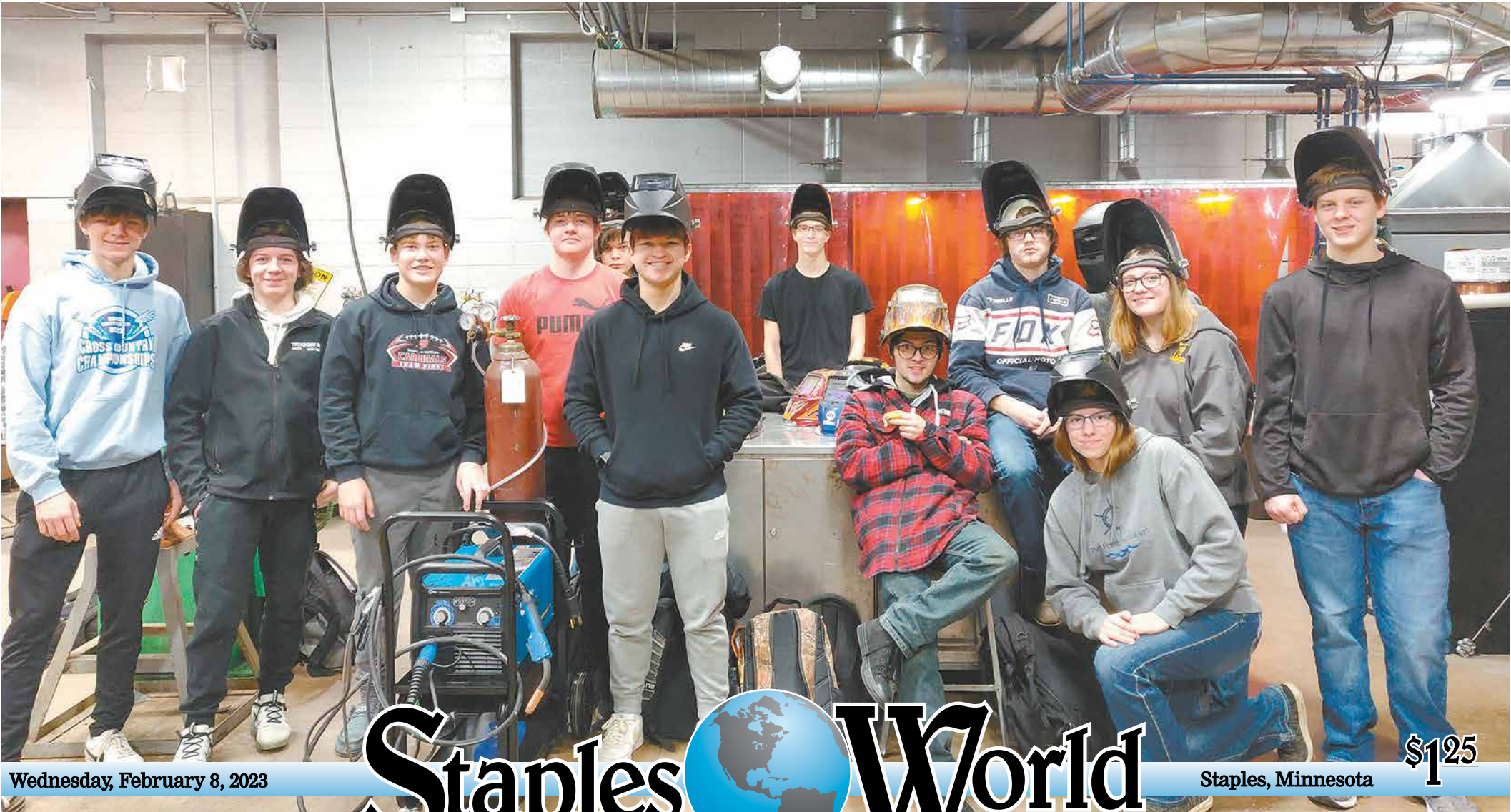


Inside this issue:

Staples downtown committee meeting
Middle school honor roll
Girls basketball win
State of Rural 2023



Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Staples, Minnesota

\$125

Snowmobile crash claims life of rural Staples man

Mark Plattner, 65, died Feb. 4, as the result of a snowmobile crash in Byron Township. According to Cass County Sheriff Bryan Welk, their office received a 911 call at 4:55 p.m. Feb. 4, reporting a snowmobile crash with serious injury at 72nd St. SW, rural Staples. Deputies and responders arrived on scene and found family and bystanders performing CPR on an adult male victim. Medical aid was immediately continued by deputies and EMS Personnel. The male was pronounced deceased on scene. An investigation indi-

cated that a family was returning to their residence from a snowmobile trip when the track on the victim's snowmobile became dislodged from the 2007 Yamaha snowmobile, causing the machine to crash and eject the operator. The victim was wearing a helmet at the time of the crash. An autopsy is scheduled with the Ramsey County Medical Examiner's Office and the incident remains under investigation. Assisting at the scene were Motley Fire and Rescue, staples Ambulance and North Memorial Air Care.

Snowmobile accident

On Feb. 3, the Wadena County Sheriff's Office received a report of a snowmobile crash with injuries on the snowmobile trail, located Red Eye Township, north of Sebeka. Upon arrival of emergency personnel, Erik Damm, age 50, of Menahga, was found lying on the ground next to his snowmobile. He stated he was riding his snowmobile on the trail when he went around a corner and struck

a tree head on. He was wearing a helmet at the time of the crash. It was reported that the male party had a broken leg and wrist. Speed is believed to be a factor in the crash. Damm was airlifted to Sanford Hospital in Fargo, ND. Assisting on scene was North Memorial Ambulance, Sebeka First Responders, Sebeka Police Department and North Memorial Air Care.

Industrial Tech. class receives donations from 3M

The Staples-Motley High School's Industrial Tech. class, taught by Jerry Freese, recently received donations from 3M in Staples. In addition to teaching Welding and Industrial Tech classes a few hours each day, Freese works for 3M as his "real job." The class (and school) has expressed their appreciation for his being a great teacher,

as well as his bringing in much needed donations for his department. Pictured, from left, are Odin Trif, Jacob Morrow, Dustin Converse, Drake Dukowitz, Nikolai Moore, Andrew Salxido, Blaine Plattner, Devon Fishman, Tucker Braith, Kenzie Erickson, Emma Lamke, Alex Black. (Submitted photo)

Teaching kids to read and more through SPARKS

By Dawn Timbs
Staples World reporter

Thanks to a number of dedicated volunteers who stop by Staples-Motley Elementary School (SMES) and Sacred Heart Area School (SHAS) at least once a week, students are getting some valuable one-on-one reading time with adult mentors. SPARKS is an acronym for, "Special People Are mentoRing Kids in School". It's based on a reading program that originated in 1998, but has been reorganized and reenergized in recent months, still with the goal of helping young students read. According to information at their website, www.staplesmotleysparks.org, "We are a group of caring adults who want to support the growth of healthy, empathetic, caring young people in the Staples-Motley community."

The main objectives of the program are to help strengthen the reading strategies and abilities of students, and to help them build healthy relationships by building self awareness and working on communication skills. Rynell Schock serves as board chair of the SPARKS program. She noted that they currently have about 25 mentors, which enables them to work with second graders five days a week. In order for them to expand the program and work with other grade levels as well, they would need about 70 volunteers, Schock said. Since it was re-launched this past fall (after being dropped by Kinship in April of 2022), SPARKS volunteers have been working solely with second-graders. As the mentor list grows, the program will soon include first-graders, and the hope is to be able to work with kindergartners by spring. The SPARKS program takes place for an hour a day at SMES and SHAS. During that time, each mentor reads with six students. Because they see the same six students each time, relationships are built over the course of the school year.



Practicing their reading skills

Second graders at Staples-Motley Elementary School have the opportunity to practice their reading skills with adult volunteers involved with the SPARKS program. Above, Asher Carry, a student in Robin Kautto's class, reads to SPARKS

mentor Rynell Schock. Below, Emmitt Winter, a student in Tressa Cain's class, gets some assistance from SPARKS mentor Mary Brauch. (Staples World photos by Dawn Timbs)

Many of the mentors volunteer once a week with the SPARKS program, others more than that. Second grader Asher Carry, who reads each week with Schock, said he likes the SPARKS program because while reading with his mentor, "I learn the words." Mary Brauch is a mentor to students in Tressa Cain's class. She's really enjoyed the opportunity to work with the second graders. She said that all of the 'hard word' in teaching kids to read is done by their home-room teachers, but that the SPARKS mentors can follow-up and offer that extra help where needed. Katrina Kligge, second grade teacher at SMES, said that "it is so wonderful to see so many community members involved with this program and sharing their time to help our students learn and build relationships with them. I can see



positive impacts in their reading abilities as well as their social skills through working with their mentors."

Rosie Blessing is a founding board member with SPARKS and passionate about the program. See **SPARKS** on page 10a

Weather

This Week's Forecast			
	High	Low	Cond.
Feb. 8	40	21	Sunny
Feb. 9	32	9	Cloudy
Feb. 10	25	2	Sunny
Feb. 11	29	20	M. Sunny
Feb. 12	34	22	Cloudy
Feb. 13	33	20	M. Sunny
Feb. 14	36	23	Snow

Last Year, 2022			
	High	Low	Cond.
Feb. 8	38°	16	
Feb. 9	30	15	P. Sunny
Feb. 10	39	4	Cloudy
Feb. 11	11	-3	Cloudy
Feb. 12	0	-11	Cloudy
Feb. 13	3	-19	Sunny
Feb. 14	9	-1	Sunny

Average Temps:
H = 25° Low = 7°
Another great week!

Compiled by
Dale Hausmann,
WCCO's Staples area
Weatherwatcher

Public Notices

Todd Cty BOA **9A**
Evergreen Cemetery **9A**
May Township **9A**

Obituaries

Henry Achermann
Arvilla Dyer
Catherine Fellbaum
William Goodrich
Ronald Lemcke
Doug Thydean

Motley man located deceased in ditch

A 33-year-old Motley man was located by officers the afternoon of Jan. 28, in a ditch north of the intersection of 1st Ave. North and Morrison St. East in Motley. He was deceased.

The subject, Jorge Sandoval Jr. of Motley had been reported missing earlier in the day, according to a report from the Morrison County Sheriff's Office. After searching the area, Sandoval was located, deceased, around 2:10 p.m. Sandoval's body was taken to Midwest Medical Examiner's Office for an autopsy, where he was positively identified.

There is no evidence of

foul play or safety concern to the public. This case remains an active investigation.

The Morrison County Sheriff's Office was assisted at the scene by the Motley Police Department and the Staples Police Department.



The search ended near here

Law enforcement located 33-year-old Jorge Sandoval Jr. of Motley Jan. 28, in a ditch north of the intersection of 1st Ave. North and Morrison St. East in Motley. He was deceased. (Staples World photo by Dawn Timbs)

Cushing couple charged with multiple tax crimes

The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced that the Ramsey County Attorney's Office recently charged Scott Lawrence Ziegler and Kristine Elizabeth Ziegler, both of Cushing, with six felony counts each of failing to file individual income tax returns and two felony counts each of failing to file withholding tax returns.

According to the complaints, the Zieglers willfully failed to file their state income tax returns for tax years 2016 through 2021 and failed to file withholding tax returns for their business, Prism Powder Coating, for tax years 2020 and 2021. The complaints allege that the Zieglers both earned enough money from the business to be required to file individual income tax returns and pay income tax in Minnesota. According to the complaints, Ms. Ziegler served as the bookkeeper for the business and told investigators that she knew of their obligation to file withholding tax returns but failed to do so. According to the complaints, Mr. Ziegler owes over \$258,000 in income

tax, penalties and interest. Prism Powder Coating allegedly owes more than \$20,700 in withholding tax, penalties and interest.

Each tax-related felony charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Although most taxpayers comply with tax laws voluntarily, the department takes enforcement action against noncompliant taxpayers to ensure that tax laws are administered fairly.

Many of the department's criminal case referrals come from public tips. There is a 24-hour tip line for anyone who suspects that a person or business is violating Minnesota tax laws. Local callers may dial 651-297-5195 or call toll-free by dialing 1-800-657-3500. Tips can also be submitted to the department by email at tax.fraud@state.mn.us. Tipsters may choose to remain anonymous.

Motley area law enforcement report

Recent reports from the Motley Police Department (MPD) and Morrison County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) included the following:

Jan. 25 - 31

Jan. 31 - The MPD was dispatched to the Holiday gas station in Motley for the report of a person that had taken another person's dog and refused to give it back. Once on scene, the MPD observed a male standing in front of a vehicle at the gas pumps. He stated that the people inside of the vehicle had taken his dog and won't give it back. The officer then spoke with the other party who stated she'd observed the dog up by the building and had picked it up and placed it in her vehicle. She went on to say that the man had approached them and tried reaching into her vehicle to grab his dog and when she got in between him and the vehicle he pulled his arm out and bumped her in the face. The MPD observed no injuries on her face.

The woman also stated she believed the dog to be malnourished and abused. The officer observed the dog to be slightly skinny. The officer then had them remove the dog from the vehicle and give it to him, and then had the owner come retrieve the dog. The officer walked to the owner's vehicle where he placed the dog into the back truck area of the SUV and into a kennel. The officer observed treats and dog food inside of the vehicle.

Jan. 31 - The MPD received a report of theft at Dollar General in Motley.

Jan. 28 - The MCSO was dispatched to Gold Ln. West and Riverfront Ln. in Motley for a possible suicidal subject that was calling 911. Deputies checked the area and were unable to locate the subject. The subject's phone was pinged and showed him to be in Cass County. Cass County was notified and the call was transferred.

Jan. 28 - The MPD responded to a call from

dispatch regarding a suspicious person on 1st Ave. North near Wellwood Street in Motley. The officer was unable to locate the subject of the call.

Jan. 25 - The MPD issued a speeding citation to Keshia Kettler, 34.

Jan. 31 - The MCSO received a call from a Motley resident reporting she'd received a scam call from someone stating the sheriff's office was asking for donations. The reporting party was informed there have been no requests for donations made by the department.

Jan. 28 - The MCSO conducted a death investigation at Cedar St. East in Motley.

Jan. 25 - 27 - The MCSO issued speeding citations to Robert Horton, 24; and Troy Haida, 38.

Jan. 25 - The MCSO received a report regarding financial fraud at the 2000 block of Summit Dr., Cushing.



Unity Bank donates to food shelf

The Motley Area Food Shelf (MAFS) recently received a \$482 donation from Unity Bank in Motley. The donation was part of the bank's 'Jeans for a Cause' efforts, during which every three months they collect money for a cause in Motley. Pictured, from left, are Marlene McQueen, Unity Bank employee; and Sherry Miller Frisk, Motley Area Food Shelf Director. (Submitted photo)

THANK YOU

for making a difference!

Congratulations to these 5-Star employees



Evelyn Gonzalez, CRA, Care Center
Nominated by Jacqueline Bartczak, RN, Quality Manager and Ashley Wallgren, RN Care Center Director of Nursing

"Evelyn was nominated for a STAR-Good Catch as she noted on removing a resident's shoes that his skin was red from increased pressure caused by his shoes. She notified the charge nurse right away so a skin assessment could be done, and the shoes were removed from use immediately. By speaking up right away a potential pressure injury was avoided. Great catch, Evelyn."



Robert Grondahl, Environmental Services
Nominated by Brenda Braford, Environmental Services Supervisor

"Rob is a true definition of team player. He is an amazing asset to our department. Rob has been so wonderful with lending a helping hand when someone is behind or overwhelmed. He has been so helpful with getting everything deep cleaned and trying to get caught back up after all the overwhelming pressures with COVID. He is more than willing to add any input on helping make things easier, more efficient, and run smoother. Thank you so much, Rob, for all your hard work, dedication and willingness to always lend a helping hand with any task."



Carol James, Lab, Phlebotomist
Nominated by Elisheba Johnson

"Carol is such a hard worker. After walking into the building to start her shift, her first words are usually 'what can I do' or 'what needs to be done'. If there was a test that should have been done, Carol doesn't hesitate to look into it. If there is a big draw needing to be done at the end of someone's shift, she is willing to help. She has taken the task of doing the EKGs and has done an excellent job. If you ever have a question, she is willing to help the best she can and she is never afraid to ask for help when she doesn't know. Carol is an amazing team player."



Jessie MacPherson, RN, Clinic Case Manager
Nominated by Stacy Grossman, HPM Provider

"In pain management we encounter some very difficult situations and Jessie is able to tackle these with ease. She multi tasks with multiple departments without a blink of the eye. I truly appreciate her grace and efficiency. With Holistic Pain Management (HPM) being a nationwide company, she handles our clients flawlessly. She communicates to keep the circle ever flowing between those who need to be in the know. I am thrilled to have her as my go-to at LHS for pain management. My patients and team are blessed to have her. She deserves to be recognized for her hard work and daily devotion to Lakewood Health System on behalf of Holistic Pain Management."



Deanne Mertens, RN, Hospital Nursing Shift Supervisor
Nominated by Bryan Kavanaugh, RN, BSN, Hospital Nursing

"Deanne is one of those 'once in a lifetime nurses' that truly loves being a nurse and strives to bring everyone up around her. Over the Thanksgiving weekend, we had a staffing need that she didn't hesitate to take on despite it already being her holiday to work. This wasn't a one-off situation, Deanne picks up shifts, helps others out with shift swaps, or taking an assignment on the hospital floor. She is someone we all look up to and respect, her guidance and leadership are truly one of a kind. We are fortunate to have her at LHS."



218-894-1515 lakewoodhealthsystem.com



Speech team with second place trophy

Front: Cyril Johnson, Grace Allen, Caden Mrazek; second row: Jaden Johnson, Joshua Cushing, Lily Davis, Hailey Richardt, Riley Dabbs, Sabina Moe; third row: Andrew Daniels, Keegan Harvey, Luke Bates, Laken Hines,

Brynn Bestland, Keegan Bestland; back: AJ Nienow, Micah Larson, Maddock Harvey, Arabella Moore, Raina Mikhael, Estella Bock, Olivia Opheim. (Submitted photo)

SM Cardinal speech second at Pequot

The Staples Motley speech team secured second place at the Pequot Lakes "Not So Early Bird" tournament held January 28. The following speakers received honors for their performance:

Creative: 1st Micah Larson, 6th Joshua Cushing
Discussion Honor Finals: 4th Sabina Moe, 7th Hailey

Richardt
Drama: 2nd Cy Johnson, 3rd Brynn Bestland
Duo: 1st Caden Mrazek and Luke Bates, 3rd Cy Johnson and Keegan Harvey
Duo Honors: 3rd AJ Nienow and Micah Larson
Extemp. Reading: 5th Walker Johnson
Great Speeches: 2nd Brynn Bestland, 7th Raina

Mikhael
Humor: 2nd Laken Hines
Humor Honors: 1st AJ Nienow
Inform.: 3rd Olivia Opheim, 4th Keegan Bestland, 6th Andrew Daniels
Original Oratory Honors: 3rd Estella Bock, 6th Jaden Johnson
Poetry: 5th Grace Allen
Poetry Honors: 2nd Riley

Dabbs, 6th Raina Mikhael
Prose: 3rd Luke Bates
Prose Honors: 4th Walker Johnson, 7th Grace Allen
Storytelling: 2nd Keegan Bestland, 4th Caden Mrazek, 6th Laken Hines
Storytelling Honors: 6th Maddock Harvey.

-Submitted by
Chloe Jackson, Coach



Staples World

DEADLINES

Newspaper deadline for copy and advertising: 12 noon Fridays

Thanks for reading the Staples World!

Looking back

75 YEARS Ago - 1948

• Feb. 5, 1948 - Old Mr. Stork is very inconsiderate some times, and can pick some of the most unconventional places to arrive, and his arrival upon these occasions is always at a most inopportune time.
Mr. and Mrs. Alvis Brever of Moran township, became the parents of their second child, a son, born while they

- O -
Compiled by
Dawn Timbs
- O -

were enroute to a hospital.
The Brevers live on a farm formerly operated by the Paul Marshall family. Mrs. Brever became ill and her husband was rushing about the farm trying to get things in readiness for their trip. There was quite a snow drift in their yard and Mr. Brever had to shovel snow for a while to get the car ready for use. Finally they got started.

At the corner near the Paul Pfleuger home, Mr. Stork decided he had waited long enough, and that he must be on his way, so he delivered the baby boy to Mr. and Mrs. Brever in their car. The baby arrived as per schedule and “hollered” his little lungs out to let everyone know he had arrived.

Mr. Brever was an excited father (who wouldn't be in such a time) and rushed to the Pfleuger home to summon assistance. The doctor was called and Mrs. Pfleuger went to assist. Mrs. Brever and her new baby were removed to the Pfleuger home, where they remained until returning to their own home. The doctor arrived about 25 minutes after the little son was born. Both mother and babe are doing nicely at the present time.

Thirty below weather is a heck of a time for Mr. Stork to pick to do his errands, and above all place in an automobile.

• Feb. 5, 1948 - Clarissa bowed to Motley last Friday night in a closely contested struggle on their floor - 46 to 42 in favor of Motley. The week before, the Rockets trounced the Brownville players on their floor to the tune of 39 to 15.

• Feb. 5, 1948 - Minneapolis Vocational high school basketball team failed in a last minute rally to overcome the lead which the Staples Cardinals had piled up against them in the game played in Staples Jan. 30. The score was 39 to 35, with victory for the Cards, coached by John Rengel. High point man for the Cardinals was John Irby with 14 points and Phil Johnson of the Volts scored 12 points.
This is the second Twin



Mystery photo

Hello readers. This week's archive photo is from our Jan. 29, 1998 edition. Do you know who these people are and perhaps the context of the photo? Do you have a memory to share? Email your an-

swers and where you're from to dtimbs@staplesworld.com by Friday, or call 218-894-1112. The answers will be published in next week's paper, as well as a new mystery photo.

50 YEARS Ago - 1973

• Feb. 8, 1973 - A new industry, Stern Rubber Company of Savage, will be opening a plant in Staples within the next couple of months, according to an announcement by Don Stern, owner and president of the firm.
Don Stern has been in this business since 1955 and the Stern Rubber Company was formed in February of 1969 from scratch. His son, Terry, is vice-president of the firm and Mrs. Ruth Huss is the office manager. All three of these individuals will be moving to Staples with their families, it was reported.

Stern also said that the employees of the firm will be local people, both male and female, and by the end of the year, we expect to have from 35 to 50 persons employed at our industry.

• Feb. 8, 1973 - The Staples Cardinals again showed their wrestling power in the Mid-State Conference as they defeated the Park Rapids Panthers 31 to 17 in a dual meet at Park Rapids Jan. 30.

Coach Don Dravis' Cards have now completed their regular season and finished with a record of 10 wins and 1 loss.

• Feb. 8, 1973 - “Eat ‘em up, eat ‘em up, rah, rah rah,” was the chant of the Staples students and sports fans last Friday evening in the Staples Auditorium and the Cardinal and White clad basketball team of Coach Tom Wolhowe apparently followed this advice as they stepped onto the basketball court and completely dominated all aspects of play and

chalked up a convincing 76 to 52 victory over the Little Falls Flyers.

• Feb. 8, 1973 - Marine Sgt. Albert A. DeWald, one of Mr. and Mrs. Frank D. DeWald of Aldrich, has reported for duty at the Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N. C. He is a former student of Staples High school.

• Feb. 8, 1973 - The kick-off event of the Sno-Week activities at the Staples Area Vocational-Technical Institute, coronation of the royalty, was held last Wednesday morning in the high school cafeteria.

Crowned king for the week's activities was Dave Christianson of Wadena, a third-year student in Tool Design and Engineering. His first official act of office was to crown the Sno-Week queen, Sally Rychman of St. Cloud. Sally is a Photo Tech I student.

Other candidates for the Sno-Week royalty were Tom Albert of South St. Paul, Gary Wikelius of Aitkin and Gary Dauer of New Ulm for the king's post. Other queen candidates were Karyl Paulson, Goodridge, runner-up; Wendy Kesich, Hibbing, second runner-up; and Betty Allebach, Brainerd, third runner-up.

Chuck Balzar, student personnel, acted as master of ceremonies for the coronation.

• Feb. 8, 1973 - After serving 32 years as a volunteer member of the Staples Fire Department, Howard Pattison retired Jan.. 31.

His retirement was announced by Chief Leo B. Fahnlander and was accepted with regrets at the Jan. meeting of the 32-member department.

25 YEARS Ago - 1998

• Feb. 5, 1998 - Morey Fish Co. of Motley has

announced plans to merge with a Detroit-based fish company Salasnek Fisheries, known as Seafood International.

The transaction combines two of the Midwest's larger fish and seafood processors and distributors.

The main Morey production plant is in Motley, where the company was founded in 1937. It's headquarters in recent years has been in Golden Valley.

• Feb. 5, 1998 - “We played four good quarters,” Joe Joerger said in summing up the difference after the Cardinal girls (basketball team) had trounced Verndale 63 - 24 Jan. 29.

• Feb. 5, 1998 - The days may be numbered for the 600-foot Dower Lake fishing pier, a fixture for generations of Staples residents. Its supporting pilings are deteriorating and costs to repair could be more than the city of Staples, the current owner, can handle.

10 YEARS Ago - 2013

• Feb. 7, 2013 - Hal Swanson and Mike Wiebolt took over Staples Hardware on Feb. 1.

Swanson and Wiebolt are brothers-in-law and are partnering on this venture after looking at the store for several years. They both mentioned how impressed they were they way Dave Lester built the store back up after he had sold it in 2008 but then got it back. On Feb. 1, after signing the papers to sell the store, Lester said, “I'm excited, they know what they're doing, the store is in good hands.”

• Feb. 7, 2013 - Nicholas Sharma won the Elementary School Spelling Bee on Jan. 30, correctly spelling words like “tension,” “cartwheel,” “combination,” “symbol” and “honorable.”

Staples Police report

Jan. 25, Staples Police were informed of an individual who has been calling into the Lakewood Health System threatening staff on site. Individual lives in Cass County and the threats were made to the Pillager Clinic. Cass County Sheriff's Office was advised.

Jan. 27, Staples Police were informed of suspicious activity around the 400 block of 2nd Street NE. Reporting party stating that some windows have been broken.

Jan. 27, Staples Police received report of a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed in front of the high school when kids are leaving for the day. Reporting party confronted the individual and the individual keeps revving the engine every day after school when it goes past. Officers will check with the school to retrieve video.

Jan. 28, Staples Police responded to Beck's Burger Co., Staples, on report of a

male refusing to leave after bar close. Upon arrival officers spoke with the intoxicated subject and asked him to leave the business. The male became argumentative and did not want to leave. Officers, along with the subject's girlfriend, escorted him outside. Once there, he refused to leave with the female in a car. Officers remained on scene to speak with the subject until employees were able to get into their vehicles and leave. Once employees had left, the male was left in the care of his girlfriend.

Jan. 29, Staples Police received a report of a male party pinned between two vehicles. Male party was free from vehicles and had a severe leg injury. Autumn Rorvig, 26, was issued a citation for driving after revocation and no proof of insurance. Male party was transported to Lakewood Health System Hospital in Staples by ambulance.

DOWNTOWN continued from page 10a

Businesses need to work together to build on each other's success

thetics, not to mention their environmental benefits.

The group bemoaned the fact that the depot was not more accessible to traffic. It's a community treasure and should be a draw for tourists. Is there space for expanded parking? Would it be possible to build a walkway, making it safe for pedestrians to cross Highway 10?

Gerard encouraged the group to visit other towns similar in size to Staples. What seems to be working for them in terms of drawing people to downtown? Someone mentioned the variety of shops available in Perham. And, when people are shopping, most likely they stop for a bite to eat at one of the local restaurants. Lindsey Williams, who owns the Stomping Grounds coffee shop in Staples, said she's tried staying open more on weekends, but it's not been beneficial financially. Perhaps that would change if there were more specialty shops downtown, or an activity option like bowling or rollerskating.

Look at the small community of Dorset, a group member said. During the summer months, they are hopping. Yes, they are closer

to lakes than Staples, but there must be other factors that entice tourists. Well, they did have that four-year-old mayor for awhile, a novelty that seemed to keep them in the news throughout the United States. “Are you up for the job, Sam?” someone jokingly asked 12-year-old Sam Hirschey, the youngest person in attendance at the ‘huddle.’ He shook his head ‘no.’ Back to the drawing board.

Mike Stevens shared that he had worked at Batcher's Department Store for 20 years, and helped decorate the storefront windows. He remembered how bustling the streets of Staples were back in the 1970s and '80s. Why couldn't that happen again? Stevens wondered about the possibility of having a window decorating contest for business owners. Hopefully, that would be an incentive for businesses, as well as encourage people to visit Staples.

Keep brainstorming, Gerard encouraged the group, reminding them that this project is estimated to take 18 months. They'll meet again Wednesday, Feb. 15, at Beck's Burger Co., hopefully with some concrete ideas for achieving their three goals.

Snowmobile safety tips from MN DNR

Watch the weather and check trail conditions before riding

Don't ride in adverse weather conditions. Plan your trip and check the trails you'll be riding prior to departure. Check trail conditions and trail maps.

Don't drink alcohol and ride

Alcohol is a factor in over 60% of all fatal accidents in Minnesota, as well as many non-deadly snowmobile accidents. Alcohol and drugs have a negative effect on the driver's vision, balance, coordination, and reaction time. Don't ride with people who drink and ride! Minnesota is part of a larger coalition of snowmobiling states that support ‘Zero Alcohol’ consumption before or during your ride.

Never ride alone

Always ride with a friend on another snowmobile. This way if one machine is disabled, you have another to get help.

Dress for safety & survival

Always wear a quality DOT helmet and facemask. Wear layers of clothing to keep warm and dry. Snowmobile suits, bibs, jackets, gloves and mittens should cut the wind, repel water and keep you ventilated.

Slow down

Excessive speed is a

major factor in many accidents, especially at night. To help avoid accidents, keep your night time speed under 40 MPH.

Stay to the right

Almost every trail is a “two way” trail. So stay to the far right of the trail, especially on hills and corners. Obey all trail signs and cross roadways with extreme caution.

Stay on the trail or stay home

Trespassing is a major complaint about snowmobilers and can result in trail closure. Always stay on designated snowmobile trails. Venturing off of trails can result in accidents. Only ride private property when you have landowners permission.

Riding on ice - lakes & rivers

It is safest to avoid riding on lakes and rivers. If you must ride on ice, wear a life jacket over your outer clothing. Stay on the marked trail and stay off of ice that has moving water (current) near or under it - ice in these areas may be thin and weak.

Take a Snowmobile Safety Training Course

Designed to educate the student on basic snowmobile operation, laws and regulations, and safety.

Mystery solved



in Chicago has his snowmobile jacket “on loan” Sorenson laughed. Sadly, many of the people who would remember this photo are now gone, Sorenson went on, mentioning Dave Nordell, Dick Donat and his boss, Bobby Mertens, “a great guy.” He also said that Dave Cline, who worked as a mechanic for Mertens at that time, should have been in this photo as well.

David Erbe, Steve Kobliska, Mike Koppes, Lee Jenkins, all of Staples, correctly identified both men in the photo, as did James Nichols of Baxter. Erbe shared that he was related to “Bobby Mertens” and that he'd bought a snowmobile from him years ago. Kobliska, former owner of Ideal Construction, said that Mertens had worked with them as a contractor. Both Erbe and Kobliska recalled that Bob Sorenson's dad had a fertilizer company, which was located near the Erbe's farm in rural Staples. Koppes shared that he'd graduated from Staples High School with Sorenson in 1972, but he didn't remember him having dark hair or a beard. He also commented that “Bobby Mertens was a super nice guy who died too young of cancer.” Thanks for participating in our mystery photo.

Last week's mystery photo published in the Feb. 1, 1973 edition of the Staples World featured Bob Sorenson (right) a snowmobile driver from Staples who had won many trophies in race competition that winter. Sponsored by Bob Mertens (left), local Arctic Cat dealer, Sorenson had participated in five races to date and won 10 awards. Sorenson is pictured with four trophies he'd recently won at the Jack Pine Savage Days in Pine River. They included first in 400 stock; first in 100 modified; second in 300 and third in 250 super stock.

Bob Sorenson, Staples, said this picture brought back a lot of great memories from a rich time of life. He went on to share that he was 19 years old, “165 pounds soaking wet” and a student at the vo-tech school that year. After classes, he'd go work at Mertens' shop for several hours. After working on the customers' sleds, he'd work on the race sleds. He remembered well those snowmobile races, including a few held at Dower Lake in Staples. He still has one of the large trophies he won, as well as his hat that he keeps in his car. His son-in-law

'All of the above' energy approach for Minnesota

By Senator Paul Utke

Senate Democrats once again forced through more hyper-partisan legislation, this time focusing on energy. SF-4, which I call the “Blackout Bill,” undermines the goals of energy reliability and affordability, neglects our cleanest forms of energy, and subjects small co-ops and municipalities to aggressive mandates. This is a bad bill that faced a lot of scrutiny on the Senate Floor, just for Democrats to push it through with an iron fist. There are so many dangerous parts of this bill that will adversely affect those in greater Minnesota.

Senate Democrats’ Blackout Bill is a nightmare for rural communities. The base of the bill mandates that all electric production in the state of Minnesota be 100% carbon-free by 2040, offering little-to-no flexibility when it comes to offramps for smaller locals and co-ops that will be unable to meet that goal. The bill completely closes our state off to coal and natural gas, while simultaneously shifting to renewable sources of solar, wind, hydroelectric, hydrogen, and biomass. The language mandates so much, and still fails to even consider nuclear energy and natural gas. The United States Department of Energy has already categorized nuclear energy as “clean and sustainable” for a number of reasons: it protects air quality, it has a small land footprint, and it produces minimal waste. The bottom line is that we can’t seriously discuss renewable energy unless we include nuclear energy in the conversation. With no flexibility or backup plans, our rural commu-

nities will suffer greatly.

This is surely a Blackout Bill, but I consider it to be a “Taillight Bill,” because after it becomes law, I will just see more taillights of people leaving Minnesota. We’ve already seen targeted billboards advertising places like North Dakota as alternative options to live and do business, and this bill will push more folks to take up those offers. For years, we’ve seen businesses expanding over the border instead of staying in Minnesota. With this bill and other extreme regulations, Minnesota is sending a message to business owners that we are no longer a business-friendly state. This bill is going to drastically increase energy prices, and in doing so will price businesses right out of Minnesota. We should be doing what we can to keep these folks and their businesses in the state. As long as we continue this trend of higher costs and more regulations, we are going to continue losing folks to our neighboring state. We must stop exporting these jobs and businesses.

Senate Republicans not only spent hours once again offering commonsense amendments to help our local utilities contend with this bill, but we also presented an alternative energy plan known as the A+ Energy Plan. Our plan focuses on reliable, affordable, and consistent energy. It would also lift the ban on nuclear power construction in Minnesota, allowing for more innovation exploration in the energy sector. Additionally, it would allow for coal and natural gas to be used when demand is higher than average. Our plan outlines 5 key highlights: it allows

nuclear construction in the state, authorizes hydroelectric power to count as a renewable energy, provides affordable renewable natural gas to continue to emission reduction, ensures that natural gas and coal are always on for consistent reliability and affordability, and an “all-of-the-above” strategy that mixes renewable energy with our current energy sources.

Despite our best efforts, we are left with yet another extreme bill that does little to represent greater Minnesota. This Blackout Bill is going to hurt our local utilities and will force families to pay higher costs when it comes to utility bills. Inflation is hurting families across the state—they are seeing rising prices everywhere from the grocery store to the gas pump, and they simply can’t afford an exponential increase in the cost of utilities, but this bill will do just that. Senate Republicans tried to offer amendments that keep costs down, energy reliable, and allow the use of coal and natural gas when the grid is overwhelmed—and believe me folks, under this plan, it will be. Naturally, Democrats voted against every amendment on multiple party line votes because they care more about partisan politics that forming real solutions. Our state is going to be forced to contend with less energy reliability, which will lead to rolling blackouts in the middle of winter and summer. Minnesotans want reliable and affordable energy, but they are being left in the dark by this extreme legislation.

The State of Rural 2023

By Center for Rural Policy and Development
Kelly Asche, Senior Researcher
and Mamie Werner, Vice President of Research and Operations

Each year, the Center for Rural Policy and Development provides an update on various economic and demographic data pertaining to rural Minnesota. As policy discussions concerning the various regions of the state unfold, it is important to understand the past, present, and potential futures of rural regions. This report provides historical data points that illustrate how rural conditions have changed and where they are at now, making for healthy discussions about the current demographic and economic vitality of these areas.

To supplement and support the annual State of Rural Minnesota report, we also maintain and regularly update the Atlas of Rural Minnesota Online. This collection of interactive maps and charts provides readers with a higher-level analysis of the data, breaking it down in a variety of ways to give a better understanding of Minnesota’s demographic, economic, and societal characteristics at the state, county, planning region, and economic development region levels. Visit www.ruralmn.org/atlas-online-2022 to view the site.

Following are the takeaways for 2022:

People

In 2020 and 2021, the decades-long trend of population loss in rural counties and population gain in urban ones was disrupted by the pandemic in a noticeable way.

The newest population estimates reveal that rural Minnesota counties experienced a population increase from in-migration, while at the same time, the Twin Cities’ urban counties experienced enough out-migration to result in their first population decline in many years. Meanwhile, Greater Minnesota counties with higher percentages of non-white populations continued to see growth as well.

It should be noted that these recent shifts are sudden and modest. Unless something

happens to cause significant changes over the long term in in-migration, either internationally or from other states, Minnesota’s population is still projected to decline across much of the state over the next 20 to 30 years.

Economic Vitality

There are only a few significant differences among the industries that employ Minnesota residents when comparing urban and rural areas.

The education and health services sector is the largest employer in a majority of Minnesota counties.

Rural counties have a higher percentage of people employed in agriculture and government jobs or who are self-employed, while the Twin Cities area has a significant share of people employed in the professional and business services sector, which includes jobs like management of companies, legal advice and representation, and accounting.

Greater Minnesota’s climbing workforce vacancy rates paused only briefly during the pandemic and are now at all-time highs. The largest increases in wages for job vacancies have occurred in Greater Minnesota as well, although wages are now rising in the Twin Cities as the workforce shortage hits the metro area.

Although rural Minnesota’s median wages are still below those of the Twin Cities, the region’s lower cost of living makes up for the difference.

Agriculture

After a rollercoaster decade, farmers appear to be getting some relief.

After a decline in land values from their peak in 2014, prices have plateaued but continue to be historically high. Land along the western side of the state has increased in value as much as 700 percent since 2000.

Ag markets have improved over the last few years. Average incomes are finally exceeding expenses, resulting in some of the highest net incomes farms have seen recently.

Flaws in carbon-free bill threaten small towns

From Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA)

The cost of utilities for customers and the impact on small Minnesota towns may be staggering under the Carbon Free Energy Bills (SF 4/HF 7) as they are currently written. Municipal utilities do not typically generate power. This reality, along with their smaller size and customer base, means they will experience significant negative impacts if the bills are enacted without changes.

MMUA urges legislators to make adjustments to ensure that flaws in the bills are addressed so hometown ratepayers are protected from forces beyond their control. Specifically:

- The bills should ensure that municipal utilities and their ratepayers are not negatively affected by the

need to generate power with locally owned legacy equipment during weather and grid emergencies.

- Language should be removed that weakens customer protections against devastating blackouts and high rate increases.
- The bills should exempt municipal utilities from repercussions of decisions made by entities with whom they may have contractual agreements that pre-date the new law.

“Hometown utility leaders are right to be concerned about these well-intentioned bills as currently written,” says Karleen Kos, CEO of MMUA. “I have never met a municipal utility customer or employee who wasn’t supportive of clean energy, but this law is not realistic for small town utility operations. What makes sense for Xcel is simply not

feasible for Ely or Elbow Lake.”

MMUA encourages ratepayers across Minnesota to raise these issues with their legislators and with Governor Walz. “If we are truly ‘One Minnesota’ as Governor Walz has said, then our lawmakers need to join us at the table to fix problems with these well-intentioned bills,” says Kos. “We all want a carbon free future, but the path to that goal needs to be based in the realities of our towns today. By working together, we can attain carbon free power that is also reliable, affordable, and sustainable.”

The Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association represents nonprofit hometown utilities in 124 communities around the state.

Abortion issue reaches Minnesota Senate

By Senator Paul Utke

Last week Senate Democrats brought abortion legislation to the Minnesota Senate floor. For over 16 hours, Senate Republicans put up a fight offering numerous commonsense amendments, only for every attempt at debate to be struck down by party line votes. What we were left with was a one-page bill that opens the floodgates on abortion and a number of other procedures.

Despite Republicans’ attempts to offer commonsense amendments that most Minnesotans agree with—a ban on third trimester abortions, a ban on the violent partial birth abortions, parental consent—Democrats voted down every single amendment. At one point, Senate Democrats stopped responding to our

amendments and refused to even discuss them. This is not how Democracy works, and it is not what our constituents want to see. With topics as sensitive as this, it is important that we engage in respectful discussion to reach common ground. Unfortunately, Democrats were more interested in ramming through their extreme legislation.

What we were left with was the most extreme abortion bill in the country. Supporters of the bill claimed it only codified Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Gomez, but that just isn’t accurate—it went far beyond both of those bills. Abortion is now legal up until birth for any reason with no viability limits. What was even worse is that this bill was written in a way that allows minors to have access to sterilization, gender surgeries, and abortion. This is wrong. Most

folks agree this bill goes way too far.

I am disappointed Democrats pushed this bill through so quickly and showed such an utter unwillingness to find common ground. Unfortunately, that seems to be the theme of this session. We also brought up a bill that would have eliminated the tax on social security, just to be struck down once again on a party line vote—for the second time this year. When Republicans were in the majority, we were always respectful of the minority party. Even if we didn’t agree with some of their policies, we were willing to come to the table and negotiate because that is how you reach solutions that serve all Minnesotans. Democrats have shown zero interest in doing that this year. I’m disappointed, but not surprised.

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The Staples World tries conscientiously to report fairly and accurately. If you feel we fall short of this objective at any time, please direct your complaint to the manager whose name appears on this page.

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Reproductive freedom bill signed

From the office of Governor Tim Walz

On Jan. 31, Governor Tim Walz signed the Protect Reproductive Options Act into law, establishing reproductive freedom as a fundamental right for every Minnesotan.

“Last November, Minnesotans spoke loud and clear: They want their reproductive rights protected – not stripped away,” said Governor Walz. “Today, we are delivering on our promise to put up a firewall against efforts to reverse reproductive freedom. No matter who sits on the Minnesota Supreme Court, this legislation will ensure Minnesotans have access to reproductive health care for generations to come. Here in Minnesota, your access to reproductive health care

and your freedom to make your own health care decisions are preserved and protected.”

“This is a truly historic day for our state. This legislation signals to Minnesotans and everyone across the country that your access to abortion and right to reproductive freedom will be protected here in Minnesota,” said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. “This legislation ensures all Minnesotans have the freedom to make their own health care decisions about their own bodies. I am proud to have stood in this fight alongside so many powerful women and will continue to fight to expand access to affordable and comprehensive reproductive health care for everyone across the state. I am proud to be a Minnesotan.”



SM Middle School Honor Roll

A Honor Roll
Grade 8

Corben Berg, Hannah Cole, Bella Hines, Thomas Johnson, Jadin Linehan, Suhaila Mikhaeil, Justin Olson, Carter Sarbaum, Evan Schultz, Wade Tornado, Chloe Trantina, Tyson Turner.

Grade 7

Gage Bjerga, Beau Carlson, Sarah Kroll, Nathaniel Macheel, Clara Maros, Keira Mevissen, Maci Mithun, Ally Pesola, Addison Potter, Lydia Roelofs, Alyce Scheler, Kalee Winter.

Grade 6

Garrett Bjerga, Eli Bounds, Isaac Cole, Millinda DeWald, Elaina Elfstrum, Gabriel Gibson, Brock Gratton, Preston Hangge, Alea Holst, Kennedy Judd, Levi Larsen, Alex Leach, Olivia Lynch, Roxy Mertens, Rylee Mevissen, Hudson Nanik, Evah Noska, Jackson Odden, Kaylee Perius, Mikaela Pesta, Daniel Reese, Taylee Reese, Owen Roline, Nadia Santos, John Schotzko, Sawyer Storry, Daniel Sturm-Hughes, Cooper Tappe, Eva Weber.

Grade 5

Tenley Bartylla, Caleb Bestland, Alivia Bingham, Emma Borash, Maxx Carlson, Braxton Cherry, Odin Davis, Naudia Djuren, Layla Dumpprope, Mari'VeL Duran, Kelsey Elfstrum, Gemma Fairbanks, Maggie Grunewald, Meredith Hoemberg, Addyson Holst, Aubree Hove, Aubrey Lund, Ryan Macheel, Lucille Maros, Cydney McGree-Schmitbauer, Brayden Moore, Levi Mumm, Berkeley Nelson, Nathan Nel-

son, Nora Nelson, Carter Odden, Braydon Pruitt, Chadia Schultz, Alexander Tkalcich, Elise Trif, Aubrey Vogle, Jocelyn Vogt, Tayden Weite, Christian Winter, Joshua Winter, Jr., Madisyn Zetah.

B Honor Roll
Grade 8

Brooke Bendson, Emerson Bettis, Leighton Bettis, Marie Casillas, Gavin Cowles, Lily Davis, Allison Dukowitz, Jacob Hansen, Maddock Harvey, Reece Headley, Jocelyn Lenk, Sophie Schlosser, Logan Serich, Charles Simkins, III, Lilith Tester, Landon Thotland-Quenzer, Paige Warren, Kylie Wenzel, Gracie Wolpert, Daniel Zimmerman.

Grade 7

Andrew Black, Jayci Borash, Natalie Brant, Adalynne Brenny, Kylee Chenoweth, Andrew Dobson, Bryson Dumpprope, Roman Engebretson, Jesus Gallardo, Ryan Heifort, Molly Hoemberg, Gauge Holst, Jaida Holst, Ayden Hovland, Carter Kist, Karter Lynch, Jaxon Macheel, Jadalynn McKenna, Josiah Mumm, River Munger, Brooke Reisenauer, Paxton Sharpe, Elliot Stracek, Scarlett Stracek, Daisie Jean Strasburg, Emilyynn Sullivan, Brooklyn Winter.

Grade 6

Charlotte Aldrich, Jackson Alexander, Waylen Anderson, Chloe Badger, Dylan Caldwell, Jessica Dukowitz, Airen Gutknecht, Hannah Holker, Liam Jennissen, Michael Jewison, Ella Judd, Caleb Kopp, Aubrey Lang, William Lange,

Jack Lundquist, Abby Miller, Tristan Moore, Lee Morrison, Kenton Pope, Shyla Radermacher, Ryder Thompson.

Grade 5

Tucker Baumgartner, Jackson Bitzer, Quinn Brichacek, Kiera Chenoweth, Jaxton Critten, Natalie Dumpprope, Katelyn Erickson, Reece Hull, Annabella Hurtig, Stella Iverson, Matthew Jewison, Lalonie Kenyon, Easton Larson, Addison Macheel, Belle Mevissen, Blake Mongan, Payton Nelson, Nyah Noska, Kade Potter, Leiten Rychner, Danielle Sanford, Lydia Tkalcich, Damian Vargas-DeWald, Gunner Vogt, Kasen Wingert, Landon Ziegler.

Mark Your Calendar

February 8, 9

FREE TAX-AIDE Wednesdays, 1-4 p.m. and Thursdays, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., through April 13, Staples City Hall. Must call for an appointment at 218-296-6616. For low to moderate income taxpayers.

February 9

WALK WITH A Doc Thursdays at 5:15 p.m., at Lakewood Health System's main campus in Staples. Meet at the main entrance. For more information about this free program, visit https://walkwithadoc.org/ join-a-walk/locations/staples-minnesota

WADENA WHIRLAWS SQUARE DANCE GROUP DANCING Thursdays, Jan. 26, 7:30 - 10 p.m., at St. Michael's Church, 280 1st Ave. S., Motley. Larry Johansen, caller. For info., 218-296-1642.

February 10

WOMEN'S OPEN AA RECOVERY MEETING Every Friday in person, 10:30 a.m., Motley Free Methodist Church (lower level), 33 Wellwood St. E. Motley. All women welcome.

February 13

AA GROUP MTGS IN MOTLEY are held at the United Methodist Church, 847 3rd Ave. S., on Mondays at 8 p.m.

February 14

EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE AA GROUP MTGS IN STAPLES are held at the Staples Congregational Church, 204 5th St. NE, Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

February 15

STAPLES ALL VETERANS AND COMMUNITY PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD MTG Wednesday, Feb. 15, 5:30 p.m., at Timbers Restaurant and Event Center in Staples. The public is welcome to attend. Zoom attendance may be available by contacting Bob Hamann at 218-894-3139.

Staples Area Church Directory

Staples

Staples Alliance

1512 8th St. NE, Staples218-894-2891
Pastor Zach Jones
Sunday Worship9:30 a.m.
Sunday School11:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
AWANA6:00 p.m.

Assembly of God

914 3rd Ave. NE, Staples218-894-1081
Pastor Roy Miles
Small Groups (Bible classes for all ages)9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship Service10:30 a.m.
Children's Church (Kids start in main worship service)11 a.m.
Prayer Meeting5 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Sunlight (Kids ages 4 yrs.-6th grade)After school to 5:30 p.m.
Youth Group (Teens, 7th-12th grade)After school to 5:30 p.m.

Church of Christ

27343 490th St., Staples218-894-2609
Pastor Barry Klein
Facebook Live
Bible School (youth and adult)9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY:
Teen Youth/Adults Bible Study7-8 p.m.

First Congregational Church, UCC

firstcongregationalstaples@gmail.com
204 5th St. NE, Staples218-894-2571
Worship9:30 a.m.
Fellowship, refreshments following service

Faith Lutheran

430 12th Street. NE., Staples218-894-1546
Pastor Carl Larson
Pastor Chris Mathiason
Sunday Worship Service9:00 a.m.
Sunday School and Coffee Fellowship10:05 a.m.

Sacred Heart Church

310 4th St. NE, Staples
Church218-894-2296
Pastor Fr. Aaron Kuhn
Parochial Vicar, Fr. Gabriel Walz
MASS:
Thursday and Friday8:30 a.m.
Sunday8:30 a.m.

Seventh Day Adventist

421 Dakota Ave. SE, Staples
218-894-0033
Saturday Worship9:30 a.m.
Sabbath School10:45 a.m.

Thomastown Covenant

15940 251st Ave., Staples218-894-3923
Pastor Scott Jorgenson
Sunday Worship10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH6:30 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran

1000 4th St., NE, Staples218-894-2372
Rev. Robin Collins
Sunday Divine Service9:00 a.m.
Sunday School and Bible Class... 10:30 a.m.

United Methodist

310 5th St. NE, Staples218-894-2248
Sunday Worship10:30 a.m.
(Nursery Available for Sunday Worship)
Sunday School (for grades K-12 and adults)9:15-10:15 a.m.

Aldrich

Balsamlund Lutheran
19550 490th Street, Aldrich
Eric Clapp701-261-2394 (cell)
Sunday Worship8:15 a.m.
Sunday School8:30 a.m.

Cushing

Bethany Lutheran
25430 Bison Rd. Cushing, MN
320-749-2140
Pastor Carl Larson
Pastor Chris Mathiason
www.bethanylutherancushing.org
Sunday Worship9:00 a.m.
Communion1st and 2nd Sunday of each month

Lincoln Evangelical Free

1354 320th Street, Cushing, MN 56443
Phone: 218- 575-2449
www.lincolnefree.org
Facebook Lincoln E Free
Office Hours: Tues. - Thurs., 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Senior Pastor: Don Reigstad
Community Life Pastor: Jim Brown
Associate Pastor: Joe Reigstad
SUNDAY
Church Worship Gathering10:00 a.m.
YouTube Channel10:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Community Meal5:30 p.m.
Family Night6:00 p.m.

Cushing Baptist

26298 Bear Rd., Cushing
Pastor Dan Holmes320-749-2583
Sunday School9:30 a.m.
Worship10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible study7:30 p.m.

Leader

Swan Valley Lutheran
Leader218-397-2470
Sandy Knight, Synodically Authorized Minister of Word and Sacrament
Sunday Worship
January - July9 a.m.
July - January11 a.m.

Maple Hill Lutheran

Sandy Knight, Synodically Authorized Minister of Word and Sacrament
Leader218-397-2470 (Rural Pine River)
Worship and Sunday School9:00 a.m.

Motley

Motley Free Methodist
33 Wellwood St. E
Motley 56466218-352-6888
Jim Johnson, Senior Pastor
Casey Reynolds, Assistant Pastor
Sunday Worship9:00 and 10:30 a.m.
facebook live9 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
AWANA4:00-5:30 p.m.
Youth Group6:00-8:00 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran

497 3rd Ave. S, Motley218-352-6399
Pastor Vicar Paul Koehler
Sunday School and Bible Class8:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship9:30 a.m.

St. Michael

1st St. and Birch, Motley218-894-2296
Pastor Fr. Aaron Kuhn
Parochial Vicar, Fr. Gabriel Walz
MASS:
Tuesday6:30 p.m.
Saturday4:00 p.m.
United Methodist
847 3rd Ave. S. Lane, Motley218-352-6466
Pastor Greg Leslie
www.motleyumc.net
Sunday Worship Service10:00 a.m.
Monday AA meeting8:00 p.m.

Oylen

Oylen Alliance
City Rds, 7 and 9, Oylen
218-472-3440 or 218-472-3316
Pastor Neal Malcore
Sunday School10:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship11:00 a.m.

Pillager

First Lutheran Church
Pastor Mathew Sundquist
717 River Street S, Pillager, MN
218-746-3775
Sunday Worship9:30 a.m.
Sunday School8:30 a.m.

Casino Assembly of God

Pastor Dan Johnson
N. of Motley, Hwy. 64, E. on Cty 34 to Cty. 104.
Phone218-746-3839
Sunday School9:30 a.m.
Worship10:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship7:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY7:00 p.m.

First Baptist

903 River Street South, Pillager
Pastor Jake Anderson
218-746-3768
curious@fbcpillager.com
Worship Gathering10:00 a.m.
Connection Point9:30 a.m.

Hewitt

Church of the Nazarene
114 Front Street, P.O. Box 146 Hewitt, MN
218-924-2028
Jim and Linda McCaffey, Pastor
Sunday School9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship10:45 a.m.
WEDNESDAY PRAYER7:00 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS)

524 Front Street, PO Box 116, Hewitt, MN
Pastor Robin Fish
Sunday Worship10:30 a.m.

United Methodist Church

Hwy. 210, Hewitt, MN
Pastor Kenneth Uhren
Sunday Services10:30 a.m.
Sunday School9:30 a.m.

Verndale

Verndale Alliance
109 NW Brown Street, Verndale, MN 56481
218-445-5619
Senior Pastor Tony Stanley
Heath Belknap, Pastor of Student Ministries
Sunday Worship9:30 a.m.
Sunday Bible Fellowship Classes11-11:45 a.m.

Family Life Church

402 NE Clark Drive, Verndale 218-445-5568
VerndaleFLC@gmail.com
Pastor Amos Self218-371-7189
Tahna Rurup, Connections & Media Pastor
Tillman Phagan, Kid's & Food Shelf Pastor
Ryan Wolfenden, Youth Pastor
SUNDAY
Youth Prayer9:20 a.m.
Worship Service10:00 a.m.
Prayer Meeting5 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Life Groups6:30 p.m.

Hope Chapel Alliance

18126 County Road 7, Verndale
218-445-5643 or 218-472-3316
Pastor Neal Malcore
Sunday Worship9:00 a.m.
Sunday School10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Family Night5:30 p.m.

Immanuel Lutheran Church of Bartlett Township (LCMS)

17097 460th St., PO Box 37, Verndale
Pastor Robin Fish
Sunday Worship9:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study6:30 p.m.

Verndale United Methodist

10 3rd Ave. SW, Verndale
218-445-5108
Pastor Jill Pawlowski
Sunday Worship9:00 a.m.

Central United Methodist

5 miles N on Cty Rd 26 (Nimrod tar)
Pastor James Middendorf, 320-260-4950
Sunday Service9:00 a.m.
Bible Study10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Seeds of Hope7:00 p.m.

Leaf River Township

The Old Country Church
Leaf River Twp., Wadena County Rd. 6
Info. 218-837-5690
Sunday Service10 a.m.

Cardinal Calendar

Staples-Motley School events

February

- SNOW DAZE Feb. 6 - 10
- HOME SPEECH MEET Feb. 11, Staples-Motley HS
- LARGE GROUP INSTRUMENTAL CONTEST Feb. 22, Staples-Motley HS
- DISTRICT SPELLING BEE Feb. 23, Centennial Auditorium

March

- MS CHOIR/BAND/ORCHESTRA CONCERT March 7, 7 p.m.
- HS MUSIC TOUR March 8 - 12
- MS PLAY March 17, 7 p.m.; March 18, 2 p.m.

All Staples-Motley Upcoming Events are subject to change. Go to www.isd2170.k12.mn.us for up to the minute information.

LakelandDental
NO INSURANCE, NO PROBLEM! Call to hear about our Lakeland Dental Savings Plan
www.lakelanddental.com
Staples Office:(218) 894-2201
Email: info@lakelanddental.com
Clarissa Office:(218) 756-2234
Long Prairie Office:(320) 732-6141
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Social Security Disability
320-257-0231
www.GetFields.com

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Newspaper deadline for copy and advertising: 12 noon Fridays

"The Subtlety of Selfishness...and the Hope Out of It"

Pastor Barry Klein, Staples Church of Christ

I recently read a book that is identifying our current presence of selfishness in and out of the church. It exposes the slick packaging in which we live and attempt to justify our selfishness. It's easier for me to see other people being selfish than it is for me to see it in my own life.

Books have been written over the past four decades that are identifying our direction of growing selfishness in our country. As followers of Jesus, we need to start the house cleaning with ourselves. The apostle Paul calls out the presence of living self-centered lives to the Christians in the area of Galatia in the first century in Galatians 5:20, penning it as "selfish ambition." James 3:14-16 does the same.

Selfishness had an early start in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve working the angles for what they perceived to be their better selfish gain. Selfishness is really an attempt to create "self-protection" in a sense that I am number one and I am the center of the universe. Everyone else

needs to adjust to me. Is it getting warm in here as the heat of application gets closer and closer to me?!

So what is the hope out of self-centeredness? Let's hear Philippians 2:3-8 (NIV), "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (demanded), but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!"

Pondering that reality will move us a giant step away from being self-centered and toward being "other centered."

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Obituaries

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Ronald
Lemcke

Ronald Lemcke, 72, of Pequot Lakes, died January 31, 2023, at his home from cancer.

Visitation will be held from 10 to 11 a.m. followed by a memorial service at 11 a.m. on Saturday, February 18 at the Staples Assembly of God Church. Luncheon to follow.

w7x A00006B2023FB08



William
Goodrich

William Goodrich, 71, of Baxter passed away January 29, 2023, at Diamond Willow Assisted Living in Baxter.

Per William's request, no services will be held.

William was born September 8, 1951 to Lloyd and Ollie (Simkins) Goodrich in Staples.

Arrangements were with Brenny Family Funeral Chapel, Staples.

w7c A00006B2023FB08

Fae
Bostrom

Fae Ann Bostrom, 91, of Blaine passed away January 31, 2023.

Visitation will be held Weds., February 8 from 4 to 5 p.m. at the Iten Funeral Home in Browerville.

Funeral services will be held Thurs., February 9 at 11 a.m. at the Staples Church of Christ Church with visitation one hour prior to services at the church.

w7x A00006B2023FB08

Arvilla Dyer

Arvilla F. Dyer, 95, of Staples, passed away peacefully at Lakewood Health System Hospital, Staples on January 27, 2023.

Funeral services were held February 4 at Faith Lutheran Church in Staples.

Interment was at Evergreen Hill Cemetery in Staples.

Arvilla was born in Bertha, January 18, 1928, to John and Amanda (Klatt) Lorenz. She graduated from Bertha High School in 1946 and Staples Normal Teacher's Training in 1947. She taught in rural schools for five years before going to Verndale as a fourth grade teacher in 1962. Arvilla earned her B.S. Degree from St. Cloud State in 1965. She retired from Verndale Public School in December 1986.

Arvilla married Charles Dyer on February 26, 1949. They lived in Staples most of their married life. She was a member of Faith Lutheran Church. She loved both her family and her 'God given Faith Family'. Besides being active in her church, she enjoyed reading, visiting with people and taking care of her husband.

She is survived by one



daughter, Lucinda (Jerry) of Lockhart, TX; one son, Bruce (Deborah) of Norfolk, VA; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren and two brothers, Gary (JoAnn) and Ralph Lorenz.

Arvilla is preceded in death by her husband Charles; parents; four brothers; six sisters and one granddaughter, Deirdre Dyer.

In lieu of flowers, donations are requested to Faith Lutheran Church, Staples in memory of Arvilla - indicate that the donation is to go towards the new bus garage.

Arrangements were by Brenny Family Funeral Chapel, Staples.

w7c A00006B2023FB08

Henry Achermann

Henry Achermann, 85, of Mountain View, CA, passed away January 16, 2023.

Memorial Mass will be held February 16, at St. Athanasius Church, Mountain View.

He was born in Neuhausen am Rheinfall, Switzerland on February 27, 1937 to Heinrich and Berta Achermann. He was the beloved baby brother of Johannes, Peter and Verena. Henry emigrated to the U.S. in 1959 with the plan to reunite with his brother, Peter Achermann who had left Switzerland 11 years prior. After working with Peter on a pipeline in New Mexico and Texas, Henry helped get the farmhouse in Leader ready for Peter's family to move into in December 1960. He worked at Budd and Ruth Boldan's Leader Machine Shop (aka Budd's Place) where he met Ardyce (Ardy) Goble (Granby). They married in Minnesota and settled in Mountain View in 1962.

Henry is survived by four children, David Achermann (MN), Veronica (Chadd) Witham

(CA), Marcus (Tanya) Achermann (CA) and Rebecca Achermann (CA); daughter-in-law, Kathy Achermann (MN); six grandchildren, Cassandra (Peter) Johnson (CA), Rebecca (Rory) Self (MN), Tristram Achermann (CA), LeAnne Witham (CA), Tasha Achermann (MN) and Tiffany Achermann (MN); one great-grandson, P.J. Johnson (CA); sisters-in-law, Delaine Achermann, Gay Swecker and Garnette Nobel (all MN); many nieces and nephews in the U.S.A. and in Switzerland and many, many friends.

In lieu of flowers, Henry requested donations to one of his favorite charities: Tunnel-to-Towers Foundation, Wounded Warrior Project, Shriners Hospitals for Children or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

The day after Henry died, his step-son, Roger Goble died in Brainerd. Roger is survived by his wife Vicki, son, Simon (Linda), daughter Amanda Fox and four grandchildren.

w7p A00006B2023FB08

Catherine Fellbaum

Catherine Fellbaum, 71, of Swanville, passed away January 31, 2023, at her residence.

Funeral services were held February 4 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Swanville with Rev. Kevin Zellers officiating.

Burial was at Springbrook Cemetery in Swanville.

Catherine was born November 2, 1951 in Long Prairie, to Kenneth and Mary Lee (Martin) Becker. She graduated from Staples High School in 1969 and then from Wadena Technical School with a degree in Cosmetology in 1970. She married Lloyd Fellbaum on September 8, 1973, in Staples. During the majority of her life, she raised a family with her husband on a dairy and hog farm in Culdrum Township, Morrison County. After retiring from farming, she worked in the home healthcare field for several years. Throughout her life, she always cherished time spent with all of her family.

Catherine is survived by her husband, Lloyd; one daughter, Stacy (Mark) Mosher of Cambridge; three sons, Loren (Sonja) Fellbaum of Grey Eagle, Kevin (Amanda) Fellbaum of Fergus Falls and Darin (Louisa) Fellbaum of Wadena; 10 grandchil-



dren, Kyle, Rachel and Julia Mosher, Dirk and Ian Fellbaum, Marshall, Hadlee and Milo Fellbaum and Ellie and Lyla Fellbaum; mother, Mary Lee Becker; eight siblings, Jeanne (Larry) Odden, Scott (Sheila) Becker, Barb (John) Reese, Connie (Mike) Odden, Terry Kavanaugh, Judy (Don) Lisson, Carol (Al) Lisson, Mike Becker and many nieces and nephews.

Catherine was preceded in death by her father, Ken Becker; two sisters, Sue Pearson and Kristi Becker; father and mother-in-law, Earl and Esther Fellbaum and brother-in-law, Lyle Fellbaum.

Catherine loved her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Arrangements were by Shelley-Gibson Funeral Chapel in Swanville.

w7c A00006B2023FB08

Doug Thydean

Doug Thydean, 68, of Littlefork passed away January 13, 2023, at St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth.

A Celebration of Life will be held at later date.

Doug was born December 18, 1954 to Reynold and Mary Thydean, in Bigfork. He spent his childhood on the family farm outside Bigfork until 1968 when he and the family moved to Littlefork. He graduated from Littlefork-Big Falls School in 1973, and that fall Doug joined the U.S. Air Force and was stationed at Edwards Air Force Base, CA. He studied to become an Electric Power Line Specialist and upon discharge from the service took a job as a civilian electrician back at the base. He later worked as and got an electrician with the National Park Service in Estes Park, CO. His final job for the federal government was with the Bureau of Reclamation as an electrician at the Estes Power Plant.

Doug was married to his first wife, Mary Lottman, in 1979, and had his only child, a son, Chase, born in 1983. They raised Chase together in their Estes Park home until they divorced in 1991.

Doug met and married Brenda Lavelle and they moved to Staples in 2005. Doug bred and raised German Shorthair Pointers, was a skilled trainer of bird dogs and a sought-after hunting guide for Little Moran Hunting Club. Doug had a creative side; along with his skills as an electrician, he was a talented carpenter, often helping family and friends with projects.

After his divorce from Brenda, Doug remained in Staples. He continued to raise dogs and pursue his interests in hunting, fishing



and spending his love of the outdoors with friends and family.

Doug recently moved back to Littlefork because of multiple health problems to be closer to family.

He is survived by his former spouses; his dearly loved son; five grandchildren, Aubrey, Teryn, Evan, Lila and Brighton; three brothers, Robert (Jan), Leroy (Barb Gurstelle) and Todd (Trina Thompson); two sisters, Gin (Ken) Ziemba and Beverly (Gerald) Houghlum; Uncle John (Elaine) Greene, Aunt Nancy Bement and close friend, Joneene Lobe and Uncle Tom Karsnia as well as many other special friends and relatives including Janeal Thydean and Rana Thydean and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

Doug was preceded in death by his parents

Many thanks to best friend Curt (KC) Foster for helping Doug on his final journey, to all the other friends and caregivers who provided such wonderful support to Doug and to Brian and Pat Kehoe for taking in Angel, Doug's last dog, who brought him so much happiness in his final days.

w7p A00006B2023FB08

Student Achievements

TASHA ACHERMANN Motley, has been named to the 2022 Fall Semester Dean's List at The University of Minnesota Crookston. To qualify, students must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average.

BEN OLANDER Staples, has been named to the 2022 Fall Semester Chancellor's List at The University of Minnesota Crookston. To qualify, students must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 4.0 grade point average.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE St. Peter, has announced its 2022 Fall Semester Dean's List. To qualify, students must have earned a 3.7 grade point average or higher for the semester. Local students named include:

- Torii Nienow, Motley
- Rose Han, Staples

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Rutten, Anderson lead Cardinals to big win

Lauren Rutten scored 17 points, Cami Anderson had 15 while the Staples-Motley defense was energetic, creating numerous turnovers and missed shots in a 66-38 win over Aitkin on Feb. 2. The Cardinals lost 79-49 at Henning on Jan. 30 and had a close 44-40 loss at Osakis on Jan. 31.

Against Aitkin, Izzy Olander got the Cardinals off on the right foot by hitting two three pointers. That pulled out the defense so Rutten and Anderson

were able to drive to the basket to get short shots. The Cardinals played a zone defense that created several steals, which they turned into fast breaks. The defense also did a good job of rebounding and limiting each possession to only one shot. Ashley Robben made a driving basket at the half-time buzzer to put the Cardinals up by 20, 38-18. In the second half, the Cardinals scored the first 10 points to take a 30 point lead and they went on to win comfortably.

Against Osakis, the Cardinals were behind by seven at halftime. They cut the lead in the second half but still ended up down by four in a low scoring game.

Team results
Staples-Motley 40, Osakis 44
Scoring: Livi Lorber 13, Lauren Rutten 11, Ashley Robben 6, Cami Anderson 6, Izzy Olander 2, Ellie Lange 2
Staples-Motley 66, Aitkin 38
Scoring: Rutten 17, Anderson 15, Olander 10, Robben 9, Lorber 9, Miranda Schotzko 6



Wrecking ball

Isaiah Schultz takes off on a fast break after getting a steal against Pequot Lakes, with Luke Brownell running with

him, leaving downed players including his teammate Avandre Brandt. (Staples World photos by Mark Anderson)

Cardinals search for offense in three losses

The Staples-Motley boys basketball team suffered scoring droughts in losses against Pequot Lakes, West Central Area and Crosby-Ironton. They finally started to put things together in the second half of their game against Crosby-Ironton, but came up short in the end.

Against Pequot Lakes on Jan. 31, Hunter Miller and Isaiah Schultz scored all but three of the Staples-Motley points in the first half. They had the game tied at 20 late in the half, but Pequot hit three 3-pointers while the Cards missed their long shots. Schultz made a steal and hit a layup at the buzzer to make it 22-29 at halftime. In the second half, Pequot opened up with four more 3-pointers and the Cardinals never recovered after that.

Against West Central area on Feb. 2, Staples-Motley started out flat and were down by 10 points early. The Cardinals managed to cut it to five, the team missed a lot of shots after that, with only Luke Brownell and Dakota Hennagir making three point shots to keep them in the game.

At Crosby-Ironton on Feb.



Wrestling for the ball

Luke Brownell hit the floor to steal a loose ball away from Pequot Lakes players.

3, the Cards had another slow first half and were down 40-28 at halftime. They outscored C-I in the second half, but it wasn't enough to get the lead back. Hunter Miller was the workhorse in the game, scoring 10 baskets, one of them a three pointer, and he made his only free throw attempt. Alex Schultz, Avandre Brandt and Grant Bestland each made two three point shots.

Team results
SM 41, Pequot Lakes 57
Scoring: Hunter Miller 19, Isaiah Schultz 11, Avandre Brandt 5, Dakota Hennigar 3, Alex Schultz 3
SM 38, West Central 65
Scoring: I. Schultz 13, Brandt 9, Miller 6, Hennagir 6, Luke Brownell 4
SM 64, Crosby-Ironton 69
Scoring: Miller 22, Brandt 14, A. Schultz 9, Grant Bestland 6, Eli Rutten 6, Brownell 3, Hennigar 2, Elijah Claussen 2



Fast break

Lauren Rutten gathers the ball to go up for a shot in the win against Aitkin. (Staples World photos by Mark Anderson)



Power shot

Cami Anderson goes up strong for a basket.

At the hoop

Left, Ashley Robben gets a lane to go in for a basket.



Strong to the basket

Hunter Miller sneaks a shot past the Pequot Lakes defense.

Skills up in the air

Left, Miranda Schotzko pulls a rebound away from an Aitkin player as Livi Lorber (5) is in position on the other side of the basket. The Cardinals picked up a lot of rebound in the game.

Wrestlers place third in WHA tournament

The Staples-Motley wrestling team placed third out of 12 teams at a tournament at Walker-Hackensack-Akely on Feb. 3.

The Cardinals did not have a full squad but the wrestlers who did compete placed well. The team won two weight class brackets, Eli Greenwaldt at 106 pounds and Colbe Tappe at 138. Jason Trantina placed second at 132.

Greenwaldt scored three pins, including one in the championship match. Tappe scored a pin, a technical fall and a 9-1 major decision in

the final. Trantina scored two technical falls, then lost 6-3 in the final match.

Other placers were Riley Reese 4th at 126, Owen Winter 5th at 145, Blake Neelan 5th at 152, Dustin Converse 8th at 160, Luke Bjerga 5th at 170 and Steven Petrich 4th at 285.

Also of note, Staples-Motley wrestler Caden Kramer placed third in the state at the Minnesota Ninth Grade Wrestling League individual tournament on Feb. 4. Kramer wrestled in the 88 pound category. He won his first two matches

6-0 and 7-0, then lost to the eventual champion 7-2. He won the third place match 4-1 against a wrestler from Hastings. Kramer has a 32-5 record on the year.

Team results
WHA tournament
Thief River Falls 228, Deer River 163, Staples-Motley 152, Crookston 140, Rock Ridge 129, Hibbing 113, Fosston-Bagley 98, Walker-Hackensack-Akely-Nevis 85, Proctor-Hermantown 60, Crosby-Ironton 51, Nashauk-Keewatin-Greenway 51, Blackduck-Cass Lake Bena 45



Avandre Brandt shoots over the defense.



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Downtown Revitalization group begins working on goals

By Dawn Timbs
Staples World reporter

Once again, the groundhog didn't see his shadow Feb. 2. The bad news, according to folklore...it's going to be cold for at least six more weeks. The good news is...the Downtown Revitalization groups will have a little more time to hunker down and plan for summer projects.

At their first official gathering Feb. 1, the sub-committee whose focus is to "Improve the Downtown Experience and Build a Sense of Place" met at Beck's Burger Co. in Staples. The purpose of the meeting (or huddle), chaired by Blake Gerard, was to get to know one another, look over the list of goals compiled

at last month's community forum, and decide which ones they should focus on first.

The group's consensus was to start with these three areas:

- Clean up and fill up empty buildings
- Make downtown aesthetically pleasing
- Look at ways to pull traffic off from Highway 10 into downtown

As they brainstormed, several thoughts and ideas were verbalized. How can we attract more downtown traffic? Is it possible to have a Farmer's Market somewhere downtown? Where could that be? Can we offer tax credit for business owners as an incentive? Would it be possible to use the Staples Theatre's

lighted marquee to place catchy phrases or list upcoming events?

Let's make downtown look beautiful, seemed to be an ongoing part of the discussion. Gerard mentioned all of the positive comments voiced in response to the downtown planters that were decorated for the winter holidays. Would businesses be willing to "adopt" a planter during the summer months as well? What about expanding that to include hanging baskets on the lampposts? Would business owners or other individuals be willing to help keep them watered? And let's not forget about trees, someone said. They do wonders for a town's aes-

See **DOWNTOWN**
on page 3A



Downtown group off to a great start

The downtown revitalization committee focused on "Improving the Downtown Experience and Building a Sense of Place" met for the first time Feb. 1, at Beck's Burger Co. in Staples. Pictured, from left, are Tim Nieminen, Mary Jo Goff, Sam

Hirschey, Blake Gerard, Lindsey Williams, Lynnette Gerard, Mike Stevens, Sandy Knosalla. Missing from photo are John Jewison and Dawn Timbs. (Staples World photo by Dawn Timbs)



Building relationships

Dale Schock of Staples is one of the volunteers with the SPARKS program at Staples-Motley Elementary School. He's pictured above with Aiden Kuechle, sharing a lighthearted moment at the start of their reading session. At left, Schock listens as Edward Trout reads from a book to him. Both boys are second graders in Katrina Fligge's classroom at the elementary school. (Staples World photos by Dawn Timbs)



SPARKS
continued from page 1a

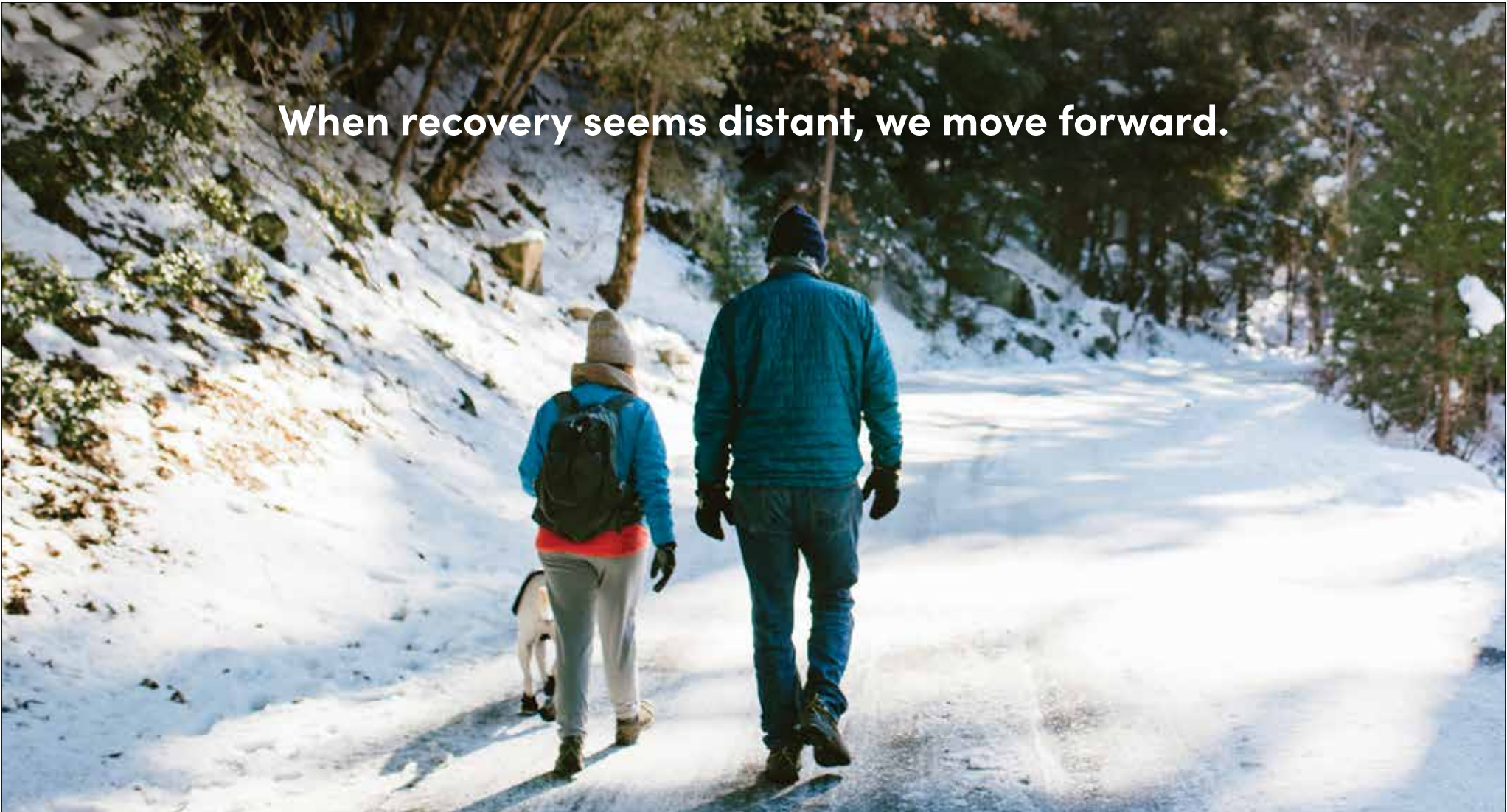
Sparks Dinner in the Woods Feb. 11

A retired kindergarten teacher (although there's no retirement option in God's master plan, she laughs), Blessing knows first-hand how important one-on-one help is to the growth of young students. In fact, research has shown that by reading aloud with a teacher or mentor for seven minutes a day, a student's test scores will improve, Blessing noted. Obviously, teachers don't have time to do that with every student in their class, so "we fill in the gap," she said of the SPARKS mentors.

To date, all of the board members and mentors are volunteers. However, they are hoping to be able to form a 501(c)(3) and perhaps pay one person to help manage their program. "We have a goal of raising \$15,000," Blessing said, adding that these funds would also help with supplies and the mandatory background checks of mentors. They are grateful for donors who have already stepped up to the plate, Blessing said, mentioning the area Lions clubs for starters. Additionally, SPARKS will be hosting a "Dinner in the Woods" event at Timbers Feb. 11, which they are excited about.

She can't say enough good about this program, Blessing says, adding that she hopes this 'spark' for helping kids will take off and ignite many more adults in the community. "Our kids really need it," she said.

To learn more about the SPARKS program, visit their website, or email sparksmentoring@gmail.com.



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