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POSTBULLETIN.COM | ROCHESTER, MINN. | SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2019 | SIX SECTIONS | \$2

Not a drop to drink

Dodge County farm among many across region facing nitrate exposure

BY BRIAN TODD

btodd@postbulletin.com

BERNE — “We definitely do not drink the water, for coffee or anything,” said Sonja Eayrs. “It isn’t safe for human consumption.”

Eayrs and her husband, Douglas, share the old family farmhouse just west of Berne in Dodge County. The couple — plus Douglas’ siblings, who use the house from time to time — enjoy the time they spend at the farm. However, they need to be careful of the water.

Drawn from the farm’s well, the water is loaded with nitrates, more than twice the limit for safe drinking according to the Minnesota Department of Health.

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“We don’t drink the water from the well,” says Douglas Eayrs, pictured with his wife, Sonja Trom Eayrs. The water at Eayrs’ childhood home near West Concord is undrinkable due to high levels of nitrates.

Joe Ahlquist / jahlquist@postbulletin.com

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Tidying trend sparks donations, consignment sales

BY JOHN MOLSEED

jmolseed@postbulletin.com

Penny Bracken understands getting rid of things can be difficult.

“It’s emotional — people can get attached to their things,” said Bracken, owner of Kismet Consignment.

For customer consigners who do feel attached to their belongings, Bracken reassures them by referring to her store as an “adoption agency.”

“We’re here to find things new homes,” she said. “For people who just want to cut to the bone, we’re here for them, too.”

Bracken has been in business for more than 16 years. So far this year, she has seen an upswing in people interested in paring down.

“People are bringing in things like crazy,” she said.

Bracken said the trend could be in part due to a new Netflix series “Tidying Up” based on Marie Kondo’s book, “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up.”



Ken Klotzbach / kklotzbach@postbulletin.com

Kismet owner Penny Bracken, left, talks with longtime customer Gayle Snyder about a coat she is looking at buying Friday. Bracken says she has seen an upswing in her consignment business in the last few weeks.

In her book, first published in Japan in 2011 and translated to English in 2014, Kondo espouses the joy of an uncluttered life. She outlines techniques for paring

down and offers advice for the more sentimental unwilling to let things go.

See TIDYING, page A2

No wall, but a line in the sand

Shutdown ends as Trump allows a 3-week window to negotiate border security agreement

Staff and wire service reports

Hundreds of thousands of federal employees are being asked to return to work and “reopen offices in a prompt and orderly manner” following the end of a 35-day government shutdown.

The Office of Management and Budget sent a memo late Friday to the heads of shuttered departments and agencies after President Donald Trump signed a bill that temporarily reopens the federal government for three weeks.

Trump submitted to mounting pressure and growing disruption, agreeing to a deal Friday to reopen the government — at least for now — backing down from his demand that Congress give him money for his border wall before federal agencies get back to work. But Trump also warned that the government could shut down again “if we don’t get a fair deal from Congress.”

Standing alone in the Rose Garden, Trump said he would sign legislation funding shuttered agencies until Feb. 15 and try again to persuade lawmakers to finance his long-sought wall. The deal he reached with congressional leaders contains no new money for the wall but ends the longest shutdown in U.S. history.



Trump

See SHUTDOWN, page A2

Post Bulletin snags 19 MNA awards, including top honor

From staff reports

BLOOMINGTON — The Post Bulletin collected 19 awards from the Minnesota Newspaper Association’s Better Newspaper Contest on Thursday, and the take included the evening’s most sought-after prize: the Vance Trophy.

The Post Bulletin won seven first-place awards, nine second-place awards and three third-place awards. Each award carries different point values. The newspaper with the most points at the end of the evening wins the Vance Trophy. The competition included publications with circulations of 10,000 or more but did not include the Star Tribune or the Pioneer Press.

“Kudos to our talented team! It’s great to see the team appreciated by their peers,” said Post Bulletin General Manager Chris Blade.

Newspapers ranging from small weeklies to large dailies from all over Minnesota submitted more than 4,000 entries for the contest, according to the MNA.

The Post Bulletin last won the Vance Trophy in 2018, and in 2001 prior to that. The trophy is awarded annually to the top daily newspaper in Minnesota, and was created in honor of the Jim Vance family of Worthington.

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Walgreens advertisement: buy 1 get 1 FREE on hundreds of vitamins and supplements. Includes images of various supplements like Co Q-10, Turmeric Curcumin, Move Free Ultra, and Nature Made D-5000.