



Father Tom Jennings blessing his new car with Holy Water.

## Secret about Father Tom's gift is finally revealed

When the retirement of Father Tom Jennings appeared in the Sept. 27, 2018, edition, I kept a secret for the parishioners of Luverne and Ellsworth.



### RUMINATIONS

By Mavis Fodness, Reporter

As Father Tom was winding down his 49 years in the priesthood, the parishioners of St. Catherine and St. Mary churches were busy finding a heart-felt thank you gift for the man who faithfully served the parish for 15 years.

Parishioners finally decided Father Tom deserved a new car. He put on lots of miles in his weekly travels between the two towns and his 2014 Ford Fusion was showing its age.

Because my story would appear in public before Father Tom's last day on the job, I agreed not to mention their parting gift in the retirement story.

Until now, when Father Tom used the \$25,000 given him to purchase an electric blue Ford EcoSport from the showroom floor at Herman Motor Company.

The transaction is one experience salesman Travis Dunn admits he won't soon forget.

Two weeks on the job and Travis admits he wasn't used to Father Tom's humorous yet priestly demeanor.

The vehicle purchase was a topic Father Tom said he had in his prayers for months and when he saw the four-door crossover in the showroom he knew it was the vehicle for him.

"It spoke to me," he said simply from his retirement home in Caledonia, Minnesota. "It said, 'I am the one.'"

Father Tom admitted his decision was assisted by Pope Francis, who was shown in news reports riding in a similar blue vehicle during his travels in Panama.

The Pope connection was unknown to salesman Travis, whom Father Tom grilled with questions of family, faith and Fords.

"I wanted to make sure he was a Bible-believing salesman," Father Tom said.

Travis passed the test and the sale was sealed.

Before driving off the lot, Father Tom blessed both his old and his new cars with Holy Water.

The priest admits he may have blessed Travis, a Lutheran, too.

"Now I know what a Catholic blessing is," Travis said. "It's like a little bath."

Travis, who used to work in marketing, photographed the blessing (above picture) and announced the vehicle purchase on social media.

The post reached 4,000 views within days, as parishioners and friends of Father Tom posted their congratulations. Normally the business posts reach about 1,400.

"You don't see that much engagement in a vehicle post," Travis said.

Fortunately it's a response you'd expect from a community who thought to buy a retired priest a car.

## Walz releases Southern Minnesota Way of Life Report

### GUEST EDITORIAL

Former U.S. Representative Tim Walz (now governor) released the Southern Minnesota Way of Life Report on behalf of the people of Minnesota's First Congressional District.

The report, released at the end of 2018, summarizes what Walz and his office learned from constituents over the last two years along their listening tour across southern Minnesota.

The report showcases the Walz's Small Town and Regional Vitality Investment Act legislation to invest in the needs and longevity of Minnesota's small towns and empower local leaders to create jobs.

"This report is a call to action," said Walz.

"It's a call to continue the conversations and building the bridges we started along the Southern Minnesota Way of Life Tour. It's a call to participate in our democracy and invite others to do the same."

He thanked the communities and local participants for contributing to the conversation.

"This report would not have been made possible without your invaluable input and expertise," he said.

"It is because of each and every one of you that Minnesota has a bright future, and I look forward to continue working with you all to bring

it to fruition."

#### Background

In May of 2017, Walz and his office set out to visit all 21 counties in Minnesota's First Congressional District to hear from constituents and community leaders.

Along the Southern Minnesota Way of Life Tour, Walz and his team convened more than 60 meetings in small towns to hear about the critical challenges rural leaders are facing.

The Tour culminated in the Small Town and Regional Vitality Investment Act (H.R. 6383), legislation Walz introduced in July of 2018 to invest in the needs and longevity of Minnesota's small towns and empower local leaders to create jobs.

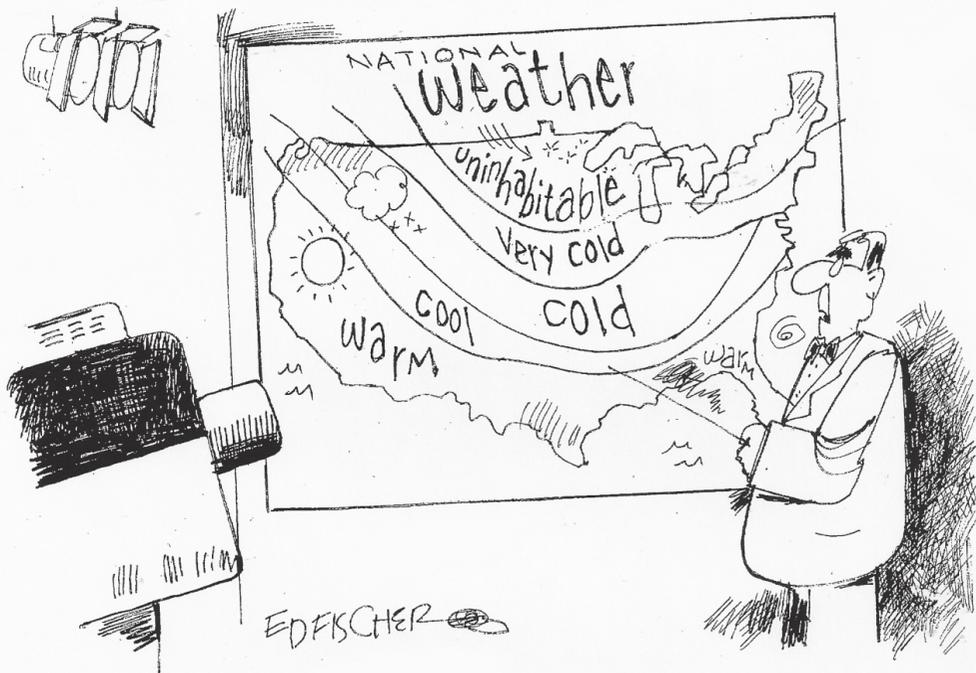
The bill, now making its way through Congress, creates a new investment initiative by sharing federal revenues directly with local governments to address the major challenges facing their specific com-

munities.

#### Summary

The specific needs of small town Minnesota communities identified in the report and addressed by Walz's legislation include but aren't limited to:

- affordable, quality child care and early childhood education options.
- public infrastructure investment, such as waste water treatment facilities and substance abuse treatment centers.
- sufficient housing opportunities for the local workforce.
- reliable, high-speed Internet.
- increase in health care services, including mental health care, and affordable health insurance options.
- increase in skilled, experienced workers.
- increase in amenities like art and music, sports, bike trails and other outdoor recreational opportunities.



## Grandparent babysitting roles become apparent

It's been a while, but recently Grandma Mary and I were called into duty to watch our granddaughters while their mom and dad attended a holiday gathering.

Brooke is four and Ellee is one. So both walk, only one in diapers, and there are no bottles to deal with. So this should be relatively simple. So I thought.

Grandma Mary and I do this granddaughter-sitting thing as a team. I drive us to Hartford, South Dakota, where they live, and Grandma Mary does everything else. I try to help where I can ... like, if the girls don't eat all their supper, I am more than willing to eat whatever is left over.

While Grandma Mary handles all the normal duties such as feeding the girls, playing with them, changing Ellee's diaper, giving both of them a bath, putting their toys away, and of course rocking them to sleep, I pitch in by trying to figure out the TV remotes.

I know what you're thinking ... it sounds like Grandpa Rick isn't doing his share of the work. Not so. Consider that I watched three hours of "Peppa the Pig," "Paw Patrol" and "Toy Story," not to mention I went to the convenience store and bought two cups of coffee and some ice cream for the girls. I think I am more than holding up my end of



### FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

By Rick Peterson, General Manager  
Tollefson Publishing

granddaughter-sitting team.

While I was on the coffee/ice cream run, the girls got their iPads out and were playing games on them. That started out as a good thing at first until Ellee, the one-year-old, was having some issues and she came to Grandpa Rick for help. I hadn't figured out the TV remote yet, and now I had an iPad in my hand. Good thing four-year-old Brooke

was there to help 60-plus-year-old Grandpa with the iPad.

Once the iPad issue was resolved, I found my way back to the recliner. I was able to recline the chair like a pro, but getting it back to its upright position was a different story. As you can imagine, I was having some difficulty. I kind of felt like I was sitting in a swing, and you know how you have to pump your legs to make the swing go higher? Well, I thought if I employed the swing-pumping method, I could get the recliner back to the upright position. As it turns out, the swing method was a failure. It did, however, provide Grandma Mary and the girls with a good laugh watching me trying to exit the recliner.

Finally, I kind of rolled out of the recliner to the side. Once on the floor, I got to my feet and pushed the recliner back to the upright position by stepping down on the footrest. Laugh at me all you want, but you know what I'm talking about because more than likely you've done the same thing.

So, to recap, I struggled with the TV remote, was an outright failure when it came to the iPad, and got my butt kicked by the recliner. From now on, when it comes to granddaughter-sitting, I'll stick to driving and eating leftovers, two things I can handle.

## Preuss: Thoughts on 'Minnesota Nice'

#### To the Editor:

I've noticed that people do not give a house number or street name as their residence. They say, "The Grumbel House." When introduced to someone new, I get their name plus their genealogy. I'm Alotta Stuff, my mother is Augusta Wind, and my grandparents are the Grumbels.

Do you think the reason we don't win championships is because of "Minnesota Nice?" I am for free education and health care. That way I won't have to pay taxes.

It's interesting that meteorologists cannot predict with certainty what the weather will be in 30 days, but they are certain that in 30 years if you go outside, you will melt.

People want equality. Equal to what? Income, athletics, music, science or physical features? We can never be equal. Viva la difference!

Last thought: You can say holy mackerel and deader than a mackerel. How can you be deader? You're dead and cannot be more dead. Are you a holy mackerel and then a dead mackerel, or are you dead and then become holy?

With the cold and snow, you can tell I have way too much time to think. Waiting for warmer weather so I can get a life.

Bill Preuss  
Luverne

E-mail: editor@star-herald.com Web site: star-herald.com  
Phone: 507-283-2333 Fax: 507-283-2335

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