

# OPINION

## EDITORIAL

# Spring cleaning goes beyond the flood

Receding flood waters will leave behind an unsightly mess — branches, bottles, plastic wrap, barrels, hazardous materials, you name it. The melting snow in your neighborhood will expose plenty of refuse, too — trash, accumulated junk, rusty bikes, leftover bricks and boards.

The first you can blame on Mother Nature. The second you cannot.

Unfortunately, some people let their properties reach such a sad state of affairs that their negligence devalues adjacent properties and lowers the overall appeal of a neighborhood and community.

The issue goes beyond aesthetics and, in fact, is a public health concern. Tall grasses give rodents a place to hide, noxious weeds spread, abandoned tires attract mosquitoes, pet feces create a stink. Yuck all the way around.

Neighbors justifiably complain. The city, village, township or county

become involved when the situation gets bad enough.

We can do better. This spring, each and every resident should take a long, hard look around their properties. Get rid of the junk. Remove the debris. Eliminate the weeds and invasive species. Gather your household hazardous materials and take them to the local dropoff center; collections days are drawing near.

Then offer to help a neighbor do the same. Sometimes people need a hand but are too proud to ask.

And if you're one of the few whose lawns already look like a golf course, here's a challenge for you: "Adopt" a park, highway or riverbank in your community. Call the local Public Works or the state Department of Natural Resources and find out when they might be looking for volunteers.

Spring cleaning will be intense this year. Let's make the most of it.



Steve Gardiner / RiverTown Multimedia

Driftwood and trash wash up on the eastern banks of Lake Pepin on March 30.

## LETTERS

### School property taxes are beyond burdensome

One of the rites of spring is the arrival of the annual property tax statement.

We all know about property taxes: one of the most regressive and unfair taxes that exists. It is not based on anyone's ability to pay, encourages people to not improve their property, and in reality the valuations bear little resemblance to what a property is really worth.

The property tax is long past being due for elimination by a sales tax, but since counties can "count on" stable, regular revenue from a property tax (versus a sales tax which will have fluctuating revenue), it will continue to exist. Our state is always beholden to county lobbying and influence and will do nothing for taxpayers.

That said, the bill is coming due for the Goodhue school referendum. Our property tax is increasing almost 45 percent and over \$800 for the year. Almost an entire monthly Social Security check. An amount that will require, for many, a loan to pay.

Did the school need this money? Somewhat questionable, but a good cause. However, funding school district wish lists is a cause that is increasingly burdensome to homeowners, especially young homeowners just starting out and elderly retired homeowners.

There is a better way with a sales tax, but inertia in the legislative system will continue to exploit the property tax.

Allan and Gaye Larson  
Red Wing  
(Goodhue school district)

### Don't miss the READ ALOUD

The Friends of the Red Wing Library are sponsoring their third annual READ ALOUD at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 20, downstairs at the library.

It will be a time for adult poetry lovers in this area to come and share

old time favorite poems or even lines they've written themselves.

I'm really looking forward to it. The READ ALOUD is always a treat!

Barb Betcher  
Red Wing

### With help, you can take on Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is on the rise, but there is a lot you can do for yourself to prevent or delay its onset.

I just completed a free class called "I Can Prevent Diabetes" sponsored by the University of Minnesota and taught by a U of M Extension educator. Taking this yearlong class was one of the best things I've ever done for myself! It's designed for people with pre-diabetes who are at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes.

There is no dieting. We set goals for ourselves and we learned how to eat healthier meals with lots of vegetables and easy on carbs and sugars. Moderate exercise is important too.

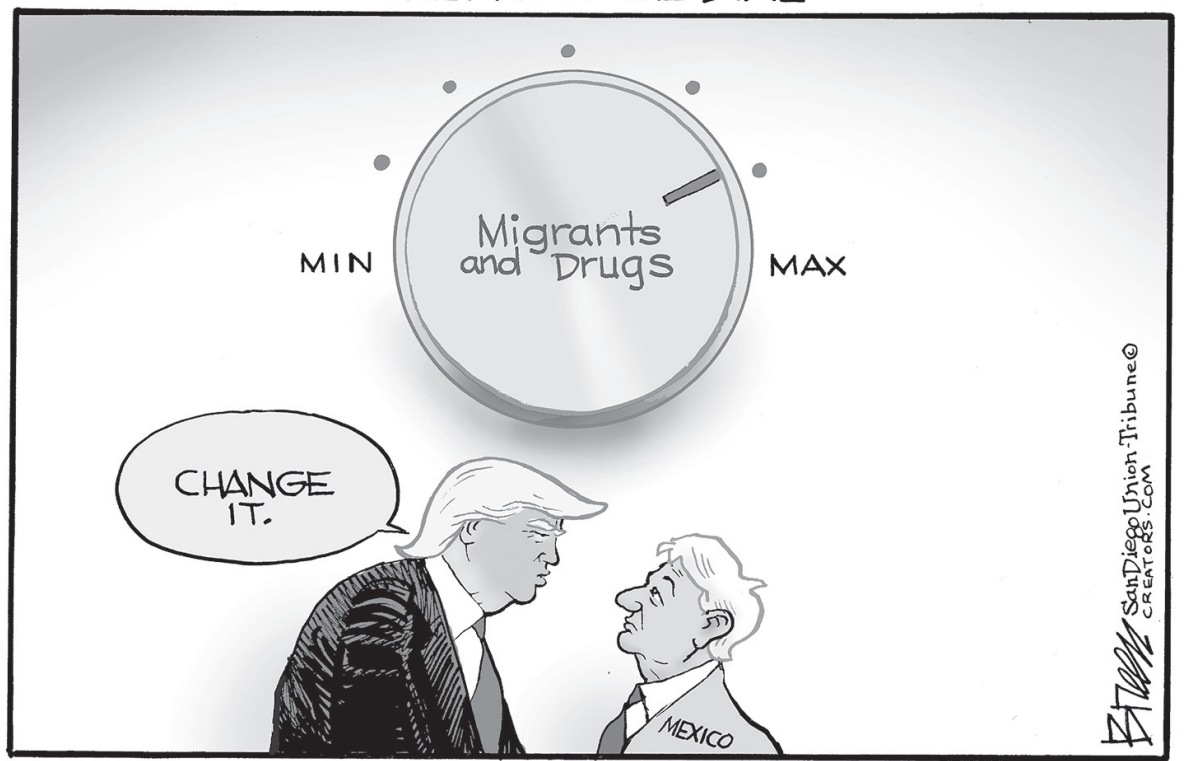
Initially, I didn't need to lose a lot of weight, but I lost 7 percent of my starting weight and my blood glucose level has gone down to a normal range.

Since more than 1 in 3 American adults has pre-diabetes and 9 out of 10 people don't even know they have it, we need to start living healthier. Once a person gets diabetes, with all its associated health problems, it doesn't go away. Just a 5 percent to 7 percent weight loss can lower your risk of getting Type 2 diabetes. I recommend this class for everyone who is at risk for Type 2 diabetes, for adults and a growing number of teens and children.

The next class begins April 30 in Zumbrota. For more information contact SNAP-Ed Educator Kanko Akakpovi at 507-332-5948 or kakakpov@umn.edu.

Nancy Pettman  
Red Wing

## THE ART OF THE DIAL



San Diego Union-Tribune ©

## VIEWPOINT: ASK THE CHIEF

# Removing road debris is team effort

**Q:** I have been driving past a front bumper that must have fallen off from a crash on Tyler Road South for several months. Who is responsible for cleaning up after a car crash?



**ROGER POHLMAN**  
Red Wing Police Department

A: Depending on the severity of the crash, this could fall to several entities (police, fire, EMS, public works, and tow company) being responsible for crash site cleanup. Working as a team and dependent on the debris at the crash site, they will determine who is responsible for site cleanup.

Towing companies are responsible for removing vehicles and vehicle parts from the scene and they do an excellent job.

The Fire/EMS Department is

responsible for initial HAZMAT response and containment, which may consist of oil, gas, chemicals, medical waste and other associated duties at the scene.

Public Works may be requested by fire or police for additional cleanup with their equipment.

In Red Wing, when you see debris on the roadways or in the ditch that may pose as a hazard/obstruction, you can report it by using the Your Gov app — <https://www.red-wing.org/faq.aspx?qid=140> — or calling the police at 651-385-3155.

Your Gov app also allows you to track your debris report via the web page. You can view the issues you have submitted by selecting the "My Requests" button in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. To view other requests, select "All Requests" in the upper right-hand corner. Blue dots on the map represent where different issues have been reported and the issue that is currently

being viewed will have an orange halo surrounding it.

Citizens can check on their submitted issues by logging in to see what activity is assigned to the issue, when the issue was closed, and any notes city staff have submitted regarding the issue.

Debris in the roadway or on/in the berms/ditches also come from debris falling from moving vehicles and the motor vehicle operator not being aware that it fell off or not wanting to pay a disposal fee and making the decision to dump it, which could fall under the littering statute.

### Resources

1. Minnesota DOT Traffic Incident Management Recommended Operational Guidelines. Located online at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/tmc/documents/Freeway%20Incident%20Management.pdf>
2. Your Gov App: <https://www.red-wing.org/faq.aspx?qid=140>

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/169.42>

3. Minnesota State Statutes: 169.42 LITTERING; DROPPING OBJECT ON VEHICLE; MISDEMEANOR. Located online at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/169.42>

4. Minnesota State Statutes: 168B.035 TOWING AUTHORIZED. Located online at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/168B.035>

**"Ask The Chief" allows readers access to useful information about law enforcement issues in Red Wing. This communication tool has been developed to enhance community policing efforts by providing residents and visitors with the opportunity to ask questions about local laws, programs and the department in general.**

**Submit your question to askthe.policechief@ci.red-wing.mn.us.**

**Generally one answer a week is posted RWP social media sites and printed in the Red Wing Republican Eagle.**



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### NEWSROOM

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**Reader letters and viewpoints** - The Red Wing Republican Eagle welcomes readers' letter and viewpoint submissions. If you wish to submit a letter, please limit it to 350 words or less. At the editor's discretion, the Eagle may consider publishing longer submissions as viewpoints, which generally are limited to 650 words.

Letter and viewpoint submissions must be signed and contain your name, address, email and phone number for verification purposes. Email your submission to: [editor@republican-eagle.com](mailto:editor@republican-eagle.com). You can send a letter or viewpoint submission to: Red Wing Republican Eagle, PO Box 15, Red Wing, MN 55066.

Reader submissions must be received no later than Noon Monday to be considered for publication in the following Wednesday's edition and 5 p.m. Wednesday for publication in the weekend paper. For details, call 651-388-8235.

**Comment** - Want to sound off on an important issue, ask a question, or praise someone for a deed that has benefited you or your neighbors? Feel free to email [editor@republican-eagle.com](mailto:editor@republican-eagle.com). Go to [www.republican-eagle.com](http://www.republican-eagle.com), click "Opinion," and follow the link to send a letter to the editor.

