

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

### OUR VIEWS

# Thank you to area dispatchers

**A**lmost every incident our law enforcement officers, firefighters and EMTs respond to originates with a phone call taken by a dispatcher.

While some calls are minor, other calls deal with life-and-death situations and involve the response of multiple agencies. During stressful moments, these dispatchers utilize patience, compassion and professionalism to communicate with those on the other end of the phone and to help organize the responders.

As part of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, we recognize the role dispatchers play in the public safety community in our area. You may not be on the front lines like our officers, deputies and EMTs, but your role is a critical part of the response.

We thank you for your dedication to your jobs and the community, and we encourage others to thank you as well this week.

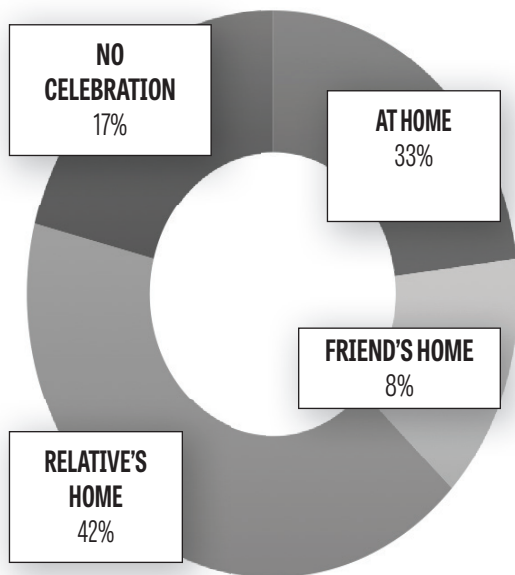
First responders in the community could not do their jobs as well without the role of the dispatchers.

### HOW TO SEND A LETTER

Send letters via mail to: Letters to the Editor, Fergus Falls Daily Journal, 914 E. Channing Ave., Fergus Falls, MN 56537, or via email to [letters@fergusfallsjournal.com](mailto:letters@fergusfallsjournal.com). Letters cannot exceed 500 words. They cannot have more than two authors. Letters must include address and telephone number for verification purposes — only your name and city of residence will be printed. Each author may write one letter per calendar week. Letters are published as soon as space allows. To request a guest column, contact Zach Stich at 739-7030.

### ONLINE POLL

Where do you celebrate Easter?



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# Reminiscing on barbershop harmony

**W**hen you think of barbershop singing, what comes to mind? Do you see a small group of elderly men in red striped vests with handlebar mustaches and sappy smiles singing silly songs in four-part harmony? That may be the way the Barbershop Harmony Society started and what we may recall when we take a backward glance, but barbershop has changed! One of the few truly American music genres. According to Wikipedia "it originated in the late 1800s and early 1900s as a hybrid of both black and white expressive cultural forms of music in America. The African-American influence is sometimes overlooked, although these quartets had a very formative role in the development of this style of singing." My understanding is that men sang together in barbershops partly because they didn't have radios to listen to and there was apparently only so much gossip and politics to discuss. They began singing together to entertain themselves. Popularity of the style faded in the 1920s and was revived in the mid-20th century with help from an organization that called themselves the Society for Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBQS), founded in 1938. The organization is now known as the Barbershop Harmony Society.

While the striped vests and handlebar mustaches have joined the dodo bird in extinction (except when the men dress up in costumes for reminiscent programs), but the four-part harmony has survived. An entire generation of barbershop singers has risen to present the art as a finely tuned competitive-music form which has resulted in a delightful American style with a professional level of entertainment. Barbershop is now an international organization with groups performing and competing around the world! If you go to YouTube and type in barbershop quartet, you will experi-

ence absolutely amazing music that is artistic, funny, and overall entertaining. They sing not just traditional tunes, but showtunes, Broadway hits, swing, gospel, jazz, etc. You name it, they sing it, in uniquely barbershop harmony. I have learned to love this music as I listen to our local barbershop organization as they prepare for frequent performances and their annual show. We are blessed to have an accomplished barbershop chorus in our hometown.

Heart O' Lakes Harmony is our local barbershop chorus comprised of men from their mid-20s to their mid-80s. The HOLH chorus is comprised of men from all around the lakes area, reaching from Wheaton to Mahanomen, and from Breckenridge to Wadena. These men travel many miles every Monday night, through sun, rain, hail, and snow, just so they can sing together. I remember one time we drove to Pelican Rapids in a snowstorm only to learn rehearsal was canceled due to severe weather, we didn't get the memo. But I digress... these men love to sing, and they invite other men with a passion for singing to join them. No audition is necessary, a good ear and a love for singing is all that is necessary to join the group.

The HOLH chorus presents its annual performance in Fergus Falls on Friday, April 26 at the Kennedy Secondary School auditorium. Their theme this year is "Everyone in Harmony." They will be singing a variety of songs from "Abide with Me" to the beautiful "Tennessee Waltz", along with all-time favorites like "Edelweiss" and "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing." Included in the show this year will be opportunities for audience participation, which should be a riot.



**SUE WILKEN**  
 A Backward Glance

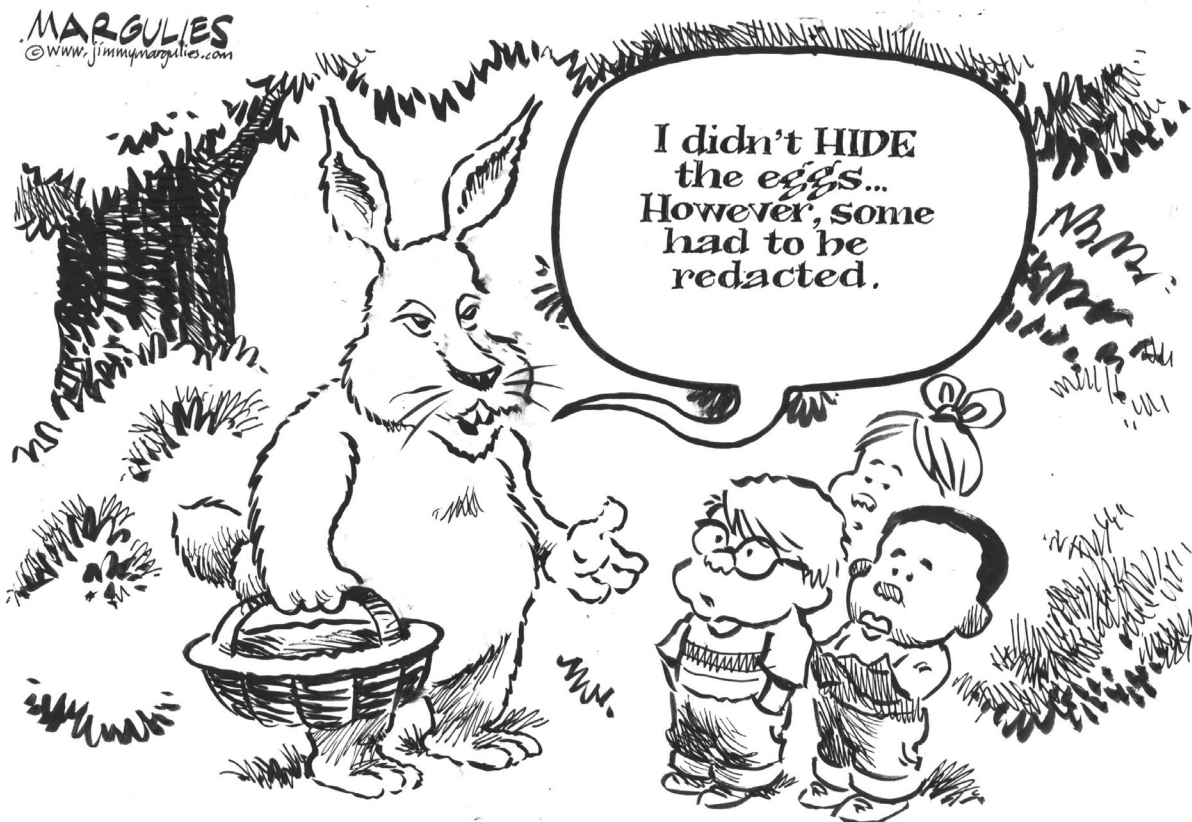
As I have already alluded, barbershop singing has had a resurgence of popularity with the younger set who are motivated both by the love of music and the challenge of competition. The guest quartet for this year's show is Kordal Kombat, a young barbershop quartet based out of central Minnesota. They deliver a fun, high energy performance that comes with a variety of great music and lots of laughs for all ages. They have opened for Tonic-Sol-Fa, competed and won at the Minnesota State Fair, and performed to audiences of over 10,000. They have won numerous competitions including the Land 'O Lakes Collegiate Quartet Championship for several years running. In 2017, they placed 27th in the world in the International Barbershop Quartet Contest! You do not want to miss seeing these young men do what they love to do!

Did you know that barbershop music isn't just for men? Sweet Adelines International, a worldwide organization of female singers has a membership of over 30,000 worldwide. Acapella Express is a chapter of SAI in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Women of all ages and walks of life come together from a 100 miles radius of Fargo Moorhead to share their love for music. Acapella Express will be joining the Heart O' Lakes Harmony chorus as guests in this year's performance of "Everyone in Harmony."

You do not want to miss this show. It's "Everyone in Harmony," with the Heart O' Lakes Harmony Chorus, Kordal Kombat, and Acapella Express, on Friday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m., Kennedy School auditorium. If you can't fit this performance into your schedule, it will be repeated at the Detroit Lakes Community Center auditorium the following evening. I'll be looking for you!

*Sue Wilken is the executive director of A Place To Belong. Her column appears on Thursday.*

### POINT OF THE PEN



# Remembering a trip to Notre Dame Cathedral

**S**itting down at my desk on Monday morning and looking through emails and preparing the week's schedule, I was shocked to see on several websites Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris aflame. I was hoping that the report later would be that the fire had been extinguished with minimal damage and the pieces of the building that were affected were going to be removed anyway in a restoration project. But as reports continued to come in, the cathedral suffered a devastating loss of its spire and roof.

As a Christian, I was disheartened to see a cathedral that was over 900 years old sustain fire and smoke damage. As someone that graduated college with a history degree, I thought about the priceless artwork and architecture that could possibly have been damaged as firefighters doused the flames. You could only pray that no one was injured or killed while battling the flames.

In 2006, I was a part of a group of students that went on a trip to Paris, London and Rome from Minnesota State Community and Technical College. When signing up for the trip/class, I knew that this may be my one opportunity to travel overseas. I was looking forward to seeing several different historic sites including

the Louvre, Normandy Beach, Vatican City, Big Ben and Notre Dame Cathedral.

Although my memory is a little dusty, I do remember much of my visit there. The cathedral was very awe-inspiring as its stained glass saw light pierce through and historic presence gave me the shivers. Knowing significant historic events happened at the cathedral had me reflecting about stepping foot in a religious building that had been around since the 12th century.

There is also a humorous story about a €5 candle and the laughs that came from the guards of a museum toward one of my friends. This made the experience of visiting the cathedral one of the major highlights on a trip that already had its fair share of memorable moments.

Although there is damage to the structure, the people of Paris and the Catholic diocese will recover. During the French Revolution, the cathedral was desecrated as mobs and revolutionaries looked to push back against the elite of the na-

tion. It was only after the Reign of Terror, that the cathedral would be restored and retain its powerful symbolism in Paris.

Several wealthy individuals offered to help pay for the reconstruction of the cathedral. I can only assume that the Catholic Church has decent insurance to help cover damages. What they won't be able to recover is the historic significance that the lost parts of the building held.

So as I woke up the next morning, expecting the worst. I thought I would hear that the cathedral would be burned to the ground. I was happy to hear that they were able to extinguish the fire.

#### Good Friday, Easter

Moving toward Good Friday and Easter, please remember those that have passed as you get together with your families and friends. Stay safe out on the roads if you are traveling, and if you are hosting, pray that everyone that leaves the Easter dinner table gets back to where they came from safely. Have a great Easter holiday.

*Zach Stich is the Managing Editor of The Fergus Falls Daily Journal. His column appears Thursday.*



**ZACH STICH**  
 Banter and Boxscores