



www.steeledodge.com
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

STEELE COUNTY Times

SNAKING INTO NEW BUSINESS

An 8-foot Boa constrictor wraps itself around Barry Benjamin of Owatonna just after it finished eating a 5-pound rabbit at Benjamin's new pet store last Wednesday morning. Benjamin, who has been breeding animals since he 5 years old, recently opened Happy Tails Pet Store in the Medford Outlet Center. See page B1 for a story on Benjamin's new venture.

STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

RIESS PLEADS GUILTY



Lois Riess

Judge hands down life without parole

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

In an extraordinary court hearing that took place in the auditorium of a high school, accused killer Lois Riess admitted her guilt Aug. 11, bringing an end to the nearly 2½ year saga that began outside of Blooming Prairie.

Riess appeared in person with an orange jump suit and handcuffed in the front for the hearing at Kasson-Mantorville High School, a move that came about because of Dodge County's small courtroom and concerns over COVID-19.

SEE RIESS PLEADS, A4

"What I did was an unpardonable crime. Solitude is forever. I feel I deserve this. I will have no reprieve."

Lois Riess
Convicted Murderer



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

With her head buried in her lap, Lois Riess leaves in a sheriff's transport vehicle Aug. 11 from Kasson-Mantorville High School where she pleaded guilty to killing her husband, David, in March 2018 outside of Blooming Prairie. The sheriff's office transported her to the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Shakopee where she will spend the rest of her life. The judge ordered her to life in prison without the chance of parole.

Uniqueness in a COVID election

County's primary turnout at 13%



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

With protective masks in place, Alexis Weinzettl, left, and Sue Rypka go over voter records at the Clinton Falls precinct on Primary Election Day Aug. 11. Like all precincts, Clinton Falls installed Plexiglass for when voters came in to sign in. Clinton Falls also added an extra twist of hanging a clear plastic shower curtain for extra protection. Voter turnout around the county was 13.47% for the primary.

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

It certainly will go down as one for the history books.

Election judges navigated through their first ever COVID-19 primary election on Aug. 11. With face mask in place, Sue Rypka monitored the polling activities at Clinton Falls. And she came up with a rather unique way to keep herself and voters safe while coming out to the polls.

Rypka purchased an inexpensive clear plastic shower curtain to provide protection between the judges and voters. In addition to the curtain, the precinct also had a smaller clear Plexiglass where voters signed in.

"People were laughing at me," Rypka related about her shower curtain invention. "It wasn't a real big investment—\$1 a piece," she said, noting she actually got the idea from watching TV.

But when it comes to safety during a pandemic, it's no laughing matter. "I'm glad we got the equipment to help protect us from the public," said Rypka.

SEE UNIQUENESS IN A COVID, A8

Fair Fest shrinks down, scales back to drive-in event

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

More than a few times last week Steele County Fair manager Scott Kozelka muttered under his breath that putting on a fair is easier than dealing with a condensed event to satisfy people wanting to get their fix of fair food.

After announcing plans a few weeks ago to host a Fair Fest with 20 food vendors and placing them strategically around the fairgrounds to satisfy social distancing requirements due to COVID-19, fair officials ran into a major snag

SEE FAIR FEST, A5

Corky's Classic strikes out against COVID

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

The early bird is usually known to get the worm. But in the case of Corky's Early Bird Softball Classic, well, they're out of luck this year.

Last week organizers of the popular national



SEE CORKY'S CLASSIC, A5

\$1.00 | Volume 129, No. 4



507-583-4431 | bptimes@frontiernet.net

INSIDE

Opinions.....	A2	Riess Murder Case.....	A6	Farm Living.....	B5
Coronavirus Coverage.....	A3	Owatonna Park & Rec.....	A7	Community Calendar.....	B6
Public Safety.....	A4	Hometown Living.....	B1	Public Notices.....	B8
History.....	A5	Owatonna		Classifieds.....	B9
		Schools Section.....	B4		

AREA DEATHS

Gordon Sommer, 85, Owatonna

Serving
Blooming Prairie
and Steele County
since 1893

BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT

BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT: At 12:18 p.m., a hit and run accident resulting in property damage occurred in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S.

RIESS PLEADS: *guilty*

FROM A1

During the short hearing, which was tear-filled at times from both Riess and some of her family members, Riess pleaded guilty to first-degree pre-meditated murder in the death of her husband, David Riess, in March 2018.

After Riess waived her right to a pre-sentence investigation, Judge Jodi Williamson immediately sentenced her to life in prison without the chance of parole. She was remanded into the custody of Dodge County sheriff's deputies to be taken to the Shakopee women's prison where she will spend the rest of her life.

After an agreement between the governors of Minnesota and Florida, it was decided Riess would spend her prison sentence in Minnesota, and not Florida where she killed another person shortly after her husband in 2018.

Riess had been in Florida custody in connection with the murder of Pamela Hutchinson prior to returning to Minnesota on July 3. She had been locked up in the Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna before being taken to Shakopee after last week's hearing.

In court Tuesday, Riess said her husband handed her a loaded firearm on March 11, 2018. They had been fighting, and Lois said David told her to go and kill herself and to "get it right this time." Lois said she had tried to commit suicide in the past, but this time she turned the gun and fired at his heart.

Lois said once she realized David was dead, she laid down alongside him, closed his eyes and covered him in a blanket.

Several family members, including Lois' children, gave victim impact statements at the hearing.

"I will never forgive you that you took a part



Deputies use metal wands for security at the Riess hearing at a Kasson school last week.

of our life that we will never forget," David's mother said through a prepared statement read by an Olmsted County social worker. "When you killed David, you took my heart."

Prior to the judge handing down the sentence, Riess was given the opportunity to speak. She apologized to her husband's friends and family, saying life without her husband is her true sentence and that she should not have killed him.

"What I did was an unpardonable crime," Riess said in court. "Solitude is forever. I feel I deserve this. I will have no reprieve."

As she left court, Riess removed her face mask and turned to her family to mouth words to them with a hand on her heart.

With her head of white hair, Riess garnered national attention as the "fugitive grandma" before she was captured in April 2018 in Texas. She had been in a Florida jail prior to coming back to Minnesota last month.

Turn to Page 6A for more coverage of the Riess murder conviction and sentencing.

CRIME BRIEF

Woman seriously injured after falling from vehicle

A woman was seriously injured after she fell from a vehicle and was dragged for a short distance.

Owatonna Police responded to the area of Cashwise Foods where they found a woman with serious injuries. Officers discovered the woman on State Avenue with blood coming from her forehead and nose, road rash on her right forearm and complaining that her leg was broken.

Mayo Air Ambulance transported her to the hospital.

The victim told police she was at a bar and was trying to get her friend not to drive. She was in the driver's seat trying to turn off the vehicle. The friend got into the driver's seat and took off, dragging the victim with the vehicle.

Shakopee Police located Celes Erickson, 24, of Shakopee. Police say she was intoxicated. After she was transported back to Owatonna, a search warrant was drafted and executed for an evidentiary sample of her blood to determine her alcohol content.

The Steele County Attorney's Office has charged Erickson with two counts of criminal vehicular operation, one causing great bodily harm and the other causing bodily harm.



Celes Erickson

Man arrested after stolen gun recovered

A stolen firearm has been taken off the streets of Owatonna after police stopped a for an equipment violation.

Police arrested Stetson Fox, 33, of Owatonna during the incident on Aug. 11. He has been charged with unlawful possession of a firearm, fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance and possession of marijuana in a motor vehicle.

The incident began to unfold when a patrol officer tried to stop a

vehicle with a headlight out at Interstate 35 and Hoffman Drive. The vehicle did not stop until about a mile later at the 26th Street ramp.



Stetson Fox

When speaking to the officer, the driver identified himself with a name and birthdate. Officers later determined the name was false. During the investigation, the officer detected a strong odor of fresh marijuana coming from the vehicle.

Officers determined Fox had a warrant out of Waseca County. During a search of the vehicle, officers found a small amount of marijuana and a .357 firearm stolen from Ohio.

Fox was transported to the Steele County Detention Center where officers found cocaine inserted into a part of

Fox's body cavity.

Court records show Fox was convicted in Illinois of robbery and ineligible to possess a firearm.

Separate from this case, Fox has also been charged with third-degree sales of a narcotic. This charge is the result of an undercover drug investigation in which Fox allegedly sold cocaine to a confidential reliable informant working with the South Central Drug Investigation Unit.

Man dies while working at Costco site

An early morning accident at the new Costco distribution center in Owatonna has claimed the life of a construction worker.

Owatonna Police responded to Costco at 3601 10th St. SW around 7:31 a.m. Aug. 10 for a report of a man who fell off a lift. The incident took place where the Costco regional distribution center is being built in Owatonna's Industrial Park.

Officers pronounced the victim dead at the scene. He has been identified as George McIntosh, 62, of Waterville.

Police are investigating what led up to the incident.

The Steele County Sheriff's Office, Mayo Ambulance and the Steele County Coroner's Office assisted local police at the scene.

COURT NEWS

Steele County

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Aug. 3 with Judge Carmaine Sturino presiding:

Joshua S. Almendinger, 39, Faribault, previously appeared and was convicted of felony domestic abuse – violation of two or more order for protections with 10 year. The defendant was sentenced to \$81, 63 days in county jail, obtain and maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, psychological evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, domestic abuse evaluation, no possession of firearms and 3 years of supervised probation.

Nicholas M. Balfe, 44, Rochester, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of cocaine or methamphetamine. He was sentenced to \$81, 78 days in county jail, obtain and maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms, 200 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Aug. 3 – 9:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Cole C. Finnegan, 21, Austin, revoked license, \$275; Nathan J. Kehret, 25, Austin, speeding, \$125; Si V. Moo, 20, St. Paul, invalid license, \$175.

MN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Justin W. Bulver, 34, Owatonna, take fish without a license, \$175; Jared L. Evans, 37, New Richland, ATV violation, \$125; Ryan D. Spatenka, 28, Owatonna, ATV violation, \$125.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Heidi J. Anderson, 37, Ellendale, speeding, \$115; Kalin C. Arradondo, 32, Minneapolis, no license, \$175; Cassandra S. Bremer, 19, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Conner J. Carnes, 21, Indianapolis, IN, speeding and possession of marijuana, \$325; Ryan M. Dela Mercedes, 19, South Elgin, IL, speeding, \$135; Nicholas T. Fifield, 37, Chicago, IL, speeding, \$115; Felipe R. Gonzalez, 49, Clara City, registration violation, \$175; Megan R. Jensen, 22, Lakeville, speeding, \$125; James R. Jirik, 59, Kilkenny, vehicle weight violation, \$175; Grace K. Justinak, 19, Shorewood, speeding, \$135; Amber M. Klein, 22, St. Joseph, speeding, \$125; Makayla M. Krein, 19, Mason City, IA, speeding, \$115; Emily A. Maine, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Veronica L. Montes de Oca, 31, Omaha, NE, speeding, \$125; Kristina N. Olson, 36, Princeton, speeding, \$115; Ian A.

Pena, 33, San Marcos, TX, speeding, \$125; Bruce E. Prestegard, 62, Claremont, seat belt, \$100; Arpan Rai, 24, Fargo, ND, speeding and child passenger restraint system violation, \$185; Bailee A. Rasmussen, 31, Farmington, speeding, \$135; Andrew K. Rick, 40, Maple Grove, speeding, \$115; Elle R. Roberts, 31, Albert Lea, speeding, \$115; Adysan N. Schrom, 19, Oceanside, CA, speeding, \$115; Christopher I. Simmons, 51, Cleburne, TX, speeding, \$125; Emmanuel Valdez Medina, 33, Rochester, speeding and no insurance, \$335; Victor A. Van, 34, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Mathew R. Williams, 19, Owatonna, speeding, \$275; Andrew L. Winkelman, 46, Warsaw, speeding, \$115; Tyler J. Worke, 33, Waseca, hands free violation, \$125.

OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Darian M. Bohlman-Reyna, 27, Owatonna, theft, \$254 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Sean R. Gerlach, 19, Medford, seat belt, \$100; Aleesha L. Klindworth, 25, Owatonna, no insurance, \$275; Mark J. Kubat, 46, Owatonna, headlights violation, \$115; Alfonso P. Mendoza, 42, Minneapolis, speeding, \$125; Kader M. Muhumed, 26, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Alex J. Olson, 31, disorderly conduct, \$75 and 41 days in county jail; Mario R. Perez Juarez, 29, Schuyler, NE, invalid license and no insurance, \$375; Jamari D. Roland, 27, St. Louis

Park, speeding, \$215; Hope K. Rosenquist, 33, New Richland, speeding, \$125; Oscar J. Sletten, 48, Owatonna, unsafe passing, \$125; David C. Swenson, 40, Owatonna, stop sign, \$125; Linda L. Torres, 27, Owatonna, speeding and invalid license, \$225; Elizabeth A. Vierling, 40, Owatonna, permit offense, \$115; Scott R. Wilson, 36, Faribault, disorderly conduct, \$125, substance abuse subtle screening inventory and 1 year of supervised probation.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Darian M. Bohlman-Reyna, 27, Owatonna, theft, \$75 and 1 year of supervised probation; Jessica L. Gregory, 18, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; Brady S. Heaney, 24, Owatonna, careless driving, \$175; Christopher P. Judd, 33, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Salina P. Nra Xiong, 23, Neenah, WI, speeding, \$115; Shane P. Phelps, 29, Minneapolis, speeding, \$125; Timothy P. Plank, 48, San Antonio, TX, speeding, \$115; Jason S. Ranslow, 43, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Jack J. Sande, 16, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Jonathan J. Tattersall, 18, Elko New Market, speeding, \$135; Kaw P. Thaw, 22, St. Paul, speeding, \$215; Mario A. Torres, 55, Faribault, invalid license, \$175; Mackie F. Zabinski, 19, Minneapolis, speeding, \$115.

ARRESTS

Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE
Prentiss Joseph Boyd,

36, arrested at 4:55 p.m. Aug. 10, felony theft of a motor vehicle, held for court.
Kenyetta Elwoods, 52, arrested at 2:58 a.m. Aug. 11, felony order for protection violation, damage to property and burglary, held for court.
Cody Lane Luchi, 23, arrested at 10 p.m. Aug. 13, probation violation warrants arrest, body only.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Luiz Antonio Matias Mendez, 19, arrested at 9:09 p.m. Aug. 9, DWI, open bottle and no license, held for court.

COURT NEWS

Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Aug. 2 – 9:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Jalynn N. Colligan, 16, Stewartville, speeding, \$220; Justin J. Harrington, 42, Windom, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$320 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without adjudication; Brooke E. Kline, 22, Winona, speeding, \$220; Leibert Ortiz, 50, Dodge Center, cancelled license, \$280; Alexander L. Paulson, 22, West Concord, speeding, \$220; Cristina D. Reyes, 43, Dodge Center, speeding, \$140; Logan C. Sailor, 20, Conger, speeding,

stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without adjudication.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mindy M. Blaesser, 41, Blaine, speeding, \$130; Diego Perez, 23, Kasson, domestic abuse no contact order violation, \$380, 3 days in county jail, domestic abuse evaluation and 2 years of supervised probation; Chase L. Spatenka, 19, Dodge Center, hands free violation, \$130.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Jilani M. Bochane, 28, Chicago, IL, speeding, \$130; Jamie J. Fritz, 40, Byron, speeding, \$120; Tyler J. Gephart, 43, Brandon, SD, speeding, \$130; Andrew A. Henden, 38, Rochester, speeding, \$140; Jeffrey A. Herrley, 50, Dodge Center, speeding, \$120; Austin M. Lewis, 23, Geneva, IL, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring; Michael D. Madtson, 26, Dodge Center, speeding, \$130; Sofia S. Meirick, 18, Kasson, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without adjudication; Chloe A. Michael-Teschendorf, 22, Mapleton, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without adjudication; Edward J. Shilts, 24, Ellsworth, WI, speeding, \$130.

FEDERATED INSURANCE

It's Our Business to Protect Yours

Visit

federatedinsurance.com

for COVID-19 resources.

LIFE IN PRISON FOR RIESS

School turns into courtroom for Riess case

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Never before in the history of Dodge County has a high profile case taken place outside of the courtroom. But that's exactly what happened last week when killer Lois Riess offered her guilty plea and received a life sentence.

Riess appeared in the auditorium of Kasson-Mantorville High School in what would end up being her last time in public. After the hearing, deputies immediately escorted her off to the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Shakopee where she will serve her life sentence without the chance of parole.

The hearing was moved to the school because of concerns over COVID-19, according to Sheriff Scott Rose. He said Dodge County's courtroom is simply too small to accommodate such a high profile case and then add social distancing on top of everything else.

Rose pointed out that Olmsted County has utilized up to 2½ courtrooms for cases in order to obtain proper social distancing. "The Judicial Branch has very specific COVID social distancing guidelines for courthouses," he said.

Dodge County, Rose said, had no idea what

to expect for the number of people attending Riess' hearing. There were about 50 people at the hearing, including court personnel, media and family members. Rose said there were likely fewer people than what could have been because the hearing was considered pre-trial. "That didn't draw a lot of attention to the public," he noted.

A pre-trial quickly turning into a plea hearing and wrapped into a sentencing with victim impact statements, which all happened with the Riess case last week, is highly unusual for the courts, Rose said. "I've never heard of that happening before," he said. "I didn't even know you could do it all in one day."

Riess waived her right to a pre-sentence investigation, which typically comes after a plea and before sentencing. The move allowed for Judge Jodi Williamson to sentence her right away, bringing an end to the nearly 2½-year-old case.

"The courts worked very well with us and the Attorney General's office to facilitate so it could be done in a day," said Rose. He noted the school's performing arts center was the only building big enough in the county to handle the hearing.

Sheriff Rose said his

office utilized 14 deputies to provide security in the highly unusual location for court. The security force included 10 regular deputies and four posse members.

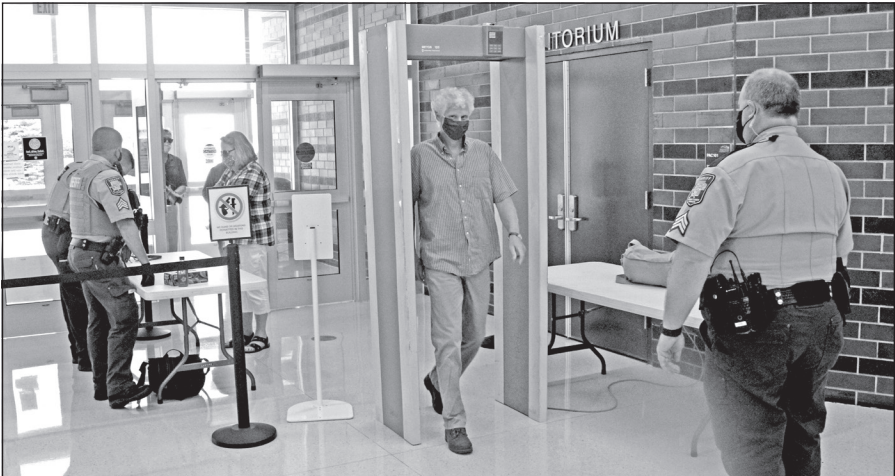
The sheriff's office brought in a mobile incident command vehicle, which was staffed with dispatchers who relayed information to the dispatch center in Mantorville. Rose said the portable radios used by officers do not work large facilities, creating the need for a makeshift mobile center outside of the school to relay radio transmissions.

Rose said a walk through metal detector was brought inside the school to utilize for security of visitors to the court hearing. Deputies also utilized metal detector wands for screening purposes.

Sgt. Rob Hovland coordinated the sheriff's response at the hearing. Hovland, who took over courthouse security in January, admitted the set up at the school was "unusual for all of us." He is used to dealing with security in a more controlled environment at the courthouse.

Asked about the challenges they faced, Hovland said, "It's not a building we typically deal with. It's a larger venue we have to try and secure."

The garage located



STAFF PHOTOS BY RICK BUSSLER

Top: Dodge County sheriff's deputies provide security inside Kasson-Mantorville High School Aug. 11 for the Lois Riess murder hearing. **Bottom:** The sheriff's office brought in an incident command unit and stationed it outside the auditorium where Riess appeared in court.



"It went very smoothly considering we were doing it (security) in a school."

Sheriff Scott Rose
Dodge County

behind the stage was used for deputies to drive Riess into the school rather than parade her outside in front of people. "For security reasons, we had transport drive into the garage (with Lois)," Rose said, noting Riess was never outside. "We were

trying to avoid any problems or issues," he added.

While there were no threats or perceived safety concerns, Rose admits he didn't know what to expect for the hearing. "We didn't know how family was going to react," Rose

said. "You have to be prepared for anything."

Rose was happy with how well everything took place. "It went very smoothly considering we were doing it in a school," he said. "It went off without a hitch, and it went as well as anyone could have expected."

The sheriff, who has been involved in law enforcement since 1996, says this is the highest profile case he has ever encountered in Dodge County.

Family members deliver emotional impact statements

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

More than two years after the murder, family members finally got a glimpse into what happened to David Riess in March 2018 inside his Blooming Prairie home.

Part of the frustration with the Lois Riess murder case has been that investigators have never been allowed to share any details of what happened with family members, Sheriff Scott Rose said. He noted last week's hearing was the first time family members heard exactly what took place.

Victim impact statements are typically written and presented in court after family members get details about the crime, but as Rose pointed out that did not happen in this case. Rose noted that no probable cause statements had ever been released regarding the Riess murder.

Even though they did not know details going into last week's hearing, four family members

gave victim impact statements.

"When you killed David, you took my heart," David's mother, Darlene Riess, said in a statement read by an Olmsted County social worker. "David was the family's ray of sunshine. I will never forgive you. You took a part of our life that we will never forget."

David's sister Cindy Sleeper told the court she couldn't figure out how Lois could kill David, who a year and a half before his death saved his wife's life. "Our family is fractured so a cold-blooded murderer could do her gambling habit," Sleeper said.

The couple's oldest son, Bill Riess, said he didn't care what his mother said happened that night. "I don't care how many times you apologize," he said. "You stole something from us."

Bill Riess pointed out how this has devastated the family. "The hurt

you caused my kids, your grandkids, they love you so much," he said. "They do not deserve this at all. It's so selfish. You have left us with a mess and a burden," he added.

In closing, Bill told his mother, "It will take a lot for me to talk or see you ever again."

The final statement came from the couple's daughter, Bria Riess, who was the most visibly emotional as she cried through most of her comments. "Losing my dad at the hands of my mom is something I will never be able to process," she said. "I cycle between anger, regret and sadness. I can never understand how something like this could happen," she said.

Bria concluded by saying, "I miss my dad more than words can describe, but I have to allow for forgiveness in my heart, because that's what he would have wanted."



David Riess

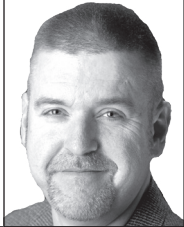
Thanks to everyone who helped on Riess case

I would be remiss if I didn't take a few minutes to thank everyone that helped with the Lois Riess case. This was a challenging and unique case for us for many reasons; no prior contact with family, the second homicide in Florida, and the multiple agencies involved – and then throw COVID into the mix.

We need to thank the following agencies for all their great work and help with this case:

- Blooming Prairie Police Department
- Steele County Sheriff's Office
- Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
- Iowa Criminal Investigation Division
- U.S. Marshals
- Lee County Sheriff's Office in Florida
- South Padre Island Police Department
- Minnesota Assistant Attorney General Matt Frank

Our investigators really did a great job with this case and put an incredible amount



Behind The Badge
SHERIFF SCOTT ROSE

of time and energy into finding her. Investigator Ben Bohle was lead on this case and did an absolutely outstanding job, as recognized last week in court by the Assistant Attorney General Matt Franke. Investigations Captain Jeff Brumfield also worked day and night to help follow leads from all over the country along with BCA Agent Mark Peterson. Investigator Bob Morris also assisted throughout as well. Fortunately, we were able to locate her before anyone else got hurt because of the people and agencies listed above.

We also have to give credit to our friends

in the media – local, state, and national for your coverage of this case. The media played a big part in helping us apprehend Mrs. Riess as well.

This family lost their father, brother, and uncle at the hands of their mother, sister, and aunt. Their grandkids have essentially lost both their grandfather and grandmother – grandkids that spent a great deal of time with Lois and David at their home in Blooming Prairie. The community of Blooming Prairie also lost a valued business, and friends of many.

While justice was served, there were no winners. We just hope that the media is respectful of this family's privacy during this time and gives them some space so they can continue their grieving and healing process.

Scott Rose is the Dodge County Sheriff whose agency led the investigation in the Lois Riess murder case.

2018

2020

TIMELINE OF LOIS RIESS MURDER CASE

2018

2019

2020

March 23, 2018: The body of David Riess was found in his home after police do a welfare check.

March 27, 2018: Warrant issued in Dodge County for theft against Lois Riess, accused of stealing money from her dead husband. Authorities reveal Lois is a person of interest in David's death.

April 2, 2018: Tess Koster of Blooming Prairie tells a harrowing story of coming face to face with Lois Riess in Florida. Koster's information provided police with the first solid lead of Riess' whereabouts since David's murder.

April 9, 2018: Pamela Hutchinson of Bradenton, Fla. found murdered in Fort Myers Beach. She suffered fatal gunshot wounds.

April 13, 2018: Authorities in Lee County Florida announce Lois Riess has been charged in Hutchinson's murder. A nationwide manhunt is launched to find Riess.

April 19, 2018: U.S. Marshals capture Lois Riess in South Padre Island, Texas. She is sent back to Florida to face charges in the Hutchinson murder.

April 20, 2018: Authorities execute a search warrant on Lois Riess' motel room and find two hand guns believed to be used in both murders.



February 2019: Minnesota Attorney General's Office takes over prosecution of the Riess homicide for Dodge County.

May 2019: A grand jury is convened in Dodge County and indicts Lois Riess on first-degree murder charges for killing her husband.

Dec. 17, 2019: Lois Riess pleads guilty to killing Pamela Hutchinson in Florida. Officials in Florida agreed to drop the death penalty against Riess.

2020

March: The COVID-19 pandemic hits delaying the return of Lois Riess to Minnesota to face murder charges.

July 3: Dodge County deputies bring Lois Riess back to Minnesota from Florida. She is locked up in the Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna.

Aug. 11: Lois Riess pleads guilty to first-degree pre-meditated murder for killing her husband. Judge hands down life in prison without parole sentence. She will spend the rest of her life in the Minnesota prison system in Shakopee.

