

Why the Snitch didn't steal Christmas

Every Whom in Sauk Centre liked Christmas a lot, But the Snitch, who lived north of Sauk Centre, did not. Do not get him wrong; he did love the season, But right after October, it just felt like treason. It could be, perhaps, that the stores wanted money, Or the good Lord in heaven thought the timing was funny, But whatever the reason, be it bad joke or cash, The Snitch stood in November, talking some trash. For he knew, every Whom in Sauk Centre below, Was throwing out pumpkins underneath mistletoe. "And, they're hanging their stockings," he snarled in dismay. "Thanksgiving is still, what, a half-month away?" Then he growled, with his Snitch-knuckles nervously cracking, "I must stop this Christmas decoration unpacking! For tomorrow I know, all those Whom churls and dandies, Who aren't even finished with Halloween candies, Will wake bright and early, get Christmas bells chiming, And sing Christmas carols, regardless of timing! The songs aren't bad, but when Christmastime comes, They'll be so overplayed I could bite off my thumbs. But they'll sing, and they'll sing, And they'll sing, sing, sing, sing!" The more the Snitch thought of this Whom-Christmas song, The more the Snitch thought, "No, the start date's all wrong! We need to have space to think of Thanksgiving, A time for our families, both past and the living; But no, they get Christmas's influence growing,



by Ben Sonnek
Ultra Sonnek

And they can't seem to wait for it to start snowing! Why, for over two decades it's been quite a chore, I must find a way to stop early décor!" At that point, however, the Snitch did remember, That snow in these parts wasn't just in December. There'd already been snow in last October's midst. Our weatherman's bonkers, if you get my gist. The Snitch pondered this, and he also thought twice About lands north of us – some now covered in ice. While wreaths in November may seem like the worst, Minnesota seems happy to decorate first. So the Snitch, with his Snitch-feet ice cold on the ground, Stood puzzling and puzzling, "Why's it all turned around? The snow's out of schedule! It came much too soon! It came without thought for the phase of the moon!" He puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was dead, Then the Snitch slapped himself upside of his head. "Who cares?" said the Snitch. "I can give it a rest; No need to put transgressors under arrest. There's no mandate for me to get my decorations, Nor hold it against all my friends and relations. Nowadays, Advent and Christmas go fast; It's those, not the early commercials, that last. As for me, I'll hold off for a fortnight or more, And if I hear that music, I'll merely ignore." What happened then? In Sauk Centre they say, The Snitch loosed a burp he'd been holding all day, And now that his gut didn't have so much gas, He decided to let this whole Christmas thing pass. "Alright," said the Snitch, "I'll go home and stay calm, But if they sing 'Jingle Bells,' I'll break out the napalm."

Harvesting underway, program improves jail costs



Commissioner's Corner
by Commissioner Steve Notch

"Rain, rain, go away, come again another day," seems to be what everyone was thinking the last few months. As our farmers continue to struggle to bring in the harvest, let's remember to give them the courtesy of a little more patience as they travel from field to field and to put up with less than ideal road conditions to travel on. As kids, most of us didn't mind getting a little dirty in the mud occasionally, but it seems as we get older, we are less apt to deal with it in the same jovial manner. I think most farmers would agree they don't like it either, as they need to clean up all their equipment when they are done, and everything is usually frozen by then. Lastly, that ground is their precious topsoil that they would rather have stay on the field versus on the road where it is lost forever. As the County looks at needing to either remodel the existing jail or build a new jail within the next five to 10 years, I thought I would expound on some of the things our jail and correctional staff must deal with on a regular basis, things that most of us are not even aware are happening. We see the headlines in the paper on people being arrested or the crimes being committed, but that is as far as most of us go with these headlines. There is a lengthy process that goes on after an arrest is made, involving a lot of staff time and expense with really no reimbursement or payback to the County for these efforts, except for hoping the person or persons do not offend again. The following jail statistics are from 2018:

- 7,132 people were booked in jail
- 5,280 of these inmates required some form of medication
- 76% of the inmates were male and 24% were female
- The average daily jail population was 170 inmates
- The average inmate stay was six days

Because of the high number of inmates requiring some sort of medical care, Stearns County, along with CentraCare, Central MN Mental Health Center, St. Cloud Police Department and Mayo Clinic Ambulance, created a Community Action Team. The team's main goals were to cut down on emergency room visits and jail bookings by identifying individuals who were frequently picked up and brought to either facility mainly to be reminded to take their medications or to refill their prescriptions. Stearns County Human Services calculated the cost of one individual to the County and CentraCare prior to starting the program in December 2017 through December 2018 at \$24,373. From December 2018 through May 2019, the cost went to \$0. Stearns County's Community Corrections Division has seen positive results from six clients in the first year, which included:

- Four of six were homeless in 2017, with five of the six in some sort of housing a year later. The remaining person ended up serving jail time for their offenses.
- Five of the six were unmedicated and received intervention by the team. Five of the six were receiving medication management to make sure they kept up on their medications.
- An average client spent 15 days in detox prior to intervention and zero days after the intervention.
- Prior to being assisted by the Community Action Team, individuals had 103 police contacts, and that dropped down to 28 after the intervention started.
- These individuals averaged 331 days in jail prior to and 308 after intervention. These numbers don't seem as good, but one individual had a 104-day sentence at the end of the year review and another had a pending 111-day civil commitment which skewed the numbers. But at a cost of \$212/bed per day, dropping 23 days equals \$4,876, which also means a savings to county taxpayers.

This partnership between these entities will hopefully make change happen that will benefit all of us in the long run. Without these organizations working together, the costs to all of us and our communities will continue to rise. One could say the St. Cloud Area is the bigger cost driver, but it doesn't necessarily work that way. To put it in perspective, if three individuals in western Stearns County were picked up, it would be equivalent to 47 out of the City of St. Cloud and surrounding area. Trying to keep these individuals that need some sort of medicine management out of the legal system or emergency rooms can yield long term savings to all of us. If anyone would like to learn more about the Community Action Team or would like to talk to a member of this team, please contact Becky Bales Cramlet at (320) 656-6404. If you'd like to contact me, I can be reached at (320) 248-3605 or (320) 836-2199.

Gales of November came early

We missed it by a couple days. When Don and I arrived in Duluth Oct. 23, Canal Park was getting back to normal after a strong storm had closed it two days prior.

For a number of years, we have gone to Duluth for a few days in September, but it was delayed this year. As the day for our visit drew near, we watched in fascination as a storm was brewing with high winds and up to 24-foot waves forecast by the local television stations. Unfortunately, there was no way we could reschedule and get there to experience it.

Odd as it might seem, I always thought it would be cool to be in Duluth during a storm. You would want to stay at a safe distance, obviously, but the sheer power of this lake fascinates me. This was a legit storm, and no one was messing around. Even the big ships were coming in off the lake to find safety. When I saw the 24-foot wave warnings, I looked up the Edmund Fitzgerald, which went down in a similar storm on its way to Detroit.

That day, Nov. 10, 1975, a ship that was not far from the Edmund Fitzgerald reported winds gusting to 80 mph (70 knots) and waves between 15-18 feet an hour and a half before the last communication from the Fitzgerald. Later, the waves would reach 35 feet, according to some estimates.

On Lake Superior, October and November is storm time. Gordon Lightfoot immortalized the event with his song, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald." The lyrics might seem familiar.

"The lake, it is said, never gives up her dead When the skies of November turn gloomy With a load of iron ore twenty-six thousand tons more Than the Edmund Fitzgerald weighed empty."

The eerie song gives me goosebumps every time I hear it and think of the men on board that ship. While in Duluth, we checked out the Fitzgerald exhibit at the Canal Park Maritime Visitors Center. A video show the bios and photos of the men lost in that November storm.

It was a bit gloomy during our stay and a little weird.



by Diane Leukam
Random Reflections

We walked all around Canal Park and had the place pretty much to ourselves. Behind our hotel, we walked along the beach which had been ravaged by waves just a few days earlier.

We watched a few ships come and go; one of them, the Paul R. Tregurtha, we have seen a few times. She (for some reason, ships are 'shes' even if they have male names) is the longest on the Great Lakes at 1,013 feet and can carry 71,000 tons of coal. In 1975, the Fitzgerald was the largest on the lakes at 729 feet and 26,000 tons.

Superior is so massive that it is hard to comprehend. It covers 31,700 square miles and is more than 1,300 feet at its deepest. It holds almost 3,000 cubic miles of water and contains 10% of the world's fresh water.

It is a wondrous thing, but when the gales of November – or October – come, it can spell disaster even for the biggest of ships. In fact, the lake can be deadly at any time.

A Sauk Centre lady who grew up near the north shore put it quite simply: "You don't mess with it."

For us, Duluth is always an option for a couple of days away. Just three hours from home, we have the largest freshwater lake in the world and it begs a visit. It's kind of like the old saying, "It's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there!"

Back home, I couldn't be more proud as we celebrate Veterans Day. Here in Sauk Centre, we have such a strong veteran influence with the American Legion, VFW, the auxiliaries, the National Guard Armory and the Eagle's Nest.

Be sure to read all our Veterans Day stories, both in the Sauk Centre Herald and in our special section which is inserted in this paper. If you are a veteran, or the family of a veteran, thank you for your service and the sacrifices you have made for our country. God bless you and God bless America!

Starved

Well, I hate to say this, but we had a close call on Sunday. It all started out with a family who wanted to meet me at the funeral home early Sunday morning.

This part of the story was just fine. I was able to meet the family and get back to pick up the girls to get them to Sunday school and get myself there to fulfill my duties as the Sunday school librarian. Mark also had to work early that day, and the girls knew to be ready when I came back to pick them up. We got to church and went our separate ways, me making a pit-stop for a cup of coffee and a little treat from the coffee fellowship.

The hour passed, and the girls met me in the library before we made our way into church. They immediately spotted my coffee cup and the crumbs on my napkin and proceeded to tell me they were starving and they



by Sara Thompson
At the Centre of it

were never going to survive without something to eat. I didn't know what to tell them; they are perfectly capable of making their own breakfast, and I wasn't sure why they didn't eat before we left for church. But, in my mind, it was a good lesson that part of them getting ready in the morning was to make sure they ate something. This isn't a new concept for them, believe me, but this time it seemed to be all my fault.

As we found our usual seats and waited for the service to start, the dramatics really began. We play a lot of hangman when we are waiting, so when Hazel drew out the spaces and asked me to start guessing, I just played along. It wasn't until I realized that she had spelled out "I am so hungry I could die," and then I looked over to Nora who was drawing a variety of food items with a picture of

herself reaching for them and the caption "So far away... oh well," that I knew this was going to be a long service.

They asked if we could stop and get something to eat after, and I realized I never even brought my wallet with me to church. They really lost it then. A while ago, Hazel became obsessed with communion. She would watch Mark and I take it and ask us to blow our wine breath on her when we got back to our seats. Don't even ask because I have no answers; she is something else. Knowing they were going to look at that little piece of bread with such desperation had me in a fit of giggles.

Lo and behold, they survived the service even though Hazel wrote up her own death notice, blaming me not feeding her for her death. Leave it to our children to compose their own obituaries.

At the centre of it, I don't think they will skip breakfast again, but to be safe I'll start packing snacks.

Sauk Centre Herald

522 Sinclair Lewis Ave.
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
Phone: (320) 352-6577
Fax: (320) 352-5647

www.star-pub.com

HOURS: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Subject to change during holidays.

Periodicals postage pending at Sauk Centre, MN

THE SAUK CENTRE HERALD (USPS 482-220) is published weekly on Thursdays by Star Publications, 522 Sinclair Lewis Ave., Sauk Centre, Minn. 56378. Second-class postage paid at Sauk Centre, Minn. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE SAUK CENTRE HERALD, 522 Sinclair Lewis Ave., Sauk Centre, Minn. 56378

Advertising: Classified advertising and Classy Canary advertising are on a cash-only basis. Our ad takers have no authority to bind this newspaper, and only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance of the advertiser's order.

Subscription Rates: Stearns, Todd, Douglas, Pope & Morrison Counties, \$48.00. Elsewhere in Minnesota, \$55.00. Out of Minnesota, \$58.00.

Staff

Mark Klaphake.....Interim Editor/General Manager.....mark@saukherald.com
Joyce Frericks.....Business Manager.....joyce@saukherald.com
Pat Turner.....Co-Production Mgr./Graphic Design.....pat@saukherald.com
Brian Dingmann.....Co-Production Mgr./Graphic Design.....brian.d@saukherald.com
Amanda Thoof.....Graphic Design/Page Layout.....amanda@saukherald.com
Janell Westerman.....Graphic Design.....janell.w@dairystar.com
Maddy Peterson.....Graphic Design.....maddy@star-pub.com
Diane Leukam.....Proofing.....diane@saukherald.com
Andrea Borgerding.....Writer.....andrea.b@dairystar.com
Jennifer Coyne.....Writer.....jenn@saukherald.com
Ben Sonnek.....Writer.....bens@saukherald.com
Herman Lensing.....Writer.....herman@melrosebeacon.com

Deadlines: The deadline for most news in the Herald is 5 p.m. Monday. Exceptions are obituaries and reports of weekend events, which have a deadline of 10 a.m. Tuesday. The deadline for advertisements in the Herald is noon on Tuesday, in the Shopper noon on Wednesday and Classy Canary noon on Thursday.

Letters: Letters to the editor and other opinion articles are welcomed. Letters must be signed with first and last name and include address and phone number. Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit lengthy letters.

Corrections/Clarifications: The Herald strives for accuracy. If you would like to report a factual error, please call 352-6577.

Katelyn Asfeld.....Writer.....kate@saukherald.com
Missy Traeger.....Sales Manager/Marketing.....missy@saukherald.com
Kayla Hunstiger.....Marketing.....kayla@saukherald.com
Jaime Warendorf.....Marketing.....jaime@star-pub.com
Warren Stone.....Marketing.....warren@star-pub.com
Robin Brunette.....Inside Sales Representative.....robin@saukherald.com
Emily Joium.....Bookkeeping.....emily@saukherald.com
Gretchen Jennissen.....Bookkeeping.....gretchen@saukherald.com
Lorie Swendenburg.....Receptionist, Circulation.....lorie@saukherald.com
Logan Thomas.....Sign Design.....logan@saukherald.com
Irene Henry.....Sign Design.....irene@saukherald.com
Mike Imdieke.....Inserter