

INSIDE
MEET THE FAT
BOYS CLUB,
LIFE PAGE 6

Alexandria ▶▶

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Celeste Edenloff / Echo Press

Mya Fernholz, 7, (left) and her sister, Drea, 10, tend to their goats that are helping to eradicate buckthorn and other invasive plants on a property in Alexandria on Lake L'Homme Dieu. The girls, who are the daughters of Mike and Kate Fernholz, are from Kensington.

Chloride fix bears hefty price tag

By Karen Tolkkinen
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The Alexandria sanitary district will revive a citizen's advisory committee as it seeks ways to reduce the amount of salt entering Lake Winona from treated wastewater.

It's a costly problem, and solutions will require community support. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has calculated that reducing chloride could reach \$2,370 per household each year depending on the steps taken. The Alexandria Lake Area Sanitary District, or ALASD, is sending significantly more chloride than it should into the lake and is seeking a variance that would give it more time to figure out how to meet the legal limits.

CHLORIDE: Page 5

GETTIN' THEIR GOATS

Family uses goats to help eradicate invasive plants, even within Alexandria city limits

By Celeste Edenloff
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Earlier this year, after selling his business, Mike Fernholz decided his family should get some goats. Growing up on a cattle farm, having goats was going to be a new adventure.

"They are fun to watch," said Fernholz, who lives in Kensington with his wife, Kate, and two daughters, Drea, 10 and Mya, 7. "Most people have cats or dogs. We now have goats."

One of the reasons he decided on goats is because he knew they were good for cleaning up yards because he said, "They eat everything – all kinds of foliage, from buckthorn to poison ivy."

And, he added, that goats are much more environmentally friendly



Celeste Edenloff / Echo Press

The Fernholz family of Kensington – Mike and Kate and their daughters, Drea and Mya – own a herd of 14 goats, including this one. Her name is Valiente and she is named after a bull character in the movie, "Ferdinand."

compared to harsh chemicals.

That ability to eradicate unwanted plants without harming the environment means the goats are part of budding business, with

a homeowner along Lake L'Homme Dieu being the first to take advantage of an Alexandria city ordinance allowing the use of goats within city limits.

Here is how the

business got off the ground.

This spring, Fernholz put his 14 goats, which are half Boer goats and half dairy goats, in a fenced area on his property, about 3-4 acres. Within about three weeks, he said the brush was cleaned up.

His sister decided she wanted to try it on her property and borrowed the goats. It worked so well, she decided to post something on Facebook about it, with his permission, of course.

"After she posted it, she called me and said that at least five people had already reached out to her wanting more information," he said.

One of those people who ended up reaching out to him was Joani Nielson of Alexandria.

GOATS: Page 8

Osakis creates festival to rebound from COVID-19

Taste of Osakis features fair food, live band, crafts and more

By Al Edenloff
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The coronavirus has robbed small towns of their fun summer festivals and celebrations.

Osakis is responding with a brand new event – Taste of Osakis on Saturday, Sept. 12.

It will include food trucks, live music, craft vendors, shopping specials and other activities starting at 10 a.m. and continuing until 7 p.m.

The idea sprang from Osakis businesses, and the Osakis Chamber of Commerce picked it up and ran with it, according to Cory Abers, chamber president.

"The Osakis Festival and Moonshine Madness were canceled and the businesses were looking for an opportunity to let people know, 'Hey, we are still here and want you to come enjoy Osakis,'" Abers said.

OSAKIS: Page 8

From shed days to non-tasting parties

Tastefully Simple celebrates highs and lows in its 25 years

By Jasmine Johnson

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Jill Blashack Strahan founded a business in 1995 in a shed with no running water, packing orders on a pool table in the town of Villard. By the end of that calendar year, she hoped to hire seven salespeople to help her out.

Today, 25 years later, Tastefully Simple is a multi-million-dollar business with thousands of sales consultants nationwide and 75 employees working from its



Blashack Strahan

Alexandria headquarters, but that growth didn't happen overnight.

Buttering up an idea

As a dairy farmer's daughter, Blashack Strahan said she didn't have big dreams, but she was determined. By age 23, she owned Jill's Grill in her hometown.

She started selling gift baskets

and hosted open house tasting events for the holidays. After closing her store, Blashack Strahan was asked to bring her baskets to Alexandria's annual Holiday Crafters' Tour.

She brought five themed gift baskets along with seven individual products separate from the collections that people could taste. That weekend, Blashack Strahan sold about a third of her average annual profit in two days.

TASTEFULLY: Page 5



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When Jill Blashack Strahan started packing orders for Tastefully Simple in 1995, she worked in this building in her hometown of Villard, Minn.

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