



The Globe

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SEE INSIDE:

ACTIVE LIFE



SHORE STILL GOING STRONG



RICKERS TRAVEL FULL CIRCLE

'I just want things to go back to normal'

Adrian woman is 3 months into long haul with COVID-19

Editor's note: This is the second in a three-part series about area COVID-19 long haulers. Watch for Part 3 in the Feb. 17 edition of The Globe

By Julie Buntjer
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ADRIAN — After reading the story about Susanne Murphy's experiences with the lingering effects of COVID-19 in the Feb.

3 edition of The Globe, Jolene Wieneke thought she was reading a story about herself.

The rural Adrian woman is also deemed a COVID long hauler, still battling fatigue and numerous other complications since being diagnosed with the virus last November. Now, she and Mur-

phy are teaming up to offer a support group for local individuals facing the same lingering effects.

"Long-haul COVID patients need to know they aren't alone and they need an advocate locally," Wieneke said. "So, we will structure (Zoom, Facebook, etc.) the group based on

response."

Wieneke and her husband both contracted COVID-19 — him a few days before her. It's suspected he contracted the virus while out and about with his work as a farmer.

"Of course you wear a mask and take precautions, but when you have family members

that are out in the public, it does happen," she said, noting that she and her husband and teenage daughter quarantined together until the day after Thanksgiving.

During quarantine, Wieneke experienced a low-grade fever, dizziness, fatigue and loss of taste and smell,

COVID-19: Page 6



Special to The Globe
Jolene Wieneke of rural Adrian has been living with the lingering effects of COVID-19 since she contracted the virus in mid-November 2020.



Photos special to The Globe

The Buntjer family shows a group of beaver collected from Matt's traps. From left: Danny, Brody, Jonny, Matt and Elsie.

Caught up in trapping

Minnesota outdoorsman passing down passion for wildlife

By Leah Ward
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Luverne

While most people — and the sun — are still sleeping, one southwest Minnesotan arises before dawn every morning to travel a 20- to 30-mile route through Rock County, checking on traps he has set for nuisance and overpopulated animals.

Matt Buntjer first became interested in trapping in high school, through a friend of his

dad's, and has gotten more serious about the sport over the last eight to 10 years.

"I always loved being outside," he said.

A lifelong hunter and fisherman, Buntjer was drawn to trapping because of the mental challenge.

"Trapping is like a puzzle," explained his wife, Kaitlin.

Buntjer agreed. When he hunts, he just has to find the general area of the animal he's searching for,

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On the weekends, Matt Buntjer enjoys taking his whole family out with him to check the traps.

Worthington businesses examples of statewide labor shortage

By Leah Ward
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WORTHINGTON — Two Worthington employers recently shared their experiences struggling to hire enough employees, noting several factors that have contributed to the labor shortage.

One major problem is not having skilled workers from which to choose. Troy Wietzema, co-owner of W-2's Quality Meats, said he's noticed this in his line of work.

"It's a profession that there are no schools for," he said.

Butchering and processing meat are not simple tasks. They require specialized training and lots of practice.

Stacey Luong, director of nursing at South Shore Care Center, agreed. The majority of South Shore staff are certified nursing assistants (CNAs) or licensed practical nurses (LPNs). Both job titles require some formal training, but not as much as a registered nurse has to have.

"Long-term care has had a shortage for many years," she said, noting that many people who pursue a career in nursing don't consider that specific field.

A local obstacle is that South Shore employees must be able to read and write English at a sixth-grade level, and that's not always the case in immigrant communities. However, Luong said, Sandra Demuth at Career Force runs a bridge program that helps people boost their English literacy so they can apply for more jobs. This program has been a huge help, Luong said.

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, South Shore had a significant drop in job applications, Luong noted,

WORKFORCE: Page 3

2 school board members ask to reconsider purchase of Shopko building

By Leah Ward
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WORTHINGTON — As designs near completion on District 518's planned community education building — a process set in motion by a 6-1 Nov. 17 vote to build new on land the district already owns — two board members have asked

for a work session to revisit a possible purchase of the former Shopko building instead of building new.

At Monday's instructional committee meeting, Superintendent John Landgaard gave an update on the planning process of the building. He noted that while the space will house the community education department,

the other offices now operating out of the former West Elementary site won't fit there and will have to be broken up between other district buildings. This is not ideal for a couple of reasons, he said, as special education and the department of teaching and learning really need to be in the same building so they can collaborate

efficiently. As the district grows, he added, there is also no room for expansion.

Hearing this, school board members Brad Shaffer and Adam Blume revealed that when they voted to pursue building a new building, it had been their understanding that it would have enough room that everything currently happening

at West would be moved to the new site. Landgaard had explained in September that the district only owns so much land on its Crailsheim Road property, and that it's unable to accommodate a building that will meet all of the district's needs.

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GOOD MORNING

David Jorgenson
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AG BRIEFS

Century Farm applications due March 1

ST. PAUL — Minnesota families who have owned their farms for 100 years or more are invited to apply for the 2021 Century Farm program. Produced by the Minnesota State Fair in conjunction with the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, the Century Farm Program was created to promote agriculture and honor historic family farms in the state. More than 10,500 Minnesota farms have been honored since the program began in 1976. Family farms are recognized as a Century Farm when three requirements are met. The farm must be:

at least 100 years old according to authentic land records; in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years (continuous residence on the farm is not required); and at least 50 acres and currently be involved in agricultural production. A commemorative certificate will be awarded to qualifying families, along with an outdoor sign signifying Century Farm status. Applications are available online at mnstatefair.org/about-the-fair/awards-and-recognition/; at fbmn.org; by calling the State Fair at (651) 288-4400; or at statewide county extension and county Farm Bureau

offices. The submission deadline is March 1. Recipients will be announced in May. Previously recognized families should not reapply. **Women Managing Horses program to be offered** SPENCER, Iowa — Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Clay County will host a four-session Women Managing Horses program from 6 to 8:30 p.m. beginning Feb. 18 and continuing Feb. 25, March 4 and March 11 at Grace United Methodist Church, Spencer. The program will also offer a virtual attendance option. Sessions will cover financial doc-

umentation and breakeven analysis, equine insurance, annual horse health care plans, evaluation of feed rations, marketing your equine business, environmental management and land use decisions. Social distancing will be maintained, and mask wearing is encouraged. Individuals can specify at registration if they plan to attend in person or online. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3p59iLx> or contact Amy Forrette at the ISU Extension Clay County office at (712) 262-2264 or forrette@iastate.edu. Registration deadline is Feb. 11. There is a fee to attend, which includes a meal for those who attend in person.

TRAPPING

From Page 1

and sometimes he has a dog to help him locate game. Trapping is a lot more difficult. “An animal can go anywhere it wants to, and I have to get it to step on a two-inch circle,” he said.

To be successful at trapping, Buntjer has to know the animals really well, by reading extensively about them and studying their patterns. After a while, it becomes almost second nature to observe and trace critters’ paths. “One of the things I love about trapping is that you’re there every single day, so you see so much more wildlife,” Buntjer said. “You see a lot of things most people don’t get to see.”

For example, he knows that at certain times of day, he’ll see a group of deer in a given spot while he follows his trapping route. It’s not uncommon for him to pause on his way and say a prayer of thanks that he gets to see God’s glory and creation up close.

As a busy husband, father of four and employee with the city of Luverne, Buntjer relishes the quiet time that trapping gives him. However, he also loves that trapping has become a family activity. On the weekends, Kaitlin and the kids like to join him in checking traps, bringing back whatever they’ve caught and making adjustments to the route.

While the youngest Buntjer, Jonny, is too little to appreciate trapping yet, the older three have embraced the sport, especially the boys, Brody (10) and Danny (5). In fact, this season, Brody and Danny ran their own raccoon trap line.

Prior to trapping seasons opening,



Matt Buntjer (right) enjoys teaching his children about trapping. Here, son Brody and daughter Elsie join him on an early morning adventure to check traps.

Buntjer makes it a habit to visit several local landowners and ask their permission to trap on their land. He also is hired by area farmers to trap nuisance animals — usually beaver — who are tearing up their pasture.

Requests from farmers actually start rolling in around harvest time, before the trapping season. If they can prove the animals are causing a problem, then Buntjer can get a damage permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, which allows him to dispose of the animals. He can’t keep or sell any part.

Over the course of his time as a trapper, Buntjer has caught almost every animal that is legal to trap in Minnesota, with the exception of bobcat, marten and fisher, which aren’t found in this part of the state. He is able to make this claim just as of this year, when he caught his first otter.

The otter was actually an accident, which does happen sometimes in trapping, Buntjer explained.

In Minnesota, he needs only to apply for a general trappers’ license each year, with optional tags for otter, bobcat, fisher and marten. Since he wasn’t planning to trap otter, Buntjer didn’t request any additional tags with his license. So, after he caught one, he called a

local DNR conservation officer and asked what to do. The officer allowed him to procure a tag retroactively, and he was permitted to use the parts of the otter.

Sometimes, a trapper will accidentally catch an animal out of its season. How to handle that situation largely depends on what kind of trap was used. If the trapper is able to release the animal, then they have to do so. If the trap already dispatched the animal, then the trapper has to turn the animal in to the DNR, which donates the fur to the Minnesota Trappers Association for tan/fur kits for education purposes.

During the regular season, Buntjer uses all of the parts of the animals he traps, and sells as much of that as possible — and it’s more than just fur that’s useful. For example, while most beaver fur is ground up into felt that becomes items such as cowboy hats, beavers also have what’s called a castor sac, located between the pelvis and the base of the tail, which secretes a substance they use to mark their territory. Castor sacs are valuable because they are used to make



Photos special to The Globe Matt Buntjer checks on some traps with three of his children. From left: Danny, Matt, Elsie and Brody.

imitation vanilla flavoring — although not as commonly anymore, since lab-created vanilla is now a lot cheaper to produce.

To sell the furs from the animals he traps, Buntjer works with fur buyers who run routes within a reasonable distance of Luverne. He can sell the furs one of three ways: in the round, which is the whole animal, as is, and frozen; green, where the animal is skinned and cleaned, then frozen; or finished, which involves scraping off the fat from the leather, then stretching and drying the fur. Finished furs require the most work, and therefore sell for the most money.

Once a fur buyer purchases the furs from Buntjer, he or she will bale a large number of furs and then ship them all over the world. Most coyote furs stay in North America, while raccoon end up in Russia and muskrat go to Korea.

In addition to sharing his skills with his own children, Buntjer enjoys working with area youths who are interested in trapping.

“The education side of it has been a lot of fun for me,” he said.

At the end of each school year, Luverne Elementary students usually go on a field trip to Blue Mounds State Park, and Buntjer gives a presentation on animals that live nearby and lets them touch the animals’ furs.

He has also logged a lot of hours teaching trapping classes through the Minnesota Trappers Association, which are required for people seeking trappers’ licenses. Part of Buntjer’s goal in trapping education is to correct the misconception that trapping is evil or malicious. In his view, trapping actually helps take care of the environment.

When a certain species becomes too concentrated, he explained, it becomes easier for disease to spread among that species and severely decimate the population. For example, when coyotes are overpopulated, they will commonly contract mange, which makes their fur fall out. Mangy coyotes cannot keep themselves warm, and freeze to death. Buntjer believes it’s more humane to “help maintain more of a balance” through

trapping. He also pointed out that traps used in 2021 are very different from the traps shown in movies. Modern traps have thicker jaws, which leave a gap that allows for blood flow to the foot. He shared that on some occasions, he’s found a trapped animal actually sleeping while caught in a trap. It’s also common that when he releases an animal, it runs off like nothing even happened. Buntjer has accidentally caught his own hand in some of his traps before, and he was not injured.

“Just like a deer hunter wants to make as clean a shot as possible to make sure the animal is taken care of as quickly and humanely as possible,” he, too, does everything he can to make the animal as comfortable as it can be or to dispatch it as quickly as he can.

Opponents of the fur industry sometimes argue that fur is bad for the environment, but Buntjer says that fur is actually the most sustainable clothing people could wear. It’s renewable and biodegradable, and it’s efficient in terms of warmth. Faux fur, he explained, is actually made of oil products and takes centuries to decompose.

A lack of education about trapping is one of the reasons trapping is becoming a forgotten sport, Buntjer said. Another reason is that in the modern world, people aren’t accustomed to the quiet, stillness and patience it takes to be a successful trapper. Buntjer loves the thrill of the puzzle enough that, for the foreseeable future, he intends to keep 4:30 a.m. vigil with his trapping route.

Drs. Hibbard and Halligan hold outreach clinics at Avera Medical Group Worthington.

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