

# Mille Lacs Messenger



## Alien Book Club

Former Aitkin drummer joins a punk band in the Twin Cities scene page 11



Wednesday, September 9, 2020

\$1.00

## Amish holding up well amid COVID

by T.A. LeBrun

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As several children in the Amish community located north of Isle gather around the barn activity at the Hershberger farm, Mr. Hershberger, the father of the children, calls out to them in their native Pennsylvania Deutsch. They respond in the same language. He turns back, seamlessly transitioning back to English and continues the conversation. He explains that Pennsylvania Deutsch is a combination of German, English and a "little bit of Swedish" when asked about his language.

The children gather around seeming very interested in why a stranger was there. They are friendly and timidly wave, curious but cautious at the same time.



PHOTO BY T.A. LEBRUN

Ranger, one of the Amish family's dogs, stands curious for a photo. As is customary for the Amish, photography of themselves is not allowed as humility is their objective. However, they allowed Ranger to take part in the photo op.

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## Public health update at county board

### Cases continue to rise in counties

by T.A. LeBrun

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As county commissioners, county administration and the historic courthouse audience gathered in person for the regular meeting and work session on Sept. 1, Mille Lacs Community Health Services Administrator and Supervisor Kay Nastrom was video-fed into the meeting as she has been for the last several months while working from home. Approximately 35% of county employees are working from home from various departments, minus the sheriff's department.

Nastrom updated the board and those gathered on the COVID-19 conditions around the state and locally.

As of Sept. 1, 2020, Minnesota had 76,355 total positive cases with 502 newly reported cases and six new deaths on that day. In Mille Lacs County, a total of 101 positive cases have been reported to date with three deaths in the

County to 3

## Onamia School Board pursues potential tax savings

### Ideal projected savings could total nearly \$900,000

by Evan Orbeck

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On Aug. 17, Onamia School Board held their regularly monthly meeting, working through their usual agenda items amid ongoing concerns about their plan to re-open during the COVID-19 pandemic. One item in particular among the evening's new business presented the district's taxpayers a potential saving over the next 11 years. Michael Hart, Director of Public Finance



PHOTO BY EVAN ORBECK

Onamia School board, Brian Barnett, Shelly Stecker, Angel Oehrlein, Superintendent JJ Vold, Virgil Wind, Lisa Anderson, and Ben Husom.

with PMA, who was serving at the district's municipal advisor for the refinancing, provided a virtual presentation on how the district could refinance a \$7.725 million bond, previously approved by referendum in 2012.

As Hart explained the issue before the board involved refinancing the referendum-approved bonds that the school board had issued in 2012, which now totaled \$7.725 million outstanding. By refinancing these bonds now, Hart said the district could reduce its interest rates and

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**Stauber visit**  
Congressman Pete Stauber visits Milaca to address COVID-19

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Aitkin teachers share story of near-fatal crash

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