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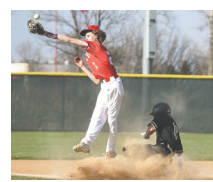
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# Austin Daily Herald

www.austindailyherald.com

Saturday, April 24, 2021

**WEEKEND EDITION**



**Inside: Rough day on the diamond Thursday for the Packer baseball team.**

Page 1B

**TV Guide: Page 9A • Classifieds: Page 2B**

## Handshake and a smile

### John Beckel remembered for conservation work, personality

By Eric Johnson  
eric.johnson@austindailyherald.com

From those who knew him best, John Beckel's work in land conservation started and ended in a belief of people doing what was best for the community.

"He was so confident that if we went out and asked people ... be very transparent and

they would support us ... and the community did," said long time friend Dave Cole.

Beckel passed away on April 4 at the age of 96, but he leaves behind a legacy of conservation that stretches far and wide having worked on several large land acquisition projects for the Ramsey Mill Pond Wildlife Management Area north of

Austin and the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.

He achieved much of this success in a quiet manner that came from a simple and personal approach that consisted of talking with landowners and getting them invested in conservation of the land.



Beckel

See **BECKEL**, Page 10A



Throughout the years of conservation work and land acquisitions, John Beckel found the most important part was simply talking. Photo provided



Ellis Middle School student Alex Arizpe is photographed outside of the school Thursday morning as students wait to get in. On a few days this year, Alex has entertained students by playing his accordion. Photos by Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

## Morning Music

### Alex Arizpe shares his love of the accordion with his fellows students, the community

By Eric Johnson  
eric.johnson@austindailyherald.com

Thursday morning, students lined up outside and waited to get into Ellis Middle School for a day of MCA testing.

But it wasn't all bad as fellow student Alex Arizpe provided entertainment in the form of his accordion. He performed a pair of traditional songs and for the first time sang along with one of the songs.

It was just his fourth public performance, but Arizpe enjoyed every moment of it.

"I like the music," Arizpe said. "I've always liked the music from when I was younger. I love playing with [the accordion]."

Arizpe comes from a family with plenty of music and he got his first taste of the accordion with help from his uncle.

"He showed me a song and I started practicing twice a day and for family," Arizpe said.

However, Arizpe didn't just show up one day and start playing for students. It all started from a conversation with eighth grade algebra teacher Brandon Drescher.

"We were in advisory and he had an accordion box," Drescher said. "He started explaining how they play, airflow ... we spent 20 minutes talking about the accordion."

See **MUSIC**, Page 11A



"I like the music. I've always liked the music from when I was younger."

Alex Arizpe

## MN schools to stay open despite growing COVID-19 spread among students

**Data showing spread particularly noticeable in middle and high school students**

By Elizabeth Shockman  
MPR News/90.1 FM

Data released on Thursday shows that COVID-19 case rates are going up statewide — and they're affecting younger Min-

nesotans, especially middle and high school students. In fact, the number of school-related COVID-19 cases reported this week in Minnesota students has now exceeded a peak during a surge of cases in November.

"The last month-plus has been very worrisome — especially among younger Minnesotans," said state Health Commissioner

Jan Malcolm in a news release. Still, Minnesota officials are not planning to issue sweeping recommendations or orders for schools to switch students to distance learning. Instead, they are ramping up testing opportunities in an attempt to make it easier for students to get weekly or biweekly COVID-19 tests.

"Increasing vaccination and

increasing testing can help us protect the ability of schools to stay in person, protect the ability of sports to continue and make possible those very important ceremonies and markers of the end of a school year," Malcolm said during a news conference Thursday.

See **SPREAD**, Page 11A

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You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

~ Psalm 18:28 ~



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**summerset THEATRE**

## Summerset Theatre changes shows for Season 53

**Shows to be performed at HHH, Riverland, and ArtWorks Festival**

Austin Daily Herald  
newsroom@austindailyherald.com

Due to ongoing concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, Summerset Theatre has postponed its planned performance of "Mary Poppins" and "We Will Rock You" until the summer of 2022 or beyond, according to a press release from Summerset Theatre Co-Director Randal Forster. Both shows were scheduled to be performed last year; however, were postponed as the pandemic spread.

However, Forster said Summerset will produce four smaller shows during its 53rd Season this summer "in order to provide its staff, cast members, and audiences a much safer environment."

Two shows, "Motherhood the Musical" and "Rated P for Parenthood," will be performed on alternating dates from June 20-27 at the Hormel Historic Home Peace Garden.

"Motherhood the Musical," directed by Carrie Braaten Moore, tells the story of four women - Amy, a soon-to-be first-time mom, Brooke, a hard-working lawyer, Barb, a stressed-out mother of five, and Tina, a single mom seeking to balance work, her family and her divorce - who share their insights, challenges and pleasures at a baby shower. Show times are 2 p.m. on June 20 and 7 p.m. on June 21, 23, 25 and 27.

"Rated P for Parenthood," directed by John Deyo, chronicles every stage of modern-day parenting, from conception to college, with giant doses of heart and humor. Showtimes are 7 p.m. on June 20, 22, 24 and 26 and 2 p.m. on June 27.

Tickets for both shows are \$10. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, seating will be limited to 100 guests and ticket holders will be required to bring their own chairs.

See **SUMMERSET**, Page 10A