

### OUR VIEW

## Stay alert and share the roads

Around here, spring is synonymous with slow-moving farm vehicles.

That's why the Minnesota Department of Transportation urges motorists to be prepared to slow down and be patient while waiting for a safe place to pass when meeting farm equipment on the roads.

The size and weight of farm equipment makes it hard for operators to accelerate, slow down and stop. The equipment makes wide turns and can create large blind spots, making it difficult for operators to see approaching vehicles.

That's why it's so important for motorists to heed MnDOT's advice.

According to the state Department of Transportation, there were 532 crashes reported in Minnesota from 2016 to 2020 involving farm equipment in Minnesota, resulting in 242 injuries and 11 deaths. Inattentive driving and speed were the biggest contributing factors in these crashes.

Equipment operators need to do their part as well. To keep the roads safe, they should use lights and flashers to make equipment more visible and use slow-moving vehicle emblems on equipment traveling less than 30 mph.

Driving smart and focusing 100% of your attention on the road can help avoid tragedy for everyone sharing the road.

As we all know, distracted driving is responsible for too many injuries and deaths on our roadways – not just rural roads.

Between 2016 and 2020, distracted driving contributed to 39,000 crashes – or one in nine crashes in Minnesota. Last year alone, distracted driving contributed to 2,612 injuries and 29 deaths.

Tractors aside, there's simply no room on our roadways for distracted driving. And we aren't just talking about cell phone use.

Maybe Minnesota law enforcement agencies can get that message across in their latest distracted driving extra enforcement and awareness campaign that runs through April 30.

We hope so.

### YOUR VIEW

## Impressed with the newspaper

To-the-Editor:

When reading your paper at the breakfast table this morning, my wife and I were very impressed with the quality of your paper.

It is so interesting and informative. You and your staff do a thorough job! Great photos also. Continued success.

Bud Peka  
Owatonna

## Letters to the Editor

We encourage readers to share their views on issues of community interest. Letters must be signed, no longer than 275 words and type-written or clearly printed. Writers must include their address and a daytime phone number for verification. Phone numbers and street addresses will not be published; your name and city of residence will be published. Letters will be edited for clarity, grammar and length and may be published in print and electronic forms. Submit a letter by email to [scletters@gmail.com](mailto:scletters@gmail.com); or by mail to the Steele County Times, attn. Letters to the Editor, P.O.Box 247, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917.

### GUEST COLUMN

## Free At Last

They drive into our town with drugs and guns, then pollute the bodies, minds, and souls, of our precious, daughters and sons. They start them out on weed, then crack, it is hard for these kids, to ever stop, to get that monkey off their back. Thank God for our Drug Court, 18 months is the minimal treatment plan, it takes much effort, It's a joy to see the happy smiles, on those graduates' beaming faces, for now is their time to reconcile. They receive from good Judge Bueltel, words of wisdom and sage advice, but he doesn't yell or give them Hell. Those lives are saved, and returned again, Into general society, as they were, before starting on drugs, way back then. They have stories to tell how it had begun, how they first got hooked by that pusher, who ruined the lives of our daughters and sons. Let us pray that they always remain clean, please, God, help them to stay clean and dry, so the courts will never again, have to intervene.

**Bud Peka**  
Owatonna

# Don't shoot the Easter bunny



**Hot Pursuit**  
RICK BUSSLER

Pop, pop, pop. Easter produced something a little out of the ordinary for our family this year.

In between going to the various church services and the great holiday meals my mother always prepares, we took a little target practice.

No, we weren't aiming to shoot the Easter bunny hopping around with a bunch of goodies. Instead, my 12-year-old nephew lured us out to the back 40 on my parents' farm to show us

his latest venture. He is participating in trap shooting at his school in western Wisconsin.

He is learning the proper way of handling firearms while blasting flying orange discs out of the sky. In trap shooting, a machine known as the trap launches a clay target or pigeon into the air as the shooter blasts away with a 12-gauge shotgun.

More and more schools are including competitive shooting as part of high school life. Even as mass shootings have inspired protests and walkouts in many schools, a growing number are sanctioning shooting squads as an extracurricular activity.

It's apparently one of the fastest-growing high school sports in the U.S.

The Minnesota State High School Clay

Target League championship claims to be the largest shooting sports event in the world. The stars are teenage boys and girls.

As for safety, more than 70,000 students across the U.S. have fired 42 million shots since 2008. No one has reported a single injury, according to the published reports.

Trap shooting is an individual sport, much like wrestling, that also offers the bonding and interdependence of a team. As I saw from my nephew, hand-eye coordination and focus matter more than physical conditioning.

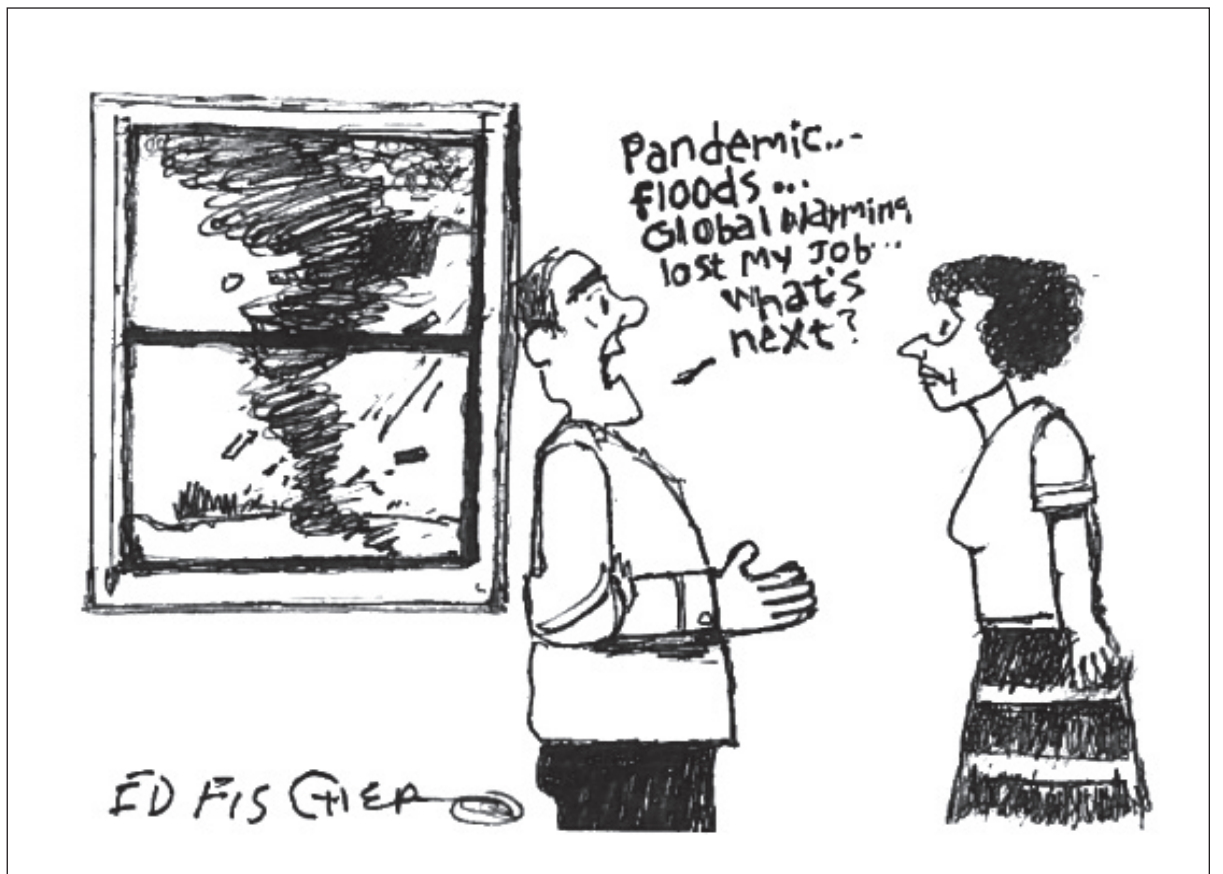
This provides an important lesson for youth all over that safe and responsible handling of firearms and ammunition is the first priority. There's no better way to ensure kids grow up

with a safe and secure knowledge of correct firearm usage than well-organized youth shooting programs. I can see where such a program helps take the fear and mystery out of children's natural curiosity and replace it with understand and respect.

Trap shooting also promotes fun in a chemically free environment, participation as a privilege rather than a right and adults must serve as a positive role model to students.

Through the school programs, teens also learn how to compete against others. Competition is healthy at all age levels.

And it looks like our family has a new ritual to go in hot pursuit of for Easter and perhaps other holidays. I just request that no one shoots the Easter bunny.



### GUEST COLUMN

## Exchange members remember Rev. Rudolf

BY GAIL BUCKINGHAM

There comes a time when you meet a person and that person impacts your life forever. Such is Russell Rudolf. Russ was a member of the Exchange Club of Owatonna for 52 years, as of March 1, 2021. Russ had a colorful soul. He impacted our lives in ways no one else could. I will share my memories of Russ, but first, let's hear from the current members of the Exchange Club of Owatonna of their memories.

Russ was a fighter, he fought for what he believed in. Russ was an advocater. He wanted you to know to understand the facts, issues, concerns and not be complacent. Russ was a champion, he was devoted to the underdog, the disadvantaged and the abused. Russ was an Exchangeite, through and through to the very end. Russ was a devoted husband and father! Russ was a friend. He was true and loyal and genuinely

cared about you. We all have grown, altered our thoughts and are better because of him! What better legacy can a man leave, than a changed life. – Sandra McConn

**Halla**  
Memories of Russ Rudolf: I was in the Owatonna Exchange Club with Russ for 30 years. I liked Russ for his friendship, his dry sense of humor, and his knowledge and love of history and culture. When he was the "judge" for our meetings, he always made us think when he posed questions for us to answer about history, current events, or the arts. He often urged us to check out an upcoming tv documentary, a book, or a local event. His love of children and the mission of Exchange--that of preventing child abuse--was always evident. I many times chose to sit at Russ's table for our weekly meeting because I knew I would be humored, educated, enlightened--or all of the above. He was

a remarkable man, and I am glad God crossed our paths. – Judy Meister  
To me, Russ was a very unique individual. He was never quiet about sharing his feelings, good or bad. If he didn't like something or disagreed with a person, he was not afraid to tell you so. I remember the first time I met him, he scared me to death, and there are many that probably felt that way, until you really got to know him. He was always the most considerate husband to Jane, taking her part of his meal everytime we met. She was his first concern, always. Russ was very special to me in that he and my dad shared the same birthday, July 4th. He believed very strongly in Exchange and everything it stood for, especially the child abuse prevention program and anything that was involved with Americanism. He will be missed by each of us in a different way.

Russ will definitely be missed. – Sharon Klein

I am so saddened of Russ's passing. He is leaving us a big hole in our Exchange family. I last met with Russ at our Exchange meeting the 3rd Thursday February 2020. I have had the "Honor & Privilege" as Russ would have said to meet, Exchange ideas, hear his many invocations, tremendous introductions of students, guests, & speakers over my 42 years in Exchange. He always showed concern, praise, conviction and love for what our Club achieved for our community Owatonna. There was never any doubt where Russ stood on issues involving our Exchange Club. He inspired all of us to give of ourselves, learn by giving and growing through our projects. Yes, Russ you will be deeply missed by the mark you left on all of us who knew you. Remembered as a faithful Exchangeite. – Tom Partridge  
See EXCHANGE on A10 ▶

STEELE COUNTY Times  
Founded in 1893  
Bussler Publishing, Inc.  
[www.SteeleCountyTimes.com](http://www.SteeleCountyTimes.com)  
Email: [bptimes@frontiernet.net](mailto:bptimes@frontiernet.net)

USPS 058-340  
Published weekly on Wednesdays  
Postmaster: Send address changes to:  
Steele County Times  
P.O. Box 247  
Blooming Prairie, MN 55917  
Phone: 507-583-4431

**ETHICS:** The Steele County Times editorial staff strives to present the news in a fair and accurate manner. Please bring any grievances against the Steele County Times to the attention of the Managing Editor.

Publisher ..... Rick Bussler  
News Editor ..... Deb Flemming  
Office Manager ..... Sherrie Pechan  
Sales Specialist ..... Wyonne Priebe  
Staff Writer ..... Alex Nuehring  
Staff Writer ..... Chris Baldwin

### DEADLINES

News: Noon Fridays.  
Web: 11 p.m. (Daily)  
Advertising: 4 p.m. Thursdays.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Steele, Dodge, Freeborn & Mower ..... \$49  
Elsewhere in State ..... \$52  
Out of state ..... \$56

A state and national award winning weekly



**MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION**

2021—16 awards  
2020—9 state awards  
2019—7 state awards  
2018—6 state awards  
2017—2 state and 3 national awards  
2016—8 state and 6 national awards  
2015—7 state and 4 national awards  
2014—3 state and 3 national awards  
2013—7 state and 2 national awards  
2012—2 state awards  
2011—4 national awards

(Awards presented by the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the National Newspaper Associations)