

## Important ag measure included in Ag Omnibus bill

Friends and neighbors, As we begin to wrap up the Legislative session, we are spending most of our time passing legislation to help our communities. Agriculture legislation is particularly important for our district and I was excited to vote yes on our agriculture omnibus bill.

I am proud that one of my bills to fund mental health services to our farmers was included in the Agriculture Omnibus bill. This will provide close to half a million dollars for statewide mental health counseling support to farm families and business operators through the Minnesota State Agricultural Centers of Excellence.

This is incredibly important support for some of our most underserved but vital individuals in our community. The agriculture budget bill was heard and voted on Wednesday. As a member of the agriculture committee, I have participated in construction of this bill from farm advocacy to county fair funding.

This bill included important investments in improving our biofuel infrastructure and works to toll back MPCA's overreach. Our farmers know best how to manage their businesses.

This month, I joined the Rx Abuse Leadership Initiative (RALI) to discuss our commitment to find solutions to end the opioid crisis. The epidemic of opioid addiction in Minnesota is a serious issue that has impacted many families throughout our state and needs to be addressed.

The Legislature has made moves in the past to discourage the sale and use of opioids, but there is still more we can be doing. In the Judiciary budget bill, there is a provision that will place harsher penalties on individuals selling fentanyl. After hearing from the leaders of RALI and other passionate individuals, I will remain committed to bringing an end to the opioid epidemic in our state.

On Sunday, the city of Brooklyn Center experienced the tragedy of an officer-involved shooting. This is a tragic situation and I believe all of Minnesota's hearts are aching for those who lost their son, father, and friend. The First Amendment secures our right to assemble and speak our minds.

However, there is no excuse for lawlessness, looting, or violence. It is important to think about the big picture and how these acts of violence can impact the community around you. I was disappointed to see rioting and destruction again by individuals looking to take advantage of a horrendous situation. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our local law enforcement, state troopers, and National Guard who have been keeping us safe through this turbulent time. Here at the capital, I have had the privilege of speaking to some of these individuals protecting our state. Thank you.

If there is any legislative issue you would like to learn more about or share your opinion on, I encourage you to reach out to my office at Sen. Gene Dornink@Senate.MN or 651-296-5240.



# Trout opportunity a boon for Austin

We are thrilled by the reintroduction of 600 more trout into Wolf Creek, with the first 300 that were delivered Friday ahead of the state's trout opener.

Wolf Creek is now Mower County's only stream stocked by the Department of Natural Resources and is a "put-and-take" stream, provided that anglers stay within the limit of five and no more than one is over 16 inches.

By all accounts, the first year that trout were stocked in Wolf Creek was a success with anglers reporting good fishing and good takes.

There's every reason to believe this coming year could be just as successful if not a little more. There is also reason to believe that the creek could be, in part, sustaining a trout population. Just last month, an angler from out of town caught and released a trout that would have been from last year's stock, and while it's not a direct

### Our opinion

indicator of a sustained population, it would be nice if Wolf Creek turned into such an opportunity.

Having a bonafide trout stream within Austin itself is a boon in a number of different ways, including the opportunity to pull more people to Austin and creating another recreational outlet in the community.

Wolf Creek is easily accessible, making it a prime location not only for experienced anglers, but for those just picking up a pole.

And of course, there is a dollar value. Money is going to be spent within our community as anglers make their way to Austin.

Once again, this is a win-win. However, to ensure this continues to be a win-win, there is a responsibility that falls on the anglers themselves.

Mind the rules and observe the

limits as to how many fish can be taken. If we want this creek to have a reputation as a prime fishing spot, then we need to know the limits and ensure opportunity for everyone.

Limit your footprint. This winter, DNR officials saw an uptick in garbage left behind on Minnesota lakes. It's a reminder to mind what you bring with you and be sure to take it with you in the end.

The Mower Soil & Water Conservation District has put substantial resources into cleaning our lakes and streams. It would be a shame to add a recreational resource like trout, only for human beings to ruin it.

There was no evidence there was a problem with this last year, but it's worth a reminder all the same.

We hope that trout fishing remains and appreciate the work from local and state officials to bring this recreation to Austin.

So grab your pole and come out and enjoy the opportunity.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Supporting affordable housing

In the recent news is the story about the possibility of transforming the old YMCA property into apartments. The proposal submitted is comprehensive and targeted towards affordable housing. It is to include 48 units, three stories with underground parking and very reasonable rents with the possibility of a child care center on the first floor. Another idea that surfaced at the last moment would be a market rate project that a developer out of Rochester is planning on submitting in the near future.

The question that arises is which one would be best for the community of Austin and its residents? Recent research tells us that both market rate and affordable housing is badly needed for the community of Austin and would be completely full within months.

The argument for the market rate project is that there is a significant need for additional market rate housing for professionals moving

to the community or those who live in current apartments moving to the new improved apartments; thus freeing those units for others needing affordable housing. This translates into supposedly two winners as the saying goes. Those who would like to move up to market rate housing leaving the possibility for those who need affordable housing having an available rental unit or home to buy. The site is attractive for market rate housing as it is close to the downtown stores, the hospital, the new YMCA and across from the Mill Pond Park.

Of course, the attractiveness of the site is just as appropriate and wonderful for those citizens of Austin who would live in the affordable units. With limited resources to use for housing, they have limited housing choices or options. They have to live where their financial resources take them, not where they would like to live.

My vote is for the development to

be for affordable housing. Three Rivers, the developer, has a wonderful track record of building affordable housing with the recent Fox Point Townhomes Development being a total success. They have a plan in place with financial resources to make the project successful and there is a need for the project. Their 16-million-dollar project is a wonderful improvement to the property that presently sits not used and vacant.

However, there is even a better idea that could be on the table if we think "big." Let's do both projects while the time is ripe; the need is there and we have parties in place that want to help Austin become even a better place in which to live and work. The location of the former YMCA and the adjacent land next to Kuehn Motors makes for a winner for both affordable housing and market rate housing.

**Roger Broughten**  
Austin, MN

## House bonding bill overlooks critical needs for Greater Minn.

This year in particular, we have been advocating for a capital investment bill that will serve as the foundation for economic recovery in all corners of our state as the COVID-19 pandemic recedes. Unfortunately, this is not that bill.

In a bill that totals more than \$1 billion, we are dismayed that it directs only a small fraction of the funding toward needs in Greater Minnesota. While the bill includes money for several statewide programs that could see some dollars make their way to our communities, they are not programs that target Greater Minnesota's unique infrastructure needs nor ones that will do much to support fu-

ture economic growth.

Our greatest disappointment with the House bonding bill is the under-investment in clean water infrastructure; \$15 million for the Public Facilities Authority is simply inadequate to address the critical water needs of our entire state. State agencies project more than \$11 billion is needed statewide over the next 15 to 20 years to address water pollution and replace aging infrastructure, yet this bill fails to make clean water a priority.

The one bright spot in the bill is the inclusion of \$5 million for child care facilities in Greater Minnesota, which is vital to combat the child

care shortage in rural communities. However, the bill fails to invest in other critical needs for Greater Minnesota such as workforce housing, economic development programs, and parks and trails. In contrast, there is significant funding for the metro in all these areas. While we do not begrudge funding for the metro area, we urge the Legislature to craft a better bonding bill that makes targeted investments in Greater Minnesota as well.

**Greg Zylka**  
Mayor, Little Falls/  
President, Coalition of  
Greater Minnesota Cities

## 'Thank you' for making Easter event a success

The Easter Egg-Stravaganza Event, which was held at Westminster Presbyterian Church of

Austin on April 3, 2021, was an awesome morning for the community to drive-through and receive

goodies in celebration of Easter. We are thankful for the support from the community attending,

Jim Jayes for his entertainment and generous donations from Hy-Vee, Walmart and church members.

A special thanks goes to the volunteers for their hard work making this a blessing for our community. We look forward to seeing you all again next year!

**Cynthia Goskeson**  
Westminster  
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## HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

Email a letter to newsroom@austindailyherald.com or mail it to 310 2nd St. NE, Austin, MN 55912



Dylan Demming helps magician Jim Jayes with a magic trick during the Circle of Friends Day Camp at the Hormel Historic Home in July of 2015. Herald file photo

# Smile and laugh

**Dear Annie:** I notice many readers have problems and anxieties. Maybe something my mother taught me will help them.



She lost two husbands to illness and had a chronic illness herself. We almost lost my brother on the same day my dad died. She raised three boys in a small town taking any job available. Through all these hard times, she always found something to make us laugh. People loved her laugh and smiling face. There is a fine line between laughing and crying, of course. I know she crossed it many times, but few knew.

I was married for 62 years. Our disagreements were short-lived because one of us would make the other laugh. There is a side benefit to this type of lifestyle. When she died at age 82, neither of us had any wrinkles.

In business, I printed small yellow cards with the word SMILE and gave them away. Many people told me they put it on their bathroom mirror and always started their day with a smile.

Whatever your problem is today you won't remember it in six months. Why ruin a beautiful day feeling miserable. There are other things to think about. If life deals you a hard blow, and you don't know what to do, remember this.

You don't drown by falling in the water; you drown by staying there.

— Larry T.

**Dear Larry:** Thank you for the big smile and big perspective. I'm grateful to people such as yourself, who find little ways to make the world a brighter place.

**Dear Annie:** About one year ago, I ended my very first relationship. We were together for about six months. He was a horrible boyfriend, but that was only the beginning of it. He sexually violated me the entire time we were together. He didn't listen to a single thing I asked him to either do or not do. He would kiss me even when I told him I didn't want to kiss him, sit close by me

when I told him I wasn't comfortable with it, and touch my legs no matter what I did.

When it was happening, I pinned the blame on myself. I thought I was just scared to do all of this stuff because I'd never done it before. But now I realize it wasn't my fault.

I haven't seen or talked to him since I broke up with him. But since then, I've been tortured by the thought of him. Everything reminds me of him and makes me feel anxious. I told myself things would get better and in a month I'd be back to normal. But it's been a year and I still feel tortured remembering what happened. Every night, I'm scared to fall asleep because my dreams are filled with him sexually abusing me. What do I do?

— Desperate

**Dear Desperate:** It is horrendous that your ex-boyfriend treated you so poorly. Intimate relationships are premised on the idea of feeling safe enough around one another to be vulnerable. He turned that on its head. I'm sorry this happened. But I promise you won't feel this way forever. With the help of the right people, you can process what happened, seek justice and begin to experience life again. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673 or visit [rainn.org](http://rainn.org) to connect with trained specialists who can help you identify the next steps in the path toward healing.

*"Ask Me Anything: A Year of Advice From Dear Annie" is out now! Annie Lane's debut book — featuring favorite columns on love, friendship, family and etiquette — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit [www.creatorspublishing.com](http://www.creatorspublishing.com) for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to [dearannie@creators.com](mailto:dearannie@creators.com).*

# Celebrating acceptance

In April we celebrate Autism Acceptance/Awareness month! (As guest columnist this week I want to add Appreciation to the alliteration.) Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological developmental condition impacting one's processing of social interactions, communication and sensory information.

Since 2009, the Hormel Historic Home has embraced outreach and education for those affected by autism in Austin and the surrounding communities. Much of the growth and now breadth of the programming, recognized on a local, regional and even national level, came under the strong leadership of our Executive Director, Holly Johnson. As I write, Holly is embarking on a new exciting career adventure here in Austin. On behalf of families, the ASD advisory team, the HHH staff, the community and me—thank you Holly! Your drive, compassion, and focus (and of course your technology skills) allowed me and others to create and implement impactful camps, recreation and educational events increasing understanding of autism and improving outcomes.

You supported us to meet every current need possible while always evaluating what more could be done. We very much appreciate all your efforts in developing the Autism Friendly Austin communi-



ty we all now benefit from! You will be missed by us at the HHH, but we know you will continue driving positive change and impact in Austin!

Appreciation also goes to the following Austin businesses/organizations who have been certified as Autism Friendly since 2017. They have participated in a specially designed program to make them more aware of the needs of those on the autism spectrum. As Community Autism Resource Specialist, I conduct an hour-long interactive training where I explain the condition and provide simple ways to treat, serve and support autistic customers or employees. The training is free and businesses are given a tool kit which includes sensory items and additional resources.

- Apple Lane Childcare
- Austin Artworks Center/Paramount Theatre
- Austin Community Concierge
- Austin Fire Department
- Austin Public Schools Food Service Department
- Austin Public Library
- Bridget's Dance Conservatory
- Catherwood Childcare Center
- Drs. Elrod, Green and

Heimer, D.D.S. Austin/Adams

- Essence Salon
- Family Eye Care Center
- Guy Family Dentistry
- Hormel Foods Human Resources and Recruiting Departments
- Hormel Historic Home
- Impact Fitness
- InnoVision EyeCare Austin/Albert Lea
- Jimmy Johns
- Just For Kix
- LIFE Mower County
- Matchbox Children's Theater
- Mayo Clinic Health System
- Medicap Pharmacy
- Midtown Auto Clinic
- Mower County Historical Society
- Mower County Human Services
- Parenting Resource Center
- Perkins Restaurant
- Potach and Mitchell Dentistry
- Shoe Sensation Austin and Albert Lea
- Seibel Center
- Southeastern Minnesota Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
- Spam Museum
- Style Lounge
- Summerset Theater
- YMCA

The Autism Friendly Austin initiative and related programming is made possible by many appreciated donors including Pat and Gary Ray, Nancy Knowlton, the United Way, the Hormel Foundation and YOU! Following is a list of upcoming events we are very excited to host as we get back into the groove

of in-person activities and events here at the HHH.

Note: All events are in-person, masks required and prior registration required.

**April 30:** ASD Recreation night—youth with ASD grades K-8, 6-7 p.m.

**May 1:** ASD Teen and Young Adult Chillaxing afternoon, 1-2:30 p.m.

**June 6:** 10th Annual Stepping Out for Autism Fundraising Walk, 1-3 p.m.

**June 10:** All Day ASD Conference featuring Judy Endow: "Autistically Thriving" Living a Self-Determined Life with Autism, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**June 21-25:** Circle of Friends Day Camp for youth with ASD K-grade 5

**July 5 and July 12 weeks:** All Access Community Explorations Camp ASD youth grades 6-12th

**July 19-23:** Camp Just For Me ASD youth grades K-12 with more significant support needs

Camp registration is available online now at the website below. They will fill up quickly!

Although much attention is given to Autism in April, our programming is offered year-round and you are invited to learn more about it at [www.hormelhistorichome.org/autism-programming](http://www.hormelhistorichome.org/autism-programming). If you have questions or would like to join our advisory team contact me at [autism@hormelhistorichome.org](mailto:autism@hormelhistorichome.org) or 507-433-4243.

# The joy of the moment

It was just an ordinary Monday, but the night was somehow magical.

It had been such a long time since I had spent any amount of time outside.

When the sun was just beginning to set,

I decided to sit on the deck for about an hour and a half.

As I said there, a lot of things happened.

A white cat, with a black tail, sauntered through the yard.

I looked up at the black branches of the walnut tree beautifully silhouetted against the sky.

The tall pine tree swayed



in the wind, and it was wonderful to feel the soft breeze on my face.

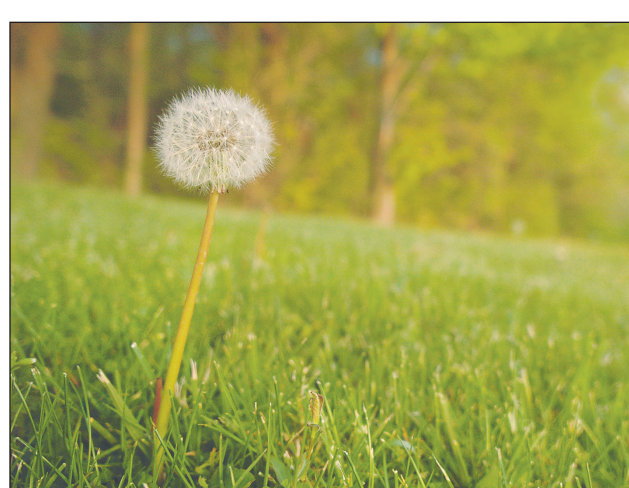
I read a book of essays and soaked up the sound of the outside.

A cardinal sang its joyful song.

The motorcycles rumble by.

Dogs bark in my neighbor's yard next door.

I sat there a little while longer.



The sky grew dark, and the stars came out.

I've always thought of stars as our loved ones, who have left this world, shining their bright lights into our lives. It is comforting.

I wasn't on the beach.

I wasn't sitting on a beautiful mountainside.

I was just in my own backyard.

But I was enjoying my surroundings.

I was enjoying the moment of this beautiful, ordinary Monday evening.

# Talking spring safety

**Question:** Can you talk about motorcycle safety going into spring riding?



**Answer:** With everything going on in the world today, a motorcycle ride can be the perfect escape. Leave your worries behind, put that helmet on, and head for the open road.

Here are steps you can take to reduce your risk of crashing:

- Ride sober.
- Wear highly visible protective gear, including a brightly colored helmet.
- Have a good riding strategy for every ride.

Wearing proper protective gear can help keep you safe in case of a crash, but having good riding skills can prevent a crash from happening in the first place.

Motorcycle training is a great way to develop and improve safe riding skills, but time is running out to register for the Basic Rider Course (BRC) to earn your endorsement. More than 1,300 riders took the BRC in the first two months of the training season, which started the first week of June, and nearly 300 more riders took other MMSC training courses. Register now for one of the 22 locations throughout Minnesota.

There are a limited number of intermediate courses still available too. This course is a great way to practice riding a new motorcycle or riding with a passenger. You can take the intermediate

course with a passenger for no additional charge. MMSC offers advanced and expert training courses too, but those have wrapped up for the season. Challenge yourself to take a training course every year or two to keep your riding skills sharp—after all, training can make a huge difference in avoiding crashes.

You can find details about all the training courses on the MMSC's website, including eligibility requirements for each level. Additional information can be found on the Department of Public Safety's blog: <https://dps.mn.gov/blog/Pages/20200824-make-every-motorcycle-ride-safe.aspx>

*You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths. If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson — Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, [Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us](mailto:Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us))*

## POLL RESULTS



**The Austin City Council postponed for two weeks a decision to vote on the building of an apartment complex at the site of the old YMCA. How do you feel about the proposed project?**

Support a market rate apartment complex site	66
Support a low income apartment complex site	30
Against any apartment complex at this site	16

Total votes: 112