

letters

Community care versus cages

From: Sarah Ventura

I've been hit in the face, bitten, pulled to the ground, screamed at, spit at, had my hair pulled out, and cleaned up all sorts of foul messes. If you've worked with someone or have a loved one with a developmental disability, none of this is surprising. Part of the initial job training for working with vulnerable adults is learning to avoid, deescalate, and escape from dangerous situations while keeping yourself and others safe. At no point is it legal to use aggression or violence against someone you support. At no point is it legal to bring a gun or weapon to work. At no point is it legal to neglect them or refuse their basic rights. Any use of physical or chemical restraints is either illegal or highly discouraged and monitored.

Distance learning and traditional grades

From: Shelly Merchlewitz
Dakota

I am writing this letter as a concerned parent and educator. Before the school year started, Winona Area Public Schools decided that the traditional grading system (A, B, C, D, F) would be followed for the upcoming school year — no matter what the learning model was. We are just about halfway through the

Remembering lefse at Grandma's

From: Orlin Brommer

My Norwegian grandma, Olena Brommer, lived a little more than a half-hour drive from Waumandee. She lived in Urne, Wis.; (pronounced Ernie) a tiny village of Norwegians. Many were related to me. One need not get very far into the adjoining valley and have been with Austrian farmers. Residents in another direction immigrated from the English Islands. Early during settlement, different groups kept to themselves, mostly because of language, customs, and religions. By the time I visited in the early 1950's there were only small subtle differences. Children began attending centralized schools where anything but English and blended customs had fallen by the way-side. Like most youngsters my memory begin about age four or five. The trip seemed to take forever. Dad varied routes providing different scenery on our outing. Between him and my mother, who met my father while teaching in the area, would give bits and pieces of the lives of the residents who's homes we see passing. Once in grandma's cozy home, I tossed my jacket while getting the warmest, co-

Ask a trooper: Commercial vehicle stops

From: Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol

Question: If I'm driving a commercial vehicle and stopped, what documents are needed to present to the trooper?
Answer: I will list what is covered in a "level one" inspection, done along with weight enforcement. North American Standard Inspection: an inspection that includes examination of driver's license;

A special thank you to our bluff neighbors

From: Arlene Walker

During these troubling and very sad times in America and throughout the world, your selfless contribution to your neighbors here in the Winona area is much appreciated. Your beautiful cross shining its light over our community has been creating a wonderful pleasant and calming effect, at least for me. Not everyone will agree, but as for me and my family, we are grateful and can only hope that you will continue this tradition for many years. Wishing everyone a happy new year of much happiness and good health.

This was not always the case. In recent history, people with disabilities were institutionalized inside carceral-like systems where they experienced violence, aggression, neglect, and restraints. They did not enjoy basic rights. Much of this was considered treatment and deemed necessary to keep them and the public safe. The staff who worked in these institutions, hospitals, and asylums were no different from myself. Often, they were people who entered a line of work with the intent to help. Unfortunately, the systems they entered were violent and the resources at their disposal were punitive or inadequate. The larger public was mostly unaware or did not think things could be done differently. Society has now decided that using violence, aggression, neglect, and restraints are not necessary or effective treatments and do not keep people safe. While our current practices are not perfect, we've come a long way in these past few decades. Most of the effort in care work is now focused on creating safe and healthy en-

vironments for people with disabilities and those who care for them. Rather than forcefully removing or isolating people, this care usually takes place in group homes or in a person's private residence. We want people to have access to resources and personal freedom, to be protected from violence and neglect, and to participate in and contribute to their communities regardless of their level of capability. We want those who were formerly institutionalized to heal, rehabilitate, and receive restitution from the abuses they suffered. It has taken massive systemic changes, but we are making progress. It's taken divesting from harsh institutions and practices and investing in community care and rehabilitation. The changes needed in our systems of care are the very same that are needed in our systems of justice. Winona County is a part of America. America has become the home of mass incarceration. We need to be brave and committed enough to choose community care over cages.

school year, and the high school students have set foot in the building on 18 days. They spent the other days in distance learning. Then, the learning model switched and they attended "in class" time via Zoom for 10 more days and had 10 more distance learning days before winter break. During their distance learning days, there is no instruction or supervision by a teacher. The students work independently on assignments. The teachers have office hours if a student needs help. So, the students have had 28 days of direct instruction over the course of almost two quarters of the school year. During a "normal" school year, one quarter is at least 40 instructional days. ziest, hug from a very good-hearted grandmother. The hug began with both of us standing, then her finding a chair while the hug continued, and ended with my sitting on her aproned lap. As greetings were exchanged and outerwear tossed on the closest bed, we all assembled around the large dining room table. Although I knew only about a dozen Norwegian words, the prayer started with "I Jesu navn går vi til bords." Being one of the youngest diners I ended up almost always on mother's lap and ate from her plate. I was, and still am, a picky eater. I am not much for mixing foods before they enter my esophagus. Mother understood and was accommodating. Another reason for not eating all that much dinner, I knew that after eating the noon meal, and while the adult women were doing dishes, Grandma Brommer was setting up in front of the shiny, black cook stove. She was about to make lefse. Everybody in the world makes flat bread, and the Norwegian's staple begins with boiled then mashed potatoes. Without fuss, she stirred together the potatoes, flour, milk, and butter and often a little more milk and salt. She then rolled out rounds to be fried on the hot shiny stovetop that had been prepared by rubbing waxed paper, from an empty bread bag, onto the hot surface (no frying with cooking oil in a pan). Earlier the stove had been dressed with a layer of white flour.

medical examiner's certificate (if non-CDL) and Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate (if applicable); alcohol and drugs; driver's record of duty status as required; hours of service; seat belt; vehicle inspection report(s) (if applicable); brake systems; coupling devices; exhaust systems; frames; fuel systems; lighting devices (headlamps, tail lamps, stop lamps, turn signals and lamps/flags on projecting loads); securement of cargo; steering mechanisms; suspensions; tires; van and open-top trailer bodies; wheels, rims and hubs; windshield wipers; emergency exits and/or electrical cables and systems in engine and battery compartments (buses), and hazardous material/dangerous goods (HM/DG) requirements as applicable.

Winona's beautiful Christmas Star

From: Paula Harrigan
Rollingstone

I would like to thank the family who has

The classes seem to be progressing through the same amount of materials with less than half the instructional time. How can students be expected to learn all the material with less instruction and yet be graded as if everything were normal. I know there are many students who are struggling with various aspects of the distance learning models and because of the current grading system, even though they are doing the best they can, they will not earn the credits towards graduation that they need if they don't pass their classes. With all things considered, maybe the grading system for the 2020-2021 school year could be re-evaluated so our students who have lost out on so much already, don't lose out on more.

The hot flour on the stove darkened and added to the flavor. Finished lefse is best eaten right from the stove, slathered with butter, and rolled up. The less one messes around with extra ingredients, the better it tastes. Butter dripping off one's fingers is required. My wife Kathy, after a not doing so well in her first few attempts, now makes lefse with the best of them. Coming from a German background, she deep-fried in oil her first lefse round or two. That night, we two newlyweds combined techniques and made some very acceptable lefse to take home to my mother for a Sunday noon meal. Mom was impressed because she, also from a German background, never got the technique to her liking. Looking back at our first lefse, many of the rounds, which are stored and transported flat, were too brittle and at the table didn't roll all that well. Although our sons-in-law didn't eat lefse before coming to Kathy's kitchen, along with the rest of us, cannot imagine any fall or winter meal without lefse. It is as important as meat, sides, and dessert. Almost everybody samples lefse before and after the meal. Although unneeded, adding brown or white sugar onto buttered lefse is OK, too. Anything one can imagine rolling in a lefse, is just fine. One evening while having lefse and eating broccoli and cheese casserole, we all tried tasty casserole lefse rollups. Grandma Olena would have approved.

HM/DG required inspection items will be inspected by certified HM/DG inspectors. There are "Level two" inspections, which are walk around inspections, and "Level three" inspections, which are paperwork only. All of which include the drivers portion and registration on vehicles. 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, 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester, MN, 55901-5848 or reach him at Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us.

placed the big, beautiful Christmas star above Winona. Driving along Lake Street at the park last winter, I was struck by the beauty of the Christmas star on the bluff and thanked God for the blessings of living in such a beautiful place. For me, that star is a sign of God's blessing on our beloved Winona.

letters

Ode to personal responsibility in the age of COVID-19

From: Jenny Kuderer
Goodview

COVID claims more souls,
The toll an unimaginable
Loss that shows one that
Science cannot be tossed
Out in hopes that this is not
A true enemy, not an invisible
Thief that takes the lives of
Young, old, and middle-aged,
That leaves some survivors
Of its ravages in an unnerving
Haze where clear thinking has
Temporarily, at least, been erased
By the devastating, intense haste of
This virus that never tires of finding
Fresh victims for its truly insatiable
Hunger to infect rather than protect.

How many communities must be
Wrecked by this predator that knows
No bounds until the response will be
One fitting an opposing force whose
Ways are still conniving but not entirely
Unknown, when the president stands
And tempts the virus to come "home"
To supporters standing shoulder to
Shoulder spewing saliva into the air
Where a droplet or hundreds might
Land on unsuspecting pairs who
Believed him when he said, "We
Are rounding the corner," and
That they themselves would never
Become ill or become mourners
For loved ones to whom they spread
This plague as their belief in the
Scientific proof continues to lag?

The wish for healing for all is great,
But the steps that must be taken
Cannot be escaped by courting
Fate and running against the
Scientists that say even six feet
Apart inside is not enough to save
All the lives we wish to hold dear upon
The global stage as days pass with
Maskless revelers insisting that they
Shall be unfazed until they are forced to
Feel the chaos and the pain that COVID
Brings with its dark, painful reign.

We are in this together, you see,
Whether we steadfastly protect one
Another or attempt in vain to flee the
Facts that say for the good of all
Playing it safe is key so that we might
Protect the singular lives that rely on
That generous gift of personal responsibility.

County missed the point on new jail

From: Bonnie Hammack

I wish I could rescind my previous letter to the editor. In my last letter I stated my hope that the democratic process might be allowed to function as intended. That hope has been crushed. At the County Board meeting on December 22, county commissioners refused to allow a public hearing on the jail size before they voted on the 80-bed facility that had been proposed. The public requested to be heard; we were denied. Commissioner Meyer instead proposed to seek public input on needed programs in the community. The three city commissioners failed to recognize that the services repeatedly requested by community members would inherently reduce incarceration and the request for services in our community is directly tied to the size of the jail — to separate the two exemplifies that the commissioners were not listening with intent to public outcry. The vote in support of a discussion about a smaller jail size at the last meeting was lip service at best. The city commissioners appeared to have no intent to consider a smaller jail size than what was proposed; there was not true discussion among board members to consider a smaller option. The commissioners that represent constituents within Winona city limits have failed in their roles as representatives of the public, they chose to represent the criminal justice system and their agendas, and not allow residents a voice in decisions that have the potential to massively impact our lives.

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