

MAPLE GROVE:

2 men found guilty in death, kidnapping of real estate agent. See page 3

SCHOOLS:

Area students placed in BestPrep's Stock Market Game. See page 5

COMMUNITY:

Cross Community Players is back with a summer production. See page 5



Concert on the Lawn is back in Maple Grove this fall

This year's event will be over 2 nights

By ALICIA MILLER
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Tickets are now on sale for one of the most anticipated events in Maple Grove this year. The Concert on the Lawn event will feature several bands performing Friday, Sept. 17 and Saturday, Sept. 18, on the great lawn area at Central Park of Maple Grove, 12000 Central Park Way.

This event did not happen last fall due to restrictions related to the pandemic. Concert on The Lawn is the northwest metro's newest live music festival, which first took place in September 2019.

This year's event, presented by the Maple Grove Lions Foundation, has been expanded to two nights. Each will showcase three live musical acts and include beer gardens and food trucks at the award-winning Central Park of Maple Grove.

Tickets are now on sale for this two-day music festival, with tickets available for one night or both.

The gates will open at 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday, with music from 5 to 10:30 p.m.

Headliners are Rockie Lynne (Friday) and the band Soul Asylum (Saturday).

Concert on the Lawn is presented by the Maple Grove Lions Foundation in partnership with the city of Maple Grove. For more information and to

purchase tickets, go to: maplegrovelions.org/concert-on-the-lawn

FRIDAY

The lineup for Friday includes the bands Rockie Lynne, Hitchville and Anderson Daniels.

Rockie Lynne, a veteran of the United States Army and co-founder of Tribute to the Troops national charitable organization, is the lead guitarist. His debut single, "Lipstick" spent an 10 consecutive weeks in the No.1 slot on Billboard's Country Singles Sales chart.

Hitchville is under the foundation leadership of dynamic lead vocalists Heidi Owens and Matthew Kneefe, the group's trademark harmonies, down-home personalities, and kinetic

stage energy leads to an unforgettable live show. The group's most recent album "Soundtrack to Life" includes their first iHeartRadio #1 single "Even When It's Bad It's Good" as well as their second iHeartRadio No.1 single "Love is the Road."

Anderson Daniels is on a straight line to creating the mid-western sound in country music.

SATURDAY

The lineup for Saturday includes the bands Soul Asylum, St. Paul Peterson and The Minneapolis Funk All Stars and Turn Turn Turn.

Soul Asylum, initially formed in the early '80s under the name Loud Fast Rules, quickly became part of the celebrated Minneapolis local music scene.

The band had several international hits, including "Runaway Train," which won a Grammy Award for Best Rock Song, and "Black Gold," and led to steady alternative radio and MTV airplay. Soul Asylum continued to enjoy mainstream success with 1995's platinum-certified Let Your Dim Light Shine, which featured the hit "Misery," and 1998's Candy from a Stranger; the group also appeared on the soundtrack for multiple Kevin Smith movies, including "Clerks."

St. Paul Peterson and the Minneapolis Funk All Stars includes member Paul Peterson, born in Minneapolis, who was the youngest son in a musical family.

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Way to go Rebels, Class of 2021!

The Champlin Park High School Class of 2021 celebrated their commencement with a ceremony on Sunday, June 6, at 3M Arena at Mariucci on the University of Minnesota campus. Confetti cannons shoot off as graduates throw their caps in the air at the end of the ceremony. More photos can be found inside this paper. (Photo by Sam Johnson)

Osseo School District provides kids summer meals for free

The Osseo School District is doing its part to help kids stay fed this summer. From June 14 to Aug. 25, Osseo Area Schools will provide free meals to any child 18 years or younger through the federally funded Summer Food Service Program.

Meals provided at no charge will be distributed curbside at 10 district schools from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. A meal bag containing breakfast and lunch will be provided. Adults may pick up meals for a child without that child being present.

These schools are: Basswood Elementary School in Maple Grove, Edinbrook Elementary School in Brooklyn Park, Elm Creek Elementary School in Maple Grove, Garden City Elementary School in Brooklyn Center, Weaver Lake: A Science, Math & Technology School in Maple Grove, Woodland Elementary School in Brooklyn Park, Zanewood Community: A STEAM School in Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Middle: A STEAM School in Brooklyn Park, Maple Grove Middle School in Maple Grove, and Maple Grove Senior High School in Maple Grove.

Additionally, Osseo Area Schools will provide free meals to children who are enrolled in specific summer programs at Cedar Island, Crest View, Fernbrook, Oak View, Palmer Lake, Park Brook, and Rice Lake elementary schools as well as Osseo Middle School and Park Center Senior High School. These same sites will also be offering summer meals, but only to students enrolled at the schools.

A man and the leaf: Carlson at MGSJ since founding

Now the legendary coach walks proudly into retirement

By SAM JOHNSON
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Tucked away near the back of the Maple Grove Senior High boys lockers is an inconspicuous office that belongs to Darby Carlson. It isn't flashy and doesn't stand out, but that is just the way Carlson likes it.

As soon as you enter his office, there is a wall lined with a potpourri of newspaper clippings, team photos, and a photo of Chicago Bears legend Walter Payton with a quote that reads, "Remember, tomorrow is promised to no one." During Carlson's quarter-century of coaching and teaching at Maple Grove, he has lived with that truth at the forefront of his mind and will hold to that in his next stage of life: retirement, which the longtime baseball coach will enter at

the end of the season.

But that carpe diem attitude started in his youth, growing up on a fourth-generation farm in a small town called Parkers Prairie.

As someone who grew up seeing his grandparents and parents toil on the farmstead, Carlson got immersed in a strong work ethic and responsibility. But that wasn't necessarily an inherited trait. One day after school in the 30 degrees below zero winter cold, Carlson, then a starter on the high school basketball team, was tasked with feeding the 50 beef cattle his family owned. However, the machine had broken down and instead of trying to fix it, Carlson thought he would leave it for his dad. He had a basketball game later in the night to get to. When his father came home, he asked Carlson if he got the job done. Carlson said he replied with some excuse as to why he hadn't.

It did not matter to his father. Carlson had to finish the job before he left for his game. After missing the



Darby Carlson poses in the Minnesota Twins dugout at Target Field during a state baseball game against Burnsville in 2011. Carlson and the Crimson have finished as a state runner-up twice, in 1999 and 2011. Carlson is retiring after 25 years as the baseball head coach at Maple Grove Senior High School. (Photo courtesy of Darby Carlson)

team bus and driving himself to the gym, Carlson showed up just in time... for the second quarter. "That established within me a lot of what I value today," Carlson said.

He lived at the crossroads of farming and athletics for his early years. With only 66 kids in his graduating class, Carlson played in every sport he could. For that matter, so

did almost everyone in the school who wanted to. "If you could walk and chew gum, you were probably playing a sport," he said. By the end of his high school career, he had lettered in four sports: basketball, baseball, football, and tennis.

From there, he attended the University of Northwestern in Roseville, where he played football and

baseball. While at Northwestern, Carlson, who entered as a business major, felt a change in his calling. He really enjoyed sports and after consulting with his uncle regularly, he decided to change his major to education where he would become a physical education and health teacher, and a coach.

His first landing spot post-college was Hopkins, where he served as the sophomore football coach. During his time coaching for the Royals, Carlson was serving his teaching duties as a substitute in the Osseo School District, and after two years, he accepted a full-time job as the physical education at Osseo Junior High School.

In the 12 years he taught at Osseo Junior, Carlson continued coaching, this time as the freshman football coach and an assistant baseball coach.

After the decade-plus at the middle school, a new high school called Maple Grove Senior High was founded in 1996 and needed a leading man to be in

their athletic department. Enter Darby Carlson. "I was just looking for an opportunity," Carlson said. Before he knew it, Carlson was wearing multiple hats again: Varsity football defensive coordinator, freshman basketball coach, and head varsity baseball coach. Oh, and that is along with being the school's physical education and health teacher. "It was non-stop," he said. "But to me, coaching was a mini-vacation."

Carlson enjoyed going to practice each day with two goals in mind: have fun and pursue excellence. Over his many years as the head baseball coach at Maple Grove, Carlson has reaped what he has sown. More than 400 wins and nine conference championships later, including two state runners-up in 1999 and 2011, Darby Carlson has every right to stick out his chest and brag about all that he has accomplished. But that isn't him.

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Darby Carlson looks back on 25-year coaching career

CARLSON...
from page 1

"If you are judging your success based on wins and losses, your focus is in the wrong spot," he said. Instead, his focus is on what is not in the box score or record books. To Carlson, sports provide the best medium for teaching life lessons to kids. "That is what it's always been about for me," he said. "You can learn so much more I think in competition on the field that you learn in the classroom."

BUILDING CONNECTIONS AND DARBYISMS

During Carlson's coaching stint at Osseo, he made an impact on a man who would one day share the sidelines with him, as a fellow coach.

Mark Cook first met Carlson when Cook was a running back and Carlson was the defensive coordinator for Osseo High School in the 1990s. One of the first things Cook felt when playing for Carlson was a deep sense of pride in the work they did and also create some laughter. "The way he got the best out of the kids was amazing," Cook said.

One year, in particular, Cook remembers the Orioles football defense being a brick wall. If you got past the first line of defense, you sure weren't getting past the second. So one day, when Osseo made it to the state semifinals and got to practice at the University of

Minnesota facilities, Cook remembers taking a hand-off and miraculously getting past the defensive line. All of a sudden, a linebacker came out of nowhere and as Cook said, "lit his ass up."

The first person over to check on Cook was Carlson. Although he wasn't knocked out cold, Cook felt extremely woozy. As soon as Carlson saw that Cook would be alright, he uttered one of his famous Darbyisms: "Did you get the number of the train that hit you?!" It made Cook laugh on the spot.

"He had a special way to connect with kids," Cook said.

Talk to any of Carlson's former players and expect to hear a story about some unique Darbyism. Beware if you hear:

"Oh my grandma!" — a shriek of disbelief.

"Catch the picken ball!" — which is as close as players say Carlson gets to cussing.

"Gotta have sand in the pants!" — getting down and dirty.

"The cream rises to the top" — an ode to Carlson's childhood growing up on a farm. When the milk sat, the cream rose to the top, which is the best milk.

Any player of Carlson knows the way he operates in practice. If you commit a mental error, it's either running to the meat shop advertisement in center field, or writing out a rhyming phrase 20 times about how you won't make the same mistake again, and then reading it out loud to the entire team.

Included within the sporadic Darbyisms, though, are nuggets of truth that players latch on to and remember. "It's special to be his very last group to get the last wisdom from him," sophomore Hunter Gerber said. "It's an honor to go out last with Darby. He's a man of high character and he pushes us to be our best in every aspect of life."

When Cook began coaching and teaching at Maple Grove in 2000, that is the same intention he saw in his former coach. In any season of life, Cook knew that there was one person he could go to with any

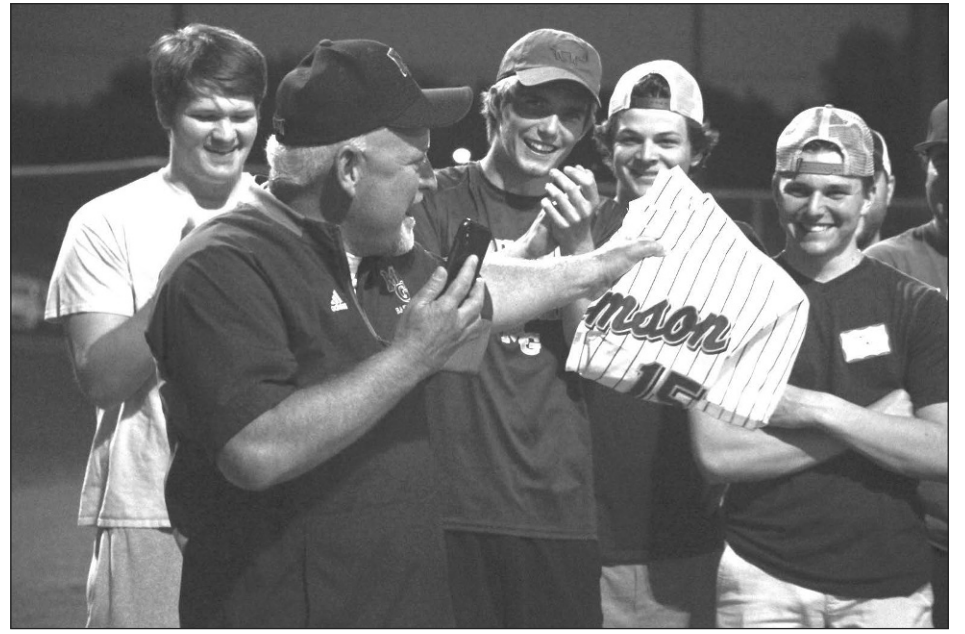
question or conversation: Darby Carlson. "Darby was such a huge mentor for me," Cook said. "I always grew up saying I hope my kids got to play for him." Low and behold, Cook's son, Cade, did. The second-generation Cook was coached by Carlson in ninth-grade football and 10th grade basketball.

Off the field, Cook has gotten to know Carlson as more than a coach and colleague, but a spiritual role model, as both men are a part of a Bible study that meets regularly. Early on in Carlson's time at Maple Grove, one of his football players approached him asking if they could start a weekly devotional time. Carlson was all in. Soon, a handful of athletes began to meet on Friday mornings to gather in fellowship and read the Bible, a group they called the Breakfast Club. It didn't hurt that Carlson supplied the donuts and juice for hungry athletes. Eventually, the group got tied in with the organization Fellowship of Christian Athletes and often has nearly 100 kids attend on Friday mornings.

Spend a day, a week, a month with Carlson and you'll soon realize there is no off switch for his encouragement. It may not be in the form everyone likes, though. He occasionally raises his voice and is stern at times to players. But that is all in an effort to make them as great as they can be.

For the past three seasons, assistant baseball coach Jeff Peterson has had the pleasure of coaching in the dugout with Carlson, watching how he galvanizes young men to be the best version of themselves. "He cares a lot of every one of his players," Peterson said. "It's not about baseball. He wants them to be successful at every walk of life."

Before taking the field wearing the same uniform, Peterson saw what Carlson was like as an opponent when Peterson played baseball for Park Center in the late 1990s. "He's the face of Maple Grove baseball," Peterson said. "He is not a big stats guy or one to enjoy the limelight. He's more worried about winning the



Darby Carlson cracks a joke towards his current and former players at his postgame retirement ceremony on May 21. (Photo by Sam Johnson)

game." But with built-up passion comes unbridled elation during moments of ecstasy. "There is nothing better than a fired-up Darby Carlson," Cook added.

REPLACING A LEGEND

Attempting to fill Carlson's void at Maple Grove is like trying to replenish the oceans. But in each of the coaches and players he has touched in his long and successful career, a seed of Darby Carlson will live on. And with time, the legacy of the Crimson legend will continue to spread. "Darby is a legend at our school," assistant baseball coach Adam Spurrell said. "Coach C's attitude, work ethic, and passion are truly reflected every day. These kids realize sports are just a part of who they are."

"I'm a better coach and teacher with the time I spent with Darby," Cook said. "I'm a better man, father, husband, and human being thanks to Darby. My hope is that someday someone will say the same about me."

When his time at Maple Grove comes to an end after this season, Carlson is planning to move back home to Parkers Prairie and spend more time with his wife and family. He also has a dream to start an apple orchard on six acres of land that he owns. But what might surprise some people is that he is not yet ready to leave coaching altogether. "It

wouldn't surprise me a lick if I got back into coaching," Carlson admitted, although he said it would be only in an assistant coaching role.

MORE THAN WINS AND LOSSES

It was supposed to be a surprise. Spurrell and other coaches had been planning for a month to honor Carlson at the end of the May 21 primetime game against Osseo. But only a couple of days before, the coaches found out that Carlson was aware of the ceremony. What Carlson didn't expect was the number of people that turned out.

After Maple Grove's 1-0 walk-off win in eight innings, where Carlson called a five-man infield in the eighth inning to quench a bases-loaded, nobody out jam, tens of current and former players, coaches, and family members covered the baseline and foul area, all waiting to give Carlson a handshake or hug. For a man who doesn't love the spotlight, Carlson was the man of the night.

As a self-proclaimed "off-the-cuff guy," when it came to giving a speech, Carlson took the cell phone that doubled as a microphone and talked for nearly five minutes about what it all meant to him.

His million-watt smile went ear to ear when he mentioned his "top-of-the-line" kids and coaches he's worked with and invested

in. His choked-up voice signified his gratitude to his family for all the support they've given him. And his inner baseball fan showed through when he paraphrased New York Yankee legend, Lou Gehrig, by saying, "I consider myself the luckiest man in the world."

When he reflected on that special night nearly two weeks later, he felt the same emotion as he thought about his former players and coaches. "I'm very grateful kids were able to come back for something like that," he said, fighting back tears. "It's pretty meaningful."

All this fanfare and celebration was very un-Darby-like. The man, who doesn't have any social media accounts and compares using Twitter to pheasant hunting, didn't even know he recorded his 400th career win just a few weeks prior until Peterson told him after the game.

No, instead of being on stage, Carlson has always preferred to work behind the scenes. When the lights are off and the crowd is invisible, Carlson shines the brightest.

"It wasn't about the wins and losses," Carlson said after. "The wins and losses are just a result of what we were emphasizing. If you emphasize those life lessons, it results in more success. That is what I hope the program was all about."



Darby Carlson stands on the third-base line during a section playoff game against Wayzata on June 5. Carlson, having amassed over 400 career wins, is finishing up his 25th season as the Crimson baseball head coach. (Photo by John Sherman)

DIGITAL RESULTS

for your BUSINESS

We Deliver Digital Results

In addition to our multiple publications in East Central Minnesota we offer agency-level multiplatform marketing solutions and service without the higher costs or fees associated with an agency. We provide you with real-time 'Transparent, detailed, placement and response reporting' for your digital campaigns! Creative minds and the most integrated data platforms in the business support the development of strong professional messaging in efforts to reach your target audience in a variety of ways across the web.

Digital Services We Offer

Online Targeted Display is a very effective way to place ads in front of your target market online. We use targeting data based on search history, location & hundreds of interest targeting options

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Additional digital marketing services we offer include Search Engine Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, Website Design, Social Media Marketing, Video Content Creation and Video Online (OTT).

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Testimonials

I am grateful for Shana Bouley, who is willing to sit down with me and my team to help us understand all of the different online media avenues that APG-ECM offers. I am not super "techie" and she is willing to explain things over (and sometimes over) again so that it starts to make some sense. Being in the real estate service industry, it is important for us to have a positive online presence and for our community to know that we are here to help them as they transition into the next chapter in their lives. I feel that in utilizing Digital Targeted Display, Geo-Fencing, Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and ads on their local newspaper website we are able to offer this to our clients and customers. Thank you for all that you are doing Shana and team!

-Michelle Lundeen, Realtor of Team Lundeen-Remax Results

"We continue to advertise with Aaron and APG/Sun Media to market online. He takes care of ad design and comes to the table with ideas. And whether it's our online display ads, Search Engine Marketing with Google or Pre-Roll Video ads - they are all clearly the top drivers of traffic to our website. With challenging times during the pandemic - it has ensured that traffic in-store and online continues to be strong."

-Ron, Appliance Depot

"I continue to be blown away on the creative you design for my online advertising! It fits our brand and is bringing results. Business has been very busy, launching my online campaigns has been the only change to my marketing. Combining that with data from my Google Analytics, I can easily see my digital marketing paying off!"

- Michele, Primp Salon

Advertising with The Anoka Shopper and The Union Herald has provided The American Cooperative of Anoka a platform to inform and promote our independent senior living community to the greater local area. Cindy Brooking has been particularly responsive and creative in her recommendations and support of our efforts. Beyond our print advertising, we have also utilized APG's email blast service to specifically target our key demographic in the area. We know local advertising is key to our success.

-Denise Didier, The American Cooperative

"The digital advertising solutions offered by the APG-ECM County News Review have provided me with great success in reaching those in my target audience who spend a fair amount of time on their smartphones, tablets or computers. Their digital advertising is truly top-notch and diverse, providing a variety of different ways to target your preferred audience, such as by a specific demographic or by zip code. They also provide their digital advertising clients with an interactive and easy to use analytics dashboard, which makes it easy to track your results in real time. My multimedia rep Shana Bouley was knowledgeable about the digital products they offer and extremely helpful in getting our campaign up and running with the trackable dashboard."

-Tony Potter, Marketing/Public Relations, Arrowhead Transit

Obituaries

David "Chipper" Lee Smith

David "Chipper" Lee Smith (75) of Maple Grove, MN was born in Dolores, CO on 7/21/45. He passed away in his home on 5/29/2021.



Chipper grew up ranching and learning to love the great outdoors. He then went to and graduated from Colorado State University, where he met his wife. He started a career with GE right out of college and then retired after 37 years. Throughout his life he was an avid fisherman and hunter.

Chipper was known for his humor and his unique tall tales. He loved to travel and see the history of our states.

He is preceded by his daughter Brandi Wynne Smith Hunt.

He is survived by his wife Linda (Trophies by Linda); daughters Trista (Matt) and Dori; grandchildren Martina (Sam) and Brok(Cassie); great-grandchildren Chloe, Abrianna and Brynlee.

We will be holding a wake/open house on Sunday, June 13, 2021, 3pm-5pm at his home 6292 Louisiana Ct N #D, Brooklyn Park, MN 55428.

Terry Benson

Age 73 of Osseo and Maple Grove, passed away on June 4, 2021.

She was a loving wife, mother and grandmother and will be deeply missed.

Preceded in death by her parents, Donald and Irene Francis; and husband, Tom Benson.

Survived by children, Tracy Benson, Troy (Juliana) Benson; and granddaughter, Julie Ann.

Private services. Donations preferred to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Osseo.

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www.evansnordby.com

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