

# OPINION



Photo by Chad Koenen

The Henning community came together in a big way in 2019 as they cheered on the boys basketball on their way to a state championship. It was just one example of people in this community putting their differences aside to come together for the betterment of everyone.

## Henning needs to come together once again

If you were to write an instruction manual about how a community could come together in the face of a tragic or monumental occasion, you didn't need to look any farther than the tiny town of Henning.

In just a matter of years the community lost a young child to cancer, two children were diagnosed with rare illnesses in the same class and a teenager was killed in a car accident on his way to school. Our boys basketball team became the Cinderella darlings on their way to a state championship (and likely a second one had COVID-19 occurred a few months later) and our volleyball and girls basketball teams advanced to their first-ever state tournaments.

Each time our community came together as one to show support for one another. It didn't matter who you voted for as mayor or to the city council. It didn't matter if you thought the city should make cuts to staffing, or whether you thought they should add more employees. We put aside our differences and came together for the betterment of our community.

After walking out of Monday's special city council meeting in which the council accepted the resignation of public works employees Brenden Markuson and Travis Arndt, one couldn't help but feel that the community togetherness we felt just a few years ago was nothing, but a distant memory.

The truth is we have always had differences in our thoughts, all communities do. The only change is that today neither side is willing to look past those differences to find common



**Henning Happenings**  
Chad Koenen

ground. It's always "their fault" for what happened, or for a decision that was made. An argument ensues and nothing is ever accomplished besides more pain and suffering.

On the wall of Citizen's Advocate are several front pages from important stories and moments over the past few years.

Two of the front pages that stick out the most are from the boys basketball team holding the state championship trophy at mid court of the Target Center in 2019 and the volleyball team a few months later celebrating the first time a Henning girls team advanced to state.

Both pictures featured a sea of orange behind them in a sign of community togetherness that few towns would be able to showcase. I remember visiting with some of the security guards at the state basketball tournament in 2019 who all shared the same notion—how can a town of just 800 people have just as many fans attend a game as many of the Class 4A schools?

I remember waiting in the skyway for an hour to get through the gate in 2019, and we were not even close to the first people from Henning who were in line.

How impressive was it to

see a sea of orange on TV during the state tournament? Nobody cared if you sat next to someone you didn't necessarily talk to on a daily basis? We were there to show our support for our community, not for individual goals. When the school tried to organize a charter bus we filled several, after the bank and a few businesses stepped up to the plate to fork out hundreds of dollars apiece to make sure anyone who wanted to go to the games would be able to do so without having to drive in Minneapolis.

In the background of a picture we have on our wall of the volleyball team advancing to state, there is a glow of orange shirts of fans cheering in unison for our volleyball team. Everyone was cheering regardless of their political beliefs, because we were all there to cheer on our tiny piece of paradise.

One thing I will never forget was the night Jacob Quam was killed in a car accident in 2017 was how a group of high schoolers came together to organize a candlelight prayer on the infield of the baseball field. There were tears and a few smiles from some of the memories that were shared from the teen who was lost too soon. At the end of the day, no one cared about past differences, we came together as a hurting community. It's a memory of community togetherness that few of us will ever forget.

Earlier today I came across a Facebook post by Cora Wiirre. The post was made in response to a somewhat heated Facebook thread about the current

state of the City of Henning. After the city council meeting on Monday night I asked if we could share part of her post in the newspaper as her words seem to summarize exactly the point I want to make—we have always had our differences and we always will, we just need to find common ground. I want to thank her for allowing me to share a portion of it with you.

"Some time ago, there was a little boy with cancer who lives in a small town," she wrote on Facebook. "He and the family needed all the support they could get. Did everyone in this town always see eye to eye even at that time, no, but one of their own was very sick. All beefs were set aside and the townsfolk came together, all the focus was set on helping 'fix' the sick boy. It took a few years, but they all did it. Help even poured in from around the states and put that little boy and his hometown on the map. It took time, but with God's help and people, he was healed."

Wiirre went on to say that it feels like Henning is "sick," and in time, if we all work together like they did for that little boy in Henning, we can also be healed.

If we truly want to come together and heal as a community, we can do that as we have put aside our differences on a moment's notice in the past. But it will take everyone putting aside their differences to truly work together. No one will get exactly their way, but if we work together we will thrive like we have so many times before and will accomplish great things as a community.

## Landmark to host CPR training

The Landmark Center will host two CPR training classes on Wednesday, Feb. 16 from 6-10 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Each of these four hour classes will be presented by Tri-County Health Care at the Landmark Center. A fee will be discounted thanks to grant funding from Lake Region Electric Cooperative. Participants will receive a two year CPR certification for successfully completing this class. Space is limited, you must call the Landmark Center at 548-5760 to RSVP.

Our reading group "Beverage and a Book" will meet from 2-4 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 15 to discuss "My Grandmother asked me to tell you She's Sorry." Copies of this book are available at the Landmark Center for those wishing to join the discussion. Viking Bookmobile visits Henning every oth-



**Landmark Center**  
Dan Broten

er Tuesday with next visit scheduled for Feb. 15 from 3:45-4:30 p.m. near the Landmark Station building.

The Landmark Center continues to ask for Henning history through your family stories and photos. Our goal is to tell the story of life in Henning through a book or exhibit. Please contact the Landmark Center at 548-5760 if you have photos we may scan or any stories you wish to submit.



Contributed illustration

Fuzzy covers are legal, however it is the drivers responsibility to make sure it doesn't effect control of the vehicle.

## Steering wheel covers are legal to utilize

Question: It's so cold in the winter, I am thinking about getting one of those fuzzy steering wheel covers. I think they will help keep my hands warm while driving. But my question is, are they legal?

Answer: Steering wheel covers are legal. A quick reminder though—it's always the driver's responsibility to keep control of the vehicle at all times, even if the steering wheel cover becomes loose. Every driver is responsible for knowing the actual and potential hazards on the highway and using due care in operating a vehicle. This includes on snow, ice, slush, frost, wet roads or



**Ask a Trooper**  
Sgt. Jesse Grabow

any type of conditions. If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota, send your questions to Trp. Jesse Grabow - Minnesota State Patrol at 1000 Highway 10 West, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501-2205.

## Have your opinion heard

Have an opinion on a topic affecting Henning and the surrounding area? Write a Letter to the Editor to share your thoughts. Deadlines for all Letter's to the Editor is Friday at 12 p.m. Letter's can be emailed to news@henningadvocate.com or dropped off at the Citizen's Advocate office at 412 Douglas Ave.

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