

## editor's notes

Chris Rogers, editor, Winona Post

## Here's to the next 50

Some things don't change. Back in 1978, when the Saturday Morning Post first landed on Winona doorsteps, a big part of what filled its pages were historical features — stories, often by Fran, about Winona baseball greats of yore, terrible 19th century blizzards, and the origins of the island city.

Several decades later, when I started as a young reporter, my story list was peppered with historical features, too: tracing John Latsch's many gifts of parkland, for example, or recounting how Father Paul Breza's apple trees helped fund the nascent Polish Museum. At a news meeting back then, I worried that because some version of these stories already existed, no one would want to read mine. Fran told me, "People love having their history retold, even if they already know it."

She was right. History is made to be retold, and it has a way of swirling back around again.

Flipping through 50 years of Winona Post issues to create this anniversary edition (check out pages 1-8D), I got a strange sense of déjà vu. So many headlines sounded like something I've written in the last few years: debates over manure management, county funding for juvenile detention, and closing rural schools — calls for a downtown parking ramp, pedestrian safety improvements, and revamping Levee Park.

Longtime former editor Sarah Squires liked to say the Post had a long memory. What she meant by that was, where others might cover the city's ongoing study of a new fire station, for example,

the Post would also remember the city already owns land purchased for that purpose in 2007. If you look back, you'll see some of the conversations our community is having today started decades ago. Being a truly local paper, with everyone from our publisher on down rooted in this community, we're uniquely able to remember that history and give our readers a sense of the bigger picture.

The Winona Post has grown tremendously from the humble shopper Fran and John started in 1971 to the leading source of local news in our area. But the mission Fran and John set out back in the day still rings true: "We wanted people to be able to pick up our paper and know just about everything they needed to know to be a participating member of the Winona community."

We've been here, setting the table, so to speak, for people to learn about and get involved in their community, in democracy for the past 50 years. While the Post is still adapting and changing to meet the challenges of the next 50 years, the heart of what we do and who we're here to serve remains the same. Thank you for reading, for sharing your stories, and supporting the local businesses that make our paper and our community strong. I can't wait to see what the next 50 years will bring.



## letters

## Thanks for supporting the arts

From: Mike Munson

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Fine Arts Commission for selecting me as an award recipient as well as a grant recipient. I am humbled to be among the many talented individuals and organizations that have received these honors. My sincere thanks to the Winona City Council and to the Fine Arts Commission for their continuing support of the arts in our community.

## Congratulations on 50 years

From: Sarah (Marek) Landman

Congratulations to the Winona Post, and all current and past team members, on celebrating 50 years in business! I am proud of my father, Patrick Marek, for dedicating his life's work to the continuation and advancement of the Winona Post, and for his leadership as the publisher for the last seven years. The hard work, determination, and creativity you have demonstrated, inspires your five children in our work and daily lives. I am grateful to Fran and John Edstrom for having the courage and entrepreneurial talent to start the Winona Post. I am also forever grateful to the local community for continuing to read and support the Winona Post.

## City Council cuts Alternative Response Team

From: Katie Mueller-Freitag, Claire Richards Winona

After working with city council members, the city manager, deputy chief of police, and various stakeholders on the steering committee that created the Alternative Response Team (ART), it was hard news to hear that it will be cut before it gets a chance to begin. When ART was designed, one of the core issues it intended to address was the deficit of support available to Winona residents experiencing mental health crises. Compounded by Winona Health not having a Department of Behavioral Medicine, police are often called to crisis, exacerbating the situation, and causing further harm. Often, these encounters lead to arrests. Putting a person experiencing a mental health crisis behind bars, causing financial and legal strains, cutting them off from family and friends, should not be the solution. Some have argued support for people exists behind bars. In jail you can talk to a social worker, have a meal, and bed for the night. This stance is outrageous. It suggests that people should be locked up to get the services they need. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 44% of jailed inmates have a mental health disorder and 1 in 4 jailed inmates are experiencing serious psychological distress upon entry.

It has repeatedly been misrepresented that Winona's ART would send social workers to assist and work alongside the police department. According to the original proposal, only one of the new city employees was required to be a licensed clinical social worker (LSCIW) and the ART could "provide an alternative first response to police in certain situations." Furthermore, the proposal stated "ART will have the capability to provide an alternative response to non-violent 911 calls with existing caseload, mental health crisis assistance, as well as assist with crisis intervention planning both in person and remotely. The ART will provide confidential services, support and follow up." Shifting the narrative and suggesting adding social workers to the police force, negates addressing the root cause of the issue. Winona needs more community systems that are set up to support people, not find new ways to punish people lacking resources.

Across the nation, cities are creating models much like the ART. Why does Winona choose to criminalize it's residents instead of supporting them? Members of city council have expressed the importance of ART but claim budget cuts had to be made. Budgets are moral documents. We fund what is important to our community. The \$3 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding coming to the city could certainly help pay for the program. According to the U.S. Treasury, the money is intended to "address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic." There are also federal dollars allocated for such programs through the CAHOOTS bill. If the city (or county leaders) want to see this program up and running, the funding is there. Contact your elected representatives to voice your support for this program.

## letters

## Expanding feedlots calls for environmental, public health disaster

From: Bruno Borsari Winona

Confined animal farming operations (CAFOs) are designed and maintained on the assumption of producing affordable foods yet, their impacts on the environment (soil erosion, manure disposal, pollution) and public health problems caused by water and air quality deteriorations remain enormous. The modern dairy cow in a factory farm produces so much milk that she can weaken and succumb to foot and udder infections. Microbes are dairy farmers' nightmares because these may contaminate the milk and make cows sick. Consequently, a massive use of agrichemicals and antibiotics is part of the daily routine on a factory farm. Antibiotics are diluted in the drinking water or mixed in the feed to protect livestock populations from infection outbreaks. However, this approach to animal health exerts a selec-

tion pressure on microorganisms that will soon adapt (through mutations) to their new, living environment. Adaptations in microbes' world happen quickly, resulting in new, strains that will require more effective antibiotics, to keep the number of disease-causing microbes at bay.

More concerns have emerged since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting the possibility that an emergence of this and similar infections like SARS, H5N1, Nipah, MERS, may have originated from human encroachment into wildlife areas. A recent article on climate-andcapitalism.com is suggesting industrial livestock production as the origin of this problem, indicating the possibility of "spillover" of novel infectious diseases from wildlife to humans, through farm animals. Also, Rob Wallace's book, "Big Farms Make Big Flu," made a compelling case conceding that enabling land conversion into industrial farms will increase this kind of problems.

Life is dominated by microbes (including viruses) and these are senior, pioneering organisms of planet Earth. Scientists find them everywhere and argue that domesticated animals (cows, sheep, dogs, cats, goats) share the highest number of viruses with us. In addition to this, wild animals

that have adapted to human environments (from industrial farms to cities) share with us more viruses. Think about mice, bats, squirrels, which often live with us, in or near our homes and farms. These were found to be hosts for about 75 percent of all viruses.

An expansion of farms destroys wild animals' habitats, causing their displacement and/or forcing their adaptation to the human landscape, which includes huge livestock populations. This forced coexistence amplified by biodiversity losses, facilitates microbial exchanges across species (e.g. mouse-cow-farmer) and when by chance one of these is pathogenic to humans, an infection may escalate into a dangerous outbreak. Modern and fast transportation systems can spread germs broadly and, in few weeks, we have a pandemic disease.

The lesson to learn here is that the scale of agriculture should be limited by the carrying capacity of ecosystems. The way of producing food is strongly linked to the health of the land, environment and people. For these reasons, the industrial mode of food production must be revisited, stabilized and replaced with a more ecological model. Expanding Dailey Farm is unsustainable to environmental and public health.

## A goodbye letter to our community

From: Lee Gundersheimer, former city of Winona arts and culture coordinator

To my fellow Winonans,  
It has been my profound honor to help network, partner with, and create opportunities to employ Winona's arts and culture organizations and creative individuals and ensure they are brought even further to the forefront of this city that I had made

my home. It is with great sadness I am leaving Winona where I would have loved to continue to work to champion creativity. It was my strongest desire and plans were in place to assist in this revival and the current emergence from a difficult pandemic as we all worked toward a community that is fully invested in these cultural efforts, that envisions Winona as a living work of art.

Thank you to all the supporters who have given time, efforts, and donations to this vision over the last four years, and to Steve Sarvi for his desire to create a position that was tasked with strengthening the city's

future by growing our already burgeoning arts and culture initiatives. I sincerely believe it has been of value for us all in Winona!

Please include music, film, art, prose, poetry, and theatre in your plans for the New Year and stand behind and be prepared to assist making the goals of the forthcoming Arts and Culture Strategic Plan a reality.

Enjoy your holidays with friends and family and thank you for giving me this honor to have been a part of the cultural landscape and the creative history of our community.

## Effort to remove Malcolm a disservice to public health

From: Kathryn Jarvinen Winona

Extreme disappointment in Jeremy Miller is my reaction to his effort to remove Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm. Jeremy Miller is our

District 28 Republican senator who claims he is concerned about his constituents. His effort is a disservice to our health. Health Commissioner Malcolm has provided all Minnesota citizens with a great service providing us valuable advice and information about COVID-19. Since I am an RN, I am appalled that anyone with knowledge would think she should lose her job because of a political effort that is misguided. The approaching threat of Omicron should spell out the need for intelligent leadership in continuing to deal with this pandemic. Vaccines have saved us in the

past but many are forgetting our history. Many have died. Let us prevent more deaths and get politics out of health care. Senator Miller please rely on your intelligence not your politics. This is unjust and uncalled for.

*Editor's note: Miller has criticized Malcolm, but hasn't called for her removal. He told WCCO late last month that Senate Republicans were willing to put conversations about her confirmation on hold until the regular legislative session this spring.*

## Ask a Trooper: Do I need a horn?

From: Sgt. Troy Christianson, Minnesota State Patrol

Question: I noticed that the horn on my vehicle does not work. Is there a law that says a vehicle must have a working horn and when it can be used?

Answer: According to state law, your vehicle must have a horn that's "in good working order and capable of emitting sound audible under normal conditions from a distance of not less than 200 feet.

The horn or other warning device must not emit an unreasonably loud or harsh sound or a whistle." I believe the definition of whistle is quite clear, and use common sense to determine if a horn is unreasonably loud or harsh. If it's too loud or harsh, it could violate a local noise ordinance.

Minnesota law says it's legal to honk a horn when it's "reasonably necessary to insure safe operation" on the road. For example, that would include warning other vehicles, pedestrians or animals as needed to avoid a crash.

If it's not a safety situation, it's illegal to honk the horn on the road. Excessive or illegal use of the horn could result in a road

rage scenario, so only use it when needed for safety.

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



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email: winpost@winonapost.com

winonapost.com



507.452.1262 800.353.2126

fax: 507.454.6409

P.O. Box 27, 64 E. 2nd St.  
Winona, MN 55987

**Publisher:** Patrick Marek  
**Editor:** Chris Rogers  
**Finance/Operations Director:** Dana Cierzan  
**Advertising Director:** Patrick Marek  
**Sales:** Kim Farkas, Bob Shattuck, Les Guderian  
**Inside Sales/Classified:** Amanda Sattler

**Reporter:** Alexandra Retter  
**Columnist/Proofreader:** Fran Edstrom  
**Circulation:** Mary Veraguth  
**Mailroom:** John Payne

**Creative Director:** Ashley Blum  
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