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Todd Soil and Water project
December grouse hunting
Boys wrestling team starts out hot
Girls wrestling competes in tournament



Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Staples World

Staples, Minnesota

\$125

Shopping for presents

Thor Luchka, left, and Talon Kavanaugh helped a young shopper at Santa Day Dec. 6, at Motley United Methodist Church. A total of 139 children picked out free gifts for their family members, all donated by Motley UMC members. (Photo by Dawn Timbs)

Polar Xpress set for Dec. 13-14 at CLC

The community is invited to the Polar Xpress holiday festival, presented by Central Lakes College and The Staples Historical Society. The free family event runs from 12-4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13 and Sunday, Dec. 14 at CLC's Staples campus, 1830 Airport Road. There will be large G-scale train models, a Santa Claus photo booth, crafts, games, rides, Christmas tree displays and holiday vendors.

See **XPRESS** on page 10a



New Purple Heart monument installed

A new granite monument honoring Prisoners of War and those Missing In Action (POW/MIA) was recently installed at the Staples All Veterans and Community

Park. The monument was repurposed from signage at the former National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA), now Sourcewell, in Staples. Ken Klose of Staples

researched the appropriate descriptive wording that's placed on monuments in regard to POW/MIA and Purple Heart awards. This information was shared and approved by the Veterans Park Board, with the engraving work done later by Northland Memorial. A flagpole for the POW/MIA monument is planned to be added next spring. Above, Northland Memorial employees begin unloading the monument. See more photos on page 9a. (Submitted photo by Ken Klose)



Structure of railroad history, Christmas

The Old Bell Coffee Station at the Polar Xpress is a chimera with a combination of history, style, railroads, fantasy and Christmas. Like the event itself, the station is changing with new additions and artifacts. The front stained glass is from the first Northern Pacific Railroad depot in Brainerd, from the 1870s. The side and back stained glass are from a 1902 Great Northern pullman coach. The harp and bird side windows are from an old St. Paul Home. The front cabinet is from an 1840s hand-carved hunter's cabinet made in Belgium. Accessories in-

clude marker lamps and brass side lamps from the Northern Pacific in the 1900s. The railroad bell is from Northern Pacific in the 1890s.

The collectibles were gathered by John and Judy Wolak of Staples, the structure was built by Rick Brichacek of Miran Creek Furniture, who assembles the structure at Central Lakes College for the Polar Xpress. The free event is Saturday, Dec. 13 and Sunday, Dec. 14 from 12-4 p.m. (Staples World photo by Mark Anderson)

Weather

2025 This Week's Forecast			
High	Low	Cond.	
Dec. 10	18	-3	Cloudy
Dec. 11	15	5	Cloudy
Dec. 12	5	-15	Cloudy
Dec. 13	1	-15	Cloudy
Dec. 14	3	-2	M. Cloudy
Dec. 15	12	-2	M. Cloudy
Dec. 16	17	10	M. Cloudy

Last Year, 2024			
High	Low	Cond.	
Dec. 10	23°	18	Cloudy
Dec. 11	0	-8	Sunny
Dec. 12	2	-12	Sunny
Dec. 13	11	-3	M. Sunny
Dec. 14	28	19	Cloudy
Dec. 15	32	29	Cloudy
Dec. 16	34	27	Cloudy

Average Temps:
H = 25° Low = 9°
Winter is here.

Compiled by
Dale Hausmann,
WCCO's Staples area
Weatherwatcher

Public Notices

Motley 9A
Moran 9A
Thomastown 9A

Obituaries

Robert Dvorak
Janice Peterson



Polar Xpress 2024



Santa’s helpers in Motley

The Motley Lions hosted a Lunch with Santa event Dec. 6, at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Motley. In addition to meeting Santa (and his helpers), attendees were treated to a free lunch and enjoyed making crafts and doing other holiday activities, such as writing letters to Santa, which the Lions promised to mail to the North Pole in time for Christmas. Pictured above, back row, from left: Glen Sutton, Anita Sutton, Nancy Lucas, Cathy Johnson, Ken Swecker, Garrett Sutton. Front row: Ed Jordahl, Sherry Frisk, Bruce Brotherton, Wanda Lutzke.

In lower photo, some children posed with Santa Claus and his helper elf. From left, are Alora Weber, Motley; Santa’s elf, Wanda Lutzke; Santa, who looked a lot like Motley Lion Bruce Brotherton; and Flynn Weber. (Staples World photos by Dawn Timbs)



Enjoying ‘tacos in a bag’

A free ‘tacos in a bag’ lunch was enjoyed by people of all ages Dec. 6, at the Motley Lions’ ‘Lunch With Santa’ event held at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Motley. Pictured above, from left, are Brooklyn Eshevick and Devon Golonviecki, both of Browerville. Below, from left, are Ed Jordahl, Marsha Jordahl, Sheila Bryce and Pat Koehler.



Dear Santa...

Children attending the recent Lunch with Santa event in Motley were invited to write letters to Santa Claus. Pictured, from left, are Autumn Tauring, Motley; Ady Cariveau, Staples; Emma Tauring, Motley.



LAKEWOOD WELCOMES

Elizabeth Redemske, DC
CHIROPRACTOR

Lakewood is pleased to announce the arrival of on-staff chiropractor, Dr. Elizabeth Redemske. Dr. Redemske provides family and pediatric chiropractic care, utilizing diversified techniques and Activator Methods®, as well as physiotherapy techniques to support soft-tissue health. In her free time, she enjoys bow hunting, fishing, gardening, traveling, and spending time outdoors with her husband and two children. She will be seeing patients at Lakewood’s Pillager clinic.

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LAKEWOOD WELCOMES

Don Hughes, MD
FAMILY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN

Lakewood is pleased to announce the arrival of on-staff family medicine physician, Dr. Don Hughes. Dr. Hughes cares for patients of all ages and has a special interest in teaching and mentoring students and resident physicians. He also performs flight physicals for FAA pilots. In his free time, he enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife, Cathy, their three adult children, and four grandchildren. He will be seeing patients at Lakewood’s Staples clinic.

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Staples Police report

Recent incident reports taken by the Staples Police Dept:

Nov. 23, Staples Police investigated a vehicle taken from Cardinal Pines apartment. Police determined it was a civil issue, the vehicle had been loaned to a friend and hasn't been returned.

Nov. 24, 1:30 a.m., Staples Police responded to a vehicle on fire on Warner Rd, east of Todd Cty Rd 83. Vehicle was found to be fully engulfed with flames. Vehicle had dealer plate, police checked to see if vehicle was stolen.

Nov. 25, Staples Police stopped vehicle for failure to use turn signal and cracked windshield. Police arrested driver for DWI as well as possession of controlled substance.

Nov. 28, Staples Police took a report of a suspicious person described as a male with a white hat,

carrying a Casey's bag and trying to deliver unknown items. Male could not speak clear English and was confused. Party continued down the street trying to deliver items. Party had left the area before police arrived.

Nov. 29, 12:30 a.m., Staples Police received a report of approximately 50 underage individuals at a residence on 490th St. Three more calls regarding the party were received. At 1:12 a.m., police stopped a vehicle near the party and cited the underage passengers for alcohol consumption. At 1:36 a.m., another vehicle was stopped, with three passengers cited for underage consumption.

Nov. 29, Staples Police assisted at a two vehicle accident at 7th St. NE and 2nd Ave. NE. Both airbags deployed, no injuries reported.

Todd Cty. court report Nov. 12

Long Prairie Police

Ashley Mae Alvarez, Long Prairie. Driving without a valid license for vehicle class or type. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Dept. of Natural Resources

Eric Michael Baker, Bloomington. Water safety. fail to display valid registration on motorized watercraft.

Christopher Arlen Bjerke, Clarissa. Fail to have legal lifesaving device on board watercraft or water-fowl boat. Fine \$25. Fee \$85.

Andrew John Maher, Little Falls. Fish and Game-take fish without angling license. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

Hudson Michael Pung, Fargo, ND. Game and Fish-licenses-must have license or proper paperless in personal possession. Fine \$25. Fee \$85.

Chad Michael VanBeck, Grey Eagle. Unlawful deposit of garbage-litter or like. Fine \$100. Fee \$85.

MN State Patrol

Diane Katherine Asmus, Browerville. Speed 75/65. Fine \$40. Fee \$75.

Jacob John Hayes, Hudson, WI. Speed 74/60. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Adam Abdul Kader, Fargo, ND. Speed 84/70. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Ryan Michael Kasper, Annandale. Window tint. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Michael A. Kramer, Franklin, WI. Speed 81/70. Fine \$50. Fee \$75.

Brandon Scott Kroska, St. Cloud. Speed 80/70. Fine \$40. Fee \$85.

Keila Ortiz Llanos, Aberdeen, SD. Speed 87/70. Fine \$60. Fee \$85.

Susan Mary Lowe, Sauk Centre. Speed 65/60. Fine \$40. Fee \$85.

Maria Eilen Navarrete Ruz, Alexandria. Speed 79/70. Fine \$40. Fee \$85. Instructional permit violation (18 years or older). Fine \$50.

Mason Andrew Peterson, Maplewood. Speed 83/70. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Ryder Cole Piper, Faribault. Speed 86/70. Fine \$60. Fee \$85.

Clyde Eugene Rath, Apple Valley. Hands free Law. Fine \$50. Fee \$75.

Austin Robert Schmidkunz, Hudson, WI. Speed 83/70. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Nathan Ryan Schwartz, St. Paul. Speed \$65/60. Fine \$40. Fee \$85. Jude Kendan Shupe, Grand Forks, ND. Speed 92/70. Fine \$70. Fee \$155.

Dakota Steven Smieja, Long Prairie. Window restrictions. Fine \$50. Fee \$85. Window tint. Fine \$50.

Todd County Sheriff's Office Juan Fidel Jr. Aleman, Baxter. Driving after revocation. Fine \$200. Fee \$85.

Cole Dennis Buchta, Parkers Prairie. Speed 70/60. Fine \$40. Fee \$85.

Santo Domingo Este, Staples. Driving without a valid license for vehicle class or type. Fine \$100. Fee \$85. Driver who is not owner must later produce proof of insurance if required. Fine \$200.

Alfredo Gutierrez Rodroguetz, Sauk Centre. Driver must carry proof of insurance when operating vehicle. Fine \$200. Fee \$85.

Samantha Jo Martin, Pillager. Driving after revocation. Fine \$200. Fee \$85.

Ann Marie Middendorf, Long Prairie. Speed 64/55. Fine \$40. Fee \$85.

Dale Joseph Olson, Motley. Speed 93/65. Fine \$100. Fee \$185.

Jack Jonathan Tettie, Browerville. Speed 64/55. Fine \$40. Fee \$85.

Scarlen Nahiaara Valdez, Long Prairie. Speed 79/60. Fine \$60. Fee \$85.

The following cases were heard before Judge Daniel A. Benson in Seventh District Court in Todd County November 19, 2025.

Andrea Lee Graves, Little Falls. Drugs-5th Degree-possess 1, 2, 3, 4 or paraphernalia residual-not cannabis/hemp. Stay of adjudication.

Local confinement (9 days, stay 0 yr 0 mo 0 days for time served: 9 days) Supervised probation, 5 yr. Fine \$100.

Justin Richard Grunwald, Hewitt. Obstruct legal process-interfere with Peace Officer. Local confinement (90 days, stay 0 yr 0 mo 0 days for time served: 90 days). Fine \$50. Fee \$75.

The following cases were heard before Judge Daniel A. Benson in Seventh District Court in Todd County November 18, 2025.

Dairol Matos Ferreras, Long Prairie. Domestic Assault. Dismissed. Disorderly conduct. Local confinement (90 days, stay 0, yr 0 mo 0 88 days for 1 year credit for time served: 2 days). Supervised probation. Fine \$100. Fee \$150.

Ivan David Reinke, Wadena. Duty to drive with due care. Continued. Unsupervised probation, 6 mo. Fee \$75.

Ana Paula Ferreira Araujo, Summerville, SC. Speed 84/70. Fine \$50. Fee \$85.

Kent Leon Mischo, Sauk Centre. Obstruct legal process-interfere w/ Peace Officer. Dismissed. Driving after revocation. Fine \$200. Fee \$75.

Kenneth Joseph Beste, Long Prairie. DWI-operate motor vehicle-alcohol concentration 0.08 within 2 hours. Sentenced. Local confinement (364 days, stay 0 yr 0 mo 364 days for 2 yr). Supervised probation, 2 yr. Fine \$200. Fee \$105. Driving after cancellation. Dismissed.

Matthew Ray Grewe, Hewitt. DWI-Refuse to submit to chemical test; breath or test refusal or failure. Sentenced. Local confinement (354 days, stay 0 yr 0 mo 354 days for 4 yr credit for time served: 4 days). Supervised probation, 4 yr. Fine \$50. Fee \$105. Obstruct legal process-interfere with Peace Officer. Dismissed. Criminal damage to property in the 4th degree. Dismissed. Driving after revocation. Dismissed. Operate unregistered vehicle/without plates on public streets. Dismissed. Expired registration. Dismissed.

The following cases were heard before Judge Daniel A. Benson in Seventh District Court in Todd County November 17, 2025.

Blake Ronald Andreas, Starbuck. Liquor consumption by persons under 21. Dismissed. Cannabis open package-possess in motor vehicle. Not compliant packaging or container. Sentenced. Local confinement (90 days, stay 0 yr 0 mo 90 days for 1 yr). Community work service, 16 hours for indeterminate. Fine \$100. Fee \$75.

John Herbert Sr. Hodge, Browerville. Driving after cancellation. Unsupervised probation, 1 yr. Fine \$100.

Harley Marie Tulio, Osakis. 3rd Degree DWI-Refuse to submit to chemical test; blood or urine as required by search warrant. Local confinement (364 days, stay 0 yr 0 mo 364 days for 4 yr). Supervised probation, 4 yr. Fine \$500. Fee \$105. 4th Degree DWI-Operate motor vehicle under influence. Dismissed.

The following cases were heard before Judge Daniel A. Benson in Seventh District Court in Todd County November 15, 2025.

James Samuel Culbreth, Wadena. 5th Degree possession of a controlled substance. Dismissed. Store Meth Paraphernalia in the presence of child or vulnerable adult. Dismissed. 5th Degree-Possess Schedule 1,2,3,4-Not small amount Marijuana. Dismissed. Conditions met or expired. Local confinement (3 days, stay 0 yr 0 mo days credit for time served: 3 days). Supervised probation, 2 yr. Fine \$50. Possession of drug paraphernalia. Fine \$50. Fee \$75.

75 YEARS Ago - 1950

• Dec. 14, 1950 - Under the direction of Erling I. Lian and Miss Marianne Kulstad of the music department, and Norman Anderson of the dramatic department of the Staples high school, a very colorful and splendid Christmas program will be presented to the public at the high school auditorium Thursday evening, Dec. 21, at 8 o'clock.

The program will open

- O -

Compiled by Dawn Timbs

- O -

with three selections by the band, including "Largo" from the New World Symphony by Dvorak. This will be followed by a processional of all groups participating in the event, except the band. The mixed chorus will sing three numbers including "Nativity Carol" by Watts. Other musical groups appearing on the program will be the boys choirs, the senior girls glee club, the junior girls glee club, and smaller groups. Narration for the Christmas Story will be given by Richard Engdahl, senior of the high school.

• Dec. 14, 1950 - Robert Westin, 18, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Westin of Staples, has enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps, and he has left for San Antonio, Texas, where he is stationed at the Lackland Air Force Base. He left Minneapolis by plane Sunday.

• Dec. 14, 1950 - Seven men from Todd County were inducted into military service on Dec. 3. Among those listed were Joseph Luke of Browerville and Myrle Kupitz of Staples.

• Dec. 14, 1950 - Final work is being completed early this week on the new auditorium of the Congregational Church of Staples. Work on this project has been in progress since early in the summer, and the completed place will be dedicated at appropriate services Sunday morning, Dec. 17, starting at 10 o'clock in the morning.

• Dec. 14, 1950 - Miss Esther Bottemiller, who is always one of our busiest hostesses during the holiday season, has begun a round of entertaining. Sunday afternoon she was hostess to the faculty, their wives and husbands, and the school board members and their wives, at her annual Christmas Tea.

• Dec. 14, 1950 - The Junior Class at Motley high school will present their play, "Sound Your Horn" in the school auditorium on two nights, Dec. 19 and 20, of next week.

50 YEARS Ago - 1975

• Dec. 11, 1975 - The students at Lincoln Model Non-graded School will present their annual Christmas Concert Dec. 11, at 8 p.m. in the Lincoln School gymnasium under the direction of Mrs. Virginia Hegre. An "Olde Fashioned Christmas" theme will bring back pleasant memories of past Christmases for the audience.

• Dec. 11, 1975 - Residents of the Staples area, who make it a point not to miss the annual Christmas concerts of the Staples High school choirs, will again have two opportunities to catch the candlelight procession and the accompanying strains of "For All the Saints."

Stan Carlson, choir director at the high school, announced that the traditional concert of choirs in grades 7 - 12 will be held Dec. 18, in the Staples Auditorium.

The high school only concert will be Dec. 15, at Sacred Heart Church. Included in this concert will be the Chamber Choir, which has just completed a highly successful and sold out Madrigal Dinner; and the 55-voice and the 75-voice Women's chorus, directed by Melissa Hobson.

Both concerts will begin with the traditional candlelight procession and end with the massed choruses singing Handel's beloved "Hallelujah Chorus" from "The Messiah."

• Dec. 11, 1975 - Motley High School Music Dept. will present a Christmas Concert in the high school old gym on Dec. 15, at 7:30 p.m.

This celebration of Christmas will involve the senior high band, the 7th grade band, and a brass quartet, all under the direction of Mrs. Jeanne Rohr. Also performing will be the senior high choir, the 7th grade choir, a small vocal ensemble, and singer-guitarist Gail Score under the direction of Miss Jacqueline Lundell.

The Motley Elementary School Music Dept. will present the Symbols of Christmas Musical pageant in the high school old gym on Dec. 17, at 7:30 p.m. The program is under the direction of Mrs. Jeanne Rohr, band; and Miss Lundell, vocal music director.

• Dec. 11, 1975 - After a slow start, the Cardinalette cagers of Coach Kay Pettitt came on strong in the second period and held on throughout the second half to gain a 31-25 triumph over Park Rapids in the opening game of the girls basketball season Dec. 2.

Then on Dec. 4, the Cardinalettes traveled to Wadena for a contest with the power Indianettes of that city and took a 58-31 setback, thus bringing their season record to date to 1 win and 1 loss.



Mystery photo

Hello readers. This week's archive photo is from 1965. Do you know who these people are and perhaps the context of the photo? Do you have a memory to share? Email your answers and where you're from to dtimbs@staplesworld.com by Friday, or call 218-894-1112. The answers will be published in next week's paper, as well as a new mystery photo.

• Dec. 11, 1975 - Clarissa became the fourth victim of the Staples Faculty in five games to date in Staples-Wadena Area Basketball League play when the Staples Faculty handed them a 100 to 67 trouncing last Sunday evening on the Browerville court.

Staples Faculty led throughout the contest. Pacing the local attack was Warren Mertens with 24 points, followed by Hans Borstad 21, Brian Baustian 15, Bruce Lund 11, Brad Covert 11, Joe Naznik 11, Don Heese 4 and Joe Joerger 2.

• Dec. 11, 1975 - The cantata, "Night of Miracles," by John Peterson, will be presented in two concerts by the combined choirs of the Staples Missionary and Alliance Church and the Thomastown Covenant Church. The first presentation will be Dec. 20, at Thomastown Covenant; and the second on New Year's Eve, at the Alliance Church in Staples.

Directing the choirs will be Pastor Carol Anderson. The accompanists will be Mrs. Donovan Schimpp, piano, and Mrs. Lewis Blanchard, organ.

25 YEARS Ago - 2000

• Dec. 14, 2000 - A hot shooting Staples Motley boys team, coached by Lynn Peterson, took an early lead and went on to defeat the Park Rapids Panthers 86-44 Dec. 7, for the second win of the young season.

• Dec. 14, 2000 - Over 150 U.S. government students at Staples Motley high school, assembled in the Centennial Auditorium and lobby to simulate a Model Congress on Dec. 6.

10 YEARS Ago - 2015

• Dec. 10, 2015 - Sixteen-year-old Mikayla Sauber of rural Motley was one of 12 youth awarded a heifer at the 15th annual Minnesota Beef Expo in St. Paul this past October. The four-day event was held at the Minnesota State Fair's Lee & Rose Warner Coliseum.



Mystery solved

Last week's mystery photo published in the Aug. 14, 1997 edition of the Staples World featured members of the Staples World featured members of the Motley Mets between 1976 and 1987

who'd recently met for a reunion at Pine Grove Park in Staples. Pictured front, from left: Doug Shequen, Ken Corbett, Duane Miller, Forest "Frosty" Skeesick and Charlie Funk. Back; Tom Sycks, Gary Greenheck, Kevin Kristenson, Pat Held, Randy Dickey, John Riewer and Jim Janzen.

Pat Held of Motley shared, "Since I am in the photo, I know what it is. It's a 1997 reunion of the Motley Town Ball amateur baseball team which was a very successful team." Held, who identified all of the players except Gary Greenheck, went on to note that from 1975 - 1985, the team:

* Won 250 games, including a record of 28-8 in 1984 and 25-11 in 1985

* Won eight league championships in the Great Central and HI-10 leagues with a 46 game winning streak in league play

* Won five Region titles and played in eight State Amateur Baseball Tournaments: 1976-1977 and 1980-1985, several times advancing beyond the opening round.

Thanks for participating in our mystery photo.



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Should we go easy on December grouse?

With Thanksgiving’s passage and December’s arrival, Minnesota’s hunting seasons are on an ebbing tide. The statewide general firearms deer season has ended, with only archery, muzzle-loader, and special chronic wasting disease management deer hunts remaining. Goose hunting remains open statewide through most of December; into early January in the state’s south zone.

Squirrel, hare, and rabbit hunting remain an option through February 28th, but—compared to bird and big game hunting—see limited participation.

Having opportunities for the state’s upland bird hunters remain for just several more weeks; both pheasant and ruffed grouse seasons are open through January 4th. But in the central and northern forested regions of the state, the primary upland game bird is unquestionably the ruffed grouse. Hunting success reports earlier this season suggest a stable population, despite spring estimates that were slightly down from 2024. Strong recruitment of young birds from the 2025 nesting season may have offset those so-so spring estimates—in some areas, at least—and contributed to overall decent Minnesota grouse numbers.

The ruffed grouse population changes significantly over the course of the three-and-one-half month hunting season that begins in mid-September. We typically can expect more young birds than adults in the bag as the hunting season begins. Unlike wild turkeys, where the sight of 20 birds or more in one congregated group is not uncommon, grouse families do not typically coalesce into larger groups. The opposite is true, with a “fall shuffle” dispersal of young birds to find territories of their own that offer both food resources and security from predators. Groups of grouse found together in late fall or early winter are thought to be a consequence of a common food or security resource, not natural gregariousness.

The fall shuffle period is one of significant peril for ruffed grouse. As young birds disperse from the area where they were born, they may move through areas that vary considerably in

both the food resources and security they offer, as well as the predators they harbor. These include such avian and mammalian predators as hawks, owls, fox, mink, coyotes, bobcats, and—not least—man.

As shared by the Ruffed Grouse Society, a hunter-conservationist group, it is estimated that only about 50% of young grouse born in May or June will survive to mid-August. The rest will have perished due to such causes as weather, predation, parasites, or disease. Further, roughly 45% of the young grouse that are alive to begin the fall shuffle can be expected to be lost by late fall or early winter to both natural causes and hunting. Nature produces in abundance so that some will survive to ensure a species’ survival.

When the fall shuffle ends—roughly in mid-November—and the grouse that have survived have found cover that offers adequate food and security, the steep death rate diminishes. Minnesota’s own Gordon Gullion, one of the most respected and celebrated ruffed grouse researchers of the modern wildlife management era, believed that a grouse that is alive in early November or December stands a very good chance of surviving the winter and being part of the breeding population in spring.

Before that, during the fall shuffle when grouse are dispersing to new territories, there is a reasonable probability that losses due to hunting offset losses that would occur anyway, due to predation or other mishap. But, as Gullion told me in a 1979 interview, “Later in the season, when the dispersal is complete, a new bird is not likely to move into a favorable area if the bird that was established there is killed. That’s a bird that will not be there in the spring for breeding.”

Gullion was not claiming that hunters threaten the abundance of ruffed grouse on a population-wide scale. Nor that hunting is likely to ‘wipe out’ a local population. If there is good habitat and there are grouse nearby, birds from such adjacent areas are likely to replenish it. What he was saying is that the loss of grouse to hunting in the late season—after the fall shuffle ends—may lead to fewer birds born the next season. If this happens year after year, it could—Gullion believed—result in keeping grouse numbers below what the habitat is capable of producing.

This effect might be especially true if a grouse harvested in December is a hen.

A male or “cock” grouse can mate with more than one hen during the spring breeding season, and beyond that it plays no role in the raising of young birds. But each hen represents the potential for 10-12 grouse chicks, and—statistically probable—five or six young birds when the next hunting season begins. Unlike pheasant hunting, where only males are shot—easily recognized on the wing by their gaudy plumage—male and female ruffed grouse are positively identified only in the hand. The grouse you shoot in December has a 50-50 chance of being a hen.

Gullion had a hard time selling the idea of limiting season length to wildlife managers, and to such organizations as the Ruffed Grouse Society, which is supported by the membership dollars of avid grouse hunters. As he told author Jim Fergus during that writer’s research for his 1992 book, *A Hunter’s Road*—in a 1991 interview shortly before Gullion’s death due to cancer—his belief that hunting can potentially hold down grouse numbers was “too hot politically.”

Gullion was aware of the conflict for wildlife managers, who see their mission in part as maximizing recreational opportunities for hunting license buyers; not to mention the fact that license revenue supports their work. He was aware, too, of the mixed message that such organizations as the Ruffed Grouse Society might have to deliver if they were to acknowledge that hunting could under some circumstances limit grouse abundance.

We long ago gave up springtime hunting of waterfowl and most other game birds, in recognition of the obvious fact that hunting during the nesting season had a direct and negative impact on those birds’ numbers. Where ruffed grouse are concerned, perhaps we should think about the breeding population over a longer time span than just in springtime. In this case, they might benefit from a reduction in hunting pressure at the December end of the current season framework.

If for no other reason than selfishness, we might want to consider the possibility that a December grouse in the hand may not be worth the potential cost of having fewer “birds in the bush” next autumn. Who wouldn’t trade some December hunting time for the possibility of seeing more birds during the first 10 weeks of the season?

Quote of the week

“The cold never bothered me anyway.”
— Elsa (Frozen, 2013)

Our system of checks and balances needs attention

By Lee H. Hamilton

Checks and balances are essential to our representative democracy. Under our system of government, the legislative, executive and judicial branches provide balance and prevent each other from growing too powerful. The American people have supported this arrangement.

My concern is that the checks and balances have eroded. The system is under strain, and this feature of our government requires more attention than it gets.

The battle is not lost, we still have three branches of government. Congress and the courts sometimes rise to the occasion and limit what the executive branch can do. But the growing power of the presidency has become a real problem. It’s time to raise an alarm flag about the direction in which our country is going.

America’s founders were learned men who thought seriously about the purpose and structure of government. Drawing on the work of French political theorist Montesquieu and others, they crafted a constitution that assigns the powers of government to distinct executive, legislative and judicial branches.

But separation of powers wasn’t enough to ensure liberty, James Madison wrote in one of his influential essays known as the *Federalist Papers*, and each branch of government needed to check the others. “Ambition must be made to counteract ambition,” he wrote, recognizing that presidents, legislators and judges would try to expand their power.

Under the Constitution, the president can check the legislative branch by vetoing legislation. Congress can override the veto with a two-thirds vote. Courts can declare legislation and executive action unconstitutional. The president appoints judges, and the Senate confirms them. Congress can approve or reject spending.

Congress also has an important role in overseeing the executive branch. As I explained in a recent commentary, congressional oversight can inform the American people about the workings of government, erect guardrails against presidential overreach and expose misconduct. Unfortunately, that kind of oversight has too often be-

come an afterthought.

The system of checks and balances has served us well, but it has always been a source of tension. New presidents take office with big ideas. They want to get things done, and they don’t want Congress and the courts to put up roadblocks. The growing importance of foreign affairs and other factors has increased presidential power, a trend the historian Arthur Schlesinger wrote about 50 years ago in his book “The Imperial Presidency.”

It’s true that, in today’s world, events sometimes call for a quick response, and the executive branch is best suited for that. But we shouldn’t forget that the Constitution gives the legislative branch an important role in foreign affairs. Congress enacts laws and provides funding for military action and diplomacy. The Senate must ratify treaties. Importantly, only Congress can declare war. The founders put Congress first in the Constitution because it would be the branch that would be closest to the people.

President Donald Trump has challenged our system of checks and balances. He shows little appreciation for Congress and the courts and seems to expect them to defer to him. He governs by executive order, uses government to punish his adversaries and acts audaciously without consulting Congress.

With Trump’s fellow Republicans in the majority, the legislative branch often puts up little resistance. The Supreme Court has also been deferential, often using its so-called shadow docket to greenlight the president’s actions. Fortunately, we’re starting to see signs that Congress has its limits and will push back. Hopefully, it will see the current situation not just as a challenge but as an opportunity to assert itself.

Madison wrote that concentrating power in a few hands is “the very definition of tyranny.” It’s up to Congress to check the power of the executive branch, and it’s up to the American people to ensure Congress does its job.

Lee Hamilton is a distinguished scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies

Government cutting science

By Dr. Mel Gurtov

There was a time not too long ago when American scientists and American research facilities were the envy of the world. In those days, our scientists typically swept Nobel and other international prizes. Not anymore, the Trump administration’s drastic cuts in scientific personnel and budgets will “essentially end America’s longstanding role as the world leader in science and innovation,” said Toby Smith, senior vice president for government relations and public policy at the Association of American Universities.

In cutting-edge scientific research, in 2017 the US led China in eight categories, by 2023, it led in only one (quantum computing).

We sometimes forget how important government-supported scientific research at university and other laboratories is in ordinary life. One study mentions as examples, “lifesaving medicine, commercial agriculture, and virtual communication... Of the 356 new drugs approved over the past decade, 354 received funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the world’s largest supporter of biomedical research.”

The smartphone, computers, and highways are other examples. The US economy greatly benefits. As Karin Fischer writes in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, “A paper published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas found that government spending on research and development has spurred at least a fifth of U.S. productivity growth since World War II.” Yes, government-supported classified research underpins the military-industrial complex. Such spending contrasts with open, scientist-determined research in the public interest, with the government’s role that of a distant funder.

Deep Cuts

The Trump administration has fundamentally changed independent research. It has become the “minder” of research programs in and outside government, much like a ministry in an authoritarian country. It is now impossible to get federal funding that supports research related to DEI, LGBTQ+ rights, and climate change. Mere mention of those topics in National Science Foundation grant applications, over which DOGE presides, has ruled them out.

The Guardian has also found that “at least 1,653 active NSF research grants authorized on their merits have so far been abruptly cancelled.” Scientists who don’t agree with Trump’s political agenda are being forced out—at Health and Human Services, for instance, where RFK Jr. has fired immunization scientists who disagree with his vaccination stance. The science program at the Environmental Protection Agency has just been dismantled.

Leadership of key public health agencies, such as the Centers for Medicare

and Medicaid Services and Food and Drug Administration, is in the hands of medical quacks. Karin Fischer, an educational researcher, reports further: “The administration said it would stop underwriting scientific collaboration with overseas partners, and stepped up scrutiny of research contracts and other funds to colleges from foreign sources.”

Trump isn’t negotiating new terms of collaboration, he’s ordering them. For instance: Trump has ordered the US Department of Agriculture to remove references to the climate crisis from its website; blocked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from publishing scientific information on the threat of bird flu to humans; fired senior leaders at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cut about 1,000 jobs, with the Texas flood disaster one consequence; fired around 800 people at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, putting critical weather forecasting in a bind; and greatly reduced funds for investment in low-carbon technologies, despite the fact that those funds go overwhelmingly to Republican districts.

America’s scientific talent is now for sale. France, Japan, Australia, and the Netherlands are among the countries that are hiring away US scientists. China has succeeded in luring back many scientists in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) who had hoped for careers in the US. Those students and researchers still in the US are now regarded, not as assets but as political suspects.

What we are witnessing, in short, is an anti-science, anti-intellectual cleansing that will cause immense harm to public health, the economy, education, and America’s reputation.

Mel Gurtov, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Portland State University.

Quote of the week

“Winter is not a season, it’s an occupation.”
— Sinclair Lewis

StaplesWorld

Established in 1890. USPS 518-760
©2025 RMM Publications
Published Wednesdays by RMM Publications
Office located at 224 4th Street NE
Periodicals postage paid at Staples, Minnesota 56479.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 100
Telephone: 218-894-1112 - Fax: 218-894-3570
Toll Free: 1-888-894-1112
www.staplesworld.com - E Mail: editor@staplesworld.com
Deadline: 12 noon, Friday
Official Newspaper for:
City of Staples, Todd County,
Staples-Motley School District,
Freshwater Ed. District and area townships.

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The deadline is 12 noon, Friday. Opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily represent the views of this newspaper.
Printed at Quinco Press, Lowry, MN

Publisher.....RMM Publications LLC
Owners Rick Gail, Mike Kremer, Mark Anderson
Managing Editor.....Mark Anderson editor@staplesworld.com
Advertising Rep.....editor@staplesworld.com
Photo Tech/production.....Janice Winter jwinter@staplesworld.com
Bookkeeping/Circulation/.....Kathy Odden kodden@staplesworld.com
Reporter.....Dawn Timbs dtimbs@staplesworld.com
Front Office.....office@staplesworld.com

Subscription Rates:
Local: (Todd, Wadena, Morrison, Cass Counties) \$53 per year
Website: \$50 per year
Minnesota: \$58 per year - *Out of State:* \$63 per year
Foreign: on-line only - *Student Rate:* (Sept. through Apr./in-state) \$43
There is a \$5 charge for address change from local to out-of-state.

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SWCD teams up with farmers for water improvement

Bob Helle, center, stood just above the site where a 1-million-gallon manure pit once served a 50-cow dairy. Helle worked with the Todd SWCD to voluntarily close the pit in 2020, with support from an EPA grant and SWCD local capacity dollars (Clean Water Funds from

BWSR). Todd SWCD Manager Deja Anton and Bob's son Mike talked about the project on Sept. 30, 2020, on Helle's farm north of Clarissa. The Helles went on to install a livestock river crossing and access control, which was completed in 2024. (Photo by Ann Wessel, BWSR)

Todd SWCD-backed manure pit closures improve safety, water

By Ann Wessel
BWSR conservation
marketing coordinator

A 12-foot-deep manure pit once sat where a grassy slope of pastureland now stretches from Bob Helle's dairy barn to the Partridge River north of Clarissa.

The 1-million-gallon lagoon was one of 200 unused manure pits in Todd County identified in a 2017 inventory funded by a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) grant. By eliminating the risk of a spill or leak, pit closures protect both surface water and drinking water sources — and they eliminate the risk of people or livestock falling into an overgrown, unseen and potentially deadly hazard.

Helle worried about his grandchildren falling in.

Since 2020, the Todd Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff has worked with landowners to voluntarily close nearly 60 unused manure pits, with support from \$301,330 in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants from the MPCA. Six of those were closed in 2025.

Eighteen of the closures within the past five years were within the Partridge River watershed, where an \$81,910 Clean Water Fund grant the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) awarded to the Todd SWCD in 2020 targeted E. coli and nutrient impairments downstream. The Partridge River flows into the Crow Wing River at Old Wadena Park.

Within the watershed and throughout the county, the Todd SWCD has tapped local capacity dollars, another form of Clean Water Funds from BWSR, to augment EPA grants. Leveraged state and federal funding has covered about 75 percent of costs.

That assistance made it possible for Helle to pursue the \$25,300 pit closure.

When it was built in about 1979, Helle was milking 50 cows. The MPCA-permitted pit was the second of its kind in Todd County. Permitting rules changed; the pit didn't meet current 300-foot setback requirements.

Its berms were under water when the river level was high.

The dairy operation has since ceased. Today, Helle rents the cropland and the pasture to a neighbor who rotationally grazes 80 black Angus cow-calf pairs.

"My cow yard became a pasture, so there was really no need for it," Helle said. "Being so close to the Partridge River, it was a good idea to push the pit in and discontinue it."

A few months after Henning-based Shaw Excavating removed contaminated soils, filled and seeded the site in 2020, all traces of Helle's manure pit were gone. The only sign of construction was a black plastic silt fence bordering the river.

"The goal was to prevent any groundwater contamination," said Todd SWCD Manager Deja Anton. The SWCD administers the county's feedlot program.

Helle and his son Mike, who recently took over the farm, learned about the cost-share option at Todd SWCD-hosted informational meetings. Today, Anton said the average Todd County manure pit closure costs about \$22,000, depending upon its size and location.

"That 75% cost-share rate, that's where we're starting to see an affordability and the possibility for projects to get done," Anton said.

The Todd SWCD Board of Supervisors had wrestled with offering cost-share to close some of the same manure pits constructed with cost-share decades earlier. But as more people got out of the dairy business, more pits were being abandoned. The 1978 Census of Agriculture reported 908 dairy farms in Todd County. In 2024, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture reported 97 Todd County farms licensed to sell milk.

"We found out how many manure pits were being abandoned because of those dairy herds going away. And that just became a red flag," said Todd SWCD Board Supervisor Dale Katterhagen of Browerville.

Some of the unused pits hadn't been emptied. Some



were unpermitted, unlined and built on sandier soils, which increased the likelihood of leaching. Some were near creeks or ditches.

"It really was an alarm bell," said Lee Buchholz of Grey Eagle. A Todd SWCD Board Supervisor for 25 years, he retired in December 2024. "We got to thinking about how that would be impacting soil and water. ... If it wasn't seeping into the aquifer, it was running over into the ditch or the stream that was eventually getting to the Mississippi River."

Katterhagen and Buchholz said conversations about whether to offer cost-share always came back to human safety. Manure-pit deaths and accidents were in the news at the time.

"A lot of the early ones don't have fences or anything around them. It becomes a serious safety issue," Katterhagen said. Once they're overgrown, manure pits can become imperceptible.

When residents asked, Buchholz assured them that the SWCD-supported closures were voluntary, and that asking the SWCD about cost-share wouldn't initiate any regulatory action.

"If there's some cost-share funds to close it up today, why wouldn't you?" Katterhagen said. "If you walk away, somebody else will be waiting for the money."

Mark Your Calendar

Dec. 11

'WALK WITH A DOC' Thursdays at 5:15 p.m., at Lakewood Health System's main campus in Staples. Meet at the main entrance. For more information about this free program, visit <https://walkwithadoc.org/join-a-walk/locations/staples-minnesota>

WADENA WHIRLAWAYS SQUARE DANCE GROUP DANCING Thursday, Dec. 11, 7 - 9:30 p.m., at St. Michael's Church, 280 1st Ave. S., Motley. Bill VanBergen, caller. For info., 612-743-3480.

Dec. 12 - 14

LIGHTS IN THE PINES will be held at Pine Grove Park in Staples Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 5 - 8 p.m., through December. Free will donation.

WOMEN'S OPEN AA RECOVERY MEETING Fridays in person, 10:30 a.m., Motley Free Methodist Church (lower level), 33 Wellwood St. E. Motley. All women welcome.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY GROUP MEETINGS Sundays, 6 p.m., at Motley Free Methodist Church, 33 Wellwood St. E., Motley.

Dec. 16

WADENA COUNTY REPUBLICANS MEETING Tuesday, Dec. 16, 7 p.m., at the Wadena VFW. Come early to eat and visit with like-minded people. Meeting is one week early due to Christmas.

EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE AA GROUP MTGS IN STAPLES Tuesdays, 7 - 8 p.m., at Church of Christ, 27343 490th St., Staples. For info., call Dan at 218-640-7228.

Dec. 17

STAPLES ALL VETERANS AND COMMUNITY PARK ASSOCIATION will hold its regular meeting Wednesday, Dec. 17, 5:30 p.m. in the lower level board room at Lakewood Health System's main campus in Staples. For info., to attend via Zoom, call Bob Hamann at 218-894-3139.

Menu

Senior Nutrition Program

Call mornings (218-979-4118) the Thursday before to reserve next week's meal(s) and for current suggested donation info. LSS Meals - traditional older adult menu. Menu is subject to change.

LOCATED AT: Staples Hi-Rise Apartments, 615 4th St. NE, Staples. Seniors welcome to dine-in at 11:00 a.m., if meal is reserved.

Staples 218-979-4118
LSS meals include bread (various kinds), marg. and 1% milk.

Dec. 15 - Dec. 19

MONDAY - Country fried chicken, cream gravy mashed potatoes, peas, sugar cookie.

TUESDAY - Beef stew, sliced carrots, apple dump cake.

WEDNESDAY Scalloped potatoes w/ham, whole kernel corn, tropical fruit cup, peanut butter cookie.

THURSDAY - Beef bell pepper casserole, mixed veggies, pumpkin bar.

FRIDAY - Asian chicken, white rice, green beans, spring roll, fortune cookie.

wk51

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12 noon Friday

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Staples World newspaper subscription rates, one year:

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Student Rate: \$43 per school year, in-state (Sept.-April)

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Print with on-line: \$76

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The office closes at noon on Friday.





Happy 80th
BIRTHDAY,
Carol Bisek

Dec. 15

Celebrating your remarkable journey and the adventures still to come. We love you!



Staples World

DEADLINES

Newspaper deadline for copy and advertising: 12 noon Fridays

Hello World

ONLINE BIRTHS REMOVED
AT THE REQUEST OF LAKEWOOD
HEALTH SYSTEM.

Obituaries

Robert Dvorak

With deep sorrow, our father, husband, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Robert (Bob) Dvorak, 88, of Clarissa who left us on November 20, 2025, for his heavenly home.

A memorial service was held December 5 at the Iten Funeral Home in Browerville.

Robert Dean Dvorak was born May 22, 1937, to John and Cora “Mabel” (Tepley) Dvorak at their rural home in Todd County, the youngest of five children. He attended several country schools before graduating from Clarissa High School in 1955 and enlisted in the United States Air Force to honorably and proudly serve his country. Bob spoke many, many times of his time spent in the service and of his fellow comrades. He was united in marriage to Shirley Brisltn at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bartlett Township, Verndale on June 14, 1958.

Bob worked as a welder in Staples. He and Shirley raised five children on their farm, Kathy, Alison, Mitchell, David and Jim. He raised sheep, which he enjoyed and was especially proud of his “prize” ram. Later, he milked a few cows. While he also worked in town, Shirley and their two eldest sons helped with the milking and chores.

Bob was an avid reader, loved hunting small game birds, deer and in his later years turkeys. He was known for his “funny” stories ending with dynamic laughter shared by everyone listening. His favorite music was the “old-fashioned polka” music. He especially enjoyed his favorite traditional family meal of pork roast with dumplings, prune kolaches, prune-filled cookies and homemade finger rolls.

In 1990, Bob and Shir-



ley moved to Yakima, WA, returning to Minnesota to retire on their current farm in 2001. He had a profound and endearing love for, spending quiet moments on the deck listening and watching the birds, observing deer and turkeys passing through the yard. It was their “little slice of heaven” which he had a profound and endearing love and it was there Bob remained until the day of his death.

Bob’s presence, stories and laugh will be forever missed and remembered by his wife, Shirley of 67 years; two daughters, Kathy (Mike) Larson of rural Browerville and Alison (Michael) Shipley of Moberly, MO; three sons, Mitchell (Angela) of Zimmerman, David “Dave” (Seri) of Bellevue, WA and James “Jim /Jr (Carol) of Yakima, WA; 13 grandchildren, Michelle, Christopher, Becky, Thomas, Anthony, Minda, Julieanna, Hunter, Holden, Carter, Kenadi, Brooklyn and Harper and nine great-grandchildren, Alaina, Chloe, Tayvin, Haisley, Shawn, Jacob, Elaina, Anthony and Emma.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers, Joyce and Frank and two sisters, Alice Cline and Grace Cline.

Arrangements were with the Iten Funeral Home of Browerville.

w51c A00006B2025DC10

Janice Peterson

Janice Peterson, 73, of Staples, passed away December 3, 2025 at Lake-wood Health Center in Staples.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held 11:00 a.m. Thursday, December 11 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Red Lake Falls, with Father Bob Schreiner officiating. Burial will be held at St. Dorothy Cemetery, Dorothy.

Visitation will be held at 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Johnson Funeral Service in Thief River Falls and also one hour prior to the service at the church on Thursday.

Janice Raye (Boutain) Peterson was born June 25, 1951 in Crookston, the daughter of Andrew and Eva (Starken) Boutain. She was raised on a farm near Dorothy. She attended Woodland Country School through sixth grade, then went to Red Lake Falls public school. In the middle of her senior year she moved with her parents to Plummer where she completed her senior year with the class of 1969.

In May of 1970 Milt Peterson returned home from Vietnam. On Memorial Day she met Milt at the Hanson Bar in Plummer. They fell in love right away and after a whirlwind courtship they were married at St. Dorothy Catholic Church in Dorothy on Labor Day that same year. To this union two sons were born, Chad and Ryan. The couple celebrated 55 years on September 5, 2025.

Through the 55 year



years they purchased eight homes and moved 10 times. Janice had a knack for making each and every home a loving, welcome, comfortable home.

Janice was a wonderful wife, companion and counselor to Milt. She was always there to support and be there for him. She was a wonderful mother to their sons. She was a kind loving counselor and best friend to Chad and Ryan. She loved and adored their two grandchildren Mikayla and Mason. They were the light of her life.

Janice was a very intelligent, positive, cheerful and loving person. She could light up a room with her smile and make family and friends welcome. She was Milt’s rock and support for all their years together. She will be missed by all who were touched by her.

Janice is survived by her loving husband, Milt Peterson; two sons Chad (Lori) and Ryan (Kim); two grandchildren, Mikayla and Mason and their mother, Cindy Peterson; one sister, Julie (Chuck) Tydlacka; one sister-in-law, Lorna Jesme many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Janice is preceded in death by her parents; father and mother-in-law, Leonard (Mildred) Peterson; step mother-in-law, Bernice Peterson; one sister-in-law, Janet (Duane) Torkelson; one brother-in-law, Allan Peterson; grandparents, many uncles, aunts and cousins.

Condolences may be sent at www.johnsonfuneralservice.com

w51c A00006B2025DC10

Staples Area Church Directory

Staples

Staples Alliance
1512 8th St. NE, Staples 218-894-2891
Jonny Olson, Associate Pastor
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School 11:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
AWANA 6:00 p.m.

Assembly of God
914 3rd Ave. NE, Staples 218-894-1081
Pastor Roy Miles
Small Groups (Bible classes for all ages) 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Children’s Church (Kids start in main worship service) 11 a.m.
Prayer Meeting 5 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Sonlight (kids ages 4 yrs.-6th grade) After school to 5:30 p.m.
Youth Group (Teens, 7th-12th grade) After school to 5:30 p.m.

Church of Christ
27343 490th St., Staples 218-894-2609
Pastor Barry Klein
Facebook Live
Bible School (youth and adult) 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY:
Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.

Faith Lutheran
430 12th Street. NE., Staples 218-894-1546
Pastor Carl Larson
Sunday Worship Service 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School and Coffee Fellowship 10:05 a.m.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
310 4th St. NE, Staples 218-894-2296
Church info@marysacc.org
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314
Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310
Rev. Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
Mass: Sunday 8:30 a.m.

Seventh Day Adventist
421 Dakota Ave. SE, Staples
Pastor Joshua Jerecek
218-894-0033
Saturday Worship 9:30 am.
Sabbath School 10:45 a.m.

Thomastown Covenant
15940 251st Ave., Staples 218-894-3923
Pastor Scott Jorgenson
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH 6:30 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran
1000 4th St., NE, Staples 218-894-2372
Pastor Vicar Paul Koehler
Sunday Divine Service 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School and Bible Class 10:30 a.m.

United Methodist
310 5th St., NE, Staples 218-894-2248
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
(Nursery Available for Sunday Worship)

Aldrich

Balsamlund Lutheran
19550 490th Street, Aldrich
Janet Eckman SMA 218-837-5831
jre227@yahoo.com
Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m.

Cushing

Bethany Lutheran
25430 Bison Rd. Cushing, MN
320-749-2140
Pastor Carl Larson
www.bethanylutherancushing.org
Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.
Communion 1st and 2nd Sunday of each month

Lincoln Evangelical Free
1354 320th Street, Cushing, MN 56443
Phone: 218- 575-2449
www.lincolnefree.org
Facebook Lincoln E Free
Office Hours: Tues. - Thurs., 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Senior Pastor: Don Reigstad
SUNDAY
Church Worship Gathering 10:00 a.m.
YouTube Channel 10:00 a.m.

Cushing Baptist
26298 Bear Rd., Cushing
Pastor Dan Holmes 320-749-2583
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible study 7:30 p.m.

Leader

Swan Valley Lutheran
Leader 218-397-2470
Sandy Knight, Synodically Authorized Minister of Word and Sacrament
Sunday Worship
January - July 9 a.m.
July - January 11 a.m.

Maple Hill Lutheran
Sandy Knight, Synodically Authorized Minister of Word and Sacrament
Leader 218-397-2470 (Rural Pine River)
Worship and Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Motley

Motley Free Methodist
33 Wellwood St. E
Motley 56466 218-352-6888
Jim Johnson, Senior Pastor
Casey Reynolds, Assistant Pastor
Sunday Worship 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.
facebook live 9 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
AWANA 4:00-5:30 p.m.
Youth Group 6:00-8:00 p.m.

St. John’s Lutheran
497 3rd Ave. S., Motley 218-352-6399
Pastor Vicar Paul Koehler
Sunday School and Bible Class 8:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
St. Michael Catholic Church
1st St. and Birch, Motley 218-894-2296
info@marysacc.org
Fr. Aaron Kuhn Fr. Gabriel Walz
MASS:
Saturday 4:00 p.m.

St. Michael
280 1st Ave S., Motley 218-894-2296
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314 Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310 Rev. Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
Sunday 10:30 a.m. (May - Nov.)
Saturday 4:00 p.m. (Dec - April)

United Methodist
847 3rd Ave. S. Lane, Motley 218-352-6466
Pastor Greg Leslie
www.motleyumc.net
Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Monday AA meeting 8:00 p.m.

Oylen

Oylen Alliance
Cty. Rds. 7 and 9, Oylen
218-472-3440 or 218-472-3316
Pastor Neal Malcore
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.

Pillager

First Lutheran Church
Pastor Mathew Sundquist
717 River Street S, Pillager, MN
218-746-3775
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School, 2nd and 4th Sundays 8:30 a.m.

Casino Assembly of God
Pastor Dan Johnson
N. of Motley, Hwy. 64, E. on Cty 34 to Cty 104.
Phone 218-746-3839
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship 7:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY 7:00 p.m.

First Baptist
903 River Street South, Pillager
Pastor Jake Anderson
218-746-3768
curious@fbcpillager.com
Worship Gathering 10:00 a.m.
Connection Point 9:30 a.m.

Hewitt

Church of the Nazarene
114 Front Street, P.O. Box 146 Hewitt, MN
218-924-2028
Jim and Linda McGaffey, Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.
WEDNESDAY PRAYER 7:00 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS)
524 Front Street, PO Box 116, Hewitt, MN
Pastor Robin Fish
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

Hewitt Community Church
Hwy. 210, Hewitt, MN
Pastor Kenneth Uhren
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

Verndale

Verndale Alliance
109 NW Brown Street, Verndale, MN 56481
218-445-5619
Senior Pastor Tony Stanley
Youth Pastor Joe Ward
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Bible Fellowship Classes 11-11:45 a.m.

Family Life Church
402 NE Clark Drive, Verndale 218-445-5568
VerndaleFLC@gmail.com
Pastor Amos Self 218-371-7189
Tahna Rurup, Connections & Media Pastor
Tillman Phagon, Kid’s & Food Shelf Pastor
Ryan Wolfenden, Youth Pastor
SUNDAY
Youth Prayer 9:20 a.m.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Prayer Meeting 5 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Life Groups 6:30 p.m.

Hope Chapel Alliance
18126 County Road 7, Verndale
218-445-5643 or 218-472-3316
Pastor Neal Malcore
Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School 10:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Family Night 5:30 p.m.

Immanuel Lutheran Church of Bartlett Township (LCMS)
17097 460th St., PO Box 37, Verndale
Pastor Robin Fish
Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study 6:30 p.m.

Verndale United Methodist
10 3rd Ave. SW, Verndale
218-445-5108
Pastor Jill Pawlowski
Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.

Central Community Church
5 miles N on Cty Rd 26 (Nimrod tar)
Pastor James Middendorf, 320-260-4952
Sunday Service 9:00 a.m.
Bible Study 10:30 a.m.

St. Frederick Catholic Church
20 Mason Avenue NW
Verndale 218-894-2296
info@marysacc.org
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314 Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310 Rev. Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
MASS: Saturday 6:00 p.m.

St. Hubert Catholic Church
Bluegrass 218-894-2296
info@marysacc.org
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314 Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310 Father Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
Sunday Service 10:00 a.m. (Dec. - April)
Saturday 4:00 p.m. (May - Nov.)

Leaf River Township The Old Country Church
Leaf River Twp., Wadena County Rd. 6
Info. 218-837-5690 Call first.

Wadena

St. Helen’s Episcopal Church
22 Dayton Ave. SW, Wadena, MN
218-631-3928
Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

St. Ann’s Catholic Church
514 1st Street SE, Wadena(218) 631-1593
Rev. JC Duncan, 218-632-7314 Rev. Rick Aubol, 218-632-7310 Father Greg Sauer, 218-632-7319
Mass: Sunday 10 a.m.

“Christmas”

Father Rick Aubol , Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Staples

Alien observers could be forgiven for thinking the Christmas season begins with the first snow, or the day after Thanksgiving, or even Halloween and goes until Christmas day, for that’s when commercials flare up, carols come out, decorations are displayed and pageants and parties are celebrated. But this is just the opposite. It’s not Christmas – not yet.

Christmas begins Christmas Eve and continues for over a week (the 12 days of Christmas), not ending the next day. It never fails to confuse me this time of year, why businesses don’t take advantage of having two seasons to decorate and sell for, or why anyone would try to be excited for a month with no preparation, for there’s a vitally important season before Christmas, to prepare us for it, Advent.

Both Christmas and Advent come from the Church, who wisely knows that we cannot be celebrating at a high octane level all the time on earth. We would burn out. We would no longer feel prayer and festivity carry us and instead start to mistakenly think we were supposed to carry it and make it go. We would get it all backwards and start to think of the celebration as a burden, because though our yards, houses, kitchens and ears have been full, our hearts have been thirsting.

Christmas is wonderful, but if we aren’t faithful to the spirit of the season, if we aren’t tapped into its raison

d’etre, then we will miss out on the blessings of the festivity; our souls will feel exhausted and empty rather than comfort and joy. If we don’t celebrate Advent first, preparing our selves by praying, reflecting, serving and fasting, we won’t be able to celebrate Christmas well either. We will have only a superficial dusting of grace and our celebrations will be superficial and dependent on human effort, likely as not to stir up friction rather than joy and weary us rather than bring life to us.

But if we let grace work, if we dispose ourselves to it, cooperating by humbling ourselves, going into silence more, reflecting on what it means that Christ came, and will come again, on the consequences that should have for our lives; If we wait to pull out the songs of unrestricted Christmas joy and instead pray with the songs of Advent, those carols and all those efforts will help quiet our hearts to hear God’s message. And a beautiful thing happens when we can hear God’s message: we become happy. We realize that we were lonely and desperate and didn’t even know why, because we hid it from ourselves, worked harder to fill our mind and occupy our time.

To know God, to be in touch with He who gives us new life, first we have to be still. To enter into that stillness, God’s rest, first we need to work with Him, to prepare our hearts for His arrival very soon :)

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Wrestlers start at top of state

The Staples-Motley boys wrestling team opened the season in championship form and established themselves as the heavy favorite to repeat a state championship, as no other Class A team has yet to show they are near the same level so far.

In the first action of the year, the Cardinals won the Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted duals tournament on Dec. 5, beating Moorhead 52-8, Paynesville 58-5 and Holdingford 47-6. Holdingford is the third ranked team in Class A. The second ranked team, Chatfield, also had an early season loss to a Class A team, leaving Staples-Motley far ahead in the rankings after the first week of wrestling.

As if that wasn't enough, the Cardinals came back the next day and nearly upset a nationally ranked team in an individual tournament, placing second at the St. Michael-Albertville tournament, against mostly large schools. Staples-Motley did not wrestle two of their starters at the tournament, which could have put them ahead of St. Michael-Albertville, who is ranked 33rd in the nation by si.com.

HLWW duals

While the Cardinals won each match handily in the team score, they had to beat some quality opponents to make that happen.

Colbe Tappe beat the third ranked wrestler in Class AAA from Moorhead and the second ranked wrestler in Class A against Holdingford. In the Moorhead match, he got a quick takedown and held on for a 4-3 win. Against Holdingford, it was touch-and-go for six full minutes against a wrestler who was undefeated last year,

with each wrestler taking shots but coming up short. Finally Tappe won with a takedown in overtime.

Against Paynesville, Cardinals who had wins over ranked wrestlers included Turner Beachy, Cayden Neisen, Gage Bjerga and Beau Carlson.

Against Holdingford, who came within a point of Staples-Motley in their section match last year, the Cardinals were untouchable this year, with every match having a positive outcome. Even the two losses were against highly ranked wrestlers who would expect to score bonus points against most teams. Garrett Bjerga, Gage Bjerga and Luke Bjerga had wins against ranked Holdingford opponents. Gage and Garrett are brothers while Luke is a cousin.

St. Michael-Albertville tournament

Eight of the 11 Staples-Motley wrestlers reached the finals in their weight class, with four of them emerging as tournament champions. The tournament was filled with high quality opponents, many of them from St-Michael-Albertville.

In their finals, Garrett Bjerga beat the top ranked wrestler in Class AAA, Cayden Neisen beat a top ranked wrestler, and Colbe Tappe beat a 2nd ranked wrestler. Adrian Gomez won 1-0 in his title match after scoring pins in his first three rounds.

The second place finishers also had quality big school opponents in the finals. Caden Kramer lost to a top ranked wrestler, Gage Bjerga lost to a wrestler ranked second, Eli Greenwaldt lost to a nationally ranked wres-

tlar, and Riley Reese made the finals by beating a fifth ranked wrestler but then lost to one ranked fourth in the title match.

After the huge first weekend of the season, Staples-Motley is considered one of the top teams in the state, regardless of class. Their schedule will allow them to continue to test their progress against other top schools in the state.

Team results

HLWW duals
Staples-Motley 58, Paynesville 5
Staples-Motley 52, Moorhead 8
Staples-Motley 47, Holdingford 6
107 Garrett Bjerga W tf 19-4, 114 Justin Olson W 4-0, 121 Caden Kramer W fall, 127 Turner Beachy W fall, 133 Cayden Neisen W tf 15-0, 139 Gage Bjerga W tf 18-1, 145 Elijah Greenwaldt W tf 15-0, 152 Beau Carlson W 7-1, 160 Colbe Tappe W 4-1 (OT), 172 Riley Reese L 7-2, 189 Luke Bjerga W 4-1 (OT), 215 Zach Tabatt L 7-0, 285 Adrian Gomez W 5-3

St. Michael-Albertville tournament
St. Michael-Albertville 237.5, Staples-Motley 223, Waconia 101, Moorhead 100.5, Prior Lake 100, Willmar 95, Forest Lake 92, Kasson-Mantorville 91, Perham 80, St. Croix Falls (WI) 73, St. Cloud Tech 48, West Fargo-Sheyenne 47, Andover 44, Sauk Rapids-Rice 37, Pine City 26
107 Garrett Bjerga 4-0, 1st place
114 Justin Olson 0-2
121 Caden Kramer 3-1, 2nd place
127 (no entry)
133 Cayden Neisen 4-0, 1st place
139 Gage Bjerga 3-1, 2nd place
145 Eli Greenwaldt 3-1, 2nd place
152 (no entry)
160 Colbe Tappe 4-0, 1st place
172 Riley Reese 3-1, 2nd place
189 Luke Bjerga 3-1, 3rd place
215 Zach Tabatt 2-2
285 Adrian Gomez 4-0, 1st place

Boys basketball splits road games

The Staples-Motley boys basketball team opened their season by splitting road games on back to back nights, falling 57-50 at West Central Area on Dec. 4 but coming back for a 73-65 win against Frazee on Dec. 5.

Against WCA, the Cardi-

nals had a two point lead at halftime. They fell behind in the second half but battled back to take the lead again with three minutes left. But they allowed a couple of baskets and weren't able to come back again.

Cardinals come up just short in massive comeback

The Staples-Motley girls basketball team fell behind 13-0 to start their game against Park Rapids on Dec. 2. They battled all the way back until the end of the game, when their comeback fell two points short, losing 43-41. They also played at Frazee on Dec. 5, losing 72-31.

Team results
Staples-Motley 31, Frazee 72
Scoring: Sophia Luna 11, Clara Maros 5, Chloe Larson 4, Hannah Cole 4, Isabel Cole 3, Joci Lenk 2, Addison Potter 2



Cardinal fans support their team

Staples-Motley fans react as Colbe Tappe covers a takedown in overtime to give his Holdingford opponent his first loss in two years. (Staples World photo by Mark Anderson)



Working hard for points

Above, Gage Bjerga grabs his opponent's leg for a takedown against Paynesville. Right, Beau Carlson picks up his Moorhead opponent for a takedown. (Staples World photos by Mark Anderson)



Addison Potter drives to the basket.



Chloe Larson leads a fast break after getting a steal.

Greenwaldt, Reese, Dobson place at STMA tournament

Staples-Motley had three wrestlers place in the highest brackets of the St. Michael-Albertville girls tournament on Dec. 6.

Leah Greenwaldt was second, Kana Reese third and Isabelle Dobson fifth.

Greenwaldt won 6-2 in her 118 pound semifinal match, with a reversal and

9-0 in the finals.

After a loss in the semifinal in the 100 pound bracket, Kana Reese came back to win 12-2 in her third place match, scoring two takedowns and a near fall.

Dobson won her fifth place match 112 pound by running up a score of 14-1 before scoring a pin.

wrestlers were placed into brackets according to their experience. For Staples-Motley, Ali Reese had three wins at the 100C bracket to place first and Taylin Lind was fourth in the 130B bracket.

Wrestlers who did not place included Mikaela Pesta, Jadin Linehan, Kalee Winter and Anika Tureson.



CLC VB coach Peterson honored for National Girls & Women in Sports Day

Central Lakes College announced that recently retired head volleyball coach Jane Peterson has been selected as a Special Merit Award recipient as part of the 2026 National Girls & Women in Sports Day–Minnesota celebration. This prestigious honor recognizes some of the state’s most inspiring and influential individuals, groups, and organizations advancing girls’ and women’s sports. Peterson is among 11 honorees who will be celebrated on Wednesday, Feb. 4, in conjunction with the 40th annual National Girls & Women in Sports Day.

“I’m so grateful to the women who paved the way for me to have a career in coaching and teaching that was so successful and rewarding,” Peterson said. ‘And I’m grateful to the Minnesota National Girls and Women in Sports Day committee for the recognition. What’s special about this award is that it is celebrating what most long-term successful coaches really care about - not the wins, but the connection with people. I have often said I think I was called to help young women grow their confidence and learn to not be afraid of high expectations. I’m so grateful that Central Lakes College became the place and volleyball was the vehicle to do that. It is this connection with former players that I cherish today. They are the ones who showed up every day with open eyes, ears, hearts and minds to grow into teammates and become winners. I did not score a single point in any game, but being alongside young women to help guide them in discovering who they are meant to be and what they are capable of accomplishing is hopefully something I can continue to do.”

Peterson’s impact on women’s athletics spans decades and began in the early post-Title IX era. Growing up in La Jolla, Calif., she saw firsthand the inequities in girls’ and women’s sports — practicing in subpar facilities and entering a field where coaching wasn’t yet seen as a viable professional path for women.

Despite these barriers, she broke through. As the first female student-athlete from La Jolla High School to receive a collegiate athletic scholarship, Peterson went on to play volleyball for the College of William and Mary, earning ECAC All-Tournament honors in 1984 and ECAC MVP in 1985.

After earning her degree in economics, Peterson discovered her passion for teaching and coaching at Wayland Academy in Wisconsin. She then completed her master’s degree in athletic administration at St. Cloud State University before joining Central Lakes College in 1991 — a decision that would shape the next 33 years of her life and transform CLC volleyball into a national powerhouse.

During her remarkable tenure, Peterson led the Raiders to 737 wins, 18 conference titles, 17 Region 13B championships, and three NJCAA Division III national titles (2000, 2001, 2007). She coached 31 All-Americans, earned NJCAA National Coach of the Year honors three times, and was named AVCA Two-Year College Coach of the Year in 2007. She is one of just 10 coaches in NJCAA history to reach 700 wins and, in 2025, received the NJCAA Coaches Legacy Award, reserved for the association’s all-time winningest leaders.

Peterson’s influence extended far beyond the court. She expanded CLC’s volleyball offerings with camps, clinics, and summer leagues, and partnered with the CLC Office of Equity & Inclusion and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe youth programs to launch a Girls Empowerment Institute. Her career has been celebrated through inductions into the William & Mary Athletic Hall of Fame (2005), NJCAA Volleyball Coaches Hall of Fame (2012), and Minnesota College Athletic Conference Hall of Fame (2024).

Peterson will be honored at the 2026 National Girls & Women in Sports Day–MN Celebration, where Minnesota’s leaders in advancing opportunities for girls and women in sports will be recognized.



Installing the monument

Employees of Northland Memorial help guide the new POW/MIA granite memorial as it’s lowered on to the pedestal at Staples All Veterans and Community Park (Photos by Ken Klose)



Lowering the pedestal

Prior to the installation of the new POW/MIA and Purple Heart monument at Staples All Veterans and Community Park Nov. 24, Northland Memorial employees work to position the pedestal. (Photo by Ken Klose)



Public Notices

THOMASTOWN TOWNSHIP FILING NOTICE

Thomastown Township will hold an election in March, 2026 for one (1) supervisor for a three- (3) year term and one (1) clerk for a two- (2) year term.

The filing period for these offices opens December 30, 2025 and closes January 13, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. To file for office, contact Sue Walsvik, Township Clerk, at 218-639-8465.

Sue Walsvik, Clerk
Thomastown Township
51-52pnc

NOTICE MORAN TOWNSHIP FILINGS

During the March elections, Moran Township residents will be voting for:

One (1) Supervisor, three (3) year term

One (1) Treasurer, two (2) year term

To apply for office contact the clerk at 320-287-2233.

Diane Mack, Clerk
Moran Township
51pnc

MOTLEY TOWNSHIP FILING NOTICE

Motley Township will hold an election in March, 2026 for one (1) supervisor for a three- (3) year term and one (1) clerk for a two- (2) year term.

The filing period for these offices opens December 30, 2025 and closes January 13, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. To file for office, contact Ken Swecker, Township Clerk, at 218-330-7887.

Ken Swecker, Clerk
Motley Township
51-52pnc



The Staples World office, 224 4th St. NE, is open every weekday, 8 a.m. - noon.

•For afternoon availability, call 218-894-1112.

Regular advertising and copy deadline is Friday, noon.

The office closes at noon on Friday.

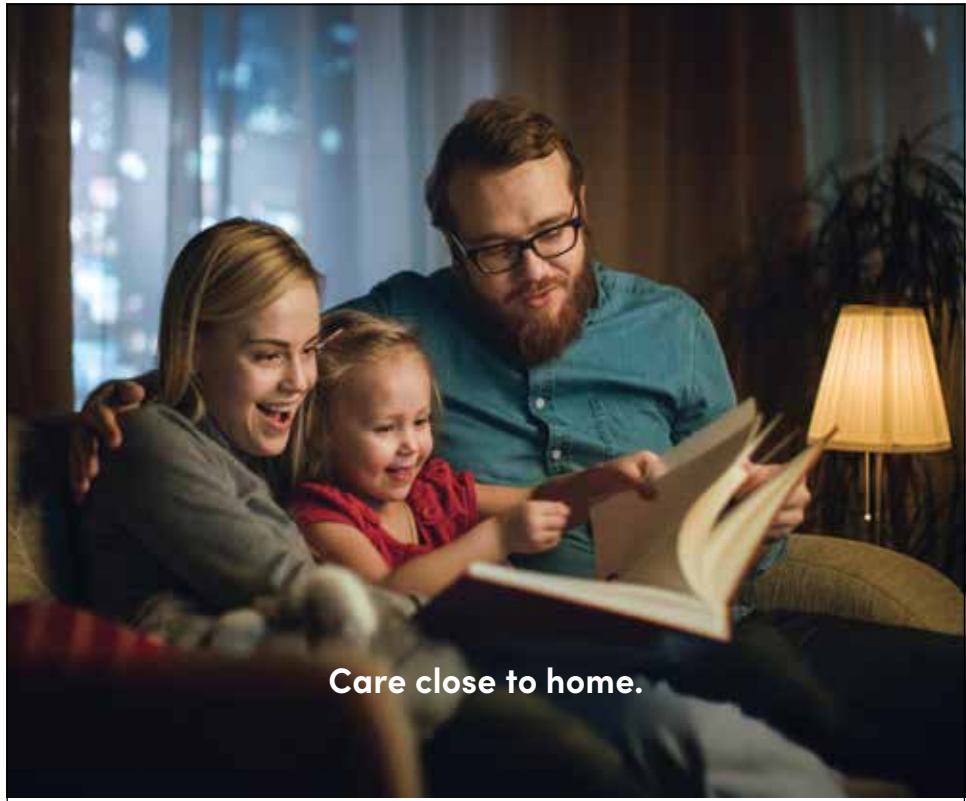




Sundogs over Staples

Sundogs, also known as parhelia, could be seen in Staples the morning of Dec. 3. Above, looking east at Hwy 10, they shine above the Northern Pacific Depot. Below, they are pictured above the Hwy 10 overpass. According to Wikipedia, “Sundogs are bright spots of

light that appear near the sun due to sunlight refracting through ice crystals in high clouds. They are most commonly seen in winter when the sun is low in the sky, and are often most vivid at sunrise or sunset.” (Staples World photos by Dawn Timbs)



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XPRESS continued from page 1a

Polar Xpress gaining momentum in fifth year at CLC

“Polar Xpress is heading into its fifth year, and it has truly become a staple of the holiday season. Families, train lovers, and anyone looking for a dose of Christmas cheer will find something to smile about,” said Erich Hepner, CLC Student Life Director. “From G-scale model trains rounding the bend to wide-eyed little ones pressed up against the display, the magic is hard to miss. Guests can enjoy local vendors with unique holiday gifts, hands-on ornament making, face painting, cookie decorat-

ing, a surprisingly thrilling train ride, and even a visit from Santa himself, who sets aside time just for this event. We hope you’ll join us for Polar Xpress 2025 and make it part of your family’s holiday tradition.”

New historical displays and new train cars will be part of the display, with CLC college programs and local businesses adding train cars this year. The patriotic train will be back, honoring the 250 year anniversary of the U.S. Army, Navy and Marines. A teddy bear display is also promised for this year.

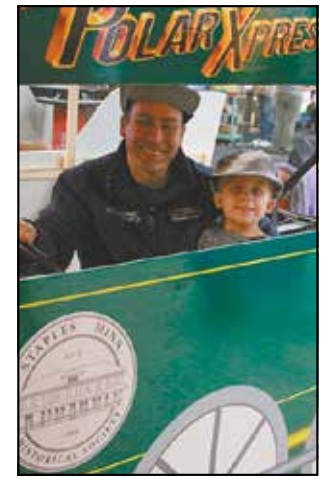


Polar Xpress 2024



Window into the past

The new ceiling window on the Old Bell Coffee Station at the Polar Xpress contains Masonic Lodge imagery from the 1880s. (Staples World photo by Mark Anderson)



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