

THOMAS COUNTY Herald

Your Source Of
News In The Sandhills

THOMAS COUNTY, THEDFORD, NEBRASKA 69166

(USPS 596-550)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2023

NO. 24



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and in the new year.

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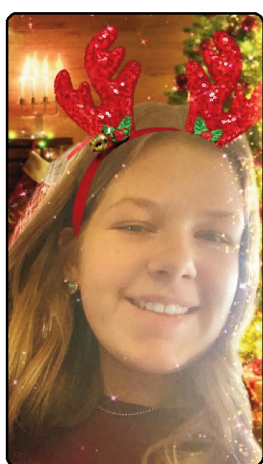
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Thomas County Commissioners Public Notice

Notice of Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Thomas County Commissioners will be held on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. in the Commissioner's meeting room at the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford, Nebraska.

An agenda will be kept continually current and shall be available for public inspection at the office of the Thomas County Clerk during regular business hours. Additions to the agenda may be made no later than 24 hours before the meeting.

Publish: December 21, 2023

ZNEZ



"The mission of Sandhills Public Schools is to provide quality education in a safe, respectful, equitable and inclusive environment to develop productive citizens for an ever-changing global society."

Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting

1. Called to Order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
- a. Open Meetings Act - adhered to and posted
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Attendance - Tedd Teahon (Pres.), Tyson Cox (Vice Pres.), Jeff Martindale (Sec.), Reed Larsen, Rory Zutavern, Ann Collier (recorder), and J.D. Furrow (Superintendent). 18 members of the public signed in and were present at the meeting, 2 members of the SDEA were in attendance as well. Absent - Michelle Milleson
- d. Per Policy 204.07 - reasonable advanced notification was made of the meeting
- e. The Board of Education reserves the right to enter into executive session for the protection of the public interest; or the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of an individual, and if the individual has not requested a public meeting.
3. Consent agenda
- a. Approve the minutes of the November 13th, 2023 regular board meeting.
- b. Approve the agenda of tonight's meeting
- c. Approve the Financial Report
- d. Approve the payment of bills
- e. Excuse Absent Board Members: Michelle Milleson
- f. Verification of Publication of minutes and

Thomas County Commissioners Public Notice

Notice of Organizational Meeting

The organizational meeting of the Thomas County Commissioners will be held on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 8:15 a.m. in the Commissioner's meeting room at the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford, Nebraska.

An agenda will be kept continually current and shall be available for public inspection at the office of the Thomas County Clerk during regular business hours. Additions to the agenda may be made no later than 24 hours before the meeting.

Publish: December 21, 2023

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Sandhills Public Schools Proceedings

Sandhills Public Schools Minutes of Regular Meeting December 11, 2023 High School Lecture Hall Dunning, NE 6:00 p.m.

THEDFORD COMMUNITY CALENDAR

December 26 - TOPS, 10:00 a.m., Thomas County Library; AA & Al Anon, 8:00 p.m., UCC, Thedford.

December 31 - Nominations due for 2024 Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame.

January 2 - Thomas County Commissioners meeting, 8:30 a.m., commissioner's meeting room, Thomas County Courthouse.

January 3 - Women in Ag Conference registration opens.

January 8 - Sandhills Public Schools Board of Education meeting, 6:00 p.m., Lecture Hall at the high school in Dunning.

Merry Christmas.

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Marcia R. HoraPublisher
Kendra CutlerEditor
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meeting notices in the Thomas County Herald.

i. November 13th, 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes.

ii. December 11th, 2023 notice of posting of Regular Board Meeting

Motioned by Jeff Martindale and seconded by Reed Larsen - passed 5-0

4. Requests to address the board. At this time, the board will hear comments or concerns from patrons that have been addressed through the proper procedure, policies, and administrative channels. The board will also take comment from the public per requirement on ESSER III - ARP funds and spending plans.

Mr. Teahon read a statement outlining the parameters for public comment at tonight's meeting. Each patron that had given previous notice was allotted 3 minutes to speak and there would be 15 minutes total for the public comment section of the night's meeting. Other patrons in attendance were afforded the opportunity to speak after those that had signed up prior to the meeting until the 15-minute limit had been reached.

Patrons addressing the board were: Chad Sutton, Anita Peterson, Jeanine Saner, Pam Moody, Kristi Webster, Mallory Sikes, and Chris Rodgers.

All speakers were addressing the topic of school safety and required drills.

5. Safety Team Update: Mrs. Trish Rodocker presented to the board on behalf of the safety team. She shared what has been done in the past in regards to student safety and what the safety teams upcoming plans are. She also asked that the board become involved in the safety team meetings and planning.

6. SDEA negotiations: The board entered executive session for the purpose of negotiating the certified teacher contract. Motioned by Reed Larsen, seconded by Tyson Cox - passed 5-0

Executive session was closed at 8:12 p.m. The board took a 5 minute recess and reconvened the regular board meeting at 8:17 p.m.

7. Superintendent Evaluation - Mr. Tedd Teahon compiled and summarized the evaluations of the rest of the board members. He then shared the overall scores and remarks from both the board's evaluation and Mr. Furrow's self-evaluation.

8. Superintendent Negotiations - This item was tabled until the January meeting due to time constraints.

9. Discussion Items/Administrative Report:

a. Sandhills-Thedford Coop Report - Mr. Furrow informed the board of some coaching additions to the winter sports. Mr. Furrow also reviewed MNAC and Sub-District hosting schedules.

b. Update building progress - Mr. Furrow discussed the security system bid in tonight's action items. Mr. Furrow informed the board of work that has been done in the last month. Mr. Furrow also shared details of the meeting with the basketball floor installer from H2I. The action item on tonight's agenda will be moved to the January meeting.

c. Staffing update-Mr. Furrow updated the board on the hire of Jake Trosper for the PE/AD position. Mr. Furrow also updated the board on the progress of staff evaluations.

d. State Ed Conference debrief - Mr. Teahon and Mr. Zutavern shared what they learned at the conference and encouraged the board to attend upcoming learning opportunities.

e. Policy Review - Mr. Furrow read the policies dealing with school safety planning and safety drills to the board. The board discussed proposed changes to the policies. Mr. Teahon instructed Mr. Furrow to reach out to our policy rep from

NASB to inquire about their recommendation to change the policies related to drills and to help draft new policy for the board to consider. The action item on tonight's agenda will be moved to the January meeting.

f. AD Stipend - the board discussed giving an AD stipend to Ann Collier and Bec Ray. They have worked together to cover the duties left from the vacant AD position.

g. Committee on Americanism and Multicultural Education Report - Mr. Furrow discussed the artifacts that had been collected to meet the requirements of state statute.

h. Other - Mr. Furrow paneled the board about who would be running for re-election in the upcoming term. Mr. Furrow also shared the upcoming changes in minimum wage and discussed how this will impact our current pay scales. Mr. Furrow also informed the board of the NDE review of our SPED program.

10. Business/Action Items

a. Review, consider, and take all necessary action to approve the revised policies 508.05 and 905.07 (Safety Drills) as discussed in tonight's meeting, and to review policy 905.02 (Annual Emergency Safety Plan) - This action has been postponed to the January Meeting.

b. Review, consider, and take all necessary action to approve the AD

stipend of \$8500 paid to Ann Collier and \$1500 paid to Bec Ray.

Motioned by Jeff Martindale, seconded by Tyson Cox - Passed 5-0

c. Review, consider, and take all necessary action to approve the payment of \$29,750 to Engineered Controls for the equipment and installation for security cameras and door access to the new building and surrounding area. This action has been postponed to the January Meeting.

11. Meeting Adjourned: 9:42

Official Meeting Notice:

The board of education of Sandhills Public Schools will meet Monday, January 8th, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Lecture Hall at the high school in Dunning, Nebraska. This and all meetings are open to the public. Agendas are kept continually current and available for public inspection in the Superintendent's Office during regular business hours with reasonable notice.

Respectfully Submitted,
J.D. Furrow (Administrator)
CLAIMS

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska.....1,511.01
ByteSpeed, LLC.....1,324.00
Cash-Wa Distributing226.85
CCT Real Estate LLC400.00
CNA Surety Direct Bill100.00
Coach Master's, Inc.483.75
Consolidated Telephone451.64

Corporate Payment Systems.....2073.07
Creative Printers.....189.28
Custer Public Power District.....3,418.93
Dana F Cole & Company, LLP ...2,760.00
DAS State Accounting - Central Finance....267.63
DLRGroup.....7,500.00
Environmental Services, Inc.....200.00
ESU 108844.73
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US. Foods.....440.25
Village of Thedford.....870.00
Waldinger Corporation, The9870.01
Yanda's Music214.95
Payroll and Liabilities.....182,398.49
TOTAL235,389.20
Publish: December 21, 2023

ZNEZ

Nominations Being Taken For 2024 Cowboy Hall of Fame

The public is invited to submit nominations for the 2024 Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame. Nominations are due by December 31, 2023. Started in 2006, the Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame continues to honor the men and women who have made a lasting contribution to the Sandhills and our cowboy way of life.

Nomination forms are available by contacting any board member or Executive Secretary Rod

Palmer at P.O. Box 127, Ainsworth, NE or by calling 402-387-2212. Nominees must be 50 years or older or deceased. Board members include Dan Dailey in Brown County, A.B. Cox in Cherry County, Rich Boots in Hooker County, Charlie Daly in Thomas and Dick Caulfield in Keya Paha County.

The nominees must fit the following criteria: The Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame honors those individuals

who have made extraordinary contributions to the Western lifestyle of horse culture in the area of competition, business, or support of rodeo in the Sandhills of Nebraska. This includes rodeo, ranching, rodeo stock contractors, western arts, western entertainment, and special achievements awards.

Online nomination forms are located at the website: www.sandhillscowboys.com.

Women In Ag Conference Registration Opens January 3

The 39th Nebraska Women in Agriculture Conference will be held Feb. 22-23, 2024, in Kearney, at the Holiday Inn Convention Center, 110 Second Ave.

A pre-conference workshop on business entity selection for farms and ranches will be held Feb. 21. This training will be provided by Sheila Hansen, CPA, and agricultural attorney Katie Samples Dean, JD.

During the conference, attendees can look forward to hearing from keynote speakers Ashley Machado, Dr. David Kohl and renowned photographer John Noltner, who is preparing a special surprise project for the event.

In addition to the keynote speakers, participants will select from over 20 workshop options that cover the five areas of agricultural risk management: production, market, financial, human and legal. The conference will also offer Continuing Education Credits for veterinary medicine professionals and certified crop advisors.

port mental health in the food and ag space. She specializes in tangible tools and simple strategies through M Well, her mental health consulting firm that provides corporate wellness programs and mental health trainings for ag families and businesses.

Machado grew up in the dairy industry and now farms and ranches with her family in California's Central Valley. She has a bachelor's degree in human development and a master's in social work with an emphasis in clinical mental health. Her goal is for everyone in the ag industry and rural America to have the tools they need in their mental health toolbox to operate and live life fully.

Dr. David Kohl is an Academic Hall of Famer in the College of Agriculture at Virginia Tech. He has been insight into the agriculture industry gained through extensive travel, research and involvement in ag businesses. He has traveled nearly 10 million miles; conducted

more than 7,000 presentations; and published more than 2,500 articles in his career. Dr. Kohl's wisdom and engagement with all levels of the industry provide a unique perspective into future trends.

John Noltner has been telling stories with words and images for 20 years. His work has appeared in National Geographic Traveler, Forbes Magazine, Midwest Living and the New York Daily News, among other publications. Since 2009, Noltner has been asking people the simple (or not so simple) question, "what does peace mean to you?" for his multimedia arts project, "A Peace of My Mind."

Conference registration opens on Jan. 3. The cost for a two-day registration is \$150 for participants who register on or before Feb. 8. The two-day registration fee increases to \$175 on Feb. 9. The pre-conference workshop has an additional registration

See Ag Conf. Page 6



\$2,000 Scholarships

Nebraska Press Association Foundation

Special consideration given to student's involvement in their local community newspaper or student newspaper.

Preference will be given to students pursuing community-based journalism or agricultural communications education at a Nebraska-based or out-of-state college/university.

Applications must be post-marked by January 19, 2024.

For more information and application form, www.nebpress.com



Remember When

Compiled By Helen White

100 years ago
Druggist W.J. Lynch last week installed a radio set which has been proving very entertaining the past few evenings.

Floyd Steele and Joseph Bruce made a trade last week. Floyd became the owner of Joseph's Buick car and Joseph the owner of a team of horses and a cow.

Sam Evans jumped from train 42 Thursday morning about a mile and half this side of Hecla. 42 backed up and picked the man up and brought him on to Mullen for medical aid. We understand he had a ticket to Cardin, Kentucky and had been helped on the train at Alliance.

50 years ago
Carolyn Biltoft of Thedford and Pat Sexton of Mullen were elected representatives from their counties to the Thedford District Extension Board.

Thedford basketball was in Mullen over the weekend where Mullen won 54-44.

The Saturday movie at Figards' Star Theatre will be "Shamus". The Art Daly Orchestra will play for the dance afterward.

25 years ago
Services were held December 16, 1998 at the Thedford United Church of Christ for David A. Miller, 73, who died December 12 in North Platte. The Rev. Linda Martin officiated and burial was in the Hillcrest

Cemetery. Survivors include his wife, Louise; son Brent (Deanna); daughters Kerri (Bill) Horler and Cheryl Miller; four grandchildren; brothers Percy, Ames and Earl and sister Kitty Simonson.

Area students who graduated from Chadron State College at winter commencement December 18th were Staci Warren of Thedford, Chessney Sevier of Seneca, Wade Holt of Stapleton and Aaron Manning of Hyannis. Tricia Nutter of Thedford graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney on December 18th.

10 years ago
Timothy and Shena (Nutter) Libeau of Fairfax, Virginia announce the arrival of their son, Brooks Arlyn Libeau on Monday, November 11, 2015. Linda Nutter and the late Troy Nutter are grandparents.

The Sandhills/Thedford Knights and Lady Knights are both 2-1 after three basketball games in December.

Over The Hills

J.R. Trumbull



At the end of life, what really matters is not what we have bought, but what we have built; not what we have got but what we have shared; not our competence, but our character, and not our success but our significance. Live a life that matters. Live a life of love.

It's that time of year again. Christmas should be a time to think of His birth and sacrifice as well as His teachings. I've been reading through the book of Luke, one chapter per day. I'm noticing things that are so similar to today. Jesus was rejected by people who had known Him all of His life. They were looking for the Messiah but they sure weren't looking in their own village. He told them the truth and they weren't about to accept it. As we go through this Christmas season, think on the teachings of Christ and how they can be applied to your life. He is the very best Present you will ever receive so don't reject Him.

It's CHRISTmas

Take Christ out of Christmas?
What do you mean?
Every time I see X-mas,
I just want to scream!

For Christmas without Christ
Loses all meaning for me
As Christmas is far more
Than presents under a tree.

God gave His Son
One glorious night
That by His life and death
We might see the light.

The light of redemption,
Of purpose and love
With Holy Spirit guidance
Sent from above.

Christmas is far more
Than mythical Santa and such –
It celebrates Christ's birth
Who loves us so much!

Yes, Jesus was born
One long ago Christmas Eve
Offering life everlasting
If we would only believe.

So leave Christ in Christmas
And center your day
Around the risen Savior
And trust and obey.

Just celebrate Christmas
Remembering His love
And all He's done for us
With blessings sent from above.

J.R. Trumbull
14 December 1997

Brosius Awarded Meritorious Civilian Service Award

John P. Brosius, son of Dennis and Trudy Brosius of Stapleton, received the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal from the Department of the Army. The medal was awarded Tuesday, December 5, 2023.

Brosius demonstrated initiative and skill in devising new and improved equipment, work methods, and procedures; inventions resulting in substantial savings in expenses such as manpower, time, space, and materials, improvements in safety or health of the workforce. The Meritorious Civilian Service Award is the third highest award granted by U.S. Army Commanders.

John lives in Rock Island Illinois, with his wife Tierney, and two children, Jack and Rowan.



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Tips on Caring for an Aging Parent

Dear Savvy Senior,
Where can I turn to for caregiving help? I help take care of my 80-year-old father and work too, and it's wearing me out.
Worn Out Wendy

Dear Wendy,

Taking care of an aging parent over a period of time - especially when juggling work and other family obligations - can be exhausting. But help and resources are available. Here's what you should know.

Identify Your Needs
To help you determine and prioritize the kinds of help you need, a good first step is to make a detailed list of everything you do as your dad's caregiver and the amount of time each task takes. Identify the times when you need help the most and which tasks others might be able to do for you.

Then list the types of care needed, such as simple companionship or doing active chores, like shopping or running errands. Once you determine this, here are some tips and places you can reach out to for help.

Care Helpers
If you have siblings or other loved ones close by, start by asking them if they could come and help with specific tasks. And see if friends, neighbors or faith group members could help too.

You also need to check into local resources that

may be available. Many communities offer a range of free or subsidized services that help seniors and caregivers with basic needs such as home delivered meals, transportation, senior companion services and respite services, which offers short-term care so you can take an occasional break. Call your nearby Area Aging Agency (800-677-1116) for referrals to services.

There are also a bevy of online services you can use to help you save time on certain chores. For example, online grocery shopping and home deliveries, and online pharmacy medication refills and deliveries. You can also order meal-kits or pre-made meals online through numerous meal service delivery companies and arrange needed transportation with ride sharing services like Lyft or Uber.

Or, if you can afford it, you may want to consider hiring someone a few hours a week to help with things like cooking, housekeeping or even personal care. Costs can run anywhere from \$12 up to \$25 per hour. *Care.com* or *CareLinx.com* are two good websites to help you find someone, or you can work with a local home care agency.

Financial Aids
If you're handling your dad's financial chores, make things easier by

arranging for direct deposit for his income sources, and set up automatic payments for his utilities and other routine bills. You may also want to set up your dad's online banking service, so you can pay bills and monitor his account anytime. Of, if you need help, consider hiring a bill paying service like Silver Bills (*SilverBills.com*), which charges a flat fee of \$150 per month.

BenefitsCheckup.org is another excellent tool to look for financial assistance programs that may help your dad, particularly if he's lower income.

Technology Solutions
To help you keep tabs on your dad when you are away at work or if he lives alone, there are affordable technology devices that can help. For example, there are medical alert systems and smart speakers that help with communication and allow him to call for help if needed. Home video cameras with two-way speakers that allow you to monitor and talk to him when you're away. Electronic pill boxes that can notify you if he has taken his medications. And to help you coordinate his care with others members of his care team there are websites like *LotsAHelpingHands.com*.

Send your questions to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.



Urinalysis in patient care

by
Kelly Evans-Hullinger, MD



Urinalysis, or testing of the urine, has ancient origins dating back to the time of Hippocrates and beyond. Although we have evolved in our methodology of studying the urine and our understanding of the meaning of its characteristics, we do still rely on urinalysis in making clinical diagnoses frequently in medicine.

In centuries past, the tools of urinalysis were blunt and primarily involved human senses of sight, smell, and taste (yes, taste). Ancient physicians noted that sediment in the urine often correlated with fever, the sediment in question probably being white blood cells. Bubbles in the urine might portend kidney disease, which we know to be true if the bubbles are caused by excessive protein in the urine. And diabetes mellitus was generally known

We look routinely for protein in the urine of patients with diabetes or known kidney disease. Protein in the urine is typically the first sign of kidney damage from chronic diseases like diabetes. And the amount of protein in the urine of a patient with chronic kidney disease can help us understand prognosis and whether certain medications are working. Glucose is found in the urine if a person has very high blood glucose (or if they are taking certain medications). Numerous other chemical tests of the urine can help us to diagnose selective medical conditions.

As a physician in the modern era, luckily I have never tasted my patients' urine like Hippocrates and his cohorts would have. But I do use urinalysis every day to help me diagnose and care for my patients.

Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices internal medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

Odds & Ends

Marcia R. Hora, Publisher
How Can We Keep Christmas?

We all know the classic Charles Dickens' story. Ebenezer Scrooge didn't have much enthusiasm for Christmas. "If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with Merry Christmas on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart," Scrooge remarks.

After being visited by the ghost of his former partner, Jacob Marley, and three spirits of Christmas, Scrooge is a changed man.

In fact to the Ghost of Christmas Future he promises to honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all year.

He kept his promise and the ending of A Christmas Carol reports



Scrooge knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge and Dickens wrote, "May that be truly said of us, and all of us."

How can we keep Christ-

See Odds & Ends
Page 6

The Cutting Edge

Kendra L. Cutler, Editor

The Man and the Birds Christmas Story

It is my hope that this powerful yet simple Christmas parable about the true meaning of Christmas will not be lost and will continue to be told and shared for many years to come.

A sincere thank you to the late Chicago based radio broadcaster Paul Harvey who retold this story for decades on his Christmas radio broadcast. Listening to this story became a wonderful Christmas tradition for many.

Editor's Note: The origin and author of The Man and the Birds Christmas Story is unknown.

According to Paul Harvey, who retold this parable every Christmas for decades, the story was originally published by United Press International by Louis Cassels. He tried for many years to trace the author of these words. He never could and it occurs to him that maybe some things are supposed to be written without credit to any particular individual.

The man I'm going to tell you about was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family and upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn't believe in all of that incarnation stuff that the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn't swallow the Jesus story, about God coming to Earth as a man.

He told his wife I'm truly sorry to distress you, but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve. He said



he would feel like a hypocrite and that he would much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. So he stayed and they went to the midnight service.

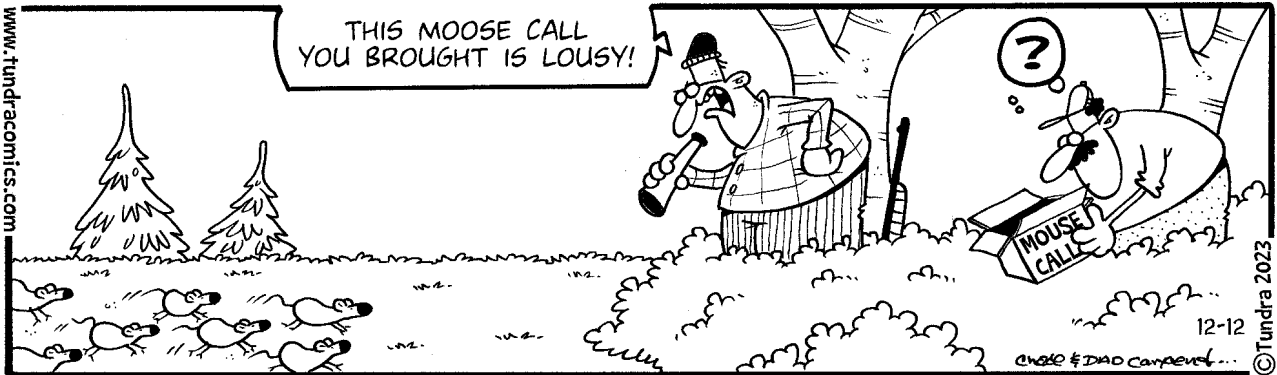
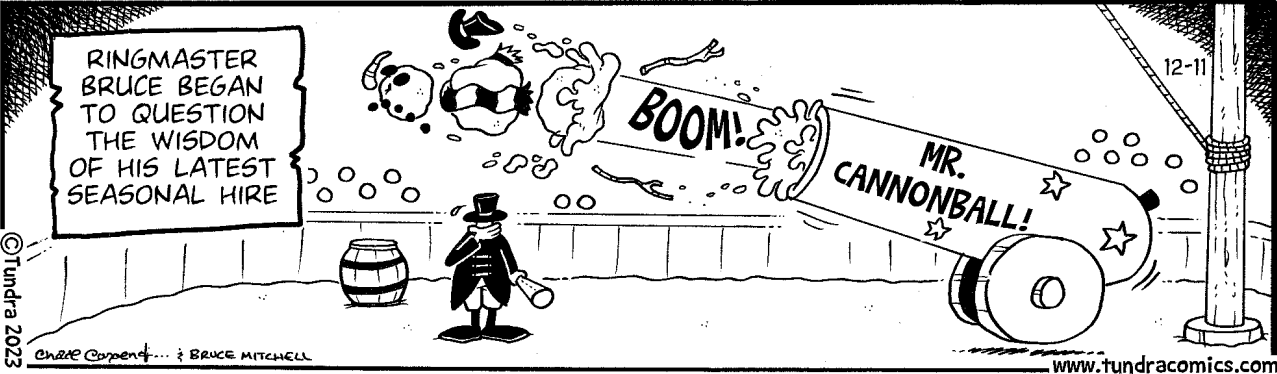
Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then he went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper.

Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another ... and then another. At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against the living room window. But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled outside miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter they had tried to fly through his large landscape window. That is what had been making the sound.

Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures just lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter. All he would have to do is to direct the birds

See Cutting Edge
Page 10

The Men of Tundra Comics



Life's Outtakes

Daris Howard

Children and Musical Instruments

As I became more comfortable teaching music in my assignment with the children at our church, I decided that since they had learned some styles of music, it might be fun to play some simple instruments. As I thought about it, I remembered learning to play a comb with cellophane wrapped around it when I was young. In fact, I became the king of the comb and played to accompany my grade school class to sing. I have even done a couple of YouTube videos.

For those who have not heard this most notable instrument, it sounds like a kazoo. Anyone can do it. You have to learn to hum and buzz your lips against the cellophane at the same time.

I went to the dollar store and bought a bunch of combs of different sizes. I took them and a box of cellophane to church. When I pulled them out, the combination intrigued the children. I didn't give cellophane to the youngest children for safety reasons, but they still got a nice comb. But the children who were around four years and older had a chance to play one.

It only took about fifteen minutes for every child to learn, some even faster. A few needed special help, but soon all got the hang of it. We then played a few of our favorite songs. As church ended, every child took a comb home with them, and the older children received some extra strips of cellophane. The older children were all buzzing out their favorite songs on their way to the parking lot. It sounded like

hives of bees had made the church their home.

I promised the children if they would bring their combs back each week, we would play some songs together. The following week, most of them had their combs with them. One little boy didn't. "My mom took mine and hid it," he said. I had extras, so he was quickly back in the orchestra.

One father told me his two children played their combs incessantly all week. "If I end up killing you, I'll be acquitted by reason of insanity," he said.

I promised the children they could play at least one comb song for the community Christmas party, but I wanted something even more oriented to the season. I had searched the internet for inexpensive bells, but everything was way out of my price range. Then I came across a website that talked about conduits being cut in lengths to make different notes.

I bought some conduit and cut a bunch of each desired length. I drilled holes in them and put different colored strings for each note through the holes to hold them. I then bought some large nails and ground the pointed ends off. When I finished, I examined them.

"I think I better ream them out, or someone will get a finger stuck in one," I told my wife, Donna.

"I don't think that will happen," she replied.

That Sunday, I hadn't passed them out to the children for more than a minute before one little boy had his finger stuck in his. I took him to the bathroom and got soap on his finger to get it out. For obvious reasons, I also had to make a rule that if anyone used their chime to whack someone else, they lost it for the day.

Donna made a chart for each Christmas song we played with colored dots related to the string colors so the children would know when to hit theirs. I grouped them by age and notes. It sounded amazing for a children's chime orchestra.

The desire to ding the conduit was so great that I found I needed to let them smack them with the nails for about thirty seconds before we could settle in and play the songs. I'm sure when they were all hitting their chimes at the same time, the dissonance made people wonder what we were up to. But with a little practice, we also played them for the Christmas party, and the parents were all complimentary.

It's amazing what can be learned and what fun can be had with a few simple items.

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Dave Says

Dave Ramsey

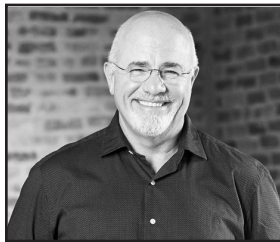
Dear Dave,
My wife and I are debt-free except for our mortgage and two Parent PLUS loans for our daughters' college educations. One of the loans totals \$18,078, and the other is for \$41,500. Both girls want to pay them off using the new extended plan being offered, but I'm 59 1/2, and I've got about \$500,000 in a 401(k) from a previous job along with \$125,000 from a job I started five years ago. We've been thinking about just paying the loans off for the girls, but we wanted to know your thoughts.

Mike

Dear Mike,
If I were in your shoes, I'd just go ahead and pay them off. Technically, you're liable for the loans. They are not.

The extended plan you're talking about is garbage. In reality, it means the loans are never paid back. The extended plan is 30 years of not even making the principal payment. No interest is paid, and they don't touch the principal. The whole thing works backward for 30 years, and it's the very definition of a stupid government program.

I really don't think you want your daughters to be part of something like this. But that means you're going to be stuck



with paying off these loans. You might as well just own it and pay them off now.

I want you to understand this, Mike. I don't advise people to dip into their savings every time a problem comes up prior to retirement. But you're 59 1/2, and at that point there's no penalty. Plus, you've got \$625,000 sitting there. You're going to pull less than \$60,000 out, plus a little in taxes, to make the problem go away. It's not as bad as it could be, but I'm afraid you're going to have to pay a little stupid tax on this one. I'm sure your girls didn't know all this, but it's a perfect example of what can happen when you put your faith in a stupid plan coming out of Washington, D.C.

I hate it for you guys—and everyone else in America who took out a bunch of student loans—because you're getting messed over by your own government. The first way they messed you over was to put a student

See Dave Says
Page 6



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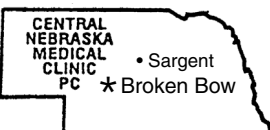
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NEBRASKA EXTENSION IN THE CENTRAL SANDHILLS

Notes From Your Central Sandhills Area Extension Office

Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings Coming Soon

The Central Sandhills Area Extension office is offering four private pesticide applicator trainings for new and re-certifying applicators. A private pesticide applicator is anyone who uses restricted use pesticide (RUP) for the purpose of producing agricultural commodities on their own property, or on property they rent. Private applicators are generally ranchers and farmers who do their own spraying.

- January 5 (Friday), Grant County Courthouse, Hyannis
- January 12 (Friday) Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford
- January 19 (Friday), Hooker County Courthouse, Mullen
- January 23 (Tuesday), Blaine County Courthouse, Brewster

Training sessions will

Odds & Ends

mas well? Is it purchasing extravagant gifts that we cannot afford? Is it decking the halls and trimming the tree to the extreme?

For Ebenezer Scrooge it was primarily a matter of generosity, joyfulness, fairness in the workplace, and caring for people in need.

He became a good friend and as good a friend the city had known. As praiseworthy as all of the things that he did, is this all there is to keeping Christmas well? Is there more?

No matter how we try to change Christmas there is one essential event. The birth of Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a man-

be from 1-4 PM, local time. RSVP is required to ensure materials and to be notified of any changes. Cost is \$60 and checks can be made payable to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Call the Central Sandhills Area Extension Office, 308-645-2267, to register.

Private pesticide applicators whose license expires in 2024, should have received a bar-coded letter from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA). Please bring this bar-coded letter to the training. Once training is completed, participants will receive an invoice for the private license \$25 from the NDA. Once payment is received, the license is mailed. Licenses are good for three years.

In addition to the trainings listed above, participants can get licensed through on-line self-study at UNL's Pesticide Safety Education Program or pass a private applicator exam administered by NDA. To study online,

(Continued from page 4)

ger, because there was no room for him and his parents at the inn. This seemingly insignificant event was in fact the watershed event of history, the entrance of the Word of God into human life as human flesh.

Keeping Christmas well means paying close attention, not only to what happened at Christmas, but especially to its meaning. Christmas changes everything, including how we live each and every day.

We need to honor Christmas each day, not only in our hearts, but in our relationships, service to others, in our finances, and the way we treat others.

Merry Christmas.

find more training dates or to get more info, please go to UNL's Pesticide Safety Education Program at <https://pested.unl.edu/>.

Dave Says

(Continued from page 4)

loan program out there and then tell you the way to success was to borrow tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars for a degree in left-handed puppetry. And now, guess what? You're a barista! Then, they start shouting they're going to forgive it all. After that it's, "No, we're not. Yes, we are. No, we're not. Yes, we are."

The fact is, they don't intend to forgive it. It's the biggest scam in history—mathematically speaking—perpetrated on the American public by our government.

— Dave

Ag Conference

(Continued from page 2)

fee.

The Nebraska Women in Agriculture program will award up to 15 scholarships to students to attend the 2024 Nebraska Women in Agriculture Conference. Any student attending a four-year college/university, two-year college, a vocational/technical school, or a 4-H or FFA member may apply for a scholarship to attend. Applicants will need to prepare an essay that answers the question: "Why do you want to attend the Nebraska Women in Agriculture Conference?" The essay response is limited to 3,000 characters. Applications must be submitted online by Feb.1.

To learn more, visit the Nebraska Women in Agriculture website at <https://wia.unl.edu>.

Season Affective Disorder: Take Proactive Steps

As temperatures drop and daylight hours shorten, many individuals experience what is commonly known as Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. This seasonal phenomenon can have a significant impact on mental health and well-being, leading to feelings of low energy, mood swings, and depression. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) emphasizes that it is crucial to prioritize mental health and encourages Nebraskans to seek the support they might need during this challenging time.

"The changing of the seasons can be a difficult time for a lot of folks but it is important to remember that there is hope and help is available," said Tony Green, Interim Director of the DHHS Division of Behavioral Health. "Every Nebraskan deserves to feel supported. I would like to emphasize the value of seeking support from a mental health professional or a trained crisis counselor by calling, texting, or chatting 988."

Symptoms of SAD may include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood most of the day, nearly every day,

for at least two weeks.

- Feelings of hopelessness, irritability, frustration, or restlessness.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities.
- Social withdrawal.
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling slowed down.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
- Changes in sleep, appetite, or unplanned weight changes.
- Physical aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems.
- Thoughts of death, or suicide.

SAD is often linked to a lack of sunlight exposure, which disrupts our body's natural rhythms and affects serotonin levels. To combat this, consider these proactive steps to boost your mood and support your mental health during this time.

- Engage in Regular Physical Activity: Exercise releases endorphins and helps alleviate symptoms of depression. Make an effort to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine, whether it's going for a brisk walk, trying out a new workout class, or practicing yoga.
- Prioritize Self-Care: Set

aside time for activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Whether it's reading a book, taking a warm bath, or indulging in a hobby, self-care is essential for maintaining mental well-being.

Seek Social Support: Stay connected with loved ones and friends. Reach out to them regularly for in-person or virtual hangouts, phone calls, or even outdoor activities. Connecting with others can help combat feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Get Sufficient Sleep: Adequate rest is crucial for mental and physical health. Establish a consistent sleep routine and create a relaxing sleep environment to ensure you get the rest you need.

Consider Light Therapy: Light therapy devices, such as lightboxes, can mimic natural sunlight and help regulate mood. Consult a healthcare professional to determine if light therapy is suitable for you.

988 is the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline which provides a direct connection to trained, compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health-related crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. 988 is available 24/7 and is a free service. Any Nebraskan can call or text 988, or chat at <https://988lifeline.org/chat/> to be connected to a trained counselor.

Need to talk or get immediate help in a crisis? Help is available. If you or a loved one need assistance, please reach out to: The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline; call, text, or chat 988.Nebraska Family Helpline – Any question, any time. (888) 866-8660.



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We Hope You Enjoy These Puzzles
Answers Can Be Found Next Week On Page 11

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20				21		22				23				
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52	53	54				55				56		57	58	59
60					61				62		63			
64					65						66			
67					68						69			

CLUES ACROSS

1. Droops

5. Subatomic particle

10. Not in danger

14. Nursemaid

15. Black band worn in mourning

16. Long song in opera

17. Edible seed of a Philippine tree

18. Chicago political family

19. Pursues pleasure from one place to another

20. Appetizer

22. Hill (Celtic)

23. Simple shoe

24. Songs to one you love

27. Secret activities

30. Upset

31. Popular hot drink

32. Body art (slang)

35. Fired

37. Blood relation

38. Identical

39. Porticos
40. Partner to cheese

41. Type of sword

42. Enough (archaic)

43. Surface layer of ground

44. Cotton fabric woven like satin

45. Choose for a post

46. Father

47. Tell on

48. Indian title of respect

49. Fonts

52. Fencing sword

55. Mock

56. Vaccine developer

60. Atmosphere surrounding a person or place

61. Marten with a short tail

63. Chinese temple

64. Invests in little enterprises

65. Popular cut of meat

66. Charity

67. Iron-containing compound

68. River in Northern Europe

69. One point east of southeast

CLUES DOWN

1. Exhausts

2. Genus of fish related to gars

3. Impudent behavior

4. Adherents to Islam

5. They come after A

6. Spoke

7. Room to receive guests

8. About opera

9. End-blown flute

10. Heroic tales

11. Member of a Semitic people

12. Dog's name

13. Opposite of west

21. Political divisions in ancient Greece

23. Ocean

25. Cool!

26. Young woman about to enter society

27. One from central Caucasus

28. Indian city

29. A way to serve ice cream

32. Emaciation
33. Escort aircraft carrier

34. Italian city

36. Mythical settler of Kansas

37. Unhappy

38. High schoolers' test

40. Measured in pace

41. Satisfies

43. Gullible person

44. Enclosed space

46. Substance used to color something

47. Shirt type

49. Discover by investigation

50. __-Castell, makers of pens

51. Semitic Sun god

52. Grads wear one

53. French river

54. Part of a cap

57. Digestive fluid

58. Metrical foot

59. Body part

61. Very fast airplane

62. Supplement with difficulty

SUDOKU

				6				
	6	5	7					8
	3		9	5		2		
	9			8		3	1	
	7							2
	1	2				5		7
7			1	3				
						1	2	
					4		6	

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

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From my desk...

Legislative News

District 42 - Mike Jacobson
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Carefully Considering Bills To Introduce

This week, I want to begin my article by congratulating the North Platte Area Chamber & Development Corporation for selecting White River Soy Processing to develop a soy processing plant inside the newly created Inland Port of the Plains near Hershey. This project and Sustainable Beef are projected to have a total of over \$2.3 billion in economic impact on the region. These opportunities will impact virtually everyone living in District 42, creating job opportunities in addition to positively impacting commodity prices in this area. Projects like these only happen because of the full commitment of everyone working together to get them across the finish line.

In other news, last week, the Legislature met for its annual Legislative Council Meeting. The meeting is used to issues facing the Legislature in the coming session. This year, Speaker John Arch began laying out some of the operational issues we experienced last year (other than the filibuster issues) that need to be resolved.

We also heard from Senator Tom Brandt, who chaired the interim study dealing with technology in the Capitol. As many of you know, the Capitol is a historic building that must not be structurally modified from its original design. This makes updating technology more difficult to accomplish. Nonetheless, we intend to improve the Wi-Fi inside the building and complete several other technology requests by Senators and the public. The interim study report outlined ways to increase the visibility of those in the speaking queue during floor debate, improve audio/visual systems in hearing rooms, and implement a possible countdown clock to allow Senators a better way to know how much time is remaining during any floor debate.

The Speaker also reported on LR179, an interim study focused on better public participation in a representative form of government, including easier ways to solicit public input on legislation even during

years when large numbers of bills are introduced. Given the number of controversial bills introduced this past session, some of the hearings ran all afternoon and into the evening. In a couple of cases, several individuals who planned to testify in person were unable to because time ran out. I believe the recommendations in this report will help bring more uniformity between committees so that the public can have a more consistent process to work through when giving their input.

We then spent time discussing possible rule changes proposed by the Speaker. These rule changes fell into three categories: technical corrections, codifying precedent, and process improvements. As a general rule, the members of the Legislature who were present for the meeting were generally supportive of the changes to technical rules and codifying precedent, but there was much debate over the other proposed rule changes.

The Speaker also outlined his proposed calendar for the upcoming session. Since a rules debate cannot be stopped through our current closure rules, it makes changing controversial rules difficult if any members choose to filibuster any one proposed rule change. In 2017, the Legislature spent nearly one-third of the session attempting to make rule changes. Because of this, the Speaker has proposed scheduling all-day floor debate to take place on all proposed rule changes during Day 6 through Day 12. Any rule changes that have not passed by the end of Day 12 will fail to move forward, and the schedule will return to morning debate on other bills and afternoon committee hearings through February 29. We will then move to all-day floor debate beginning on March 4.

Since this session will be a short 60-day session, Day 59 is scheduled to fall on April 11. This session will go fast, so having a clear path for each bill will be important. Any bills that fail to pass by



Day 60, will be indefinitely postponed automatically. That is why I am carefully considering what bills I introduce in this session and which bills to push forward. I look forward to continuing to hear from you regarding issues that are important to you. It is a privilege to serve as your State Senator, and I will continue to give my full effort to make a positive difference for the District and the State. You can reach me at mjacobson@leg.ne.gov or 402-471-2729.

District 43 - Tom Brewer
402-471-2628 • tbrewer@leg.ne.gov

Troops Will Be Home For Christmas

Recently, 91 soldiers from C Troop, 134th Cavalry Regiment returned home to Beatrice from a spending almost a year deployed overseas to perform Operations "Spartan Shield" in Kuwait. I am so pleased the troops will be home for Christmas. That is such a blessing. I have spent several Christmas holidays overseas on a deployment and I know how incredible this must be for these soldiers. Well done C Troop!

I spent some time learning about "Operation Spartan Shield (OSS)" from the United States Central Command web page;

"Task Force Spartan maintains a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen our defense relationships and build

partner capacity."

This mission statement bothers me. I am having difficulty understanding it correctly. What exactly does "maintain[s] a U.S. military posture" mean? What does; "strengthen our defense relationships and build partner capacity" mean?

From what I can gather, most of Task Force Spartan is made up of Army National Guard units from several different states. I am left scratching my head asking myself why the National Guard is doing a mission that is very obviously an active duty Army mission. The answer is simple: the regular US Army is having a hard time recruiting and retaining soldiers. Last year DoD fell short by over 15,000 recruits. I am told this



year the numbers are even worse. I find it very disturbing that members of congress are finding that DoD is not giving them a straight answer on strength and readiness. When elected officials cannot say how many troops our military is lacking, that should be setting off alarm bells.

The Army National Guard is suffering the same difficult recruiting and retention challenges the active duty Army is. The problem this makes for Nebraska is with all of the employers whose support for the Guard we utterly depend on. I had an employer express this same concern to me. He asked why an employer in Nebraska has to give time off to Nebraska National Guard troop that works for his company, to go and perform an overseas regular Army mission that has nothing to do with Nebraska. That's a darn good question. When I was in Washington, D.C. this week, I shared this question with the five members of Nebraska congressional delegation.

Everywhere you look there is a help wanted sign. The labor shortage is being felt clear across the country. When the labor shortage effects the US Army, it is the National Guard who bails them out, just like they have for the last 387 years. That said, let's hope the Guard is ready to help when Nebraska needs them. There is a limit to how much the active duty military can use the National Guard before the States start to suffer.

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to call. Please contact my office with any comments, questions or concerns. Email me at: tbrewer@leg.ne.gov. Mail a letter to; Sen. Tom Brewer, Room #1423, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509 or call us at (402) 471-2628.

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Page 8



Providing for Our National Defense

The world is more dangerous today than it's been since the height of the Cold War. The terrorist group Hamas, backed by Iran, attacked Israel in October. Russia continues its war against Ukraine, threatening order and stability in Europe. And as China hungrily eyes Taiwan, the Communist nation has far outpaced the United States in production of important military assets, including nuclear weapons and naval ships.

That's why this year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is so important. On the Senate Armed Services Committee, I've worked to ensure that the United States military is prepared to face any threat it may encounter — especially when it comes to our nu-

clear forces and Nebraska's role in our national defense.

I serve as Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, which oversees U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), headquartered in Nebraska. The funding we've authorized in this bill will support the modernization of STRATCOM's Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) architecture. A safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent is the backbone of our national security strategy.

The defense bill also supports Offutt Air Force Base, which hosts STRATCOM and the 55th Wing as well as the 557th Weather Wing and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. The bill



authorizes millions of dollars for projects at Offutt. It also authorizes funds for Nebraska National Guard projects across the state and includes many provisions for the replacement of our nuclear missile silos in the Nebraska panhandle.

This bill addresses our country's large-scale national security concerns as well. The United States has fallen behind on its nuclear capabilities. A few days after the attacks on Israel, a bipartisan, bicameral congressional commission released its report on our nation's strategic posture. The report concluded that we are woefully underprepared to face growing threats from Russia and China. We must urgently adapt our military, work force, and nuclear enterprise so we can effectively deter our adversaries.

The NDAA will help us catch up. Notably, my legislation will secure the Sea-Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM) program. SLCM fills a critical gap by ensuring that we have the smaller nuclear weapons necessary to

Dec. 14
Puzzle Answers

	A	P	E		A	D	P		A	C	T	
	W	A	X		P	A	L		P	A	C	
S	T	I	C	H		P	R	O		P	S	H
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R	E	G	A	L	I	A			P	A	R	A
			G	E	N	S			E	K	E	D
F	I	N	E	S	S	E			D	E	L	E
O	C	A									P	E
N	E	B	U	L	A	S			P	A	S	S
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3	7	2	5	4	8	9	6	1
1	6	4	9	7	2	3	5	8
8	9	5	6	3	1	2	4	7
4	1	7	2	8	3	5	9	6
2	3	6	7	9	5	1	8	4
5	8	9	1	6	4	7	2	3
6	4	1	3	5	9	8	7	2
9	2	8	4	1	7	6	3	5
7	5	3	8	2	6	4	1	9

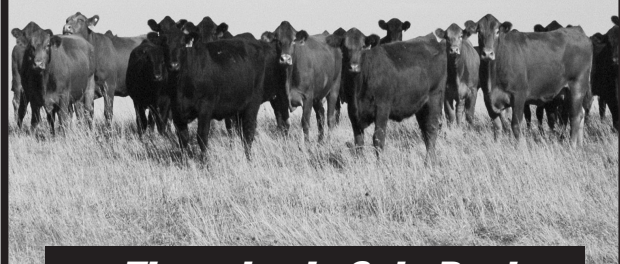
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Thedford School News

Sandhill School News

LUNCH MENU	BREAKFAST MENU	UPCOMING ACTIVITIES	UPCOMING ACTIVITIES	BREAKFAST MENU	LUNCH MENU
Menu is subject to change due to product availability Veggie/Fruit Bar and Milk Served Everyday Thursday, December 21 - Beef enchilada, refried beans, Spanish rice Friday, December 22 - Roast beef, mashed potatoes, California blend veggies, dinner roll	Menu is subject to change due to product availability Thursday, December 21 - Breakfast sandwich Friday, December 22 - Gingerbread chocolate chip muffins Christmas Break Begins December 26	Thursday, December 21 - Girls Basketball @ Ogallala, JV, 4:30 p.m., Varsity, 6:00 p.m. Friday, December 22 - End of second quarter; 2:14 p.m. dismissal Saturday, December 23 - NSAA Moratorium, gym closed through December 27 Monday, December 25 - Merry Christmas. Tuesday, December 26 - No school. Christmas break begins. Thursday, December 28 - Ravenna Basketball Tournament, girls, 4:30, boys 6:00 p.m. Friday, December 29 - Ravenna Basketball Tournament, girls cons, 1:00, Champ., 4:30, boys to follow	Thursday, December 21 - Basketball, girls only @ Ogallala, 4:30 and 6:00 p.m.; FBLA Treat Delivery; Library open to the public, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Monday, December 25 - Merry Christmas. Christmas Break Begins December 26	Menu is subject to change due to product availability. Every Breakfast served with milk, juice, cereal, yogurt and fruit Thursday, December 21 - Breakfast uncrustables Friday, December 22 - Bagels with bacon, eggs and cheese	Menu is subject to change due to product availability All meals are served with fruit, milk, vegetables and water Thursday, December 21 - Pulled pork and cheese quesadillas, Spanish rice Friday, December 22 - Hamburger on a bun, chips

5 Tips for Getting Kids Involved in Holiday Traditions

The holiday season is a magical time of year filled with cherished traditions that bring families together. And while gift-giving is one of the most beloved customs (especially for children), it can sometimes overshadow the true spirit of the season. Here are a few festive winter activities that focus on quality time together and spreading joy.

1. *Spread Joy with Kid-Created Cards.* According to a recent survey from AmericanGreetings.com, nearly 90% of Americans say that season's greetings bring them joy; and 92% say they specifically enjoy kids' homemade cards. This year, eliminate the stress of planning holiday cards—and teach kids about spreading cheer—with the Createcard app for iPad.

The easy-to-use app from American Greetings allows kids to create, color and customize cards using virtual tools, including markers, photo frames, stamps and stickers. Once complete, the greeting can be sent via email, text, or on social media. It's a simple, cost-effective and personalized way to teach them about bringing joy to others.

2. *Quality Time in the Kitchen.* Kids love sweet treats, so start involving them with baking and decorating traditional holiday goodies. In addition to being an excellent way to spend time together as a family, the tradition teaches them cooking basics, like reading recipes and measuring ingredients. Be sure to make it fun with plenty of frosting and sprinkles, or even add some competition with a decorating contest. You can also pair this activity with a cozy movie night or deliver treats to neighbors and family members to teach the importance of kindness and giving.

3. *Deck the Halls.* A perfect holiday tradition for the whole family to get involved in is the Christmas tree. Whether it's a trip to pick out a real tree, or setting up an artificial one, you can make it an adven-

ture from set-up to decoration. Plus, crafting homemade ornaments each year is the perfect kid contribution. Not only will they take pride in their creations, but each year will spark a bit of holiday nostalgia.

4. *Interactive Christmas Countdown.* According to a recent survey, what do 94% of Americans say increases the excitement of the holiday season? Advent calendars. But this year, skip the paper versions and get the whole family engaged with the interactive Jacquie Lawson Advent Calendar. The unique virtual calendar offers breathtaking illustrations of a fictional English country estate with exciting features unlocked daily in December. From a scavenger hunt to music, daily gifts, animated stories, books, games, creative activities, puzzles, and so much more, there, there's something for everyone to enjoy and look forward to each day of the season.

5. *Teach the Spirit of Giving.* While it can sometimes be easier to do the holiday shopping yourself, involving kids in gift-giving can teach them the thoughtfulness behind selecting meaningful gifts. If you have a large family, consider a Secret Santa where everyone shops for one specific family member. This is also a good opportunity to help kids make homemade gifts with more sentimental value. For an added lesson, explain how to follow a budget and count money when at the store.

By incorporating these tips into your holiday traditions, you will create lasting memories, instill valuable lessons and celebrate the joy of giving with your family.

Fisher

(Continued from page 7)

deter our adversaries, who we know already possess this capability. The United States cannot give up on important capabilities, especially as China's navy expands in the Pacific and South China Sea.

But it's not just physical weapons we should be concerned about — Chinese propaganda is also a serious problem. I included a provision in this bill that prevents our Department of Defense from participating in entertainment projects linked to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Taxpayer dollars should never enable China's disinformation war.

The defense bill also includes my provisions increasing cooperation between our armed forces and our international partners. For example, the NDAA makes it easier for the U.S. and Israel to share key technology, particularly missile defense programs.

The NDAA's impact will stretch from Nebraska to our nation as a whole to countries around the globe. We will always have more work to do as America's adversaries continue to modernize and grow their militaries, threatening us and our allies and partners. But this year's bill shows the world — and more importantly, our enemies — that the United States will not back down.

Thank you for participating in the democratic process. I look forward to visiting with you again next week.

Christmas Price Index Through The Years

The good old days — when a gallon of gas was only \$1.13 and a performance by 10 leaping lords could be purchased for just more than \$2,900. The year was 1984 and those Lords-a-Leaping, along with the other 11 gifts from the popular holiday carol, “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” were making their debut in the inaugural PNC Christmas Price Index (CPI).

Dating back to the late 1700s, the carol's early verses deviate very little from the version of the song known today. Though one factor has changed dramatically: the price tag for True Love's annual holiday shopping binge.

For 40 years, PNC Bank has been calculating what it would cost to buy all the gifts in the song as part of the CPI. The first CPI was created by a PNC predecessor bank as a whimsical holiday feature for a weekly business newsletter. Then, as now, the index was intended as a lighthearted comparison to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index. Over the years, the index has risen and fallen with the economy and consumer sentiment. When it launched, the total cost to buy all 12 gifts was \$20,023.57. In 2023, that cost has ballooned to \$46,729.86.

How it's calculated: Rebekah McCahan, a vice president with PNC's investment strategy team, has been responsible for calculating the CPI for 38 of its 40 years. She uses a variety of sources, including national bird suppliers, a hatchery and waterfowl farm, and a national pet store chain. A nursery provides the pear tree price; a jeweler assists with the five gold rings; and a Philadelphia-based dance company provides the price of the ladies dancing.

As to be expected, there have been several interesting data points throughout the years:

- \$4.14 - The price difference of the Seven Swans-a-Swimming since 1984. Every gift in the index has risen in price, but one of the most expensive is also the least changed. The swans debuted at \$13,120.86 in 1984 and are priced at \$13,125 in 2023.
- \$2,400 - Dollar for dollar, the four entertainment industry gifts (Ladies, Lords, Pipers and Drummers) have seen the biggest price increases and are most responsible for the CPI's growth over the years. Each of these gifts has grown by at least \$2,400 from their debut in 1984.
- 8 - The number of times the Four Calling Birds have changed prices in the history of

the index. Ever a model of consistency, the birds pricing remained the same for 17 years before their first modest increase. They last experienced an increase in 2013.

- 233% - The percentage price increase of the Three French Hens in 2010 — the largest one-year percentage increase for a single gift in the index's history. They jumped from \$45 in 2009 to \$150 the following year.

- 2003 - The year the CPI experienced its biggest jump in total price. The index grew by 18.4% that year due to significant price increases for the calling birds, swans, pipers and drummers.

- 2020 - The year of the single biggest percentage drop in the index (58.5%), and the lowest overall price of the index (only \$16,168.14). The 2020 CPI did not include any of the entertainment-related gifts, due to pandemic restrictions on in-person performances.

More than just numbers “I never imagined the CPI would have had the staying power that it has proven over the years,” McCahan said. “I don't know what the next 40 years will bring, but I do know this is something I have enjoyed being part of.”

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Lady Knights Continue Winning Ways



SPRINGVIEW HERALD

Karley Haake defends an opponent in a recent varsity basketball game.

The Sandhills-Thedford Lady Knights were in home court action on Thursday, December 14 when they hosted the Arthur County Lady Wolves. S/T brought home the 56-28 win.

Senior, Dayle Haake had a double/double with 20 points and 15 rebounds.

Laney Dahlberg had 13 points, six rebounds, one assist, three deflected shots, one steal and two blocked shots.

Anna Clark scored eight points and had one rebound. She also had one assist, two deflected shots and one steal.

Arena Fetty had six points, five rebounds, one steal and one block.

Others scoring for the

Knights were: Karley Haake, Jaylen Dimmitt and Kallan Cox each scored two points. J. Dimmitt had six rebounds and nine deflected shots and five steals.

Karley Haake had eight deflected shots and one steal.

The Lady Knights got their first loss of the season on the road against the Sumner-Eddyville-Miller Lady Mustangs by the score of 34-43

J. Dimmitt led the Knights with 13 points, nine rebounds, three deflected shots and two steals.

Dahlberg had 10 points, 12 rebounds for a double/double and three assists. She also had one

blocked shot.

K. Haake had five points, two rebounds and two deflected shots.

Others scoring for the Lady Knights were: Charlsie Teahon, D. Haake and Clark with two points each.

The Lady Knights were in action on December 19 when they hosted Ansley-Litchfield at Dunning.

The Lady Knights traveled to Ogallala on December 21.

They will compete in the Ravenna Holiday Tournament on December 29 and 30. Games will begin at 4:30 on December 29 and the girls games will be at 1:00 and 4:30 p.m. on December 30.

Knights Keep Adding To Win Column

The Sandhills-Thedford Knights hosted the Arthur County Wolves on Thursday, December 14 in Thedford and put another mark in the win column by the score of 62-35.

On Saturday, December 16, the Knights traveled to Sumner-Eddyville-Miller and the Class D2 State football champions took on the Class D6 football champions in what turned out to be a very exciting basketball game.

The Knights held the scoring of SEM in the first quarter to only seven and were able to put in 15 points.

In the second quarter the Knights were held to single digits with only nine points. The Mustangs put in 16. The Knights took the 24 to 23 lead into the locker room at the half.

Both teams came back out in the third quarter to play and the Knights scored 13 points to SEM's

14. In the final regulation quarter both teams scored 12 points to take the game into overtime.

The Knights offense was in high gear in the overtime period scoring 12 while the outstanding defensive work held the Mustangs to only three overtime points. The Knights are now 6-0 after the 61-52 victory.

The Knights were in action on December 19 hosting Ansley/Litchfield in Dunning.

They will be in holiday action on December 29 and 30 at Ravenna. The boys game will get underway at 6:00 p.m. on December 29 and the boys games will follow the girls games on December 30.

Omaha World Herald Releases State Football Selections

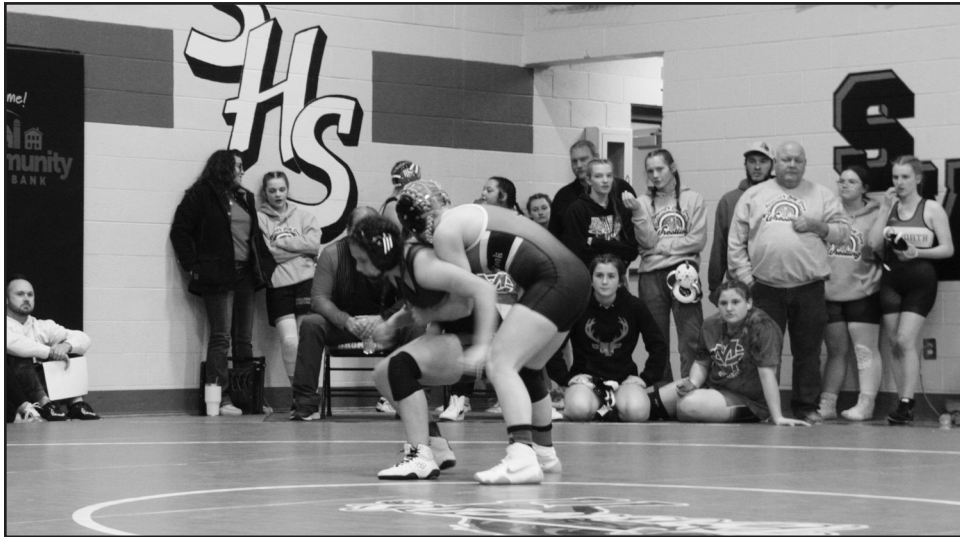
The Omaha World Herald released its all state football selections for all classes for the 2023 season. It was an outstanding season for high school football in the area and the numerous names listed as first team all state lend credibility to that. The Class D2 state champion Sandhills/Thedford placed three players on the Class D2 all state first team.

Kyle Cox was selected as quarterback on the all state first team offense and was named as honorary captain for the offensive unit. Cox's amazing season was highlighted by a record setting performance in the D2 state championship game rushing for 486 yards (a D2 state playoff record). Joining Cox on the first team offense was teammate Rhett McFadden on the offensive line.

Zeb Wilde of Sandhills/Thedford was a first team defensive selection on the defensive line.

South Loup placed three players on the D2 all state first team. The Bobcats went through the regular season undefeated including a win

Lady Knight Wrestlers Hit The Mats



KENDRA CUTLER - THOMAS COUNTY HERALD

Emily Chavez wrestling during the Sandhill Valley Maverick girls Invite.

The Sandhills-Thedford Lady Knight wrestlers were in action on Monday, December 4 when they traveled to Atkinson for the West Holt Invitational.

The Lady Knights ended the day in 12th place with 15 points. Summerland won the meet with 134 points and West Holt was second with 117 points.

Complete results for the ladies are:

115 - Emily Chavez (0-2). Quarterfinal - Baylee Chessmore, Neligh-Oakdale, won by fall over Chavez, (Fall 1:14); Cons. Round 1 - Morgan Nicenheiser, Plainview, won by fall over Chavez, (Fall 1:04)

125 - HayLynn Glidden, (0-2). Quarterfinal - Josslyn Hoefer, Neligh-Oakdale, won by fall over Glidden, (Fall 1:37); Cons. Round 1 - Daphne Mitchell, West Holt, won by fall over Glidden, (Fall 2:14)

135 - Shelby Schukei (3-1) placed third and scored 15 team points. Quarterfinal - Schukei won by fall over Uulken Kzyzy, O'Neill, (fall 4:13);

Semifinal - Lillian Hagemann, Elkhorn Valley, won by fall over Schukei, (Fall :41); Cons. Semi - Schukei, won by fall over Payton Peter, O'Neill, (Fall 1:58); 3rd Place match - Schukei, won by major decision over Payton Whited, Ord, (MD 9-0)

The girls traveled to Stapleton on Saturday, December 9 to compete in the Sandhills Valley Invitational.

The Lady Knights ended the day in 15th with a total of 33 team points.

Minden won the meet with 125 points and North Platte was second with 105.

Complete results of the local athletes are:

115 - Emily Chavez (3-4) placed seventh and scored eight team points. Round 1 - Peyton Cock, McCook, won by fall over Chavez, (Fall 1:26); Round 2 - Myia Hofaker, Minden, won by fall over Chavez, (Fall 1:48); Round 3 - Chavez won by fall over Amie Ross, Arcadia/Loup City, (Fall :31); Round 4 - Chavez won by fall over Ariel Patten, Perkins County, (Fall :33); Round

5 - Chavez, won by fall over Jalie Barnhill, Ogallala, (Fall :55).

125 - Haylynn Glidden (2-4) placed third and scored 17 team points. Round 1 - Glidden received a bye; Round 2 - Glidden won by fall over Iris Robles, Chase County, (Fall 4:28); Round 3 - Glidden won by fall over Chloe Kokes, Ord, (Fall 2:57); Round 4 - Aliena Osterbuhr, Minden, won by fall over Glidden, (Fall :38); Round 5 - Aaliyah Ramos, North Platte, won by fall over Glidden, (Fall :52)

135 - Shelby Schukei (5-4) placed sixth and scored eight team points. Round 1 - Schukei won by fall over Kalarae Snyder, North Platte, (Fall :16); Round 2 - Schukei won by fall over Londyn Dunbar, Ainsworth, (fall :58); Round 3 - Brooklynn Brown, North Platte, won by fall over Schukei, (Fall 5:01); Round 4 - Sydnie Brown, Overton, won by fall over Schukei, (Fall 2:24); Round 6 - Payton Whited, Ord, won by fall over Schukei, (Fall 1:30).

Knight Wrestlers Compete In Meets

The Sandhills-Thedford Knight wrestlers were in action on Friday, December 8 when they traveled to Oxford for the Southern Valley Invitational.

The Knights ended the day in 12th place with a total of 60 points.

Sutherland won the meet with 169 points and Chase County was second with 166.

Complete results of the local wrestlers are:

132 - Brodie Stengel (5-4) scored nine team points. Champ. Round 1 - Stengel won by fall over Jacob Wagoner, Franklin, (Fall :59); Champ. Round 2 - Stengel won by fall over Jace Hajny, Red

Cloud/Blue Hill, (Fall 1:26); Quarterfinal - Briggs Hill, Arapahoe, won by fall over Stengel, (Fall 5:20); Cons. Round 4 - Stengel won in sudden victory -1 over Corbin Carpenter (Arapahoe), (SV-1 5-3); Cons. Round 5 - Raleigh Hanson, Atwood-Rawlins County, won by decision over Stengel, (Dec 8-5)

157 - James Reiser (1-4) scored three team points. Champ. Round 1 - Clay Bohr, Loomis, won by fall over Reiser, (Fall 2:53); Cons. Round 1 - Reiser won by fall over Sully Bantam, Southern Valley (Fall 1:31); Cons. Round 2 - Cauly Twohig, Franklin, won by fall over Reiser, (Fall 2:11).

175 - Rhett McFadden, (8-2) placed third and scored 18 team points. Champ. Round 1 - McFadden won by fall over Cameron Johnson, Chase County (Fall 1:28); Quarterfinal - Tyler O'Neil, Chase County, won by decision over McFadden, (Dec 9-3); Cons. Round 2 - McFadden won by decision over Trey McCrumb, Wauneta-Palisade, (Dec 12-6); Cons. Round 3 - McFadden won by fall over Cauly Meyer, Loomis, (Fall 4:33); Cons. Semi - McFad-

den won by fall over Wyatt Seeman, Red Cloud/Blue Hill, (Fall 1:42; 3rd Place Match - McFadden won by decision over Tyler O'Neil, Chase County, (Dec 8-3)

215 - Caden Zutavern (6-3) placed fourth and scored 10 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Zutavern received a bye; Quarterfinal - Zutavern won by major decision over Hunter McLeod, Red Cloud/Blue Hill, (MD 14-2); Semifinal - Jeremy Felix, Alma, won by decision over Zutavern, (Dec 6-4); Cons. Semi - Zutavern won by decision over Walter Kenney, Loomis, (Dec 9-6); 3rd Place match - Colby Noel, Southern Valley, won by fall over Zutavern, (Fall 4:17)

285 - Zeb Wilde (6-1) placed second and scored 20 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Wilde won by fall over Jarex Rogers, Norton Community High School, (Fall :38); Quarterfinal - Wilde won by fall over Mason Gesick, Alma (Fall :23); Semifinal - Wilde won by decision over Jacen Smith, Arapahoe, (Dec 5-2); 1st Place Match - Zach Tarin, Chase County, won by major decision over Wilde, (MD 13-2).

NCPA Academic All-State Recipients

The Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) is pleased to announce the student recipients of the Fall 2023-2024

Nebraska Chiropractic Physicians Association (NCPA) Academic All-State Awards. Since 2006 this NSAA Awards

Program has recognized students who meet the criteria for nomination by their school in the season of their activity.

Each year the NSAA and the NCPA recognize students during Fall, Winter, and Spring Seasons who are nominated by their schools for their individual academic excellence, leadership, and signifi-

cant contributions in their NSAA activity.

Sandhills

Football: Rhett McFadden.

Play Production: Rhett McFadden, Charlsie Teahon.

Volleyball: Charlsie Teahon.

Thedford

Football: Brady Dahlberg.

Play Production: Dayle Haake, Karley Haake.

Volleyball: LaTajanae Robinson.

Support The Knights In All Their Winter Activities



SPRINGVIEW HERALD

Brady Dahlberg, #32 goes up for the block in recent basketball action.

Cutting Edge (Continued from page 4)

into the shelter. Quickly, he put on a coat and galoshes and he tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light so the birds would know the way in. But the birds did not come in. So, he figured that food would entice them. He hurried back to the house and fetched some bread crumbs. He sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail of bread crumbs to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs. The birds continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catch-

ing them but could not. He tried shooting them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. Instead, they scattered in every direction ... every direction except into the warm lighted barn. And that's when he realized they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me. That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Any move he made tended to frighten them and confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shoed because they

feared him. He thought to himself, if only I could be a bird and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to the safe warm ... to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see ... and hear ... and understand. At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. He stood there listening to the bells, Adeste Fidelis, listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. And he sank to his knees in the snow ...



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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



Cole Kinderknecht, Rudy Vickers, Patti Schwarz
Makenna Smith, Jackie Schwanebeck

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AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



Becky Dailey • Taylour Snyder

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Diana Coleman & Sydney Fletcher

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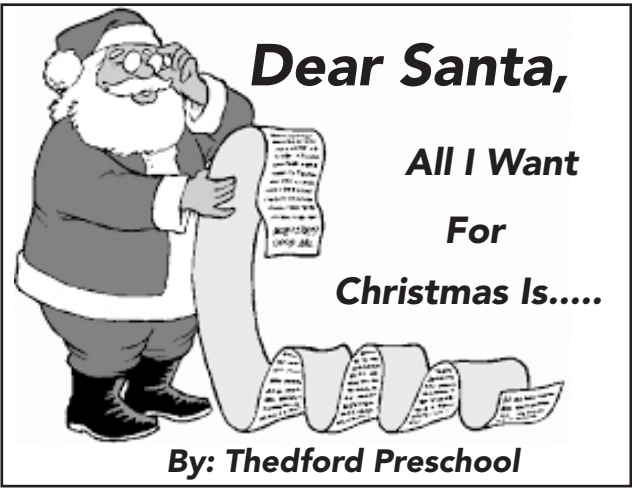


Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!



Duane McClain
Owner/Broker
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Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 4 years old.
This year I have been good all of the time.
What I would like most this Christmas is a wolf and dart guns.
I promise to leave out milk and carrots for you!
Love,
Jace
P.S. Please say "Hi" to mom and dad for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 4 years old.
This year I have been good all of the time.
What I would like most this Christmas is Legos-regular size and balls.
I promise to leave out cookies and orange juice for you!
Love,
Weston
P.S. Please say "Hi" to me, my mom and dad, and Kendall for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 5 years old.
This year I have been naughty (but nice!).
What I would like most this Christmas is a rocket gun and a remote-control digger.
I promise to leave out cookies and treats for you!
Love,
Wyatt
P.S. Please say "Hi" to my mom and dad and me for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 7 years old.
This year I have been good all of the time.
What I would like most this Christmas is a rainbow coat and rainbow blankie.
I promise to leave out a blankie for you!
Love,
Athena
P.S. Please say "Hi"

to a friend for me!
Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 5 years old.
This year I have been naughty (but nice!).
What I would like most this Christmas is a remote control snake, wrecking ball, and a bunch of Nerf guns.
I promise to leave out cookies and milk for you and leave the reindeer some carrots!
Love,
CoBurn

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 4 years old.
This year I have been naughty (but nice!).
What I would like most this Christmas is a train set and Mater.
I promise to leave out presents for you!
Love,
Noah
P.S. Please say "Hi" to my dad for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 3 years old.
This year I have been good some of the time, and naughty (but nice!).
What I would like most this Christmas is cows and new backpack.
I promise to leave out carrots and milk for you!
Love,
Urban
P.S. Please say "Hi" to my baby for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 3 years old.
This year I have been good all of the time.
What I would like most this Christmas is a toy dog and Paw Patrol.
I promise to leave out presents for you!
Love,
Berkley
P.S. Please say "Hi"

to my mom for me!
Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 3 years old.
This year I have been good all of the time.
What I would like most this Christmas is a pink magnets and play dough.
I promise to leave out hugs for you!
Love,
Ivy
P.S. Please say "Hi" to me for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 3 years old.
This year I have been good some of the time.
What I would like most this Christmas is a Superman action figure and blocks.
I promise to leave out cookies for you!
Love,
Liam
P.S. Please say "Hi" to mom and dad for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 4 years old.
This year I have been naughty (but nice!).
What I would like most this Christmas is Barbie dolls and Santa.
I promise to leave out cookies for you!
Love,
Zoe
P.S. Please say "Hi" to Emery for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 3 years old.
This year I have been good all of the time.
What I would like most this Christmas is dolls and colors and coloring book.
I promise to leave out a snack with milk for you!
Love,
Amelia
P.S. Please say "Hi" to me for me!

Dear Santa,
This Christmas I am 3 years old.
This year I have been naughty (but nice!).
What I would like most this Christmas is roller blades and animals.
I promise to leave out one of my animals for you!
Love,
Emery
P.S. Please say "Hi" to my friends for me!

Thedford First Grade



Members of the Thedford first grade class with their "Christmas Wish Letters," l-r: Claire Thomas, Julie Licking, Bryndal Greeley, Colt Smith and Rydell Scott.



Bryndal
If I could wish for anything this Christmas I would wish for a watch. Because I can play games on it.

Julie
My Christmas wish is toys like watches so me and my friends can call each other.

Claire
If I could wish for anything for Christmas it would be to know timesing so I can catch up with my brother in third grade.

Colt
My Christmas wish is to have an electric guitar so I can play music and do guitar lessons so I can be like my brothers.

RyDell
My Christmas wish would be a puppy, a watch, and a 4 wheeler and my whole family because the 4 wheeler I can ride super fast, the watch I can call people, and my family I can hug.

You can watch Santa's progress on his Christmas Eve Deliveries at: www.santaupdate.com

Wishing you all the joy and wonder of this special time of year.

J.R. Trumbull

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Wishing you a Merry Christmas And a bright And prosperous New Year!



Sending you and yours tidings of comfort and joy at Christmas. May the spirit of the season warm your heart and home at the holidays and throughout the New Year.

We look forward to serving you in 2024.

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Merry Christmas!

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My Christmas Wish

By:
Sandhills
First Grade

My Christmas wish is to get a 49's helmet. It is red. It is for football. I want to put it on my desk. I love football. I want it red and white. And merry Christmas.

By Alex

My Christmas wish is a kangaroo rat for Christmas. My kangaroo rat is brown and white. It is a stuffed animal. I play with it outside. I am going to hold it. I hold it so its warm. I like Christmas.

By Annalee

My Christmas wish is to get a Ipad. I am going to watch movies on the Ipad with my mom and dad. The boys are going to watch a movie with my mom and dad. I like Christmas.

By Josie

My Christmas wish is a Mario game. I want it to be red and green. I hope it will be a fun game. I want it to be a board game. Thank you happy Christmas!

By Hayes

My Christmas wish is a Magic Mixie workshop. It comes with a spell book. It doesn't have real wood. I love Christmas.

By Tully



My Favorite Christmas Tradition

By:
Sandhills
Second Grade

My favorite Christmas tradition is listening to Christmas music. First, my family and I turn on Christmas music. Then, I dance to the music and jog. Next, I sit on the couch to get a break. Then, I skip when the music is playing on my TV. Next, I run when the music is playing. I love Christmas music. Finally I lay on the floor. This is my favorite thing to do on Christmas Day.

Merry Christmas!
By Piper

My favorite Christmas tradition is singing Christmas songs. My family and I sing them while my mom plays the piano. We all get to pick a song. We sing every night before Christmas.

Merry Christmas!
By Bodell

My favorite Christmas tradition is spending time with my family. I like to eat cookies with my family. I go sledding with my mom and dad and brothers. We set up the Christmas tree.

Merry Christmas!
By Waylon

My favorite Christmas tradition is when we go to our family church. Then we go to our cousin's house. Our grandma spends the night. In the morning we open presents.

Merry Christmas!
By Hattie

"My Favorite...



Sandhills Public School Third Grade

My favorite family Christmas tradition is listening to Christmas music. First, my family and I turn on Christmas music. Then, I dance to the music and jog. Next, I sit on the couch to get a break. Then, I skip when the music is playing on my TV. Next, I run when the music is playing. I love Christmas music. Finally I lay on the floor. This is my favorite thing to do on Christmas Day.

Shaelynn

My favorite Christmas family tradition is watching movies with my family at my house. First we get snacks like popcorn, hot chocolate, and cookies. Next we go to the living room and sit on the couch. After that we grab the remote. Now we find a Christmas movie. Finally we go to our soft beds. My favorite Christmas tradition is watching movies. I had a great time.

By Evan

My favorite family Christmas tradition is when we go snowmobile and sledding and opening presents. First, we go to my house to go to the big hill. Next, we go down. Then we go fast. My Dad takes us up to the ranger. We warm up in there. Then we get out of the ranger and we trade sleds and we all race. I always win. I still say good job. I can't wait to go next year.

By Brayden

My favorite family Christmas tradition is when we go look at Christmas lights. First, we go to Pizza Hut with my family for a delicious pizza dinner. Next, we listen to Christmas music while we look at lights. Then, my family stops at Anselmo/Merna to watch the nativity. After that, we go to Dunning and look at lights. Finally, after we go to look at Dunning lights, we go home. This is my favorite thing to do at Christmas.

By Zadi

My favorite Christmas tradition is Gumb Christmas. First, we make some hot chocolate. And we also make cookies. Next, we open presents under the tree. Then we do "White Elephant" and we have snowball fights. Then, after the snowball fight we go in and talk. This is my favorite Christmas tradition!

By William

My favorite family Christmas tradition is when we open Christmas presents. First we bring out gifts to the pile. Then we find our Christmas gifts and we set the gifts in front of us. Then the kids open their gifts at my Grandma's house. After that all adults open their gifts. Next everyone

says thank you to the people that gave them their gifts. Finally the kids have chex mix and candy the adults play cards. This is my favorite Christmas tradition.

By Lagan

Christmas traditions is when we cut the Christmas tree first. We set up the Christmas tree before Christmas and then we decorate the tree with candy canes. After the candy canes are on the tree we also like to set more trees around the house. We have Christmas songs playing at the Christmas tree. This is my favorite thing to do before Christmas.

By Beau

My favorite family Christmas tradition is when we are getting the tree ready. First we cut a tree down in our huge pasture. Next we stand the tree up and it is hard to get up. Next we decorate the tree with red, blue and green neon lights. Then we put the presents under the tree. Three colorful presents. Then we put our snow village and the Polar Express and it is large. Finally we have hot cocoa. Getting the tree ready is my favorite thing to do at Christmas.

By Brody

My favorite family Christmas tradition is when we watch Christmas movies. First we get on Disney+. Then we watch the Grinch and Home Alone. Next my brothers and me sneak Christmas cookies. Finally we go to bed and wait for old Saint Nick. This is my favorite Christmas tradition. That is the best thing at Christmas.

By Jakob

My favorite family Christmas tradition is when we go to Broken Bow and look at Christmas lights. First we all get in the car and drive to Broken Bow. As we drive we listen to Christmas music, and sing. When we drive around we talk about the beautiful lights. The icicle lights are my favorite. Finally we stop at Anselmo and look at the blown up Grinch. This is my favorite thing to do at Christmas.

By Beda

My favorite family Christmas tradition is when we have our Christmas Eve meal. First we gather my mom's family at our house. Next we set the food on the counter and fill a plate. Then we eat soup and my favorite is oyster soup. We then take a break for all the cousins to play a game of tag. Finally after grandma finishes making desserts we enjoy Christmas cookies. This is my favorite time at Christmas.

By Landon

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**Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year!**

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Christmas Vacation



**Sandhills
Fourth Grade**

Texas Dream Vacation Plans

My dream vacation plans are to go to Texas. My family and I will go to North Platte to take a plane to Texas. First, we will go see Aunt Susie and Uncle Rob. We will see their new house. Then, we will all go to Texas Roadhouse. We will all eat a lot of ribs. The ribs are barbecued and seasoned with a lot of flavors like hickory flavor.

Then, we will go to a Longhorn football game. The Longhorns will be against the Oklahoma Sooners. There will be tackling and touchdowns. After the game I will see a famous Longhorn football player, Colt McCoy who is a quarterback.

After that I will have a Texas Christmas which will be fun because of my family and the presents. I will wake up and open up presents and spend time with my family. That will be a Dream Texas Christmas to me.

By Georgianna R.

My Dream Christmas Vacation

For an awesome vacation my dream would be to go to Kansas for Christmas. I would probably want to stay with my cousins Reid and Ivy. As we decorate the tree we would put cameras behind cardboard ornaments. How cool would it be to have a 10 foot tall snowpile and having it be 3 feet wide as well. I think it would be really cool, because then Ivy and I

would jump in and dig our way out. We could definitely do a Christmas play about the Grinch or the Nutcracker or something else Christmas related.

I have a 13 year old cousin named Reid, Ivy's brother. He is not too easy to frighten. That is because he isn't really afraid of a short 10 year old and a tall 11 year old. To scare him would be a major accomplishment. They have a trampoline at their house. It would be fun to do the penguin slide across it.

Then the rest of the trip we would play stuffed animal school with Ivy and my stuffed animals. It would be one of the best vacations of my life.

By Piper H.

Christmas In Yellowstone

My dream vacation plans are to go to Yellowstone. At Yellowstone I would like to see Old Faithful because she is beautiful to watch. I would settle into a log cabin, and watch the animals because I love them. Then we would go on Geyser Bridge.

After that we would go on my favorite hikes which are Geyser hike, Moose trail and Bear trail. Then the last things we are going to do is high trampoline and rock climbing.

Inside the log cabins there will be tons of mice traps, a beautiful view, two bunk beds, a game of foosball and four TV's.

For company outside there are air balloons and ground squirrels. The reason my dream vacation would be to go to Yellowstone is because I like exploring nature and going outdoors.

By McKenna C.

My Dream Vacation

My dream vacation is a trip to the survivor island. I know it sounds nerdy but it would be so fun. I could make a video to get famous. I would learn to make a shelter or raft. I would search for food and survive on the island.

I could do so many different activities. Just imagine how big of a christmas tree we could get. We could play extreme games such as Hide and seek, IRL among us and tag. Finally we would have a fire ceremony.

I won't talk about all the things I just listed but I will talk about some. I would make shelter out of wood and vines for support. Then I'd make an ax out of stone wood and vines to keep it all together to get food from high trees preferably coconuts for the water inside. I would put decorations on one of the trees. I would hide on top of one of the trees after I get over my fear of heights and use the island for the other games. After all that we would burn all the fire posts out. This is my dream vacation.

By Breck G.

Houston Texas Dream Vacation

My dream vacation is to go to Houston Texas and hunt in the dry desert type places. I would like to fly in a helicopter and see a famous hunter, such as Ben Lilly

I hope to ride at least 9

*See Sandhills
Fourth Grade
Page B4*

My Christmas Vacation Plans:



Thedford Fourth Grade

Family and Football

By Grit Licking
Thedford 4th Grade

Christmas break is three weeks away! There are three things I'm looking forward to this Christmas break. My family loves sports and it's something we will do all together. We watch college football playoffs at my grandma's house after we eat supper, we always hope the underdogs win because who doesn't like an underdog. My sisters don't love this tradition, but I think it's my favorite part of Christmas with my family. Another tradition I enjoy doing with my family is going to my grandma's and watching the ball drop on New Year's Eve. Staying up until midnight is fun, sometimes my little sister doesn't make it to midnight. If there is a football game on that late we turn the game back on and finish watching it. I really hope we have snow this year because my dad likes to pull my sisters and me on the sleds behind his pickup. We spend a lot of time together as a family and it's nice to have a break from school. Christmas is one of my favorite holiday breaks.

Christmas at Grandmas

By Gavin Connell
Thedford 4th Grade

Christmas break is coming up and I am excited to spend time at home with my family. It will be a busy few weeks but I wouldn't have it any other way. Every Christmas my family goes to my grandma's house with my cousins. At my grandma's house we eat and play games and spend time together. Since we are so busy, we don't see my cousins very often, so it's good to be together. After my

grandma's house, we go home and open presents from my parents. My sister and I get each other gifts too. My favorite thing to do over Christmas break is to go sledding. I hope there is enough snow this year because sledding behind my horse with my sister is one thing I really enjoy. Christmas break is one of my favorite times of the year. We spend time with family and friends, and we get to take a break from school.

Christmas Break

By Bridlelyn Gonzales
Thedford 4th Grade

What are my Christmas vacation plans? This Christmas vacation I am going to do a lot of fun things. There are three things I'm going to do. The first thing I'm going to do is invite my best friend over to go sledding and play in the snow. The next thing is I am going to go to my grandparents' house and play in the snow and maybe go sledding. When we come back inside, we will eat grandma's Christmas food. Grandma makes the best food for Christmas. She makes brisket, mashed potatoes, and pie. The last thing is helping my mom bake for my other grandparents to come over and eat Christmas dinner. When I help my mom, we make brisket, sweet potatoes with extra marshmallows, mashed potatoes, my favorite cheesecake, and green bean casserole. Over Christmas break I am going to invite my friend over, go to my grandparents house, and help my mom cook. I will have a lot of fun over Christmas break. I am looking forward to spending time with my family and doing things that we

love to do together over Christmas break.

Busy Season is Here By Clyde Zimmerman Thedford 4th Grade

This Christmas vacation I'm going to do a lot of fun things. There are three things I'm going to do that I am looking forward to. One thing I'm going to do is go to Christmas at my grandparents' house in Mullen. One of my favorite things to do there is go sledding down the steep hill by their house. The next thing I am looking forward to this Christmas break is going to play laser tag with my cousins, Kyle, Kalan, McCall, and Cutler. Another thing I am looking forward to is waking up Christmas morning and opening presents with my siblings. My family goes to three different places for Christmas, and it is a busy time of year. I look forward to being busy with my cousins and having a break from school. Christmas is my favorite holiday!

Together with Family

By Hailey Burk
Thedford 4th Grade

This Christmas vacation, there are three things I am going to do. One thing I plan to do is unwrap presents before we go to our grandpa and grandma Miller's house in Spalding. Then the next morning we help grandma make dinner for our family. We help grandma make chocolate cake, crescent rolls, and corn salad. Before we eat lunch, we hold hands and pray. After we eat dinner, we take a family picture together. We do this every year and it's fun to look back and see how my family has all changed and grown. My uncle has a countdown timer on his phone that he sets up to take the picture. We also take a picture with just the great grandkids and our great grandparents. We unwrap presents and each of us grandchildren get five presents from grandma and grandpa. There are 8 grandchildren, so there are a lot of presents being un-

*See Thedford
Fourth Grade
Page B4*

Christmas is a time for gratitude.....

We'd like to express our deep appreciation to our friends and customers. We look forward to serving you in the new year!

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Eric, Jen, Luke, Brandon
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Merry Christmas

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*By:
Sandhills
Fifth Grade*

What Christmas Means to Me By Rafe

Christmas is a good holiday to spend time with family. My favorite thing to do on this holiday is to play, ding songs around the piano, and see the nativities. The first thing I love about Christmas is playing in the snow with my siblings. We build snow forts, snowmen, and ride the sled behind the horse. My second thing is to sing around the piano with my family. The last thing is the nativity we host every year at our church. Since my family is very musical, we play at the nativity display. I hope you have a good Christmas.

Christmas means a lot of things to me, it means spending time with my family and seeing people I haven't seen in a long time. I love spending time with my family. I love having nice hugs and kisses from my mom on Christmas. This means a lot to me and it is important. I love my family. It is very nice and cozy to spend time with them. I love getting out on Christmas break and seeing my mom on weekends. Maybe a bonus is opening gifts.

By Saije

What Christmas means to me By Alex Rice

Christmas means a lot to me because I get to hang out with my family and open many presents. On Christmas I get to spend time with many of my cousins. Also I live here now, so Christmas means spending more time with all my family and cousins.

What Christmas Means to Me By Hazen Clark

Christmas means a lot of different things to me. What is important to me is just spending time with my family. Going to church and praying and thinking of how fortunate my family is. Seeing cousins is also one of my favorite things to do. Opening gifts is my favorite part of Christmas.

Christmas means a lot of things to me, so I will tell you my top three. My first reason is that I get to spend a lot of time with my cousin because I do not get to see them very often, and they are my only cousins my age. The second thing is that we get a whole week off of school and sometimes we to go somewhere for a present. The third and best thing is that I get to go to church. These are the three things that make Christmas so important to me.

By Charlie Smith

Christmas means a lot of different things to me, so I'll have to give you my top four favorite reasons. My first favorite thing is spending time with my family and eating prime rib. Second, my favorite thing is going to church and learning about God's birth. Then most important reason is we get to open a ton of presents.

Caden Winkelbauer

What Does Christmas Mean to Me by Bristol

What Christmas means to me is spending time with your family and getting presents. It also means that you are nice to each other and have a good time. We like to build snowmen and have a snowball fight. It is so fun and we also go sledding. We like to drink hot chocolate, watch movies, and sit in a cozy chair with a blanket. I think Christmas is the best because you can get gifts, and you can go sledding, and ride the snowmobile. And be part of the family.

What Christmas Means to Me

Christmas is when you spend time opening gifts from family and friends. Gifts are the only thing you do not need to worry about, it's the time together you get. You want to spend the most time to see your family and Secret Santa from your family. My favorite part about Christmas is that you get to spend time with your family, decorate a Christmas tree, and make baked goods for Santa Claus. The next day you'll see the cookies eaten and the milk gone, there might have been carrots down for the reindeer like I do on Christmas Eve.

Myah G.

Sandhills Fourth Grade

(Continued from page B3)

helicopters to take us out on hunts. I know it will be fun because you get to see wild horses and wild hogs and a lot more.

This is my dream vacation, to go to Houston Texas with my dad because we have planned it for a long time. It will be one on one time with my dad, which will be awesome!

By Lilly M.

My Dream Vacation Plans

I would like to visit Patrick Mahomes house, because he made the side arm that's where you throw a football and turn your arm sideways. Can you believe that I sure can't! I would lift weights with him every day, because that man is seriously JACKED! He can lift 90 MILLION pounds I bet.

He can throw a whole football field 'which is 100 yards' and has the best abs. That's why I would love to go!

I know he can beat Tom Brady. I bet the Chiefs are going to blow them out. He is so good. His brother might get crazy and get kicked out of another game. That's my Dream Vacation to visit Patrick Mahome!

By Carter J.

My Dream Vacation

For my dream vacation I want to go to the Amazon rainforest. (I always wanted to go there). I am going to see a lot of animals. I will see a leopard and a lot more. I want to go there because I could learn more about nature

Thedford Fourth Grade

(Continued from page B3)

wrapped. Over Christmas break, I will spend a lot of time with my family and friends, eating, taking pictures, and being together. It is the most wonderful time of the year to love and be kind to one another.

Happy Holidays

By Lachlan Stephens

Thedford 4th Grade

I look forward to Christmas break every year. I enjoy having two weeks off from school and spending time with my family. This Christmas vacation I'm going to make goodies with my mom. Together we make cookies, lemon bars, and chocolate bars. Then I will go Christmas shopping with my dad. When we go Christmas shopping, we are finding gifts for my sister and my mom. I enjoy spending time with my dad. He works a lot and I don't see him very often, so our time together during Christmas is very special. Finally, I will go have a snowball fight and go sledding with my sister. I really hope it snows, because this is one of my favorite things to do with my sister. We play outside until we can't feel our fingers and then come inside and warm up with hot chocolate. My family does something special on Christmas. We have a Christmas picnic. My mom and I make a charcuterie board for supper. We lay down a blanket in

and wildlife.

I plan on going with my mom, Hope, my birth mother. We will see waterfalls if there are any. I hope it does, if there are we will see where they are coming from. After that, we will see if there are any interesting life cycles. I hope to have a really good lunch in the Amazon rainforest.

So that is why I would like to go to the Amazon Rainforest. I have been planning this vacation forever! So I hope we get to do it!

By Niki G

My Dream Vacation Plans Are...going to Georgia because I have lots of memories there. My grandpa lives in Georgia. I could go bungee jumping and I would scream I'm going to die, it will probably make me puke but it would be so fun. I would get ice cream with my mom, only my mom. Going to Georgia would be fun for my mom and me. Both of us were born in Georgia. We would get our nails done and we would go to cook out. Cook out is very good, they have amazing onion rings there.

Going to Georgia means that my mom and I would get some time off and calm down. We would come back relaxed and it would be good for the both of us! I want to go to Georgia because I do not get much time with her. That is why I want to go to Georgia, it would be my dream Christmas vacation.

By Norah N.

hot tamales and watch the movie together just my parents, my brother, and me. The last reason I am looking forward to Christmas break is because when we wake up the next morning, we read the Bible and play with all our gifts that we have received. Christmas is one of my favorite holidays with some of my favorite traditions.

Christmas With My Brother

By Hudson Werner

Thedford 4th grade

Christmas break is almost here, and my brother and I spend the whole two weeks together! My brother and I are anxiously waiting for snow so we can make snow forts. We use bottle rockets and shoot them at each other. One year I accidentally hit him with the bottle rocket and my parents were very mad. My brother was ok, and I thought it was funny. He didn't get mad at me though, thank goodness. I wouldn't want him to be mad when it's almost Christmas. Speaking of snow, if it snows, my brother and I will go sledding and my dad will pull us behind the 4-wheeler. We fall of all the time and it's fun even though it can hurt sometimes. We usually hit a lot of bumps and fly in the air. I'm the

one who always falls off and gets snow in my face. It is still fun though. If there is no snow, we also have a ton of Christmas movies to watch. A few of my favorites are Home Alone, Home Alone 2, Christmas Vacation, and Elf. I think it would be awesome if we could go to a theater to watch Christmas movies. I will try to talk my mom into taking my brother and me. Christmas break will be here before we know it and I am excited to spend time at home with my family.

By William Warren,

Thedford 4th Grade

This Christmas break I look forward to making reindeer cookies for Santa. I hope that it snows so I can go sledding in the pasture. Sometimes Tess pulls us behind her horse in the arena on a tube.

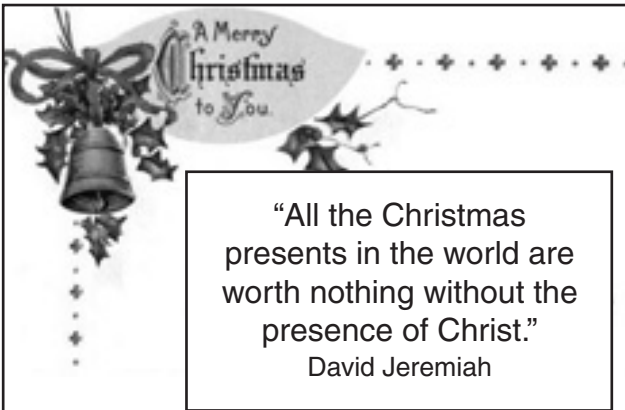
By Teagen Burrier,

Thedford 4th Grade

Over Christmas vacation I am going to stay at my grandparents house. While I stay with my grandparents, we will play games like Mindcraft. When I get home from Grandma's house, I will play with my puppy, Sparkles. I hope my mom takes me to McDonalds. We will eat cookies and watch Christmas movies.



Thank you to all who
contribute stories, news
items & photos!



"All the Christmas
presents in the world are
worth nothing without the
presence of Christ."

David Jeremiah



Not a creature was stirring...



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Thedford, NE 69166
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May all your Christmases be white....

*With friends and
neighbors like you,
we have every reason
to smile. We wish
you a merry and
bright Christmas
and a dazzling
white New Year!*

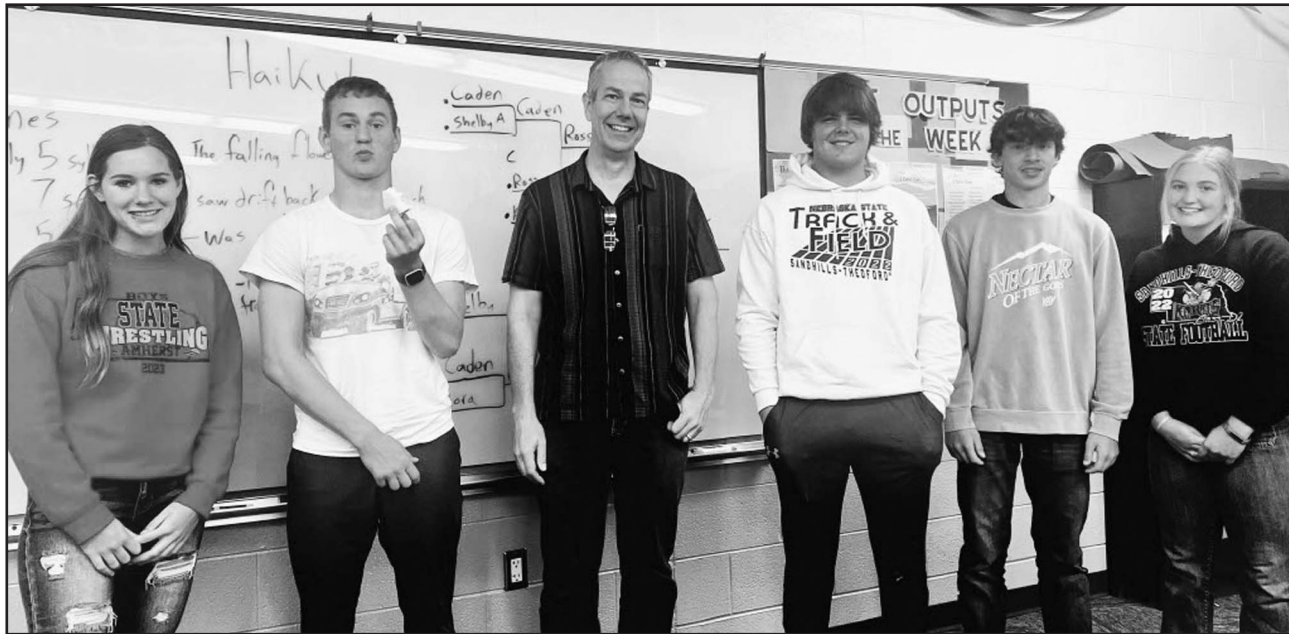


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‘Artist In Residency’ inspires Sandhills students



SANDHILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Members of the Sandhills High School Junior class pictured with Artist In Residency, Matt Mason, l-r: Shelby Schukei, Kyle Cox, Matt Mason, Caden Zutavern, Ross Martindale, and Kora Winkelbauer.

Nebraska State Poet, Matt Mason, visited Sandhills Schools as part of an Artist in Residency program made possible with the support of the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. During the week of October 9-13, Matt met daily with the

junior high and high school classes to coach them on writing poetry. He also did a poetry presentation at the elementary school, talking with students about poetry and answering their questions.

Matt’s goal as state poet

is to visit and promote poetry in every county in Nebraska. He was pleased to visit Sandhills Schools in Blaine county as part of this project. Besides traveling around Nebraska, he has conducted poetry workshops in other parts of the U.S.

and around the world, working with the U.S. State Department to present in places like Botswana, Romania, Nepal, and Belarus.

To find out more about Matt and his poetry, visit his website at: <https://matt.midverse.com/>

An Ode to Dr. Pepper

Oh, Dr. Pepper, a true doctor in my eyes
You have helped me in everything
When I stress, Dr. Pepper
When I cry, Dr. Pepper
When I smile, Dr. Pepper
Nothing can compare to that sizzle you provide
Your sleek red line is like money in my eyes
Without your sparkle, my eyes would be no more.
Without a doctor like you,
My energy would disappear.
I would be very sad.
I wouldn’t know what I would do.
I think I would flatline.

By Charlsie Teahon, Senior

In the cold air
The dense fog takes over the moon
I am home.

By Kora Winkelbauer, Junior

The snow drifting down
The comfort of my bed
I shut out the world.

By Shelby Schukei, Junior

Where I Come From

I come from whispering win in the winter
I come from a field full of cattle
talking to their babies
I come from blood that runs deep
through my veins
I come from grandma’s cooking
on Sundays after church
I come from home and nothing can change that.

By Peyton Saner, Sophomore

The books on the shelf
Oh, the dust you will collect
Alone, sitting there.

By Ross Martindale, Junior

The Ugly Weed

I would rather be the ugly weed.
It does not mean that physically I have to be ugly
and pathetic,
I just don’t have to fit in.
Right now, I have friends
but I don’t have a big friend group or people
I just want to be with constantly.
I think I see things differently than most people
my age.
I have a tendency to rub off people the wrong way.
Every attempt to be similar with the rest
kills creativity, ideas, and
Even makes you sacrifice your morals.
if you’re the ugly weed that stands alone,
Then you will have enough sunlight and water
to grow all on your own.
I prefer not to be like lilacs planted too close to
each other
that eventually will starve each other, shrivel up,
and die.

By Kyle Cox, Junior

I Come From...

As I’m asked this question, I begin to ponder.
I begin to wonder who I really am and what I’ve become.
So, I wonder, where do I come from,
Is it where I live,
Is it an object I hold dear to my heart,
Is it my heritage,
or is it the person I am.
I’m back to wondering, who am I?
I think, and as the ideas flood into my head like the river near my house,
I realize I know where I come from.
I come from empty dirt roads, and feeling lonely,
even isolated,
remembering I have no neighbors.
Oh hey, look!
There’s a cow, oh, he is my neighbor.
I wonder if he’s as lonely as me.
I would go say hi, but the air reeks of pigs.
It’s dry, we haven’t had rain in weeks,
It’s humid, the pig smell is worse.
I realize I’m lonely again.
I say hi, to my neighbor cow,
help there is a sticker in my shoe.
I remember I’m from a county,
but I can’t even say that
as I wasn’t born here.
I moved here, maybe I don’t know where I’m from.
Maybe I don’t even know who I am.

By Emily Chavez, Junior

Yet Another Ode About Hair

Oh hair, oh hair, how you keep me warm
You are like a blanket on my head
Oh hair, oh hair, let the haters hate
Life without you would be so bare
Oh hair, oh hair, I thank you
For trying to hide my baby face.
Oh hair, oh hair, I couldn’t live without you.
Oh hair, oh hair - You are amazing.
Oh hair, oh hair, I should probably cut you.
Still, I love you, my dearest hair.

By Caden Zutavern, Junior

Where I Come From

I come from waking up early in the morning
to late nights after practice
From a smile that could hide the darkest secrets
I come from a weekend with the family
As the smell of burgers rolls from the kitchen
to the living room
From staying up late at night working on homework
that makes brain surgery look easy
To watching TV that makes me laugh
I come from Saturday football games and
watching the waves of red take over me
Like a tsunami.

By HayLynn Glidden, Sophomore

Where I Come From

I come from a barren wasteland of grass
Where I come from wind speaks more than people
Where I come from there are miles of golden plants
interrupted by thin trees
Where I come from no one can judge,
for no one is around
Where I come from you can see miles of sandy hills
and valleys.
I come from a land in which buffalo once roamed
Fires raged
Wind spoke
Birds sang.
Now my land is changed
Noisy cows replace the majestic buffalo.
Fires are controlled
The wind is silenced with tree lines
Birds are no longer heard over the engines that roar.
I come from a land that was once beautiful and now
is polluted with people.

By Alex Martindale, Sophomore

Books

Careful with the spine
Delicate paper pages
Knowledge is within.

By Rylyn Moody, Sophomore

Scary gorilla
Screaming Ooga Booga loud
Run fast as you can.

By Abram Norton, 8th grade

Poetry

(Continued On Page B6)

There’s No Place Like Home for the Holidays

To all of our customers, neighbors and friends, Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy, healthy year ahead.

We look forward to serving you in 2024.

THEDFORD LUMBER & SUPPLY
Quality Products and Service

We make a living by what we get.
We make a life by what we give.”
- Winston Churchill

Merry Christmas and thanks for your patronage in 2023!

Sandhills Corral

We look forward to serving you in the new year!

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A Very Merry Christmas

*Thank you for allowing us to serve you in 2023.
We look forward to seeing you in the new year!*

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Merry Christmas

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Thursday, December 28
No Sale - Happy Holidays!

Thursday, January 4
Special Feeder Sale (Breedable Heifers)

Thursday, January 11
Special feeder Sale (Breedable Heifers)

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Special Bred Female Sale &
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Valentine Livestock Auction

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VALENTINE, NE

Poetry

(Continued From Page B5)



SANDHILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Members of the Sandhills High School Seventh Grade class pictured with Artist In Residency, Matt Mason, l-r: Sophia Glidden, Cesar Chevez, Josie Morrow, Matt Mason, Florence Bernardo, Heath Larsen and Hunter Bray.

I Come From...

I come from a place where the roaring engine is my morning alarm.
Where I come from is a place of peace and chaos.
Where I come from there are smells of
high-octane fuel,
the heat of the hardworking motor,
the smell of parts breaking in.
Where I come from is a place of flying wrench,
broken tools,
and new tools you're not allowed to use.
come from a place where the only chimney is
who you choose,
Where I come from is a place of hard work, swear,
and broken tools.
Where I come from you know not to make a mistake
twice
Where I come from the cooling engine
is the life of every person in the shop,
like the oil in the engine that helps it ran.
I come from the place that there are no wrongs,
unless you make a mistake putting something back
together.

By Connor Sutton, Sophomore

The arena lights
the contestants warming up
the announcer loud.
By Shaylee Milleson, Freshman

I kicked the football
Next thing you know
It was fall
Now let's play some ball
By Aaron Hall, Freshman

Ode to Mascara

Oh mascara, you are so great.
You can make my day or ruin it.
When I go places, without you,
I feel like a part of me is missing.
When you make my eyelashes look long,
It warms my heart like hot chocolate on a
winter day.
Even if I love you so much,
I regret starting to wear you.

When you make my lashes look bad, it ruins my day.
Do you ever get tired of doing your job?
Is that why throughout the day you lose your curl?
Hey mascara, can I tell you something?

You have changed my life for good.
Oh mascara, how I love you.
By Cora Martindale, Freshman

I Come From...

I come from pretty sunsets and grassy meadows,
from the sound of cows mooing and horses
stomping flies to the smell of steak and potatoes on
the grill
Roping and running barrels until 10 o'clock occupy
my summer evenings.

I come from tournaments on Saturdays and church
on Sundays.
From a competitive household where sports are the
main topic
Where our biggest family outings are moving cows
I come from cold winters during calving season
Taking every chance, I get to warm myself up with
a cup of hot chocolate
I come from a place that I wouldn't trade anything
for the world.
By Kallan Cox, Freshman

I ran downtown
from sun up to sundown.
What a great life showdown!
By Thatcher Teahon, Freshman

Standing by myself,
so many people around
I just want to hide.
By Ella Held, Freshman



THANK YOU

–For including us in your travels this year!
We look forward to seeing you again soon.

Merry Christmas!

No room at home?
There's room at the Inn!

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I Come From...

I come from halfway across the country,
I come from the sights of the city and of the coun-
tryside.
I come from the silence only the dead know and the
noise that shatters eardrum,
I come from dusty moving trucks and cleaned out
homes,
I come from a homemade meal and a gas station
snack isle,
I come from rolling out at dawn to make it on time
And from time killed waiting for
something to happen,
I come from showing no emotion
and from pain and disbelief
of another move.
This is where I come from.
By Russell Norton Jr., Freshman

Ode to my Eraser

My eraser, if I didn't have you
All of my papers would be wrong.
I'm thankful for you with all my heart
You help me bounce and be smart.
By Colton Leach, Freshman

Watch the river
as stress flows away
nothing else matters
as the wind echoes through.
Where did you get that cold, cold heart?
By Hunter Douglass, Freshman

Oh, jeans I wouldn't know what to do without you
How you make me use your pockets in all sort of
ways.
To fill you with my snacks that I need to hide away
How you make me complete, so I don't have to wear
sweat pants.
O jeans, O jeans, I'll keep you until you wear out
Denim, oh jeans, oh jeans, the great times we've
had.
By Mason Sutton, 8th grade

Trees blowing in wind
Raindrops falling from the sky
Clouds hiding the sun.
By Matelyn Zutavern, 8th grade

The Place I Call Nowhere

I come from a place where people say Y'all instead
of you all.
I come from a place with many trees and bees,
I come from a place singers sing
I come from a place that all you hear on the streets
are
Cars going beep, ring, and ding.
I come from a place where when you smell the air,
It smells fair not like the air you smell here.
I come from a place where sports are more
important
than taking me to the ortho in the morning.
I come from a place where the view is nothing
But green or blue.
I come from a place that when we moved,
It became bigger.

I now come from a place I can breathe
Without worry something might be in the air som
where.
I now come from a place where I can see forever
And I never have to wonder what's over yonder.
I now come from a place where all I can smell is
The leaves in the air and nothing else anywhere.
By Josie Morrow, 7th grade



Merry Christmas

As we put the finishing touches on 2023, we'd like
to express our sincere gratitude to our community.
We can't think of a better place to celebrate the
holiday season as we ring in 2024.

Midwest
Partitions

THEDFORD

ODE TO MY SIDEWALK

Oh sidewalk, you give me a place to walk.
You don't get my shoes wet or dirty, or stuck in
cement.
Sometimes you trip me, sometimes you lift me,
Other times you make me fall.
Quite often, you have tones of crack,
which oftentimes make people fall on their backs.

You are there for me when I fall,
There to catch me and there to hold me
And there to scrape me.
But most importantly,
you lead me in the right direction,
you help me go North, East, South, and West,
but sometimes you're just not the best.

I feel bad for you though
Because most people take you for granted
Or replace you with granite
Life would be boring without you,
Like a dog without a bone
Or my friends without a phone.

Thank you, sidewalk,
You're the best.
By Eli Brogdon, 8th Grade

Two bracelets are great
But with a price of twenty
I've run out of money.
By Paizley Zutavern, 8th grade

Ode to Fridays

Oh Friday, how I love you
You excite me for the weekend
You're short and loved
You bring Friday night lights
And football fights.
Without you, I would go bonkers
You're like a shot of espresso
Helping me get through school.

I have a secret; can you keep it?
FRIDAYS RULE.
So please, will you never leave my life?
By Cesar Chavez, 7th grade



Merry
& Bright

Thanks for a wonderful year.

With Love Co.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Bridget Licking • Thedford



Merry
Christmas
to All
...and to all
a great year!

Ewoldt's Grocery

Allen & Velma & The Gang
Thedford

Merry Christmas
to our friends, family
and customers and
a blessed New Year!

"For God so loved the world, that He
gave His only begotten Son, that
whoever believes in Him should not
perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16



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Senior Life Solutions

Coping with loneliness during the Holidays

You're not alone if you are expecting, preparing, or even dreading the thought of experiencing loneliness during the holidays. Many people spend the holidays alone. Whether you are alone by choice or unforeseen circumstances, it is natural to feel a sense of loneliness.

It's OK to feel lonely. Loneliness can help you gain insight into what you need at a particular moment. What's important is that you don't let feelings of loneliness led to unhealthy coping mechanisms. Keep the present in perspective. New traditions, even those you partake in alone, can be just as fulfilling as fondly remembered old ones.

The tips below can help you cope with loneliness during the holidays. If you're feeling overwhelmed by emotions and need mental health support, we can help.

1. *Do things that bring you joy.* Give yourself permission to seek out moments of pleasure. Focus on the things you really enjoy. This could be a favorite hobby, reading a good book, taking a relaxing bath, going to a movie, eating a delicious meal, or learning something new. Doing something for yourself is a form of self-care. Consider creating a holiday season bucket list of things you want to do. Make cookies. Take a holiday light tour. Go for a sleigh ride.

2. *Reframe your expectations.* Social media, TV shows, movies and commercials present the expectation that the holidays are about being surrounded by family, feeling bright and jolly, full of mirth and joy. It's easy to feel as though you're not measuring up. Looking at the holiday season from a different angle may help you re-

move the emotional pressure. Reassess your expectations for how the season will go instead of how others say it should go. Decide for yourself what a particular holiday is about. If you're going through a difficult time, you could see the holidays as a time to take care of yourself and heal.

3. *Share your time.* Volunteering is a proven buffer against stress and depressive symptoms. Sharing your time with others can be particularly effective in decreasing feelings of isolation. When we focus on helping others it helps us feel better about ourselves. You might donate your time at a local animal or homeless shelter, donate clothing you no longer use, or send someone a card. Even performing small acts of kindness, like giving someone a compliment, paying for a stranger's coffee, offering to pick up groceries for a

neighbor, or chatting with someone you haven't seen in a while can go a long way towards making both you and them feel more connected.

If you would like more information, education, or would like to discuss support this holiday season, please reach out to your provider or a member of our team. Your provider or we will provide you with ideas and support to keep you healthy and safe this holiday season.

Callaway District Hospital's, Senior Life Solutions mental health program, is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health challenge and would like to discuss support, please call #308-836-2153 or visit www.callawayhospital.org

Letter To The Editor

Medigap - It is time to close the gap in Nebraska for those under age 65

LB32 was introduced by Senator Mike Jacobson of North Platte on January 5, 2023. This bill will make Medigap plans (also known as Medicare supplement insurance) available for purchase at a reasonable premium by the under age 65 disabled and ESRD (end stage renal disease) population in Nebraska.

Neighboring states passed laws years ago making Medigap plans available for purchase by the under age 65 disabled and ESRD population: Missouri - 1998; Kansas and South Dakota - 1999; and Colorado - 2003. These laws are working. This year Medigap bills passed overwhelmingly in the Kentucky and Virginia General Assemblies.

Nebraska is now one of only 14 states in the country that does not require Medigap insurers to sell any Medigap plans to those with disabilities under age 65. Without the opportunity to purchase a Medigap plan, under age 65 disabled and ESRD patients from other states may not want to move to Nebraska. Is this the message we want to send?

Currently 19 state and national associations, as well as the City of Lincoln, support LB32. We urge you to contact your state senator and encourage him or her to support LB32. This bill will help the under age 65 disabled and ESRD populations in Nebraska and their families.

*Stephen and Jean Kay
North Platte, NE*

Guest Editorial

By Glenn Mollette

Our Ever-Changing Christmas Story

Christmas is always changing. The biblical story never changes but your story is always changing. How we celebrate and view the story of Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus may change throughout life. We view the story one way as children but then the story matures as we age.

We all have a lot of Christmas stories. I remember a large family. My mother came from a large family as did my dad. They all had children so the total number of family we felt connected to was great. The years have passed by and my mother and father have passed as have all their siblings and many of their children. The people we related to, heard from and spent Christmas with has changed. They no longer exist. Many of us have lost spouses and buried children and thus our Christmas has changed.

The story of Christmas is the same but it's not the same. For some of us we have a difficult time even recognizing Christmas. What once brought us laughter, joy and even peace may no longer exist.

How you spend Christmas this year may be a distant memory next year. What you may dread or enjoy this Christmas may not even be possible next year.

In reality, very few of our Christmases ever look totally the same. Finances change. Jobs change. Health changes. Death robs us of loved ones. Our residences sometimes change.

Mary and Joseph certainly never celebrated Christmas ever again the way they celebrated their first one. The birth of



Jesus in a stable and placed in a manger will always stand out as the Christmas we will remember about that family. Hopefully they had a few easier Birthday celebrations for Jesus in the years ahead. Although it seems they may have had many more difficult ones as Jesus' father Joseph soon disappeared from the Biblical narrative. We don't know if Joseph died or left but his absence had to be a hardship on Mary and her family.

The story of the first family of Christmas was filled with ups and downs. What Jesus would face later in life was excruciating for his mother and siblings and certainly for him. The end of Jesus' life story is the best part. The story for Jesus ends well. He was abused, humiliated, lived-in poverty, executed but came out of his tomb as the living son of God. According to the scriptures he was seen by hundreds of people. The person who had to be more thrilled than all in seeing Jesus after his death had to be his mother. The way she would experience and celebrate Christmas, her son's birthday, would forever be changed. Her Christmas story became an amazing story of victory, triumph and great hope. Her story changed and it got better.

My prayer for us all is that we each will experience hope, peace and victory in our ever-changing Christmas story.

Doctor Shares Tips To Stay Healthy During Holidays

The holiday season is a joyous time to reconnect with family and loved ones, but it also brings unique health and safety risks, according to doctors, who recommend a bit of extra vigilance to protect yourself and those close to you.

"During the hectic holiday season, it can be hard to carve out time to focus on your wellness. Awareness, along with the adoption of a few healthy habits, can help you and your family enjoy this special time of year in the best of health," says American Medical Association (AMA) president, Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, M.D., M.P.H.

For a healthy, happy season, follow these tips and recommendations from the AMA:

1. Vaccination is the best protection against a number of serious respiratory viruses circulating this fall and winter. To protect yourself and your family, get up to date on your vaccines, including the annual flu shot. Vaccines are also available to protect older adults from severe RSV. New tools to protect infants during RSV season include maternal vaccination as well as the monoclonal antibody immunization.

If you have questions, speak with your physician and review trusted resources, including getvaccineanswers.org.

2. Watch what you eat this holiday season. Pay particular attention to labels and avoid processed foods as much as you can, especially those with added sodium and sugar. Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, and eat nutritious, whole foods like fresh fruits and vegetables alongside richer holiday fare.

3. If you're consuming alcohol, drink only in moderation. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans defines that as up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men, and only by adults of legal drinking age.

4. Make time to exercise during this busy time of year. A good rule of thumb for adults is at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity. Brisk walks, or even a family trip to the gym, can provide easy and fun ways to get off the couch and elevate your heart rate over the holiday season. If you're traveling, don't forget to pack your sneakers!

5. Factors like holiday spending and navigating time with extended family can bring on extra seasonal stress. Invest in your mental health and manage stress by getting sufficient sleep, exercising and seeking help from a mental health professional when you need it.

6. Make smart choices and plan ahead if you're

driving. In December 2021 alone, 1,013 Americans died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Do not under any circumstances drive if you intend to drink. And if you are the designated driver, make a 100% commitment to sobriety.

7. Get your New Year's resolutions started early. Speak with your doctor or health care professional about quitting to-

Holiday Help From The Poison Center

Season's greetings from the Nebraska Poison Center! A friendly reminder that the holidays bring changes in routine and increase the risk of accidental exposure to poisons in the home. The Nebraska Poison Center would like to offer a few helpful holiday hints:

Toys may contain button or disc batteries. If swallowed, they can become stuck and cause serious injury or death if not removed. They may come in games, watches, remotes, and musical greeting cards.

Other toys are brightly colored and fun to play with such as water beads or rare earth magnets, but they are not suitable for persons that may ingest these items. Strong magnets can stick together in the intestines and become a medical

emergency. If water beads are swallowed, they may swell and cause a blockage in the intestines.

Alcoholic beverages are more readily accessible during gatherings. Clean immediately after gatherings and remove all items that may contain alcohol. Nicotine containing products include cigarettes, vape liquid, and chewing tobacco and are harmful if ingested. These products may cause shakiness, vomiting or seizures.

CBD and THC products are often in brightly colored packaging that can easily be mistaken for candy or other food items for children. Keep these away from common areas, locked away and out of reach.

Cleaning products should also be stored up and out of sight. Do not mix chemicals together when cleaning, and follow all label directions for using these products.

Encourage visiting friends and family to store medications up, out of sight and locked up tight, not out on a nightstand or counter. Keep all purses and bags secured and locked away.

Keep small children and animals away from seasonal plants such as mistletoe, holly berries, yew plants and poinsettias.

The holiday season can bring joy and grief simultaneously. As seasonal calls to the Poison Center increase, so do calls about intentional harm. If you or a loved one is having thoughts of self-harm or in a crisis, remember you are not alone. Please call 988, it is a 24/7 National Suicide and Crisis Line for help.

Prevention is the best treatment for poisonings. Poison Center staff are specially trained in poison information and available 24/7/365. If you have questions or have had an exposure, call 1-800-222-1222. The Poison Center is a free and confidential service to the public.



Merry Christmas
*** & ***
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Our wish for you is that you are surrounded by love, friendship, goodwill and good times.

Thank you for your support in 2023 and we look forward to serving you in 2024.



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Easy Poinsettia Home Care Tips

1. Place poinsettia plants in an area that receives six hours of light a day.
2. Avoid placing these plants in drafty areas or touch windowpanes that can induce bract drop.
3. Water poinsettia plants at the base of the plant with lukewarm distilled water until water runs out of the bottom of the plant pot.
4. Check potting media for even moisture. Avoid overwatering or allowing the media to dry out accidentally.
5. Fertilize every four to six weeks with half-strength water soluble fertilizer.
6. Poinsettia plants can be kept after the holiday season with the same growing tips. The colored bracts will revert to a green color as daylight hours increase.

Questions? Contact David Lott, Horticulture Extension Educator at dlott2Wunl.edu or call 308-532-2683 - Extension Office.

David Lott is the Horticulture Extension Educator with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in North Platte.

New Title At The Thomas County Library

12 Months To Live
by James Patterson & Mike Lupica

The Savengers
by William W. Johnstone

Catfish Charlie
by William W. Johnstone

Unnatural Death
by Patricia Cornwell

The Edge
by David Baldacci

Command and Control
by Tom Clancy and Marc Cameron

Things We Left Behind
by Lucy Score

Just Once
by Karen Kingsbury

The Ball at Versailles
by Danielle Steel

Dirty Thirty
by Janet Evanovich

Christmas Coloring Contest Winners



Thedford Service Club sponsored their annual Christmas coloring contest. This year's theme was "These Best Things About Christmas." Winners were, left to right: Katelyn Blackford (5th), Mary Licking (6th), Grit Licking (4th), William Blackford (3rd), Claire Thomas (1st), Zoe Hanson (Pre-K), Noah Werner (2nd), Mila Feller (Kindergarten). Congratulations to our winners and thank you to all students for their participation.

RSV Prevention Options Can Help Protect Your Child This Season

Last fall, the United States saw an early and significant spike in cases of Respiratory Syncytial Virus, or RSV, which is the leading cause of hospitalizations in all infants. Now, there are options available to help prevent RSV in babies, including a preventive antibody and an RSV vaccination during pregnancy.

During the first season the new RSV immunizations are offered, they may be limited in availability in provider locations. Public health experts are prioritizing use of the monoclonal antibody in infants at highest risk.

To ensure parents and caregivers of infants and young children have all the facts they need to protect their children during peak RSV season, the American Lung Association is sharing the following insights:

- RSV is extremely common. RSV infects people of all ages, and nearly 100% of all children become infected by age two.
- RSV can be severe.

Most people, including infants, develop only mild symptoms similar to that of a common cold, but for some, RSV can be severe and even life threatening. The leading cause of hospitalizations in all infants, up to 80,000 children younger than five are hospitalized due to RSV in the United States each year.

- Severity is unpredictable. Good overall health is not a safeguard against severe RSV. A study by the American Academy of Pediatrics found that 79% of children hospitalized with RSV were previously healthy.

- RSV season is now. RSV season typically begins in the fall and peaks in the winter.

Preventing Infection RSV is easily spread from person to person through close contact through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing. It can also survive on hard surfaces, such as toys and door-knobs, for many hours and can be spread by touching a surface with

the virus on it and then touching your face or your baby's face.

If you have contact with an infant or young child, especially if they were born prematurely, are very young, have chronic lung or heart disease, a weakened immune system, or have neuromuscular disorders, you should take extra care to keep the infant healthy.

To help prevent severe RSV illness in infants, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the RSV vaccination during weeks 32-36 of pregnancy in September through January, or the new monoclonal antibody. The preventive antibody is recommended for infants under 8 months old in their first RSV season and some young children between 8 and 19 months old at increased risk, such as children who have chronic lung disease as a result of being born prematurely. This one-dose immunization is a long-acting preventive antibody that provides an extra layer of defense to

help babies fight RSV infections for five months.

Monoclonal antibodies are man-made proteins that mimic the immune system's naturally-produced antibodies to help fight off harmful viruses. This preventive antibody is not a vaccine, and not for children who are already sick with RSV.

If you are the parent or caregiver of a young child, you are also encouraged to:

- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid kissing your child while you're sick.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about your baby's risk and options to prevent severe RSV illness.

For more RSV information, visit Lung.org/RSV.

RSV impacts millions of people in the United States annually. Fortunately, this RSV season, there are more ways you can help protect your infant.

Season's best wishes to our readers.



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Happy Holidays

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