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Times

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Seward County Sheriff Mike Vance poses with a proud Igor next to a stack of contraband seized during a stop along Interstate 80.

The legacy Igor leaves behind

by Brady Oltmans
editor@sewardindependent.com

It always irritated Mike Vance that the four-legged coworker he got from Belgium wasn't as young as he was promised. Vance was told the Belgian malinois was 2 years old when selecting a new K-9 for the Seward County Sheriff's Office. A month-and-a-half later, Vance discovered the dog – Igor as he'd been named – was actually over 4.

"But by that time I'd already had a bond and certification with him," Vance said. "So I kept him."

They stayed together for more than 8 years on the job. Over that time Igor helped seize \$8.4 million in illegal drug currency, over 30 pounds of heroin, over 45 pounds of cocaine, more than 32 pounds of methamphetamine and over 1,400 pounds of marijuana. Igor also accompanied Vance to schools where he'd welcome affection. Igor was forced into retirement Nov. 5 because of a degenerative nerve disease in his back legs. A full month, to the day later, Igor suffered a stroke while playing in the backyard. Having already lived 12 full years, Igor was laid to rest.

"He was just a very good police dog," Vance said. "He was

reliable and I've had several calls from other agencies – Lancaster County deputies called me. They used him several times."

Igor was the fourth K-9 Vance worked with and, by Vance's own account, one of the best-trained. Igor was trained in both narcotics and tracking with handler protection. Perhaps Igor's older age, having already been trained in Belgium and Illinois, played a role. He was also the first Belgian malinois Vance worked with. All the others were German shepherds.

Vance trusted Igor around children, including his own grandchildren. One of his grandchildren was raised with Igor. Vance could never trust his previous K-9 like that. Igor loved the social attention.

When it came time to work, though, Igor was always ready. "Throughout the course of many years, I relied on Igor numerous times to come out and do his thing to end up catching the bad guys," Deputy David Frye said. "Igor was always on point. He had an amazing nose."

Frye remembered countless stops when Igor was called to the scene. One of those came in September when, as Frye described it, a driver was traveling across

Interstate 80 under highly suspicious circumstances. Search consent was denied. Igor and Vance were called to the scene. Of course, Igor discovered the contraband concealed in the back of the truck.

"Igor helped me on some pretty tremendous cases," Frye said. "Thinking out loud, I know numerous drug loads where we relied on Igor to get us that probable cause to get into the vehicle."

Vance said he could easily call out to Igor, to the point where he could stop halfway in pursuit. He said there was only one serious bite in over 8 years on duty. They sharpened their skills with training even on their days off.

"He was one of the best dogs out of the four I've worked with," Vance said.

Igor's degenerative nerve disease was discovered after he struggled to jump into Vance's vehicle on the way to a scene. Vance knew something was wrong when Igor went to scratch the point of investigation on a vehicle and his leg came out from under him. There wasn't any pain involved, Igor was just slowly losing feeling in his back legs.

see IGOR, page 2

Downward trends and vaccine plans

by Brady Oltmans
editor@sewardindependent.com

Local health officials are encouraged by Seward County's decline in coronavirus case numbers and hospitalizations. However, optimism was accompanied by wariness for a quick, sharp rebound they've grown familiar with dealing with the coronavirus.

In a Dec. 10 briefing of the Seward County sector, Four Corners Health Department Executive Director Laura McDougall said case rates have begun trended down. At the peak spread of coronavirus, the district averaged 400 new cases per week. In the week of Dec. 3-9, she said there were 262 cases.

"It's still a large number of cases and we still have our work cut out, but it's taking the pressure off of some of us," she said.

Seward County accounted for 77 new cases from Dec. 3-9.

That encouraging sign was met with the sobering reality of making up ground. Four Corners issued a press release on Dec. 10 evening to report 12 new COVID-related deaths in the district from mid-November through the week ending Dec. 5. Six of those deaths were Seward County residents. Those deaths were previously unaccounted for because of the sheer number of cases and hospitalizations in that timeframe.

Two new vaccines on the way and an infusion treatment have given hospitals a glimmer of hope. The vaccine produced by Pfizer was approved by the Federal Drug Administration on Dec. 10 and the vaccine produced by Moderna is scheduled for FDA approval on Dec. 17.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services submits a plan, which includes distribution. According to Memorial Health Care Systems CEO Roger Reamer, the original plan was to distribute the vaccine to healthcare workers in Nebraska who wanted it by the end of December if there were no problems. Problems, however, arose. So instead, that vaccine will be delayed for rural areas. That's where the Moderna vaccine, which is scheduled to be distributed the week of Christmas, would be available.

They are two-shot vaccines with 28 days between the first and second shots.

Reamer said Memorial Hospital has started infusion treatments on high risk patients meant to keep those patients away from emergency room visits that could develop into in-patient care.

Memorial Health Care Systems has also worked with Test Nebraska to increase the number of tests conducted and days the tests can be administered. Capacity of tests have been increased from 100 to 120 and testing increased to two days per week. Those seeking tests can now also get tested every Tuesday, in addition to every Friday at the testing site in the west parking lot of Memorial Hospital, 9-11 a.m. Reamer also said curbside facilities in Utica and Milford were scheduled for completion on Dec. 14.

Various government sectors also issued their reports. Seward County Commissioner John Culver said they have placed signs recommending face coverings. Culver said the justice center has long issued its own stipulations through its various offices.

Jim Swanson of Utica said the city has not issued an ordinance requiring face coverings, like Seward, because Utica simply doesn't have the law enforcement resources. He said they don't want an ordinance on the books they can't enforce. The city clerk's office remains open with a face shield at the desk and social distancing. The city encourages face coverings when social distancing can't be achieved.

Seward City Administrator Greg Butcher said, upon visiting with Sgt. Mike Hammond with the Seward Police Department, no formal complaints were made by Dec. 10 since the city's ordinance requiring face coverings went into effect on Dec. 5. He also reiterated the ordinance on the books does not discuss gatherings and that it only pertains to face coverings in public indoor areas. Butcher also said the library has remained closed to walk-in traffic for various reasons but its drive-thru window is open.

see FOUR CORNERS, page 2

Milford is looking holly jolly



Milford Times reporter Craig Jones spent this weekend checking out Christmas lights around Milford. Do you have some you would like to share? Email us at craig@sewardindependent.com.

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COURTESY PHOTO
The Seward County Ag Society commissioned a permanent display for its 20-panel Ag Society historical display created to commemorate the 150th annual Seward County Fair in 2021. Terry Miller of Seward, left, created and built to size the display. He is pictured installing the display with Seward Ag Society Representative Doug Brand of Seward.

Fair panels on display

The Seward County Ag Society finished its 150th anniversary year with the gift of a permanent display of the Seward County Agriculture Society's 150th Anniversary Historical Panels, now located at the Seward County Ag Pavilion on the Seward County Fairgrounds. The creative display is in two sections and is somewhat portable.

The steel display was designed, created and installed by Terry Miller, owner of Precision Tool and Machine of Seward. He was commissioned by the Seward County Ag Society to create a permanent, yet flexible display for the 20 panels featuring the 150-year history of the Seward County Fair.

The project was coordinated by Doug Brand, representative for the Seward County Ag Society, and he also supervised and directed the creation of the display.

A full length feature of Doug Brand and Dr. Ron Wallman, discussing each panel can be found on the Seward Fourth of July Facebook page.

The display is available and open to the public when the Seward County Ag Pavillion is open. To schedule a visit to see the new display, contact Doug Brand at doug.brand73@gmail.com.

Igor remembered

Igor wasn't happy with retired life. When Vance took the new K-9, Eros, out of his kennel and into the cruiser, Igor barked. He wanted to go back to work.

"I'm sure it was hard on him to all of a sudden stay home," Vance said.

Veterinarians told Vance exercise helped keep the disease manageable. So Igor regularly played in the backyard. Then, on Dec. 5, Vance's grandson came running into the house saying Igor wouldn't get up. Drooling and moaning, Igor struggled to his feet.

Once upright, his body was crooked. The vet told Vance it was a stroke and Igor's time had come.

News of Igor's death spread throughout the department and in neighboring law enforcement circles. The determined K-9 Vance once felt duped about left a legacy and memories behind.

One Lincoln Police Department officer caught wind of Igor's passing. They sent Vance a text on Dec. 9 morning, offering condolences and a summary of the past eight years.

"He was a legend, Mike," the message said.

Stay safe and healthy!

Four Corners update

from page 1
Seward is due to revisit its face-covering ordinance at its Jan. 5 council meeting.

Milford Public Schools Superintendent Kevin Wingard and Seward Public School Superintendent Dr. Josh Fields both thanked Four Corners and MHCS for helping educate students and parents on new directed health measures. Wingard raised

concerns about current DHMs, where if the state dropped back into the orange range, that no longer limited attendance on indoor sporting events. McDougall said the district has shared similar concerns. She also said if the state announces under 800 COVID-only hospitalizations throughout the state on a seven-day rolling average, the state could see new directed health measures that still limit attendance but with relaxing limitations.

USDA releases information on safety-net programs

Agricultural producers can now make elections and enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs for the 2021 crop year. The signup period is open through March 15, 2021, and producers are encouraged to begin working with their USDA county Farm Service Agency office now to complete the process.

These key U.S. Department of Agriculture safety-net programs help producers weather fluctuations in either revenue or price for certain crops. ARC/PLC payments for the 2019 production season were distributed in October, and payments for the 2020 production season will go out in fall 2021.

"Safety-net programs like ARC and PLC are designed to help producers mitigate some of the financial stressors associated with crop production. I encourage farmers to evaluate their program elections and enroll for the 2021 crop year," said Nebraska FSA State Executive Director Nancy Johnner.

Producers can learn more about the ARC and PLC options during a University of Nebraska-Lincoln Farm and Ranch Management Series webinar scheduled for noon on Thursday, Dec. 17. Nebraska FSA Production and Compliance Programs Chief Cathy Anderson will present on ARC and PLC options for the 2021 production season, while Brad Lubben from the UNL Department of Agricultural Economics will discuss the economics of the programs and provide an Ag Policy Update. Those interested can register at go.unl.edu/ou4m.

ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. PLC provides income support payments on historical base acres when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its reference price.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

2021 elections and enrollment
Producers can elect coverage and enroll in crop-by-crop ARC-County or PLC, or ARC-Individual for the entire farm, for the 2021 crop year. Although election changes for 2021 are optional, enrollment (signed contract) is required for each year of the program. If a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2021, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

If an election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2021, the election defaults to the current election for crops on the farm from the prior crop year.

All program participants are encouraged to review their previous program elections, Johnner said.

For crop years 2022 and 2023, producers will have an opportunity to make new elections during those signups. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

Web-based decision tools
In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:

- Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator—the University of Illinois tool that offers farmers the ability to run payment estimate modeling for their farms and counties for ARC-County and PLC.
- ARC and PLC Decision Tool—the Texas A&M tool allows producers to analyze payment yield updates and expected payments for 2021. Producers who have used the tool in the past should see their username and much of their farm data already available in the system.

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Moisture needed before spring

by Jenny Rees
Seward/York counties Extension educator

The sun glistening on the snow holds such beauty after a warm, dry beginning to December. Moisture is very much needed.

For curiosity's sake, I looked at the Drought Monitor for this past week and compared it to the same week in previous years. The pics are shared at jenreesources.com, and it's quite interesting comparing and thinking back through the years. Hopefully we can receive more precipitation prior to planting season.

If you missed it, the Farmers and Ranchers College program featuring Dr. David Kohl and Eric Snodgrass can be found for 30 days at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cFKs13i_Ak. I appreciate how Eric shares global weather and climate information in an easy to understand way. He also shared an interesting story of how El Nino is related to the Christmas season, so you'll have to watch the recording to learn that.

Some stats he shared for Nebraska: June was the 18th driest on record followed by the wettest July on record. That was followed by the driest August on record with September as the 18th driest on record (would have been driest but thankfully we received precipitation after Labor Day weekend). He looked at weather data from 1901-2020 for Nebraska and the U.S. which showed a trend of 2.5 inches of precipitation gain from April-October (with higher gains as one goes east in the U.S.). He also looked at the past 40 years, which showed heavy rainfall events (more than 2 inches per event) has tripled.

There was an effort my colleagues began a few years ago called "Weather Ready Farms" at <https://weather-ready.unl.edu/>. It was designed to improve or increase resilience towards the impacts of extreme weather on Nebraska's farms. A number of things go into that with some examples at the website.

A few examples of things farmers have done since the 2012 drought and the 2019 floods include keeping the ground covered with residue and



Jenny Rees
Extension educator

cover crops to help reduce evapotranspiration, increase water infiltration and reduce wind/water erosion as we experience these more extreme events.

BeefWatch Webinar Series is designed to highlight management strategies in grazing, nutrition, reproduction and economics to increase cow/calf and stocker production efficiency and profitability. More information and registration for the BeefWatch Webinar Series can be found at: <https://beef.unl.edu/beefwatch-webinar-series>. Dates are Jan. 5, 12, 19 and 26 with each webinar beginning at 8 p.m.

The focus for January's webinar series is "Preparing and Managing for the Calving Season."

Jan. 5: Preventing calf scours (Is there a way to reduce the likelihood of calf scours without adding additional vaccines or other cash expenses to your current program?)

Jan. 12: Calving tool box and record keeping (favorite tools and tricks for smoother season)

Jan. 19: Calving complications and when to call the vet

Jan. 26: Cow nutrition needs at calving and in early lactation

Poinsettias: Kelly Feehan shares the following, "It's Poinsettia time.

Hard to believe these bright, colorful plants originated from a weed. And amazing what plant breeding and good marketing can do.

To enjoy your Poinsettia as long as possible, place them in an area with bright sun for at least half the day. If possible, provide a night temperatures in the 50s or 60s. This is often the most challenging condition to meet in the

home, but keep plants as cool as possible at night.

"If plants are near a window, don't let the leaves touch cold window panes and keep Poinsettias away from warm or cold drafts. Poinsettias need to be well-watered. Because they are in a lightweight soil-less mix, they will dry out quickly. Allow the soil to dry slightly between watering; then water thoroughly until water runs out of drainage holes. Be sure to punch holes in decorative foil wraps to prevent soggy soil conditions or at least pour excess water out of the foil after each watering."



Gifts for gardeners – tools to help their garden grow

by Sarah Browning
Lancaster County Extension educator

Good tools make the work in my landscape much easier. I get the majority of my work done with just five tools, so if you have a gardener on your gift list, consider one of these ideas.

Hori-hori - garden or soil knife

The tool that is absolutely indispensable to me is a Japanese gardener's knife or hori-hori. It works better than a trowel or hand rake for digging, planting and weeding. And it's great for dividing plants and planting bulbs.

It's a simple tool, basically a blade and handle. One side of the blade is serrated and I use it to cut through perennial roots when I'm dividing plants or cut away the roots of a root-bound plant. The other side of the blade is smooth.

Some garden knives have a notched tip, called a dandelion fork, which is used to pop dandelions out of the ground. However, after trying a few models myself, I prefer a knife without the notched tip. I find it gets in the way when I'm digging and gets snagged on roots, bits of mulch or other things in the ground.

I prefer a knife with a solid pointed tip. For me, it's also nice to have a knife with a brightly colored handle; then I'm less likely to accidentally throw it away in bag of garden waste. (Done that twice!)

Hand pruners

For my birthday a

few years ago, I bought myself a high-quality pair of bypass hand pruners. They are a thing of beauty with wooden handles and carbon steel blades. I guess it's official – I'm a garden nerd. But if you have a gardener in your life, this would be a great gift. Bypass pruners are much preferred by serious gardeners because they are less damaging to plant stems than anvil-type pruners, which crush the stem as it is cut.

Long-handled loppers

Hand pruners are best for making small cuts, on stems around ½ inch or less in width. Loppers should be used for medium-sized branches ½ to about 1½ - 2 inches in width. (For anything larger than 1½ - 2 inches in width, you really should be using a handsaw.) Again, bypass loppers are preferred over anvil-types.

Loppers have a couple great advantages – the long arms make it easier to reach into the center of large plants and they give you better leverage for removing

larger branches. Telescoping loppers have adjustable length handles, making flexible for a variety of pruning jobs.

My next garden purchase will be ratcheting loppers. These allow you to perform a cut using several compressions of the handles. Each time the ratcheting mechanism maintains its grip as you reposition your hands or get a better grip.

Shovels

I use two types of shovels in my landscape – a standard round-headed shovel and a straight-blade tile spade. The pointed tip of the round-headed shovel makes it easier to dig into hard soil or dense organic matter (which is common in my zoysia grass lawn), while the straight-bladed tile spade works best for me to edge my landscaping beds. But I'm now looking at new shovel designs to try in my landscape – the Root Assassin and HERshovel.

The head of the Root Assassin has saw-like

teeth on each side, made to cut through tough roots, root mats, sod, compacted soil or rocks easier than a traditional shovel.

It's made of commercial-grade carbon steel with a turned-step for secure foot placement and two handle styles. A D-shaped grip on a 48-inch shaft or a straight handle on a long-handled 58-inch shaft.

Another great alternative, especially to save wear and tear on women's arms or wrists, is the HERshovel. The head of this shovel is a standard rounded-head, but it has a shorter handle and a large D-shaped grip, which allows gardeners to use both hands at once or any grip that is most comfortable.

I'll admit, even for a garden nerd like me, a shovel isn't the best gift to find under my Christmas tree, but a gift certificate is always another good option along with a cute card for the gardener in your life – "Digging you during the holidays and all year round."

Obituary

Celia K. Whitford

Sept. 9, 1948 – Dec. 12, 2020

Celia Kay Whitford of Milford was born Sept. 9, 1948, to Verlin K. and Doris K. (Helmberger) Peterson in Mitchell, South Dakota. She attended O'Neill High School in O'Neill, graduating in 1966. Following high school, Celia attended college at West-Nebraska Regional Hospital School of Nursing in Scottsbluff and received her Registered Nursing degree. On May 23, 1970, Celia was united in marriage to Alan R. Whitford at Calvary Lutheran Church in Scottsbluff. In her free time, Celia was an avidly prolific reader. She enjoyed cooking and counted cross stitch. More than anything, she loved being a grandma and spending time with all of her grandchildren.

Celia passed away Dec. 12, 2020, in Lincoln, at the age of 72 years, 3 months and 3 days. She is survived by her husband, Alan R. Whitford, Milford; children, Erik (Kori) Whitford, Milford, and Shane (Deena) Whitford, Milford; grandchildren, Kari Whitford, Zoey Whitford, Layla Whitford, Jayse Whitford, Xander Whitford, Celaren Whitford, Liam Whitford and Cordelia Whitford; sister, Debi (Steve) Dunn, Stella; brothers, Earl (Belinda) Peterson, Beresford, South Dakota, and Michael (Lisa) Peterson, Eagle; many nieces and nephews. Celia was preceded in death by her parents, Verlin Peterson and Doris Ziska.

Visitation is from 2 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17, at Volzke Funeral Home in Seward. Funeral service is at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 18, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Milford with interment at Blue Mound Cemetery in Milford. Memorial contributions are suggested to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Milford or the donor's choice. Condolences may be left for the family at www.volzkefuneral-home.com.



Jurgensens to celebrate 50th anniversary

David and Nancy Jurgensen of Cordova will celebrate 50 years of marriage this week.

They were married Dec. 20, 1970.

To celebrate, their family is requesting a card shower. Cards may be sent to the couple at Box 136, Cordova, NE 68330.



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Join us in welcoming
Natasha Andersen, PA-C

Natasha will begin seeing patients at the Seward Family Medical Center mid-December.

Areas of interest include:

- Preventative Medicine
- Family Medicine
- Emergency Medicine

Test NE Schedule

Tuesday, December 22; 9–11 a.m.

Thursday, December 24; 9–11 a.m.

Tuesday, December 29; 9–11 a.m.

Thursday, December 31; 9–11 a.m.

On Dec. 2, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released information on new research offering a better understanding of when transmission of COVID-19 is most likely to occur.

An individual who had been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case can get tested on day 5 or after. If no symptoms have developed, and if a negative result is received the individual can discontinue quarantine **after** day 7 since last close contact with a COVID positive individual. CDC requires daily self-monitoring for development of COVID-19 symptoms and masking until **after** day 14 since last close contact exposure with a COVID-19 positive individual.

It is important that the test specimen is collected no earlier than day 5 to provide a more accurate representation of infection.

Based on this new evidence from CDC, the change in policy was made for this to be an available option to discontinue quarantine.

Choices

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We asked you

Last week’s poll question: Does it need to snow before it starts to feel like the Christmas season?

Yes: 15
No: 9

Now we want to know

This week’s question: Do you plan to get together with family for Christmas?

Vote online at www.milfordtimes.net and share the question on Facebook, then check next week’s edition of The Milford Times for results.

Letters to the editor

Thanks for the decorations

I just want to take a moment to thank all the Seward Christmas elves for decorating their houses with Christmas lights. Together with the lights provided by the city in the downtown business area, Seward’s Christmas light displays are a pleasure for kids of all ages. Just to mention a few: the Culps, the Matzkes, and in the Ridge Run area, Tom Rief’s and David Dam’s houses and all others: thanks to you for your many hours of work and preparation, making Seward very festive

for the Christmas holiday. And a final thank you to the Vinie Bitteringer family for their display in Centennial Park, down west of the fairgrounds; we are very fortunate they have chosen our town to display their electronic Christmas lights display! The out-of-town people being drawn to Seward each night to view the lights is outstanding; if you haven’t seen them, make sure you go! With that, I will close. Everyone – have a merry 2020 Christmas and wishes for a happy, healthier new year in 2021.

Doug Brand
Seward



MY MOM

Just looked at my mom’s babies! -me, the eldest child. It’s fine, I only cried a little.

Family grows, happy tears shed

by Hope Moural
hope@sewardindependent.com

Breaking news, readers: as of this past weekend, I officially have a brother!

First off, mostly because my mother is reading this, she did not have a baby. That duty has been passed on to my siblings and me, of which she reminds us often. (Love you, mom!)



Hope Moural
Reporter

Anyway, if you haven’t guessed by now, my lovely sister, Ashtyn, got married this past Saturday.

Before shooting an angry COVID email off, I will say I holed up in my apartment weeks before to prepare, wore a mask except for a few photos and spaced out from people when able.

There were not many people who attended, for obvious reasons,

but those who did wore masks, were socially distanced and overall, it turned out to be a beautiful Christmas wedding.

Unfortunately, only a small number of family members from both sides felt comfortable attending, and the event wasn’t what it could have been, but it was wonderful and happy.

My sisters cried, my mom cried and I cried because I just really love love, especially around the holidays.

Oh, and there was really good cake, so I walked away satisfied.

We took photos outside in 20 degree weather and I am pretty sure my nose was running in all of them? Oh well... hopefully that can be edited out.

Ashtyn looked like a winter angel in the cold and that’s really all that matters.

Then came the fun. My teenage sister and I gave a joint maid of honor speech. Actually, let me back up: we sang

it. That’s right, we brought out the tacky sunglasses, and sang originally composed lyrics to Frozen’s “Let It Go,” instead naming it “We Have A Bro.”

Our new brother-in-law, Blake, got a kick out of it and to be honest, I don’t know if I can top it. To be honest, I am hoping someone recorded it and sent it to Jimmy Fallon.

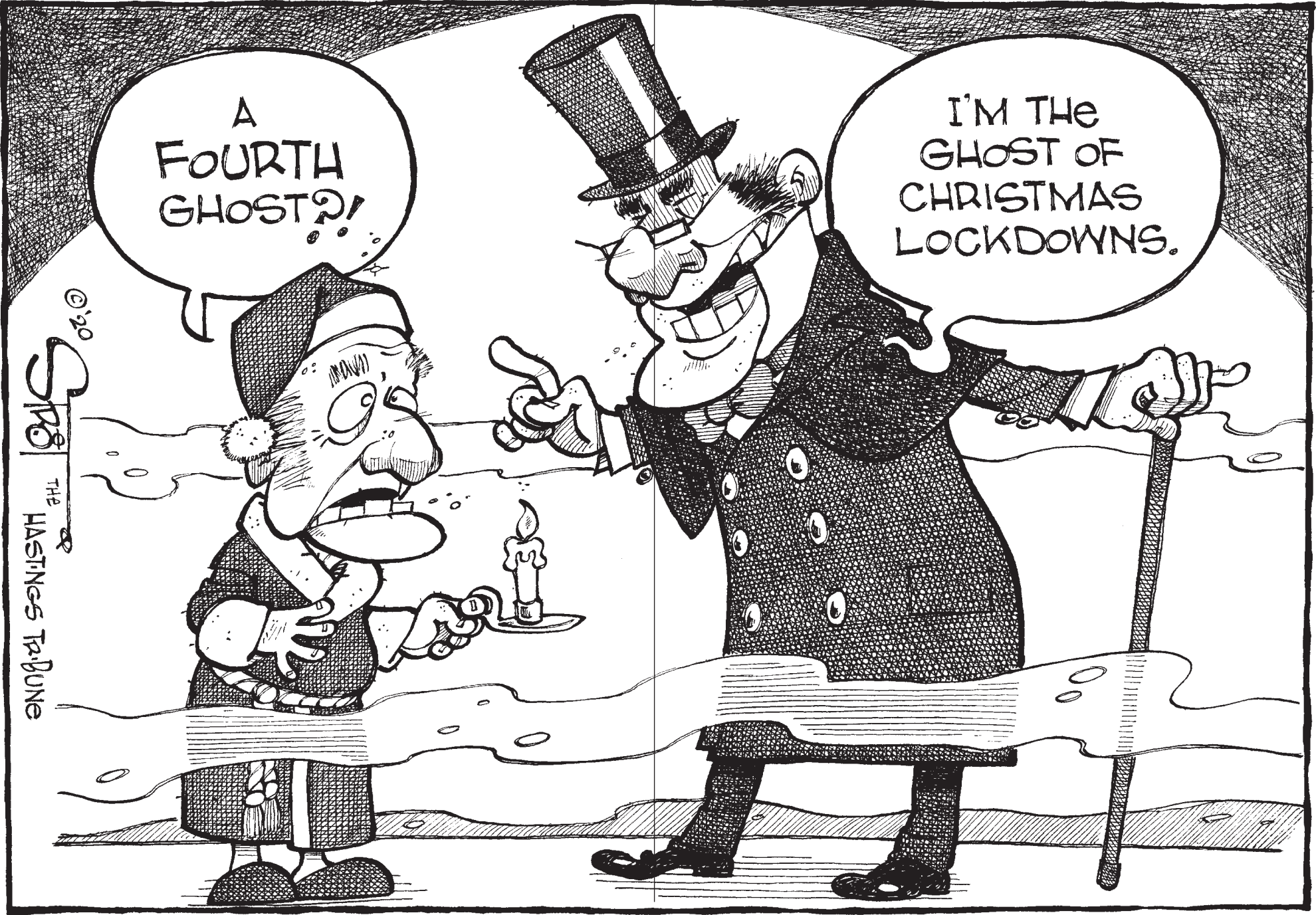
Yes, we are available for birthdays parties, weddings and any other occasion that may require a musical number.

Needless to say, coming back to work Monday was no easy task.

The entire weekend flew by with little sleep and high emotions, but the memories made will be there for a lifetime and I am so, so excited to see where life will take the couple.

In a tough year, this is one that will stick out happily for sure. Congrats to the happy couple!

Share your opinions via letters to the editor. Please include a phone number so we can verify it’s you and word count is 500.



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Office hours 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Mon., Thurs., and Fri., 12 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Wed. Normal deadline is noon Monday.

Real estate

Information taken from records filed with the Seward County clerk.

Nov. 12 – 24
Scott V. Spohn and Katherine J. Spohn to Wayne H. Milton and Lorraine C. Milton, an undivided 25% interest in the SW1/4 30-9-1. DS \$783
Norcla, LLC, to William J. White and Sharon D. White, Tract 1: N2/3 W1/2 SW1/4 4-9-3 and Tract 2: North 40 acres E1/2 SW1/4 and the W1/2 W1/2 SE1/4 4-9-3. DS \$1,721.25
Kelsey Ratkovec and Cody Ratkovec and Dan-

iel L. Buss and Suzanne Buss to John Johnson and Katherine Johnson, north 45 feet of Tax Lot 73, part of Lot 5, in the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Subdivision in the SW1/4 SW1/4 21-11-3. DS \$355
Bradley D. Bowen and Susan K. Bowen to Joseph W. Schluckebier and Trisha D. Schuckebier, east 60 feet of Lots 7-8, Block 67, Harris, Moffit and Roberts Addition to Seward. DS \$103.50
Todd A. Morrill and Diane M. Mandina-Morrill to Todd A. Morrill

and Diane M. Mandina-Morrill, Lot 4 and the E1/2 of the adjacent vacated alley, Block 6, Mary R. Spear's Addition to Seward. DS exempt
Ellis Holdings, LLC, to Elaine M. Mueller, Parcel 1: Lot 2, Block 1, Mueller First Addition, Seward. Parcel 2: S1/2 Lot 3, Block 1, Mueller First Addition, Seward. Parcel 3: N1/2 Lot 3, Block 1, Mueller First Addition, Seward. DS \$416.25
Shane Zywiec and Heidi Zywiec to Scott Prochaska and Becky Prochaska, Lot 1, Block

1, Country Club Heights Third Addition to Seward. DS \$830.25
Theodore C. Payne and Patricia A. Payne to Theodore C. Payne and Patricia A. Payne, co-trustees of the T&P Payne Family Trust, Lot 13, Block 3, Hughes Addition to the City of Seward, DS exempt
Shirley J. Hernandez to Shirley J. Hernandez, trustee of the Shirley J. Hernandez Trust, a tract of land in the NE1/4 18-9-2. DS exempt
Jackson D. Friesen to Jackson D. Friesen

and Tabbitha L. Friesen, trustees of the Friesen Family Revocable Trust, a tract of land in the S1/2 NE1/4 10-9-3. DS exempt
Nov. 17 – 24
Jackson D. Friesen to Jackson D. Friesen and Tabbitha L. Friesen, a tract of land in the S1/2 NE1/4 10-9-3. DS exempt
Vaquero Milford Partners, LP to Andrew Ross Real Estate, Lot 1, Jantze Addition to Milford. DS \$2,569.50
Connie J. Rood and Dale Rood to Norman D. Porter, a tract of land in Lots 10-11, Block 1,

Seward. DS exempt
Building Seward, LLC, to Underwood Construction Co, LLC, Lot 10, Block 2, Fairway Woods Addition, Seward. DS \$135.
Lisa Johnson and Andy Johnson to Ryan Galavez, E1/2 Lot 8, Lot 9, Block 25, Wright's Third Addition to Utica. DS \$315
Michael E. Tomes and Dawn M. Tomes to Sarah LaDoux, trustee of the Sarah A. LaDoux Trust, Lots 3-6, Block 40, Wright's Third Addition, Utica. DS \$56.25



Many churches have suspended services or are using online platforms due to COVID-19. Please use the information below to contact them directly about how they are conducting services during the Christmas season.

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- Bellwood Mennonite Church**
bellwoodchurch.org
402-761-2709
- Beth-El Community Church**
bethelmilford.com
402-761-3610
- East Fairview Mennonite Church**
facebook.com/eastfairviewchurch
402-761-2836
- Family Life Assembly of God**
facebook.com/MilfordFamilyLifeAssemblyofGod
402-761-2664
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (LCMS)**
goodshepherd-milford.org
402-761-3146
- Grace Missionary Church**
gracemissionary.org
402-761-2084
- Milford Mennonite Church**
402-761-2244
- Milford United Methodist Church**
facebook.com/MilfordUnitedMethodistChurch
402-761-2375

BEAVER CROSSING

- Beaver Crossing United Methodist Church**
facebook.com/BEUParish
402-534-2741
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church**
sacredheartcatholicbc.org
402-532-2545

GOEHNER

- Friedens United Church of Christ**
402-523-5295
- Great Plains Community Church**
greatplainschurch.com
402-730-2594
- Holy Cross Lutheran Church (LCMS)**
facebook.com/HolyCrossGo
402-523-4705

LINCOLN (Rural Pleasant Dale)

- Zion Lutheran Church (ELCA)**
zelca.org
402-796-2433

MALCOLM

- Northwest Community Church**
northwestcommunity.org
402-796-2344
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church (LCMS)**
Visit our Facebook page
402-796-2396

PLEASANT DALE

- Bethlehem Lutheran Church (LCMS)**
402-795-3885



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- Church of Christ**
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faithseward.org
402-643-6116
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graceseward.org
402-643-4131
- Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church**
hillcrestefc.org
402-643-2316
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facebook.com/thelighthousepentecostalchurch
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- Living Word Lutheran Church (LCMC)**
livingwordseward.org
402-643-6445
- Mighty Fortress Lutheran Church (AALC)**
facebook.com/MightyFortress
402-953-3678
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sewardumc.org
402-643-4156
- St. Andrew's Episcopal Church**
st-andrews-church-seward.episcopal-ne.org
402-643-3829
- St. John Lutheran Church (LCMS)**
facebook.com/stjohnseward
402-643-2983
- St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church**
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therockseward.org
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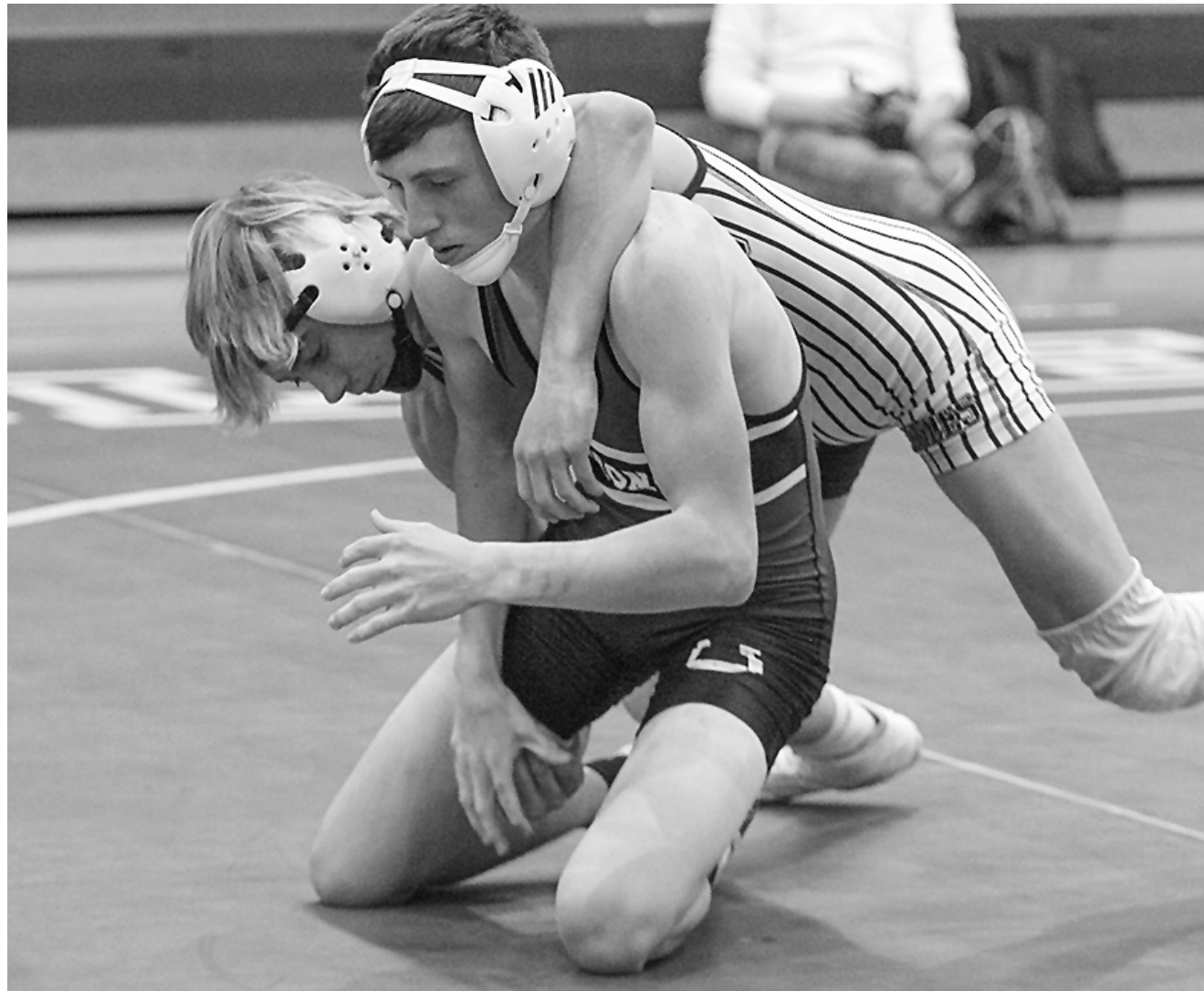
Dance, DANCE, DANCE!



The Milford High School dance team entertains the (limited) crowd during a Dec. 11 home basketball game.

STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT

Congrats, Konner!



Konner Schluckebier of Milford High School (back) is the newest record holder for the Eagles with 140 career wins. He also got his 100th pin on Dec. 12.

STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT

New athletics guidelines released

Milford Public Schools will implement the updated Nebraska School Activities and Athletics COVID-19 guidelines for school activities. These will be in effect through Jan. 4.

For all winter activities:

The NSAA is requiring the following of schools, officials and spectators for all winter season contests:

Items that remind the same:

- Spectators are required to wear face coverings at all times while attending indoor events.

- Coaches and non-active participants (those not currently on the court, mat or stage) are required to wear face coverings at all times.

- Face coverings must cover the nose and mouth.

- Active participants are permitted, but not required, to wear face coverings during competition/performance.

- Six feet of physical distance between household groups in stands and spectator areas.

^a Attendance is restricted to 25% of capacity and will include households members of the participating athletes.

Milford's limit is four household members per participating athlete

plus grandparents in Item #1 below.

Item that has changed:

Grandparents of the participating athletes may attend as part of the athletes household members.

For Milford home basketball games, this is four household members plus grandparents.

Away sites will be dependent on the host school having the capacity for additional spectators.

Grandparents must sit with the household members.

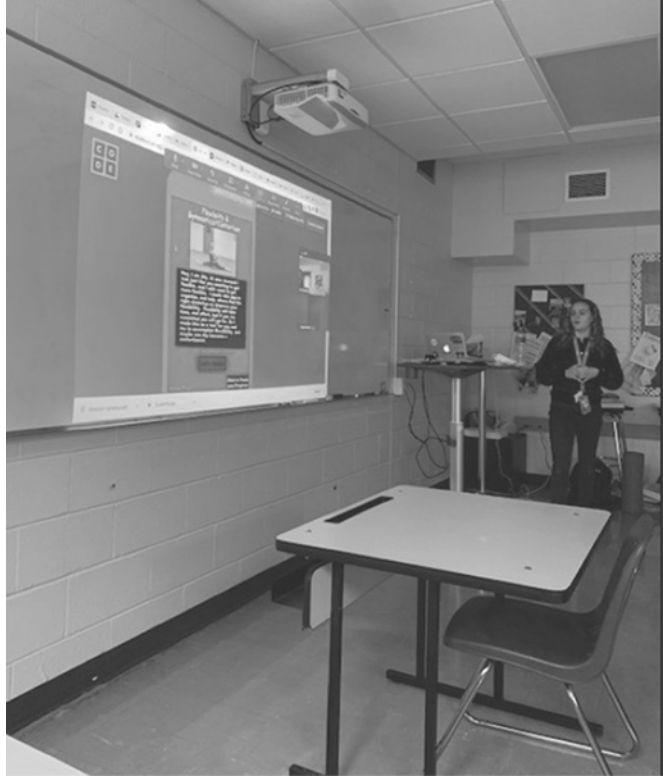
As stated above - masks are required and six feet of physical distance between household groups (including grandparents) must be maintained in the stands and spectator areas.

Please note:

The host school may establish additional requirements in consultation with local health departments. Meaning that attendance guidelines may be different when our teams travel or there could be different guidelines for basketball and wrestling.

Please continue to check our social media sites and consult with your child and/or coach for each host site's guidelines.

Getting techy at MHS



COURTESY PHOTO

The #milfordsoar Information Technology I class presented their completed apps to their classmates. A variety of apps were created from running softball drills to flexibility to trivia to a video game.

Enjoy your holiday break, Eagles!

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STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT
Kaleb Miller of Milford unleashes a pass to a teammate against Fairbury Dec. 11.

Eagles keep spotless mark

by Stephanie Croston
scroston@sewardindependent.com

The Milford boys picked up a pair of victories last week, beating Fairbury 52-27 Dec. 11 and Lincoln Lutheran 73-59 Dec. 12.

Coach Tony Muller was happy to see his team get out to a fast start against Fairbury. After allowing the Jeffs to hit a couple threes and draw fouls on drives to the basket, the Eagles cleaned up the defense and shut down the Jeffs the rest of the game.

MHS led 31-16 at the half and outscored Fairbury 17-5 in the third quarter.

“We ran the floor really well,” Muller said.

Jaxon Weyand led the team with 18 points, and Seth Stutzman added 12 points. Micah Hartwig had a solid night with nine points, eight rebounds, three assists and three steals, and Kaleb Miller grabbed eight rebounds.

Another good start led the Eagles to the win the next day. Muller said the team played up-tempo ball and was able to sustain that through the game.

Weyand scored 19 for MHS, with Stutzman adding 17 points and seven rebounds. Hartwig finished with 11 points and nine assists, and Cabe Schluckebier

notched eight points, eight rebounds and four assists.

Milford (3-0) is scheduled to visit Centennial Friday, Dec. 18, for a county and conference clash. On Saturday, Dec. 19, the team is to host Ashland-Greenwood. Tip off Friday is set for 7:30 p.m., while Saturday’s game is set to start at 3:30 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 21, the Eagles are scheduled to host Bruning-Davenport/Shickley in the holiday tournament opener. Tip-off is set for 7:45 p.m.

The Eagles then finish their pre-Christmas games Tuesday, Dec. 22, at North Bend.

Milford 52, Fairbury 27						
FHS	13	3	5	6	27	
MHS	16	15	17	4	52	

FHS—Totals 9-31 6-10 27.

MHS—Isaac Yeackley 3-8 0-0 6, Micah Hartwig 4-7 0-0 9, Cason Tucker 0-1 0-0 0, Maddox Baack 0-3 0-0 0, Jaxon Weyand 7-15 4-7 18, Carter Roth 1-2 0-0 2, Kaleb Miller 1-3 1-3 3, Collin Piening 0-2 0-0 0, Seth Stutzman 6-12 1-2 13, Cabe Schluckebier 0-1 1-2 1. Totals 22-54 7-14 52.

Three-point goals—FHS 3-13, MHS 1-11 (Yeackley 0-1, Hartwig 1-2, Tucker 0-1, Baack 0-3, Weyand 0-2, Roth 0-1, Stutzman 0-1). Rebounds—FHS 22, MHS 37 (Hartwig, Miller 8). Assists—MHS 6 (Hartwig 3). Steals—MHS 16 (three with 3). Blocked shots—MHS 2. Turnovers—FHS 20, MHS 10. Fouls—FHS 11, MHS 10.

Milford 73, Lincoln Lutheran 59						
MHS	20	20	18	15	73	
LLHS	9	15	20	15	59	

MHS—Yeackley 4-8 0-1 8, Hartwig 4-12 1-2 11, Bryce Jakub 1-1 0-0 2, Baack 2-3 0-0 6, Weyand 6-12 7-19, Roth 1-1 0-0 2, Stutzman 7-13 1-4 17, Schluckebier 2-5 4-5 8. Totals 27-55 13-19 73.

LLHS—Totals 22-48 9-16 59. Three-point goals—MHS 6-19 (Yeackley 0-2, Hartwig 2-8, Baack 2-3, Weyand 0-2, Stutzman 2-4), LLHS 6-23. Rebounds—MHS 30 (Schluckebier 8, LLHS 27. Assists—MHS 21 (Hartwig 9). Steals—MHS 8 (Yeackley, Baack 2). Blocked shots—MHS 1. Turnovers—MHS 10, LLHS 18. Fouls—MHS 17, LLHS 20.



STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT
Milford guard Kaitlin Kontor dribbles behind her back as she looks for an open teammate Dec. 11 against Fairbury.

MHS girls go 1-1 in contests

by Stephanie Croston
scroston@sewardindependent.com

Although the Milford girls’ basketball team went 1-1 in last week’s games, Coach Phil Stauffer was disappointed in their play.

The Eagles held on to beat Fairbury 42-40 Dec. 11 and lost to Lincoln Lutheran 42-34 Dec. 12.

Stauffer said the Eagles didn’t rebound well against Fairbury, allowing 15 offensive boards for the Jeffs.

“When we did get rebounds, we were able to get our transition game going and get easy baskets,” he said.

Milford finished with 19 rebounds to 31 for Fairbury. Taylor Roth led the team with four.

On offense, Hannah Kepler and Kaitlin Kontor shot well, Stauffer said. Kontor finished with 18 points, and Kepler scored 16. Kontor was 4-5 from three-point range.

Stauffer said Alayna Piening gave the Eagles a defensive spark off the bench in the second half. Abby Houk also played good defense, Stauffer said.

The Eagles made too many mistakes in the



STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT
Alayna Piening of Milford looks for her shot against Fairbury Dec. 11.

game at Lincoln Lutheran. “Unforced turnovers

and defensive mistakes have to get better. Offensively we could not

get any rhythm going,” he said.

Kepler led the team with 18 points.

“We will get better from this loss,” Stauffer said.

Milford (2-1) was scheduled to host Ashland-Greenwood Dec. 15 and travel to Centennial Friday, Dec. 18, for a 6 p.m. tip-off. The team is slated to host Bruning-Davenport/Shickley Monday, Dec. 21, at 6 p.m. in the first round of the holiday tournament and then finish in the pre-Christmas schedule at North Bend Tuesday, Dec. 22.

Milford 42, Fairbury 40						
FHS	9	10	4	17	40	
MHS	11	7	14	10	42	

FHS—Totals 15-46 7-10 40.

MHS—Makena Stutzman 0-6 2-2 2, Kaitlin Kontor 6-7 2-2 18, Hannah Kepler 6-13 2-4 16, Alayna Piening 0-1 0-0 0, Kaitlyn Klug 0-1 0-0 0, Taylor Roth 1-2 1-2 3, Abby Houk 1-3 0-2 3. Totals 14-33 7-12 42.

Three-point goals—FHS 3-19, MHS 7-19 (Stutzman 0-6, Kontor 4-5, Kepler 2-5, Houk 1-3). Rebounds—FHS 31 MHS 19 (Roth 4). Assists—MHS 9 (Kepler 4). Steals—MHS 11 (Kontor, Piening 3). Blocked shots—MHS 1 (Kontor 1). Turnovers—FHS 16, MHS 15. Fouls—FHS 12, MHS 11.

Lincoln Lutheran 42, Milford 34						
MHS	9	3	11	11	34	
LLHS	9	13	11	9	42	

MHS—Stutzman 0-1 0-0 0, Kontor 1-5 1-1 3, Kepler 6-13 3-18, Piening 1-2 0-0 2, Klug 0-1 0-0 0, Roth 0-0 3-4 3, Sydney Stelling 1-2 1-2 3, Houk 1-5 3-6 5. Totals 10-29 11-16 34.

LLHS—Totals 15-39 12-20 42. Three-point goals—MHS 3-14 (Stutzman 0-1, Kontor 0-3, Kepler 3-8, Houk 0-2), LLHS 0-7. Rebounds—MHS 23 (Roth 5), LLHS 26. Assists—MHS 7 (Kontor 5). Steals—MHS 5 (Kepler 2). Blocked shots—MHS 2 (Kontor, Houk 1). Turnovers—MHS 22, LLHS 14. Fouls—MHS 18, LLHS 16. Fouled out—Houk.

Senior sets marks; Eagles win triangular

by Stephanie Croston
scroston@sewardindependent.com

The Milford wrestlers finished another good week, winning the county triangular Dec. 10 and finishing third in their side of the Crete Invitational Dec. 12, as well as setting a pair of new school records.

MHS beat both Seward and Centennial 57-12 in duals at Seward. Both Milford losses came from wrestlers making their high school debuts against tough opponents, Coach Joe Schluckebier said.

“Seward came out really physical, but our guys responded well and came out on top of some close matches,” he said. “The marquee matchup in the Centennial dual was a second meeting between Eli Vondra and Ryan Payne who are both ranked at 132 pounds, with Vondra coming out on top again in a 4-3 match.

“We take a lot of pride in winning the county triangular and this is the second straight

year we were able to do so. These kids all know each other pretty well

and there are some neat friendships and rivalries between them.”

The Eagles headed to Crete Saturday. The teams were divided

based on how they did at state last year. Milford finished third behind Beatrice and Nebraska City.

Schluckebier said Beatrice is one of the top teams in Class B, while Nebraska City had more wrestlers competing than Milford.

Konner Schluckebier and freshman Hunter Oborny were the lone Eagle champions on the day.

“By comparison, last year we were second out of 16 teams without having a single champion,” Coach Schluckebier said. “Konner took care of business with three dominating wins. Hunter had a tough bracket with two returning state qualifiers, but our freshman had an outstanding day going 4-0 in a round-robin bracket.

“Hunter is a seasoned freshman and he’s off to a 10-1 start on the season. Christopher Scdoris, Carter Springer, and Eli Vondra all finished second after suffering their first losses of the

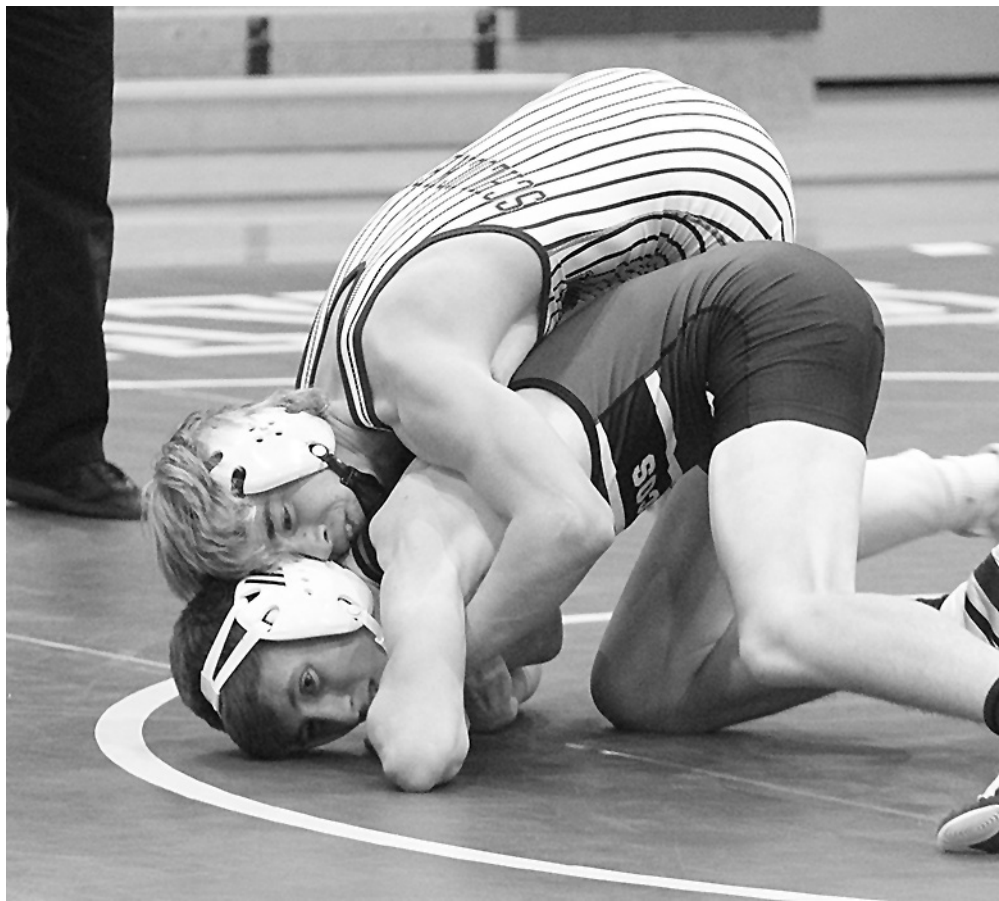
season.”

Jack Chapman, Trent Stauffer and Lorenzo Temple were third. Conner Kohout, Keenan Troyer and Thomas Vance finished fourth.

“Our team has a lot of individuals who are capable of being the top performer on any given week, and they push each other every day,” the coach said.

En route to his Crete invite championship, Konner Schluckebier set a new school record for career wins by picking up his 140th win in the finals, besting former teammate Jeaven Scdoris’ mark of 139 career wins from last year. In that same match, he recorded his 100th career pin, which extends his school record for career pins after passing Sam Copley late last year.”

The Eagles are scheduled to wrestle at Axtell Dec. 15 and in the Logan View Invitational Saturday, Dec. 19, before hosting a quadrangular Tuesday, Dec. 22, starting at 4 p.m.



STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT
Konner Schluckebier of Milford set the school record for career wins and recorded his 100th career pin at the Crete Invitational Dec. 12. Pictured, he works against Keenan Kosek of Centennial during the county triangular Dec. 10.

The Christmas spirit has arrived in Milford



A four-inch snowfall Dec. 11-12 led to Chevee Saunders, 4, daughter of Quinn and Stephanie Saunders, getting outside to play in the snow.



Our Milford Times reporter Craig Jones took a holiday drive around Milford this past weekend and took in the festivities. Have some jolly decorations you want to share? Email us at craig@sewardindependent.com to see them in the paper!

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Times

PUBLIC NOTICES

Hearings

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held on the Seward County General Assistance Guidelines in the Seward County Commissioners Room in the Seward County Courthouse, Seward, Nebraska, on December 22nd, 2020, at 9:15 A.M. The purpose of this Public Hearing is to generate public opinion and comment in regard to the General Assistance Guidelines. Notice published by order of the Seward County Board of Commissioners of Seward County, Nebraska on December 3rd, 2020. A copy of the proposed General Assistance Guidelines are available for public inspection at 320 South 14th Street, Seward, Nebraska. Written comments for consideration by Seward County will be accepted at 320 South 14th Street, Seward, Nebraska 68434 for a period of 10 days ending December 18th, 2020.

Jeffrey M. Baker
General Assistance Director
Seward County, Nebraska
MT — December 09, 16, 2020
ZNEZ

Minutes

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Boards of Commissioner Meetings are held each Tuesday morning in the Seward County Courthouse at 9:00 a.m., except for the first Tuesday of each month when meetings will be held at 8:30 a.m. **The Commissioners will be meeting at 8 a.m. on Friday, December 18 to approve Seward County Claims.** Notice of each meeting is posted on the Courthouse bulletin board and on the Commissioner's room door. The agenda for all meetings is kept continually current and is available for public inspection at the County Clerk's Office during normal business hours. The agenda is held open until one business day prior to the meeting for appearance before the Board. The Board has the right to modify the agenda to include items of an emergency nature only at such public meeting.

CLAIMS ALLOWED JANUARY 5, 2020

The Seward County Board of Equalization convened on December 8, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. Present: Chairperson: John Culver Members: Misty Ahmic, Bob Vrbka, Ken Schmieding, Becky Paulsen County Clerk: Sherry Schweitzer County Assessor: Marilyn Hladky Approved the minutes of November 24, 2020.

Approved Tax List Corrections. Hladky gave an update of her office.

Convened as the Board of Commissioners. Approved the minutes of December 1, 2020.

Approved Seward County claims through November 27, 2020. Officials gave updates of their offices.

Commissioners gave an update of their activities.

Accepted November 2020 Fee Reports for Clerk of the District Court and County Clerk. Discussed potential contract with former HR Director. No action was taken.

Approved re-appointment of Dan Kovar to the Seward County Veteran's Service Committee.

Accepted the resignation of Jeff Baker, Seward County Veteran's Service Officer/Public Transit Director, effective 12/31/2020.

Discussed restructuring for Veteran's Service/Public Transit/ General Assistance position.

Approved increase in credit card limit for Seward County Veteran's Services/Public Transit.

Approved Resolution No. 3551 in regard to correcting a previous Resolution concerning Petri Addition Short Form Plat.

Approved signage for County buildings regarding Seward Mask Ordinance.

Approved closure of County Offices on December 24, 2020. Adopted the agenda for December 15, 2020, and adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Sherry Schweitzer, County Clerk
SEWARD COUNTY CLAIMS THROUGH NOVEMBER 27, 2020

ADVANCED CRRTL HLTHCR, SE, \$4.40; ADVANCED OFFICE AUTOM, SU, \$268.84; AMERITAS LIFE INS, FE, \$18,181.06; CHARLES W CAMPBELL, SE, \$168.00; BRENNAN LAW, SE, \$7,796.60; CAMPBELL CLEANING, SE, \$2,255.00; CAPITAL BUSINESS SYS, SU, \$25.00; CITY OF SEWARD, UT, \$4,732.93; E 911 C/O, SE, \$36,687.33; EAKES OFFICE PLUS, SU, \$208.77; GALLS LLC, SU, \$84.26; GENERAL FIRE & SAFETY, SE, \$278.80; GRAHAM TIRE LINCOLN, SE, \$599.96; GREAT PLAINS COMM, UT, \$225.00; HELMINK PRINTING, SU, \$189.00; EMILY HEMPHILL, SE, \$58.65; HOMETOWN LEASING, SE, \$149.85; INDOFF INC, SU, \$99.99; JONES BANK (FICA), FE, \$13,876.19; KONICA MINOLTA, SU, \$131.48; MATTHEW BENDER, SE, \$84.28; MEMORIAL CLINIC, SE, \$416.80; MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, SE, \$230.55; MID-AMERICAN INS GRP, FE, \$36,734.12; MIDWEST OFFICE AUTOM, SU, \$61.99; NE ASSN OF CO OFFICIALS, FE, \$2,599.76; ONESOURCE, SU, \$92.00; OREILLY AUTOMOTIVE, SE, \$20.97; ORKIN LLC, SE, \$111.78; POSTMASTER, SU, \$240.00; POTTER REPAIR, SE, \$325.80; PRIORITY ENV SOL, SE, \$335.35; RADWEN INC, SU, \$1,000.00; REGION V SYSTEMS, SE, \$1,284.00; SAUNDERS CO COURT, SE, \$6.75; SOS - ELECTIONS, SU, \$20.00; SEWARD CO BRIDGES, FE, \$11,500.00; SEW CO HLTH CLM FND, FE, \$203,073.18;

SEWARD CO INDEPENDENT, SE, \$89.95; SEWARD CO PUB TRANS, SE, \$66.00; SEWARD CO ROAD FND, FE, \$750,000.00; SEWARD CO TREASURER, FE, \$45.00; SEWARD LUMBER, SU, \$23.99; SOARIN GROUP, SE, \$6,160.96; SUMMIT FOOD SERV, SU, \$2,564.45; THE HOME DEPOT PRO, SU, \$229.44; U S POSTAL SERV, SU, \$10,000.00; VERIZON WIRELESS, UT, \$547.22; VISA, FE, \$893.77; WELLS FARGO, SE, \$198.15; WINDSTREAM, UT, \$852.80; SUE WURM, SE, \$273.75; WYTHERS LAW, SE, \$313.50; ALL ROAD BARRICADES, SU, \$693.16; BLACK HILLS ENERGY, UT, \$678.44; BRD OF EXAM CO HWY, FE, \$50.00; DALE JOHNSON, SE, \$41,318.40; GERHOLD CONCRETE, SU, \$238.05; JOHNSON SAND & GRAVEL, SU, \$15,164.04; KERFORD LESTONE CO, SU, \$2,055.46; MIDWEST SERVICE, SE, \$298.50; NE PUB POW DIST,

UT, \$118.14; SACK LUMBER, SU, \$120.00; SNAP-ON INDUSTRIAL, SU, \$613.92; TRUCK CENTER CO, SE, \$541.58; TRUCK EQUIP SERV, SE, \$76.42; VILLAGE OF UTICA, FE, \$53.48; DELTA DENTAL OF NE, SE, \$29.38; BIZCO INC, FE, \$11,300.82; DEPT OF HHS, SE, \$350.00; GREAT PLAINS UNIF, SE, \$634.40; LAST MILE NETWORK, UT, \$2,762.80; MILE HIGH SHOOTING ACC, SU, \$7,063.00; NE SHERIFFS ASSOC, FE, \$435.00; SHINETECH SOFTWARE, EQ, \$6,414.50; CENTENNIAL TEAMMATES, FE, \$289.00; ST OF NE DAS COMM, SE, \$704.00; LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR, SE, \$2,917.20; SALARIES: \$263,569.99 GROSS SALARIES INCLUDE DEDUCTIONS TO: COLONIAL SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE; MID AMERICAN CO WISCONSIN; DELTADENTAL; VSP VISION; WADDELL & REED MT — December 16, 2020 ZNEZ

NOTICES

Please note early public notice deadlines for the 2020 holiday season.

December 30 edition

3 p.m., Wednesday, December 23, 2020

January 6 edition

3 p.m., Wednesday, December 30, 2020

Turbulent time in local meatpacking environment

by Brady Oltmans
editor@sewardindependent.com

The American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska, as well as the national ACLU, have filed a federal lawsuit against Noah's Ark Processors in Hastings after the meatpacking plant did not implement protections to shield workers against a surge of coronavirus cases.

Plant workers, whom the ACLU states are majority Latinx and immigrants, have been crowded together without proper personal protective equipment and without any abiding to social distancing, the ACLU claims.

"Noah's Ark has refused to implement even the most basic protections against a coronavirus surge in the plant," Spencer Amdur, attorney at the ACLU, said. "At this point in the pandemic, there is no excuse for failing to do even the bare minimum to protect workers and the surrounding community."

One plaintiff in the lawsuit said management downplayed the severity of the disease before workers fell ill in late April. According to the lawsuit, workers who showed symptoms at work were told by management to return to their stations. The lawsuit also claims Noah's Ark did not pay sick leave when workers quarantined or were COVID-pos-

itive. That would directly go against the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed on March 27.

Noah's Ark does have a record of failing to provide for workers. A district court determined Noah's Ark illegally attempted to block workers from joining a meatpacking workers union by seeking to slash benefits and workplace safety protections in October 2019. The U.S. Department of Labor fined the company in 2019 and 2020 for not paying sick leave or securing dangerous equipment.

Smithfield Foods in Crete has been praised for measures taken to protect workers at the meatpacking plant since an April outbreak resulted in 123 coronavirus cases tied to the plant. Implementing on-site testing, sneeze guards, hand sanitizer and paid sick leave are a few of the steps the plant has taken since the start of the pandemic.

Meatpacking plants across the country slowed production or shuttered doors briefly in the spring because of the spread of coronavirus. That forced President Donald Trump to sign an executive order at the end of April to keep meat processing plants open in order to secure the food supply chain.

Now, with a vaccine upcoming, unions and special-interest

groups call on meat packing workers to receive priority.

The National Pork Producers Council, National Cattlemen's Beef Association and North American Meat Institute sent letters to all 50 state governors for priority on a vaccine for ag and food workers following health-care workers and long-term care residents.

The letters say meat and poultry workers and livestock producers have been on the front lines to ensure Americans have access to safe, nutritious and affordable food. They say prioritizing meat industry workers and livestock suppliers next would address a critical industry.

The Ag CEO Council shared priority papers with the Biden campaign and American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall said he told Biden's transition team it's critical essential ag workers be included in the second tier of vaccine distributions.

"We just wanted to emphasize how important that is that after the needs of the workers on the frontline and the ones that are critical need to get that first, and then we need to make sure that we provide that for ag workers," he said.

He also called upon state farm bureaus to contact state leaders about the issue.

Ag community reacts to Vilsack appointment

President-elect Joe Biden has chosen Tom Vilsack as the U.S. Department of Agriculture secretary on his cabinet, according to reports from national outlets who spoke to those familiar with the decision.

Vilsack served as secretary of agriculture in the eight years of the Obama administration and was a top rural and agriculture policy adviser to the Biden presidential campaign. He also served as governor of Iowa (1999-2007).

Under Vilsack's leadership, the USDA leveraged its \$150 billion goals beyond traditional farmer focus and onto rural development and nutritional programs to aid low-income Americans.

During his tenure he also defended the use of so-called "pink slime," beef product made from trimmings left after the carcasses have been butchered. He also addressed global warming, saying the agriculture industry contributes only 9% of the greenhouse gases blamed for warming the planet.

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall previously said the Farm Bureau wants an agriculture secretary with either farming background or a deep knowledge of agriculture. National

Farmers Union President Rob Larew said Vilsack has the qualifications and experience to steer the agency.

Independent non-profit journalism outlet The Counter published a multi-part investigation into USDA promoting misleading data to depict a fictional resurgence in black farming during Vilsack's previous tenure. That's caused some backlash against his reported re-appointment.

The National Black Farmers Association issued a release on Dec. 8 calling Vilsack an improvement over current Secretary Sonny Perdue, but said too little was done to address discrimination against Black farmers.

"Doors continue to be closed to many Black farmers and today our members face enormous challenges – including a system that disproportionately leaves them behind," the release said.

Recently the Justice For Black Farmers Act was introduced onto the Senate floor that would transfer up to 32 million acres to Black farmers.

Since leaving his post as USDA secretary, Vilsack led the U.S. Dairy Export Council, a trade group advocating for American-made dairy overseas.

Winter tetany a possible problem when feeding cattle dry forages

by Aaron Berger
and Mary Drewnoski
Nebraska Extension

Grass tetany is considered a problem that usually occurs when cattle or sheep are eating lush, spring grass or annual cereal forages such as rye, wheat or triticale. However, it also can occur when cattle are being fed harvested forages.

Grass tetany, sometimes called grass staggers or hypomagnesaemia, is a metabolic disorder of cattle related to a deficiency of magnesium. Magnesium is a critical mineral to the nervous system and muscle function.

Low levels of magnesium can result in cattle that exhibit hyperexcitability, reduced feed intake and muscle twitching, especially around the face and ears. Cattle also may appear uncoordinated and walk with a stiff gait.

Grass tetany is most often associated with cattle grazing immature, cool-season grasses or lush annual

forages. However, tetany also can occur during the winter when cattle are being fed grass hay, alfalfa hay or annual forages harvested for hay. This is especially true if these hays are being fed in a drylot situation where they are the only source of feed.

Grass, alfalfa and cereal grains harvested for hay can be low in magnesium. A mineral analysis showing less than 0.15% magnesium in hay is considered low. When hay is low in magnesium and also low in calcium (less than 0.4%), while being simultaneously high in potassium (more than 2.5%), tetany is more likely to occur.

Recent forage test results, observed in the Nebraska Panhandle, have indicated that this could potentially be an issue with some hays harvested this year.

Forages likely to cause grass tetany often are borderline to low in magnesium while having excess levels of potassium. Usually, forages also tend to be low in sodium content.

Because high potassium levels interfere with magnesium absorption, it's the excess potassium that induces tetany.

An imbalance of potassium, calcium and phosphorus in feed can hinder magnesium absorption from the digestive system into the bloodstream, magnifying the problem of a low intake of magnesium. Sodium is important in transporting magnesium into cells, so it is crucial to provide adequate sodium (salt) to ensure proper magnesium utilization.

To prevent winter tetany from harvested forages, there are several things for producers to consider.

First, test hay for mineral concentrations to identify if an imbalance of magnesium, potassium and calcium is present.

If hay tests low in magnesium (less than 0.15%) and calcium (less than 0.40%) and high in potassium (more than 2.5%), consider feeding a high-calcium, high-magnesium mineral supplement (10% to 13% magnesium for a 4-ounce target intake mineral) that also contains salt.

Because magnesium oxide is bitter, adding dried distillers grains or soybean meal at the rate of 1 pound to 50 pounds of the mineral and salt mix can help to increase intake if consumption is not at targeted levels.

In instances where cattle are being hand-fed a protein or energy supplement, supplemental magnesium also can be delivered with the feed. If this occurs, make sure access to loose salt is provided as well.

Be sure to examine the concentration of potassium in mineral supplements. If feeds are already high in potassium, feeding additional potassium in a mineral only aggravates the problem.



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Holiday Deadline and Closing

Our Seward office will close 12:00 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 24 and will be closed Friday, Dec. 25, 2020.

We will close 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020 and will be closed Friday, Jan. 1, 2021.

ADVERTISING & NEWS DEADLINE

for the publication dates of

DECEMBER 30, 2020
is 9:00 a.m.
THURSDAY, DEC. 24

JANUARY 6, 2021
is 9:00 a.m.
THURSDAY, DEC. 31

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Times

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Fri., Dec. 18: Hamburger/Cheeseburger, Macaroni & Cheese, Veggie Tray, German Chocolate Cake

Mon., Dec. 21: Tater Tot Casserole, Breadstick, Broccoli Salad, Apple Crisp

Wed., Dec. 23: Chicken Tortilla, Warm Ham & Cheese, Veggie, Mini Apple Pie

Mon., Dec. 28: Ham Balls, Scalloped Potatoes, Glazed Carrots, Apple Crisp

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