

DAILY GRIND



NEWS FROM THE MILL

Shaun Sayres

Our year came to a soft close as snow hampered our final events. First, Julefest, then our annual market in Des Moines. All in all, we ended the year better than expected, but it’s tempting to ask what could have been had the weather held out for either of these events.

For those who don’t know, Christkindlmarket Des Moines is an annual outdoor Christmas market stylized after German-themed festivals in Europe. We have been regular vendors there for 7 years now, and have seen the festival grow exponentially over the last couple of years. Our participation is kind of a last hurrah of the year for us and helps generate enough revenue to typically carry us to Spring when tourism traffic picks up again. The Rasmussen Group in Des Moines kindly sponsors some of the event costs for us as well.

This was the first year that Christkindlmarket went two weekends. Both the windmill and Kringleman Pastries participated in both weekends this year. The first weekend proved to be okay temperature-wise. It was cold, but not unbearable, but snow showers on Friday and Saturday blanketed all of our product which of course was outside our *hygge hut*. Thankfully, the snow was dry and brushed off easily, but it came down relentlessly both nights. It made everything look pretty except the register tape. We wish to thank Nicole Butler and Jon Adams for volunteering to help us out the first weekend. We hope they had enough fun to consider coming back with us next year.

Unfortunately, the second weekend was worse.

SPARTAN SPECIAL

Contributions from EEHK High School

The Exira-EHK Spartan basketball season has started, and both the boys and girls teams are learning and improving. The girls' team has a record of 7–1, with their only loss coming at the hands of Riverside. Taryn Petersen, JR, leads the team in points with 166; Harlow Miller, SR, leads in rebounds with 66; and Taryn Petersen, JR, leads in assists with 39.

The boys' team has a record of 0–7 and is using each game to learn and get better. Austin Rasmussen, SR, leads the team in points with 106; Austin Rasmussen, SR, and Anthony Young, JR, lead in rebounds with 29; and Austin Rasmussen, SR, leads in assists with 25. Below is the remaining basketball schedule.

- 01/09 Woodbine
- 01/10 ACGC
- 01/16 Boyer Valley
- 01/22 West Central
- 01/26 Panorama
- 01/30 CAM
- 02/03 Glidden-Ralston
- 02/10 Red Oak (Boys)

LEO Night Supper

In other news, the Leo Night Supper will be held in tandem with the high school basketball game on Friday, January 30th. This upcoming event will be hosted and organized by the Leo Leadership Club. The Leo Club will be producing and serving a baked potato bar for parents, students, and other game attendees. Come support the Spartans and Leos on January 30th!

Group Speech Districts

The Iowa High School Speech Association (IHSSA) district contests will be held on January 24. Students from Exira–Elk Horn–Kimballton (E-EHK) will take part in individual and group speech events. They will compete in areas such as acting, poetry, prose, and public speaking. Students will perform in front of judges who score them on how well they present their pieces.

We had more snow and severely cold temperatures. The festival remained open, with slightly shortened hours over the weekend, and we were surprised with just how many people came out anyway. It was enough business to recoup the costs of going, but it was still overall a disappointing year. The Museum of Danish America also briefly volunteered in the beer tent on Thursday night.

Afterwards, we loaded our 20' box truck back up with stuff and came back to Elk Horn. We want to thank Justin Nelson for helping us get much of the shelving and other supplies put out of the way.

We don’t plan on doing two weekends for this festival again. It’s too much work, and the risk for bad weather the second weekend is always high. Between working both weekends, Julie shipped out over 150 packages as this is also the final stretch for our mail orders as well. Whether or not the festival will continue to hold over two weekends remains to be decided, but we don’t have the capacity to make it work, as tempting as it is.

The rest of December moved rather quickly. We’ve enjoyed the pictures of the mill with the lights on that local residents have been sending us. We’ve also had some surprising traffic in the store. Once Christmas passed, we turned our focus onto inventory and expect to be done with that in early January.

We also wish to note that we did experience a sharp increase in scammer traffic and payment fraud to end the year both in our webstore and via electronic donations. It’s nothing we can’t handle, but is an incredible amount of unnecessary work.

On a more positive note, this was a good year for us and we hope to build on it in 2026, the windmill’s 50th year in Elk Horn. We hope you’ll join us at the Annual Meeting on January 26th so we can kick off our celebrations together.

District contests are important because students who do well can move on to the state competition. After months of practice, E-EHK students show strong speaking skills and teamwork, showing the success of the school’s speech program.

Winter Concert

On December 18, 2025, Mrs. Mikayla Stockhaus held an MS/HS Winter Concert in the EEHK School Cafeteria. The concert consisted of 6–8th grade and 9–12th grade students who sang a mix of winter and Christmas music selections. The concert was very well attended and well-received by parents and community members. The students had a ton of fun performing for our community. Stockhaus was pleased with the results and is looking forward to the concert in the spring.

Prom on April 18th

This year, the class of 2027 chose the theme “Midnight at the Mansion,” which was inspired by The Great Gatsby, for Prom. The dance is being hosted at the newly renovated Hygee Inn, where the atmosphere perfectly represents the Gatsby theme. Going on to After Prom, this year the students are going to Topgolf in Des Moines, where they will have a party room, access to lots of food, and hours of fun playing different golf games.

4-Day School Week

As the first semester of the school year wrapped up, we are officially halfway done with our inaugural year of the 4-day school week. It has seemed to go over well with the students. One student says that they really enjoy having an extra day off from school to be able to work. The greater majority of students have said that they feel less stressed and look forward to the rest of their school career being this way.

Upcoming Track Season

Next, track season is around the corner, and once again Exira-EHK has a very promising girls’ and boys’ track team. The Spartans are looking to build on the success from last year, as both the girls and boys are being coached by Kevin Brown.

WINDMILL
EXPO

JAN 26

AND
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

5:00

Featuring **DANISH MEAL** served by Master Griller Catering & Concessions

Meal is **FREE** for members and \$20 for non-members. Doors open at 5:00, meal served at 5:30. Membership can be renewed at event.

Location: Hygge Inn & Suites
Time: Monday, January 26 @ 5:00pm

Please RSVP by January 16

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MODA UPDATE

Starting January 8, the Museum of Danish America will extend its hours to be open until 8 p.m. every Thursday night. MoDA after Dark will allow working professionals and families to visit the museum during hours that work with their schedules. Look forward to evening programs, events, and relaxed opportunities to explore the museum. See you after dark!

Printed issues available for **FREE** at select locations in Elk Horn and Kimballton

For all inquiries, contact Shaun Sayres at 712-764-7472 or via email at mgr@danishwindmill.com

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ELK HORN LIBRARY LANTERN

Shining the light on what is going on at your library!

We are looking forward to another amazing year in 2026! Our Friends of the Library Book Sale will end January 10th, thank-you to everyone who has stopped in to purchase as well as donate! It has been very successful!

The top winners of our trees decorated as favorite books should stop in to select your library swag prize. The top adult winners are: Best Tree for the Book-Paulette Hansen and ‘The Giving Tree’; Cutest Tree was a three way tie with Donna McClain and ‘A Snowman’s Christmas’, Julie Parker and ‘Gingerbread Friends’ and Nikkie Bricker-‘Pete the Cat loves Christmas’; Most Creative Tree-Anna Thomas ‘Gone with the Wind’! Top Children’s Entries are: Best Tree for the Book-Attalia-‘The Day the Crayons Quit’; Cutest Tree-Emily-‘Christmas Treasure Hunt’ and Most Creative Tree-Lotus ‘Diary of a Wimpy Kid’! Thank-you to all who participated and voted.

We will be having our first Kimballton Kaffee at the Kimballton Townhall on January 14th at 9 am. Hope you can join us!

Local retired teachers, let’s take some time for coffee on January 21st from 2 – 4 pm in honor of International Day of Education. We can always find something to talk about!

NFL Trivia Night at the Norse Horse will be January 22 from 6:30 – 8 pm.Get together a team of two or more and let us know here at the library. Heiko has put together a fun contest!!! In February we will be having our first meeting of the Local History Junkies from 3 – 4 on the 19th. We hope to continue to have meetings to discuss our local history after that, depending on interest. If you have any questions about some local history, stop in to fill out a form and this group will do their best to answer your questions. They are working on collecting information about Rorbeck right now. Here is our January schedule:

January 1 – Library Closed
January 2 – Kids Trivia Contest 2 – 4 pm
January 3 – Adult Board Game Night 6 – 9 pm
January 5 – Snow Animals with Christina Roelofs 1 – 4 pm
January 10 – Teen Fun 6 – 8 pm
January 12 – Scarf Making with MODA 1 – 4 pm
January 14 – Kimballton Kaffe 9 am Kimballton Townhall
January 17 -Young Adult coffee and Silent Book Club 2 – 4 pm
January 19 – Snow Science 1 – 4 pm
January 19 – Friends of the Library meal at 5, Emily Paulsen with Brun Ko Farms to present at 6 pm
January 21 – International Day of Education – Coffee for Retired Teachers 2 – 4 pm
January 22 – NFL Trivia Night at Norse Horse 6:30 – 8 pm
January 23 – ‘Hidden Figures’ by Margot Lee Shetterly Movie 12:30 pm and Book Discussion at 2:00 pm
January 24 – Let Off Some STEAM at the Library 10 – 12 am
January 26 – Sledding Adventure 1 – 4 pm
January 28 – Elk Horn Community Coffee and Craft 9 am

The Lego area is VERY popular, if you have any Legos you would want to donate to us we would really appreciate it, the kids are making some amazing creations.

We are missing some 80’s and earlier EH-K yearbooks, if you have any you would be willing to donate we would love to complete our collection.

If you have any ideas for presenters or activities, let us know!

A BIT OF HISTORY

Warren Watson

In celebration of Salem Lutheran’s 150th anniversary, this segment will feature monthly histories of the church’s inaugural year, 1876.

July 6th: At a special congregation meeting on Feb. 15th, 1882, the issue of the resignation of Pastor H.J. Pedersen was addressed. At the same meeting there was a discussion about plans for constructing a church building. The congregation at that time had pledged \$1600 towards its

IT’S ONLY SCIENCE

Bob Mortenson

Here we are, it is 2026 and our thoughts are about what we could do to make this year better than 2025? Some people consider this to be just an annual custom but do not realize that it is based on a biological fact. And that fact is how the Winter Solstice effects all of us.

In times long past, organized religions considered celebrations or ceremonial rites concerning the Winter Solstice to be pagan practices. However, those who practiced these activities understood the importance of the solstice without actually knowing why that was a fact. If that seems like an oxymoron there are parallels in our modern lives. You probably do not know how the transmission in your vehicle works. But you understand its function. The same would be true with your television. You can make it work, but you actually do not understand fully how it works.

Today’s scientists know that exposure to the strong blue light of dawn resets our circadian rhythms. When the daylight hours are shorter as when we approach the solstice more of us are awake and active during that time. Our subconscious mind has already realized this is happening. By the first of the new year our conscious minds also have noticed the lengthening of the daylight hours. That creates a

YES, THERE IS GOOD NEWS!

Bill Rollins

We were talking, in the previous article, about Peter’s admonition to the gathering crowd on the feast day of Pentecost when they asked “What should we do?” Peter did not hesitate to tell them to repent and be baptized; he wanted them to know the way into the family of God. These things were to be done in the name of Jesus Christ and would allow them purification and the opportunity to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I mentioned last time that God is merciful and always wants to bring His children back to a state of purity. But the question remains, if it is God who brings us to a state of purity, why did John say, “And everyone who thus hopes in Him, purifies himself as He is pure”? Is this God’s doing or is it our task?

Only God can purify, only God can forgive sin, only God can impart holiness on to one of His children. But it is we, who have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling within us, who follow the leading of this Spirit and who feel the hand of God upon us when we sin, that can faithfully and honestly go to God and repent of the sins that entangle our lives.

The reality here is repentance! I find it interesting that John the Baptist, who came to prepare the way for Jesus Christ, is recorded as speaking these words as of first importance in Matthew 3:1-2, “In those days, John the Baptizer came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!’” His message was repentance.

construction. Plans were presented at the March 12th meeting. The building was to be 64’ by 32’; 12’ x 12’ entrance tower and a 14’ x 16’ chancel. The entrance was to open to the west with the chancel in its ‘proper’ position in the east. Rasmus Hansen would donate the lot. New Pastor Kristian Anker believed the building to be far too large. He admitted later that he was badly mistaken. It filled with worshippers Sunday after Sunday through the years. This is truly remarkable for it is estimated that no more than 10% of all Danish immigrants between 1880 and 1890 associated with the Lutheran Church. The low involvement was heavily the result of a lack of Danish Lutheran pastors willing to leave an established parish in Denmark.

July 13th: The newly constructed wooden church would serve the congregation for nearly 70 years. In July 1883 it was decided to add a spire to the west tower. A new bell was purchased and hauled by Rasmus Hansen in his wagon from the Atlantic railroad station. This bell was rung for weddings and church services. In 1887 a bellringer was hired to ring the bell once at sunset and twice before Sunday morning worship services. Also, at the conclusion of a member’s funeral, as the casket was carried to its final

biological response that urges us to consider how we could make positive changes. Not only in our own lives but also in our interactions with others, and even with our environments.

We might call it making new year’s resolutions, but we are actually making promises to ourselves. We are following that biological urge when we make these vows. Behavioral scientists have determined that the more precise we are, the chances of actually accomplishing what we have proposed to ourselves is guaranteed.

Following that advice we should go beyond just saying I’m going to lose weight. Instead, we should plan out how we are going to lose weight. Are we going to join a fitness center and plan to attend at least 3 day a week? Or are we starting a walking program where we will walk at least thirty minutes every week? How will we accomplish this if we are faced with dangerous weather conditions? Perhaps we are going to promise ourselves that we will become more involved in local affairs? Will we be joining some already existing groups, or are we going to run for office? Are there local not-for-profit organizations that are always looking for volunteers? Or does your Church need people to assist in its everyday operations.

It is time to put on your thinking caps and make plans for your success in this NEW YEAR. Together we can make this truly a HAPPY NEW YEAR for all!

One chapter later, in Matthew 4:17 our Savior, as He began His ministry, spoke these words first, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” His message was also repentance. I believe it is an importance concept!

What does it mean to repent? Simply said the word means ‘to turn around’; ‘go the other way’. The world we live in desires to distract us from focusing upon our God. It would have us walk 180 degrees from the way God teaches us. Repent, turn around, and walk toward God. The Apostle John, who started us on this quest, states it this way, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone has a love for the world, the love for the Father is not in him.” John does not here speak of God’s creation but of man’s creation, his society.

James chimes in with a more poignant comment in his letter James 4:4 “Don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God?”

These can be difficult words! But they are also words that can bring peace to our difficult walk in this society. God’s ways are always good; they are always compassionate, kind, gentle and meant to give us rest. As I contemplate the ways of God and desire those ways of God and walk in His ways, I find a great purpose in my relationship with Him – with the Father and with His Son. Now, that is Good News, we can have a true relationship with the creator of all things.

“In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.” Prov. 3:6

resting place, the bell rang once for each year of the departed soul’s life. A schoolhouse for children 10-12 was constructed just north of the church in 1883. Hans Petersen was recruited from Denmark as its sole teacher. About 50-60 children attended the school on and off annually. This was to meet the educational needs of those too young to attend the folk school. This building may still exist just west of the corner of Main and Broadway. In 1888 three “vacation” schools were built in various locations in the area serving about 100 children. These schools were supported by the church. While many Clay Township country school sites were deeded around this time period, it was not until 1894 that the Elk Horn Independent school district was established. Taxes were then levied for monies to pay teacher salaries and for the upkeep of the one-room schoolhouses.

To be continued...