







Forecast SATURDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SUNDAY Slight chance of Mostly cloudy of showers

Low:35

High:50

Low:36 High:51

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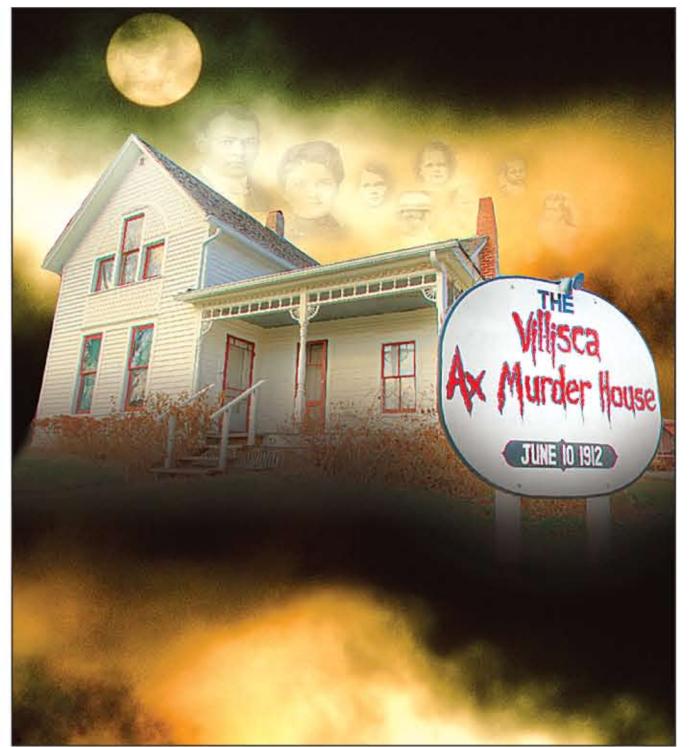


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SARA LEITHEISER

News of the mass murder hit the

But the savage murders and that

How could an entire family be

Not that there was any shortage

nation with a massive media wave,

even knocking the sinking of the

Titanic off the front pages of news-

night of chaos was just the begin-

ning of one of the most intriguing

slaughtered, with minimal signs of

struggle, and no noises that woke

of suspects - there were a surpris-

ing number of them, but only one

man was ever brought to trial, and

scene was hopelessly spoiled by crowds who tramped through the

house. There was even a report that

a piece of Josiah's skull was taken

by one of townsfolk as a souvenir.

Horton, can perhaps be excused for

law enforcement in major cities a

The town's peace officer, Hank

It didn't help that the crime

papers across the United States.

and darkest days in U.S. history.

nearby neighbors?

he was acquitted.

few years earlier.

ONE OF THE WORST MASS MURDERS IN U.S. HISTORY occurred at this house in a small town in Iowa.

TIE MACUSI OF THE WORST

Paranormal group to tackle house with dark history

BY BRIAN WIERIMA

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It's a case that still shocks people almost 99 years later, and makes the infamous Lizzy Borden ax murders look like child's play.

What has come to be known as the Villisca Axe Murder House is the site of one of the most heinous crimes one could perpetrate - and it's the next destination for the Midwest Paranormal Files research team Sunday, April 10.

A crew of six will leave Detroit Lakes and travel eight hours south to Villisca, Iowa, to spend the night in what is one of the most infamous murder houses in America.

A live webcast is planned during the investigation on the dlonline.com website, starting at 7

How could an entire family be

slaughtered, with minimal signs

of struggle, and no noises that

woke nearby neighbors?

"Comforts of home" are three

The case horrified people across

A typical early morning in the

Moore household was filled with

the sounds typical of a busy family

of six early in the last century.

Chores were started and the four

children of Josiah and Sarah

Moore were usually up and busy be-

words that do not describe the little

three-bedroom house on a quiet

the nation and still perplexes the

most seasoned crime solvers.

p.m. Sunday.

street in Villisca.

It's too quiet



ONLINE **EXTRA**

For the full story and more photos, check out dl-online.com

Our web site will also feature a live streaming of the upcoming paranormal investigation at the Villisca ax murder house.

fore the sun rose.

That's why a neighbor thought the house was strangely quiet on the morning of June 10, 1912.

In fact, it was much too quiet, as neighbor Mary Peckham realized.

Peckham started to hang her laundry at 5 a.m. and by 7 a.m., she still had seen no signs of any movement coming from the Moores'.

After knocking on the door and receiving no response, she telephoned Josiah's brother, Ross Moore.

What he found was the end of innocence in Villisca.

Lying in their beds were two adults and six children, all murdered with the same ax.

The victims were Josiah Moore, 43, and his wife, Sarah Montgomery Moore, 39 - found in

their upstairs bedroom. Their four children were in the

other upstairs bedroom. The ax Two other children, family

ended the lives of Herman, 11, Katherine, 9, Boyd, 7, and Paul, 5.

friends who had been staying the night, were found in a downstairs

bedroom - Lena Stillinger, 12, and her sister Ina, 8.

It was theorized by investigators

MURDERS to page 7A ➤

not better controlling the crime scene: The use of fingerprint identification had only come into use by

But by the time M.W. Mc-Claughry made it to Villisca as a fingerprint expert, the house was so badly contaminated, no useful fingerprints were lifted.

The murders, scene and impending investigation

What Ross Moore witnessed inside his brother's house was gruesome indeed.

But the investigation after the murders were committed was just as gruesome.

at the time that the intruder broke

TIME TO DANCE 'THE ROBOT'

DL Robotics team is best in state

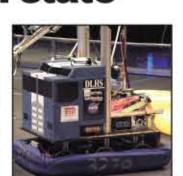
BY PAULA QUAM

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They have only been in existence for two years, but the Detroit Lakes High School Robotics team, known as QWERTY Team 3278, has already added a state championship to its

"I don't think any of us could breath for like 30 minutes," said senior and QWERTY captain Patrick Link of winning the title,

ROBOTICS to page 11A ➤



THIS ROBOT was built by Detroit Lakes High School students, who won the state championship this year and will advance to nationals.

CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION

Business leaders clash over parking

BY PIPPI MAYFIELD pmayfield@dlnewspapers.com

When the Downtown Crossing developers stood and talked about their project, reassuring the downtown Detroit Lakes business community they want to bring more success to town, the audience seemed happy. But when discussion turned to paying for the parking assessment, the mood took a downward

Monday afternoon, downtown business owners filled the Detroit Lakes City Hall to hear Jim Buus and Jeff Schlossman discuss their upcoming project, and to be told they will still be paying an assessment for the parking lot. How much that assessment is, though, could vary slightly.

The project

"We're willing to take the risk and we're hoping you'll take the risk with us," Schlossman said of the Downtown Crossing project.

Buus said the project started about three years ago, a rather small project with 30,000 square feet of

PARKING to page 7A >

NO MORE 'THUFFERING THUCATASH'

Helping kids with speech, language

BY PIPPI MAYFIELD

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One thing teachers Rhonda Bakke and Terese LaDue can say for sure is there is variety in their line of work.

The two women work with speech and language development for ages birth to 7 years in the Detroit Lakes School District.

They see a variety of kids, in a variety of settings, a variety of times, making a variety of sounds while playing a variety of

games to keep the kids interested.

"We play games with re-inforcers," LaDue said with a laugh, "Our jobs are really fun. Most of the time." Bakke and LaDue work

with children on articulation, fluency, or stuttering, and voice, for instance if it's hoarse or raspy.

"Where your tongue needs to be, how your lips need to be," LaDue said of making certain sounds.

KIDS to page 11A ➤

THROUGH 'NETS FOR LIFE' FUNDRAISER

DL church helps save African kids

BY VICKI GERDES

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Typically, the Christian practice of observing the Lenten season involves giving up a treasured luxury such as a favorite food for the 40 days leading up to Easter Sunday. But the original concept

of Lent had a deeper meaning... it was a period of self examination, and an opportunity for long-standing Christians to review their lives and renew their commitment to their beliefs.

At St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Detroit Lakes, the congregation has embraced the spirit of that original concept by embarking on a new mission project that officially launched on Ash Wednesday, March 9 - also known as the first day of Lent.

That mission project, part of a nationwide campaign known as "Nets for Life," involves raising funds for the purchase of

NETS to page 11A ➤

➤ L&M Fleet Supply: page 5A

➤ Alcohol Awareness Week: page 9A

> DLCCC - See what's showing: pages 11A & 6B

➤ Nereson - Spring Sizzler: page 12A

➤ Burger King: Insert

■ Ax murder scene was trampled by crowd; a surprising number of suspects, but no convictions

> MURDERS from page 1A

into the Moore home while the family was at an evening church program. They didn't get home until 9:30 or 10 p.m.

The murderer apparently waited in either a bedroom closet, where a heel mark and other evidence was found, or the where cigarette butts had been tossed.

Horton, the village police officer, found the blood-stained ax upon entering the dark house. All the shades were drawn and the doors were all locked from the inside.

Another odd note was that all the mirrors in the house were draped over with blankets.

It was determined that all the victims were bludgeoned with the one ax that was recovered inside the house — and had apparently been grabbed from the barn area outside.

The Stillinger girls were hit repeatedly with the ax in the head. Both had items of clothing put over their faces, with a Bible laid at the foot of their bed. The elder Stillinger girl looked to have put up a struggle — the only victim to do so that evening.

Upstairs, Josiah suffered the most damage, in what resembled rage from the assailant. Sarah was next to her husband, with similar hacking wounds to the head. It appeared one of

Sarah's blood-filled shoes, which was lying on her side of the bed, was placed there intentionally.

In the other upstairs bedroom lay the rest of the Moore children.

One of the sons had







THE MAIN SUSPECTS IN THE AX MURDERS are, from left, suspected hit man William Mansfield, suspected serial killer Henry Moore, and confessed killer Lynn Kelly.

wounds to the head, along with a gauze undershirt over the open wound. Not far from him, the little girl lay, with a sheet pulled over her head.

On the single bed next to the pair were the two murdered boys, with similar ax wounds to the head

The coroner estimated that well over 150 swings causing were taken, gouges in the ceilings in two of the rooms caused by the ax during the upswing, which still remain

It was also estimated, the murders took place between midnight and 5 a.m.

There were plenty of oddities left by the killer, including candy left on a table near one of the kid's beds, a four-pound slab of bacon wrapped in cloth, and an untouched plate of food in the house.

By midday of June 10, the National Guard had been called in for crowd control and the bodies were not removed from the house until midnight.

There was a \$3,500 reward offered up by the citizens of Villisca (\$78,000 in today's dollars) which eventually went to pay for the headstones of the Moore family.

The investigation led to many suspects detained, but none ever convicted.

Suspects gathered up, then let go

The Villisca murders were not an isolated incident. Strangely enough, there was something of an ax-murder epidemic in

on successive nights locked.

Colorado ax murders, the William Dawson family of three was murdered with an ax in Monmouth, Ill. Another family was murdered after that, and on June 5, just one week before Villisca, another family was axed to death. A man named Henry

Moore (no relation to

many as 23 murders - but not necessarily the Villisca murders.

Only one man was brought to trial for the Villisca murders and that was Rev. Lynn George J. Kelly, who was Methodist minister.

Kelly confessed to the murders in 1917, but recanted later. The reverend was known to be insane, and there wasn't any physical evidence linking him to the murders, thus he was freed after a hung jury occurred.

Plenty of others were implicated in the mur-Jones, who was Josiah

Jones hired a hitman, allegedly a man named William Mansfield, who

proved Mansfield was in Illinois at the time of the Moore murders, and he

The case went cold and even today plenty of theories abound, but nobody is ever likely to know for sure who swung the bloody ax that night.

Left behind?

With the horrific violence that took place in the Moore house, could there still be remnants left over from 1912?

dents of the house had mixed emotions about it.

and his wife and three daughters moved into the house, according to current owner Darwin Linn.

John moved out of the house and lived in the barn for the next 12 and a half years," Linn said. The house stayed in the

John's granddaughter and her husband, John Figgins, moved in.

again. Linn said he was never

"It took about three years of me working in the house to let it sink in,'

Nationally broadcast as "Ghost Adventures" of the Travel Channel, "My Ghost Story," "Ghost Lab"

experience reported in the

Moore house came in the early 1930s, by renters Homer and Bonnie Ritner.

Bonnie awoke every night to see a man holding an ax at the foot of their bed. Eventually, Homer heard footsteps coming up the stairs, and the pair promptly moved out.

Plenty of photos and electronic voice phenomena evidence has been captured by many paranormal groups over the years and first-hand accounts are published at www.villiscaiowa.com.

Most leave with the distinct impression they were not alone on their overnight stay inside the Moore house.

ing the house somewhere between 1963 and 1971, moved out abruptly after several occurrences happened to the two daughters and the father. The two sisters kept

hearing kids sobbing and crying, while finding their dresser doors open and clothes strewn about. The final straw came

one night when the father was sharpening his pocket knife and it flew out of his hands and ended up cutting him. The family moved out the next day.

Linn also received an email from an old resident of Villisca, stating, "I always thought there was something about that house. My horse always ran past it. She had good sense. I always liked that horse.

No matter whether the house on lot 310 in the quiet town of Villisca, Iowa, has eternal guests or not - the horror and blood spilled there on June 10, 1912, left a stain that won't go away.

Downtown DL business community meets with developers, talks parking

> PARKING from page 1A

land and a 24,000-squarefoot building. The challenge for the developers was to stay within the RDG consulting plan and make the building look more like the downtown buildings (multi-level) and not a strip

did that,' I would hope."

Schlossman said an ex-

"It's tough to fit it in

When asked why De-

ample of what a similar

mall looks like is the South

(the site), but I think we did

a good job," he said of the

troit Lakes, Buus said in

2007, there was a "con-

verging points of interest'

from the developers. Buus

has built a lake home on

Cotton Lake, Schlossman

and his wife own a ranch

in the Toad Lake area, and

Brent Kuehne is a Detroit

Lakes native and is build-

ing a house on Rose Lake

area, Buus said they were

excited to do a project in

the developers can't say

who the interested busi-

nesses are, but none are of-

this is all retail and restau-

rants," he said. There may

also be some service

providers, like a hair salon,

leases at this point, but

they have 75 percent of the

building filled via letters of

held to the fire," Buus said

that yes, one business on

Washington Avenue had

been contacted about mov-

ing to the new mall build-

ing, but that a junior asso-

ciate had been making

calls and it was a mistake.

He added that it was an iso-

lated incident and "it won't

businesses calling with an

When they have had

happen again."

They have no signed

After having their "feet

"Our intent is basically

Since they all live in the

At this point, he said

this year.

Detroit Lakes.

fice space renters.

for instance.

intent.

Detroit Lakes project.

Creek mall in Fargo.

Downtown Crossing developer Jim Buus

interest in the new building, Buus said they can actually be a great help to the city and downtown businesses.

For example, when the Mac's building still stood and Schlossman and Buus' company, Goldmark. owned it, the owner of the

Wadena Ben Franklin con-

tacted them about the

turned out not the right fit.

Buus said they were able to

say that there was other

real estate available in De-

troit Lakes that would be a

better fit. Ben Franklin is

now located in the Wash-

always been to bring new

businesses to town. But,

that's not to say they would

turn down someone from

town that wants to relo-

cate to the Downtown

ing faces Highway 10 be-

cause not only is it the

way the RDG plan showed,

but it makes sense with the thousands and thou-

sands of vehicles that drive

along Highway 10 each day. "That's the strength of the site," he said of the

"I hope the parking lot stays full all the time.

If all goes according to

"Five years from now,

"I think it's going to be

plan, construction would

began in early summer

and be completed by the

everyone is going to say

'we're glad we did that,' I

would hope," Buus said.

a positive thing," Schloss-

That's our goal," Schloss-

The design of the build-

Crossing mall.

traffic.

man added.

end of the year.

man said.

Buus said the goal has

ington Square Mall.

While the building

Mac's building.

a couple years. "Five years from now, everyone Business owner Dennis is going to say 'we're glad we Schurman said he'd rather have the parking spaces than the green-

ery, though. Pratt said about \$300,000 would be saved by not doing the alley, curb and trees with the plan. He agreed that the alley construction could be put off until September to accom-

modate the summer influx. "Unless something makes this project golden, I'm not in favor of this project," Schurman said. City Administrator Bob

Lousieau said the city is splitting the cost of the lot as fairly as possible, taking money from the parking assessment, food and beverage tax, city share, and tax increment financing.

Assessments on the downtown parking district can be spread out for a 20year period, and Louiseau

said that while the assessments could possibly be put off a year or two, but they need to be paid at some point.

It was asked if the development could go forward even if the parking lot isn't reconstructed. Pratt said yes, it could, but when the life of the parking lot is through, it will end up costing more to reconstruct it in a few

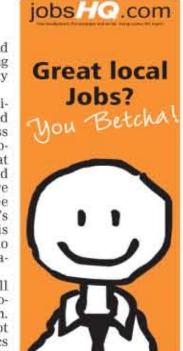
Business owner Mark Hagen said people have been arguing that the development will be like an island of its own by facing Highway 10, but giving them a new development on an old parking lot, would actually make the development look like an island.

"It would look like you remodeled half the house and are leaving half to leak water," he said.

Anita Price of Price's Fine Jewelry said the controversy over the development and the parking as-

Take it for a Spin!

tion." The city council will hold a special meeting today (Wednesday) at 5 p.m. to vote on whether or not to call for plans and specs



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The parking Buus said the developers have always been open

Tours Inc.

to discussion regarding the parking lot because it's not theirs; it's city

owned. The existing lot behind

America at that time.

In Colorado, the Burnham and Wayne families were slaughtered by axes and the mirrors in those houses were covered up, like in the Moore house, and all the doors were

Two weeks after the

Josiah) was suspected of being a serial ax murderer in the Midwest. He was believed responsible for as

Norby's provides 203

spaces. With the new de-

velopment, there will be

130 spaces along Veterans

Memorial Parkway and

163 in the lot for a total of

said the islands with trees

planted in them will con-

tain an irrigated watering

system so the trees are kept up and not dead in

City Engineer Jon Pratt

ders, including Frank Moore's business rival and a former state senator. One theory is that

oddly enough was also suspected of murdering his own family with an ax two years later, and was seen boarding a train the morning after the Villisca murders. But payroll records

was released.

Over the years, resi-In 1915, John Geesman 'After the first night,

A family who was rent-Geesman family, with

It took only two nights before Figgins left, never to sleep in the house

a believer in the paranormal, but working in the Moore house changed his mind.

Linn chuckled. "I never believed in such a thing, but when the stools were moving by themselves, it kind of sunk in."

paranormal shows such and CBS' "Scariest Places on Earth" have featured the Villisca Axe Murder House. The first paranormal

sessments has actually had one silver lining, bringing the business community

together. 'We're for it as a business area," she said, added that it's the city's process that's causing the problems. The meetings that were held this week and last week, "should have been held two to three years ago. I think that's where the frustration is coming from. We've got to have that communica-

for the project.

