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# Austin Daily Herald

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Thursday, June 30, 2016



**Sports:**  
 16U  
 softball  
 sweets  
 Rochester,  
 Page 8

## County bracing for hefty mental health bill after shift

By Jason Schoonover  
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A 2015 shift has cost Mower County Health and Human Services an additional \$135,000 for a single mental health placement since January.

Health and Human Services officials updated the county board earlier this week on the issue, as the office needs to adjust its budget for the unex-



**“That \$135,000 for one person out of the blue is costing you almost two-thirds of a percent property tax increase.”**

— Craig Oscarson  
 County Coordinator

pected expense.

“That \$135,000 for one person out of the blue is costing you almost two-thirds of a percent property tax in-

crease,” County Coordinator Craig Oscarson said.

The state changed a formula for paying for mental health placements at re-

gional treatment centers in places like Anoka and St. Peter.

The county pays nothing for the first 30 days and 20

percent for the time over 31 days if the placement is deemed clinically appropriate. However, the county now pays 100 percent for each day a client spends after he or she is deemed appropriate to be discharged, according to Health and Human Services Director Lisa Kocer.

However, that discharge doesn't always mean an individual can go home. Kocer

said people are discharged from the Anoka or St. Peter facilities once the placement isn't deemed medically necessary, but that often just means finding another placement. But lining up another facility often proves hard to line up and secure.

“It's difficult to find placement for folks,” Kocer said.

See **BILL**, Page 6

## Medical marijuana activist in custody for marijuana possession

By Jordan Gerard  
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An outspoken medical marijuana advocate who previously organized Austin's Hemp Fest has been arrested and charged after a large amount of marijuana was found at her residence in rural Austin.

Deanna Jean Ryther, 41, of Austin is charged with felony fifth-degree drug possession and being a fugitive from justice from another state. She is being held on possible charges of felony first-degree tampering with a witness.



Ryther

According to Mower County Sheriff Terese Amazi, Ryther was issued a court order from Boulder, Colorado, on May 20 to turn over any evidence she claimed she had on Facebook pertaining to a sexual assault conviction on her father from 2006.

She was also ordered to cease and desist harassing the victim of that assault. It was not stopped and an arrest warrant was issued.

On June 23, deputies of the Mower County Sheriff's Office executed a search warrant and felony arrest warrant from Colorado for Ryther, according to court records.

See **RYTHER**, Page 6

## Working with nature



Rachel Danielson, 10, waters her milkweed plant during one of Project E3's summer sessions at I.J. Holton Intermediate School Wednesday morning. Photos by Alex Smith/alex.smith@austindailyherald.com

## E3 studies habitats as part of summer program

By Ashley Harrington  
 newsroom@austindailyherald.com

David Wolff is greeted with an empty classroom Wednesday morning as he starts another day of the Project E3 program at I.J. Holton Intermediate School. While it may seem strange for other summer programs, Wolff embraces the benefits of learning outdoors.

“There shouldn't be four

walls to our classrooms, we should be outside,” Wolff said.

“We team-teach with nature,” he added.

Wolff is the coordinator and lead teacher of Project E3, an environmental and engineering program for students entering grades fourth through sixth. The program strives to promote a hands-on learning



Students make bird feeders.

experience for students who are eager to discover.

Their focus is not only to improve quality of life, but also take a look at how humans impact habitats and animals. The students meet for twenty days in the summer as well as one Saturday a month from November until June.

See **E3**, Page 9

## Suburban MN conflicted on guns as national debate roars again

By Brian Bakst  
 MPR News/90.1

Sandy Bartholomew began down the path of buying a gun after seeing a Facebook post with her grandson at a shooting range and deciding it

would be fun to join him in target shooting. But in light of recent events, she says it would offer personal security, too.

“Never in a million years when I walked in here did I think I was going to go as far

as getting a permit to carry,” she said. “But the more you think about it, the more you see on the news, it might be a good thing for me to do.”

But her views on vetting gun buyers might seem surprising: “I just

think we need stricter gun laws in so many ways. I wouldn't mind waiting three months if that's what it took. Or six months.”

Bartholomew, a retired mortgage underwriter, was shopping this week at

a gun store in Osseo, Minn., a northeast suburb in the state's 3rd congressional district.

The district could be home to one of the nation's most expensive and competitive races as U.S. Rep.

Erik Paulsen tries to hold off Democratic challenger Terri Bonoff, a state senator. Already, the gun issue is creeping into the political conversation.

See **GUNS**, Page 6

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Christ is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

~ Hebrews 7:25 ~

## Take in a weekend of fun and freedom

Thousands of people are expected to participate in Austin's various Freedom Fest events. With meals, races, fishing and Fourth of July mainstays, there should be something for everyone.

- 1. Austin Community Jazz Band**  
 6:30 p.m. Friday Free Peace Garden concert at Hormel Historic Home. The Austin Community Jazz Band will hold one of its several Fourth of July weekend shows at the Hormel Historic Home Peace Garden. Check out the Freedom Fest schedule for a listing of other performances.

- 2. Masonic pancake feed**  
 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday at the Austin Masonic Lodge, 303A N. Main St. The Austin Masons host an all you can eat

## Best Bets

pancake breakfast for \$5 per person. Enjoy pancakes, sausage, orange juice, milk and coffee.

- 3. Spam Town Disc Golf Tournament**  
 9 a.m. Saturday at Todd Park. Sign up at the Izaak Walton Cabin. Singles will play two rounds. For more information, call Deb or Greg Huckaby at 507-433-1611.

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