



■ Inside:

- 3 - Dave Zika
- 3 - Miss Sleigh and Cutter
- 4 - Obituaries
- 5 - Local Government
- 6 - Charm, Honor Roll
- 8-9 - Sports
- 10 - 33,000 times
- 11 - Classifieds
- 12 - Carnival, play



LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY
No. 5 Vol. III \$2 Office at 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca Friday, February 2, 2024



Nelson honored

Waseca High School talent show February 5 at 7 p.m.

Waseca High School's Annual Talent Show will take place on Monday, February 5 at 7 p.m. in the PAC. Students from grades 9-12 will be showing off their talents!

Community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. This event is hosted by the High School Student Council as a part of this year's SNOW WEEK (running February 5 - 9). We are asking for free will donations to help cover the cost of our snow week activities (suggested donation is \$5).

Exchange Club fundraiser at Pizza Ranch Feb. 5, 11 a.m.

Exchange Club members will be busing tables and assisting customers at the Waseca Pizza Ranch during its hours of operation on Monday, Feb. 5. Funds raised will be used by the organization to promote its community, youth leadership and Americanism programs. Serving times are 11 a.m. to 1:30 and from 5 to 8 p.m.

SWCD Board Meeting 6:30 p.m. Feb. 8

The Soil and Water Conservation District board of supervisors will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, at the SWCD office, 300 North State Street, Waseca, Door 4. For more information, call the office at (507) 835-0607.

Waseca Junior and Senior high bands performing Feb. 10

Waseca Jr/Sr High Jazz Bands are performing at Farmamerica Saturday, Feb. 10 from 7-9pm. Swing dance lessons will be provided from 7-7:30, with open dancing from 7:30-9. Dance lessons are free with admission. Admission is \$7 adults/\$4 students. Age 5 and under is free. Refreshments available for purchase.

Swing Dance Concert at Farmamerica 7 to 9 p.m. February 10

Swing dance music by the Waseca Jazz Band will be accompanied by dance lessons and dancing at Farmamerica. Admission is \$7. Tickets available at Waseca Music and Four Seasons. More information at Farmamerica.org

Benefit for Mike Coy, 2 to 6 p.m. Feb. 17

A benefit for Mike Coy, who has been diagnosed with cancer of the liver, will be at the Waseca American Legion hall from 2 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 17. Silent auction, music and entertainment will be featured.

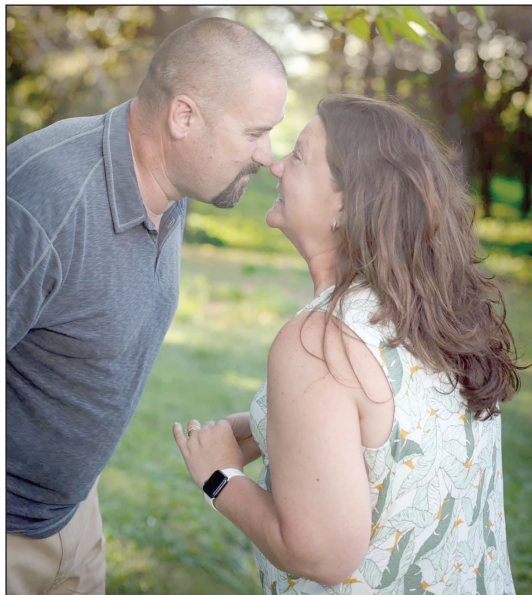
Team Academy "Books and Blankets" 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Feb. 22

Families are invited to read books and make blankets for Waseca's Bethlehem Inn charity. Families need not have a student at Team Academy. Call the school for more information: (507) 833-8326.

A word from The Word

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

John 16:33



Brent and Liane Possin

Tragic loss, local farmer dies in Mexico

Area farmer and businessman Brent Possin, 50, died on Saturday, January 27, during a vacation trip to Cancun. He, his wife Lianne, local farmer Tyler Huber and others were at breakfast together at their resort on Friday when Brent suddenly collapsed. Friends and bystanders performed cardiopulmonary respiration (CPR), starting his heart a number of times while awaiting the arrival of an ambulance from the nearest hospital, which was 40 minutes away.

According to information posted on a Go

Fund Me page, after arriving at the hospital, those with Brent were informed he would be given no care until the estimated cost of his treatment was paid in advance. Total expenses exceeded \$100,000.

The Go Fund Me page was started by Huber, with the intent that funds raised would be used to help meet medical costs and transport Brent home. As of Monday evening, nearly 400 donations had been received, showing about \$54,000 raised toward a goal of \$100,000.



Brent Possin

Brent is described by numerous people as an "outgoing, lovable person always willing to lend a helping hand." Huber stated that "He

Possin continued on 3

Snow Week



GIRLS - Candidates for Waseca Snow Week queen from left: Quinn Dahle, Tegan Flatau, Emma Keith, Tricia Cox, Mallory Bruhn, and Ali Mumme.

Snow week

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher

It's snow week at Waseca High School from Feb. 2-9. Coronation and a pepfest will be on Thursday Feb. 8, at 9:35 a.m., in the Waseca Performing Arts Center (PAC), followed by pictures. A semi-formal snow dance for students will cap off Thursday evening from 8 to 10:30 p.m. in the high school commons.

Candidates for queen are: Quinn Dahle, daughter of Tim and Katie Dahle; Tegan Flatau daughter of Brady and Stephanie Flatau; Emma Keith daughter of Joe Keith and Muriel Keith; Tricia Cox daughter of



BOYS - Candidates for Waseca Snow Week king, from left: Noah Thompson, Zach Hulscher, Nate Engel-Mueller, Preston Miller, Ethan Stenzel, and Jacob Thompson.

Eric Cox and Cori Fostveit Cox; Mallory Bruhn daughter of Ryan and Stacie Bruhn; Ali Mumme daughter of Matthew and Michele Mumme. For king: Noah Thompson, son of Isaac and Jodie Thompson; Zach Hulscher son of Jay and Stephanie Hulscher; Nate Engel-Mueller son of

Jesse Mueller and Jessica Engel; Preston Miller son of Jeremiah and Jaala Miller; Ethan Stenzel son of Jason and Lisa Stenzel; Jacob Thompson son of Isaac and Jodie Thompson.

The week is kicked off by a third annual talent show on Monday at 7

p.m. at the Waseca PAC. Dress up days are scheduled for students throughout the week beginning with Monday: "Athlete vs Mathlete," followed by, "Tourist Day,"

Snow continued on 10

Medallion found
Only two clues needed to locate treasure
Hasselquist family first time medallion hunters

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

"I was just thinking we should stop and come back another day, and then I saw it," describes lifelong area resident Danielle Hasselquist. She and her four children had been searching for about half an hour in Sportsman Park when Danielle spotted something out of place among the bark of a tree.

Hasselquist says she had never before searched for the medallion, but found her interest piqued when she saw the first, then second set of clues published on Facebook. Considering the clues that said the medallion was "beyond the city limits by only a few feet," and then advised "Think north, find a spot and go forth," she decided she and her children would head to Sportsman Park, just to the south of the golf course clubhouse along the

Clear Lake shoreline.

Her group was not the only one thinking along those lines. Hasselquist remembers that, as she and her children arrived, a father and daughter were searching the park as well. In fact, their footprints peppered the snow fairly close to the tree which hid the medallion. When those two finished and left, Hasselquist decided to search the same area, the trees to the west of the park's parking lot near the beached docks.

The medallion was in a small, wrapped package about 5 feet above the ground, tucked into a natural indentation of the tree, then covered over with a piece of bark. Surprised and elated to realize she had the prize in her hand, she called out "I found it" and waved the packet in the air for her children to see.

Twelve-year-old Madison says she



Lifelong Waseca resident Danielle Hasselquist and her children Slader, 1, Soren, 8, Ezra, 9, and Madison Frederick, 12, found the Sleigh and Cutter medallion on their first trip to Sportsman Park along Clear Lake's north shore the afternoon of Wednesday, Jan. 24.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

can still barely believe they found the medallion and earned the prize,

Medallion continued on 3

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Absentee ballot committee considered

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

The January 16 Waseca County Board meeting began with a moment of silence in memory of county highway department worker Brian Sommers, who died in a workplace accident on January 9. County public works director Jim Kollar commented that Sommers will be "deeply missed and never forgotten" thanks to his commitment and enthusiasm toward his job and his co-workers.

County business carried out during the meeting included a hearing to allow for public comment regarding the county's 2024 fee schedule, a list of more than 300 services or permits the county provides. No public comment was provided; the updated schedule was approved. According to observations shared by county administrator Michael Johnson during the meeting, the fee schedule included only a few changes from in the past, leaving it "substantially the same" as before.

Tammy Spooner, the county's director of property and election services, asked commissioners to authorize forming an "absentee ballot review committee" as required by state law. The committee's job will be to receive and evaluate ballots sent in by voters who choose not to go to the polls in person. Statute requires the committee to confirm, among other things, whether the vote has come from a registered voter and that the individual submits only one vote. Depending on the number of votes received, such committees are likely to have between 6 and 12 members, Spooner told the Pioneer later.

Commissioner DeAnne Malterer made reference to recent national elections, then commended Spooner and her staff for ensuring members of the public can feel confident their votes are being handled in a "fair, free, transparent" way.

There will be five elections within the county this year: a Feb. 13 special election to fill the vacant commissioner district 3 seat; the March 5 presidential nomination primary; the March 12 township elections; the August 13 primary election and the November 5 general election. Her office will be in charge of ensuring election judges are properly trained, along with many other related tasks.

County continued on 5



Compostings

by Al Batt

Jakes and Toms all over the road

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

What's the name of that guy who was a mnemonist whose elephantine ability to remember large amounts of information caused him to be called the "Yoda of Memory Training," who coauthored "The Memory Book" with the basketball star Jerry Lucas and performed incredible memory demonstrations on the "Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson?

Harry Lorayne.
That's it! I can never remember his name.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. How old were the big kids when you were growing up? I remember the big kids were quick to banish those strings (phloem bundles) that emerge when peeling a banana. Those strands are perfectly edible and surprisingly nutritious, as they're packed full of potassium, fiber, vitamin A and vitamin B6. That shows us how little those big kids knew.

SOON TO BE THE SUBJECT OF A KEN BURNS DOCUMENTARY

It was warm enough I was wearing a shacket. I waved at every driver I met. I didn't do the customary raised forefinger wave; I let them have a full four-finger acknowledgment, with only the thumb maintaining a grip on the steering wheel. Fellow lovers of the open road waved back. I pretended I was wearing a badge designating me as the County Ambassador of the Heraldng Congenial Gesture. It was a large badge. It's a volunteer position unless a grant can be found. My father thought waving demonstrated common decency.

I'VE LEARNED

I was shocked to learn that I'm a terrible electrician.

Laughter is the best medicine unless you have diarrhea.

It's hard to find a chew toy for a chicken.

The perfect name for a snowman this winter is Meltin' John.

NATURE NOTES

I watched a fox squirrel carrying an ear of corn excavated from the snow in the middle of what had been a large cornfield. There were no trees and only a few utility poles where a hunting hawk might perch. Not much later, I spotted a red fox carrying what appeared to be a cottontail rabbit. Red and gray

foxes are similar in appearance. Gray foxes have black-tipped tails and red fox tails are tipped in white. The red fox is an opportunist that eats many other things besides rabbits: rats, mice, ground squirrels, birds, snakes, fish, insects, turtles, frogs, berries, fruits, nuts and seeds. Red foxes hunt primarily at night and hide uneaten food under litter or bury it to be eaten later.

I slowed to a crawl as 16 wild turkeys walked and flew in front of my car. They traveled across four lanes of traffic. In the fall, turkeys segregate into groups—young males (jakes) in one group, adult males (toms) in another and females in a third. Jake groups tend to hang out close to hen flocks. It seems I see more squabbles among the jakes than with the toms or hens. The young birds are trying to find their places in the pecking order. The groups dissolve in the spring. Turkeys survive the winter by feeding on mosses, buds, seeds, fern spores, acorns, scattered corn left after the harvest, and seeds found beneath birdfeeders and in manure piles. Other than an adequate supply of food, they need a safe place to roost in the winter. They try to roost in trees offering thermal protection—pine or oak trees. If they have fed well, they can take the bitter cold. They struggle in deep, powdery snow, which makes foraging for food and escaping predators challenging. They can scratch through 6 inches of fluffy snow and a foot of packed snow. When the ground is covered with powdery snow, flocks congregate in stands of pine and other softwoods, trees that hold snow in the canopy, leaving less on the ground for the turkeys to contend with.

The snood is the fleshy flap of skin that hangs off a turkey's beak. The wattle is a fleshy flap of skin under the turkey's chin. Some people call it a dewlap. A male turkey has a beard that hangs from its chest. It's made of coarse, rough feathers. A beard is 3-4 inches long on a young male and can grow to 10 inches or longer on a turkey at least 3 years old. A small percentage (10-20%) of female turkeys have beards. Male turkeys have sharp spurs on the back of their legs that they use when fighting with other turkeys. Caruncles are bumpy patches on a turkey's neck. The caruncles may play a role in attracting a mate.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Provide an upgrade to someone's day. Be kind.

Deeply meaningful comments

I would like to thank the many folks who approach me and compliment my work as a writer. The most common phrasing is, "You do such a good job."

Those statements of gratitude are deeply meaningful to me and trust me, I take them to heart.

I want you to know, however, that I am my own worst critic. It's part and parcel of writing for a newspaper that one has to keep "cranking out" the stories. Interviews and preliminary work for the next week's paper begin well before the current edition is put to bed. Almost every time I go back over my work, I find something I wish I had changed or fixed.

Along the same lines, I have deep respect for the people who are willing



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

to share their experiences, stories and perspectives. I see it as an obligation to do the best I can to condense their personality, character and accomplishments down to the written word. It is a genuine privilege to be entrusted with the task, and so I want to respond appropriately.

So, despite my perfectionistic cyn-

icism, I have become rather excited about a recent development. The Minnesota Newspaper Association is having its annual convention this weekend; part of the event is announcing the winners of the "Better Newspaper" contest.

Eli and I are each up for three awards based on work we produced as individuals. The Pioneer publica-

tion is also in the running for overall excellence and for its sports coverage. Eli, his parents, and I are scheduled to attend the awards banquet Thursday evening.

I have to say, the fact that the selection process is judged by a group of our peers adds extra meaning to the award. Publications from all over the state were invited to submit entries. The Pioneer's work was categorized along with other "non-daily" newspapers with roughly the same number of subscribers.

It will be fun to meet and talk with other news writers whose daily experiences are similar to ours. I am filled with anticipation, and can't wait to tell you next week how it all turned out.

Anxiety, relationships and adulating

Well, it's been quite a week in Amelia's world. Settle in, grab your cup of dark coffee (because that's what you all drink in my mind), and let me tell you all about it.

I write my columns on Tuesdays, since the newspaper gets sent in for publishing on Wednesday. So while you all read this on Friday or Saturday, there's much that happens in between the writing and the reading. Last Wednesday was a doozie.

While Wednesdays are my long days, with three classes, work meetings, and editing for the Daily, this Wednesday was even more stressful than usual.

After my typical work meeting and editing, I had another meeting with the editors to talk about the story I had been working on concerning suicides on the Washington Avenue Bridge. With such a sensitive topic, we had many discussions to make sure everything was done correctly, ethically, and with the safety of our readers in mind. Last Wednesday's meeting was our last one to discuss the story, and it has since finally been published.

The meeting was fine and not necessarily the part of the day that made it so stressful, though. Right as I left work, I headed to my boyfriend's house to, sadly, break up with him. There was nothing that happened to provoke it, I just wasn't feeling great



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

about the relationship and knew it would be better if we decided to go our separate ways. He's a great guy, though, and made breaking up with him surprisingly easy, as he was very mature about it (unlike my previous ex, who cried and spent an hour trying to dissuade me from breaking up with him). So I had to deal with that after my long day. My roommate and I went to get ice cream later; that milkshake really hit the spot.

Thursday was again a long day, which I guess I shouldn't necessarily complain about considering many people have long days every day. Bear with me, though.

After class, the other editor-in-chief candidates for the Daily and I were invited to attend the Daily's board meeting, which happened at the Star Tribune office in Minneapolis. We all went, listening as board members discussed sales and our budget; there was even a hearty exchange about whether they should

pay the employees more (since many times the work we put in is not reflected in our paychecks). Very interesting stuff, although I learned later I was the only one who thought so; some of the candidates expressed either feeling uncomfortable or simply not wanting to be there.

After the meeting, we all went to a pub across the street to order pizza and get dinner, which was really fun. It felt very adult to have a company dinner after an important meeting. The "kids," a.k.a. the college students in attendance, all decided to go to Como Tap after the dinner as well, and since I was being driven by one of the people going, I also went along. It was a lot of fun learning more about my colleagues and talking about things unrelated to work, but it went further into the night than I had necessarily hoped.

Friday was spent doing last-minute story interviews and writing a story for the Daily, but the day came

with emotional pain. After attending a friend's get-together, one of my best friends (also my ex boyfriend - weird, I know) decided we couldn't be friends anymore. I didn't realize just how close we had been before becoming "exfriends" until a couple of days later when I walked by him in the street, smiled and waved, and he blatantly ignored me. Ouch. Like, I know we decided we would not be friends anymore, but that doesn't mean he should be rude and ignore my existence.

With the loss of a boyfriend and best friend, I had an interesting couple of days, being unnecessarily anxious about the relationships I had left. But I already knew that I have an anxious attachment style with my friends; I had learned about that in therapy. An anxious attachment style when it comes to relationships means having a sort of fear of abandonment, and seeking closeness in a relationship to ensure its safety or security.

Anyway, that's about it. I guess it doesn't sound that bad written down on paper, but it's been an interesting week for me.

My Determination: "I manage because I have to. Because I've no other way out. Because I've overcome the vanity and pride of being different. I've understood that they are a pitiful defense against being different." - Gerald of Rivia, The Last Wish

Lost and looking for answers

We've lost a lot of good people this year.

That's not something one expects to say in the first days of February. This week it was Brent Possin.

Two weeks ago it was Brian Sommers.

Brent farmed just up the road from my mom's house. I went to school with his oldest daughter.

I sat next to Brian and company each of the past two years during the Blujay Blast.

I knew neither Brian nor Brent particularly well, but had interacted with them and, of course, put pictures of their kids in the newspaper whenever I could.

It's difficult when a community as close as this loses someone young. We're left asking ourselves, "Why did this happen?"

I like to think God has a plan for everything, that a person's particular passing is part of a flow of events that work together toward some ultimate, currently inconceivable, end goal. Given my belief in a benevolent creator, I come back to the idea that "all things work together for good."

At this time, this moment, though, I'm having a hard time finding anything good in any of this.

One day, I believe we'll have those answers.

My friend told me the other day, he believes, right before we die, we get all of life's answers. He told me about the moment of his grandfather's passing. Right before he died, his grandpa looked up, smiled very big, and said, "Irene [his deceased wife], you're so beautiful."

In the days since, I have come across a few stories from some folks' final moments.

Steve Jobs, apparently, moments before passing, said the words, "Oh wow, oh wow, oh wow!"

I, for one, do believe in God and something after. It gives me comfort. However, it doesn't always help



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

with the why.

Walking back from lunch this week with Deb, she made the comment, "I wonder if, before we're incarnated, we're given a checklist of good and bad traits, favorable and unfavorable circumstances, and we're supposed to choose."

I don't think I let her finish the sentence.

Thinking about my own life, my own pitfalls, troubles, blessings, and everything in between, I said I would have picked everything in my life up to this point. The good, bad and everything in between. Even the era of human history in which I'm living.

Current health problems included, I wouldn't change a thing.

But what if I were diagnosed with an incurable disease tomorrow? Would I feel the same?

At the moment, no. There are a lot of things I have yet to do in life, and I might feel bitter that I wouldn't be able to accomplish them all.

And my guess is; that feeling is universal.

Back to this incurable disease.

It would likely hasten my desire to continue life to the fullest. If I had little time to live I would likely not work so much. I would do my best to make sure the newspaper continued printing and I would spend the rest of my time writing, traveling, and most importantly, spending time with those whom I love.

There would not be enough phone calls, Minnesota goodbyes, desserts, "one mores," sunsets, sunrises, hugs, or I love you's.

There wouldn't be enough Christmas dinners. Enough birthday cake,

long car rides, nights at the lake, games of cards or snuggles with a beloved pet.

I think we all get so caught up trying to do everything we need to do in life, necessary to "get the most out of it" that we forget what "getting the most out of life" really means.

Another friend and I were talking about "Yin and Yang," good and bad, nothing and everything.

The opposite of nothing, my friend told me, isn't something, it's everything.

"If you have everything, you need nothing," he said. "They're opposites."

"The right place to be is right in between having everything and having nothing."

A friend of mine is losing someone close to them to a slow cancer. One of my friends is also in the same situation. In light of this, the question was raised, is it better to die slowly, with an opportunity to say your goodbyes, or to go suddenly?

My answer to that question is "quickly."

Thinking about this, it's probably selfish.

My friend countered, but you don't get to say goodbye.

I feel the people who mean the most to me know their position in my life; after all, I've told them.

I think of my dad for this example. He knows how much he means to me. We've talked about the good, bad and the ugly parts of our relationship throughout my life.

The thing I will miss most about my father, when his time comes, is him being by my side.

I find myself thinking of Blair Nelson again this evening. I wonder if he knew how important he was to me. He might have, but I took for granted that our time as friends would go on for years, even decades.

I told myself I didn't need to rush those (important) conversations because there would be time. We talked nearly every day and I just wanted to soak in those moments while they were happening. So that's what I did when I spent time with Blair. I kept myself present and attentive to whatever we were talking about at the time.

Is that what we're supposed to do?

Or are we supposed to say the quiet part out loud? Express, in words, how important someone is to us?

As I consider the question, there is really only one practical answer: we make our own choices and move forward in the way that makes sense to us. Our actions represent who we are and our words let others know how we feel.

There's no right or wrong way to express our feelings, or how to live. Our lives don't come with owners' manuals. If they did, I'd be really curious to see the chapter about what to do when faced with the sudden, unexpected loss of a loved one.

If only there were a "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," for life here on the temporal plane.

"The chances of finding out what's really going on in the universe are so remote, the only thing to do is hang the sense of it and keep yourself occupied." - Richard Adams, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

"Protect me from knowing what I don't need to know. Protect me from even knowing that there are things to know that I don't know. Protect me from knowing that I decided not to know about the things that I decided not to know about. Amen." - Also from Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.



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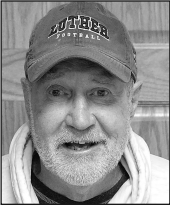
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$55 Per Year, Waseca County Residents
\$65 State of Minnesota • \$75 Outside Minnesota

Waseca County Pioneer (USPS permit #25304) is published weekly on Friday, by Pioneer Publications Inc., 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca, MN, 56093. Entire contents copyright © 2024 PIONEER Publications, Inc. and respective authors. Opinions expressed in editorials or letters to the editor are those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the Waseca County Pioneer or PIONEER Publications, Inc. Letters may be edited for content or length. Periodicals Postage at New Richland, MN. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Waseca County Pioneer, P.O. Box 578, Waseca, MN, 56093.



Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika



A complete contrast to this year’s winter

My definition of my least favorite season of the year goes something like this: Winter is cold and dark. It usually takes hold in November and finally relinquishes to spring sometime in March. December, January and February are typically oppressive with snowdrifts, below-zero temperatures, blizzards, wind chill, and heavy snowfall. Many days are spent in the house sipping coffee or hot chocolate, playing cards, watching TV shows, and contemplating the snow plows through frosty windows as they open miles and miles of highway.

The winter of 2022-23 was especially cold and brutal. A ton of snow forced everyone to clear driveways, sidewalks and streets weekly. Many, many days brought us temperatures below zero and several large blizzards kept the kiddos home, although nowadays they still receive assignments from their teachers via the internet. It ruins the concept of a “day off from school,” but prevents the need to extend the school year because of missed learning days.

Last winter was very hard on wildlife. All across our state, and even here in southern Minnesota, lakes froze out, killing the fish.

What a complete contrast to the winter we are now experiencing. The “winter” of 2023-24 will likely be known as “the winter that wasn’t.” We have wracked up asterisk after asterisk in the weather logs. Forty plus days of above average temperatures, a good share of them daily records. It looks like we’re headed for highs in the 50s the first week of February. Only a couple dustings of snow, only two weeks of below-zero temperatures.

When the news broadcasts mention some of our most popular and famous outdoor Minnesota events, it is to speculate they may be canceled, then to either cancel or modify them. No snow for ski races. No ice cover on outdoor ponds and rinks. No trails for snowmobiles. No snow-covered wooded trails for sled dogs. No giant chunks of ice for sculpting into elegant designs. Rain on Christmas day.

I just returned from an ice fishing trip at Lake of the Woods with my brothers. We go every year and stay at a resort just out of Baudette, as far north as you can travel and still be in the United States. Though it was January 17, we were among the first groups allowed to drive our pickup out onto the lake to our rented ice house. The resort owner told us she opened her resort in the 70s; she had never experienced such a late date for safe driving.

A quick aside to brag about my fishing prowess. Finally, it was me who had the “hot lure.” I personally put the first nine keeper walleyes and sauger into the bucket. I had respect, love and appreciation from my two younger brothers for the rest of the trip.

After enduring the challenges and hardships of last year’s life-threatening winter, wildlife is now getting quite a reprieve. Pheasants, turkeys, deer, bunnies, squirrels and birds of all kinds are finding food surprisingly accessible thanks to the lack of snow cover. Nights aren’t as cold as usual: They can conserve energy and body fat. Mammals and birds should be fit and healthy to raise

their young this spring. Fish under the ice should be in good shape. The ice isn’t very thick, no snow cover, plenty of oxygen—no freezing out this winter.

The “Outdoor News” is a weekly paper full of great Minnesota sports and adventure stories. Some are very interesting to me. I’d like to share some of the news I have found intriguing so far this “winter.”

According to the DNR, there have been 77 verified sightings of cougar in our state since 2004. One of the most recent took place on December 4. A home security camera in the Lowry Hill neighborhood of Minneapolis recorded a cougar walking across the driveway late at night. The DNR has verified it was a cougar, and that it was prowling in the densely populated urban area. The DNR also confirmed a cougar was struck and killed by a vehicle traveling on I-394 near Theodore Wirth Parkway at 2:15 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6.

Keep that in mind the next time you pull into your driveway later in the evening after an outing. If a big cat runs through the beam of your headlights as you open the garage door, ask yourself the question, “Was that really a cougar?” The answer is yes, it might have been.

A while back I saw the movie “Cocaine Bear.” This film was very loosely inspired by the events surrounding a 175-pound black bear in Georgia that died in December of 1985 after finding and ingesting a duffel bag full of cocaine. As my friend and I drove home after the movie, our far-ranging speculations led us to the conclusion the movie was mostly fiction.

There have been reports from newspapers in Wyoming about grizzly bears and trains. The articles relate that the bears eat fermented grain spilled from rail cars, then fall asleep on the tracks.

According to the engineers, it’s a deadly game of “Chicken” between drunk grizzlies and moving trains: The bears lose every time. There have been many reports of bears raiding alcohol from coolers and passing out on lawns. I guess a bear really can have too much to drink. Imagine the ferocity of a bear-sized hangover.

We’ve all witnessed birds flying into the clean, beautiful, reflective glass of our house windows. In Minnesota during the fall, the fruit on crabapple trees may become fermented. Birds such as robins, cedar waxwings and others eat too much of the fruit and become tipsy.

The next time a bird flies into your window early in the fall, pick it up, put it somewhere safe to sober up, feed and water it while it recovers, then wave good-bye as it flies away. If you’re a bit less certain about its welfare, you can contact Chasity Marquette at Aspyrn Acres; she knows how to assess the bird and even treat some of its injuries.

Just a thought for those who would like to add an unusual touch to their get-togethers. Why not skip buying wine and just serve fermented crabapples instead? Apparently the birds find them quite tasty—but you’ll have to watch out that no one tries jumping through your plate glass windows.

■ Medallion

from Page 1

\$1,750 in Chamber bucks and store certificates, redeemable at area businesses. The family will be able to officially submit and redeem

■ Possin

from Page 1

was always quick with a joke. People gravitated toward his personality.”

Brent’s farm, operated by the

their find during the Feb. 16 Sleigh and Cutter Banquet to be held at the Waseca V.F.W. Post.

Although Hasselquist has not yet had time to consider what she would like to purchase with her prize money, the children are quick to respond. Their thoughts turn to items ranging from a VR headset and an X-Box to craft supplies and a pet turtle.

Possin family for at least four generations, is located north of Highway 30 about five miles west of New Richland.

Brent and Lianne have three adult children, Kyra, Bayli, and Braxtyn. Funeral arrangements are pending with Dennis Steffel Omtvedt chapels. See full obituary in this week’s edition.

Miss Sleigh and Cutter

Jasmin Kotek crowned January 21



Jasmin Kotek, who was crowned Miss Waseca Sleigh and Cutter at the organization’s annual pageant on January 21
Pioneer photo by Rachael Jaeger

A strong advocate for mental health

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

“I remember when I first walked in, I cried in the interview room because they asked me to tell them about myself,” said Jasmin Kotek, who was crowned Miss Waseca Sleigh and Cutter at the organization’s annual pageant on January 21. “I searched the wall for answers, but I could not tell you who I was.”

Seeing Kotek’s bubbly energy and contagious smile, it seems hard to believe she ever struggled with knowing who she was. But that’s exactly her point and why she advocates for mental health: many people don’t recognize the many different impacts it can play into someone’s life and with their mind. She credits her acquired confidence to her experiences with the Miss Minnesota pageant and all those who encouraged her, playing a part in her growth.

“No one realizes the way this opportunity [can] change your life,” Kotek says. She adds she doesn’t mean only wearing beautiful gowns or the performances throughout the show. Instead she makes it clear the friendships she made and the strengthened confidence in herself have been more than she could have dreamed, allowing her to help others in turn.

Not only does she have resilient confidence, but she also has a dual passion to continue learning while also finding ways to give back.

Kotek describes big, bright plans for sponsoring projects which promote mental health coordinated with physical health and exercise. She says she recognizes mental health is a complex issue, but wants to do what she can to help and inspire others.

A first-generation graduate of Minnesota State University in Mankato with a secondary degree in mathematics education, Kotek teaches middle school mathematics in Fari-

bault, her hometown; she says Waseca has also always had a place in her heart.

Over the years, Molly Conway, organizer of the Waseca Sleigh and Cutter, explained that a closed title restricts who can compete and three candidates at minimum are needed. For instance, in the past and for Waseca, only those who worked, lived, or went to school within the county could participate. This year, the Miss Waseca Sleigh and Cutter pageant changed its “closed” title to an “open” one in Waseca County so the program is available to candidates from other counties in Minnesota. It helps broaden numbers, since the program requires three contestants at minimum for participation.

“Jen runs the ‘Miss’ division and for the first time ever, we had zero ‘Miss’ candidates,” Conway stated. “So this year we had to make Waseca an ‘Open’ title, meaning anyone who lives, works, or attends school to compete.”

Conway also explained that for the Owatonna Teen title, the pageant had only two girls apply so they had to “Open” that title, too. “In summary, it’s been a rebuilding year,” Conway added.

“Waseca is always a community I wanted to wear across my heart,” Kotek says, referring to the banner she now wears. “Knowing I had the chance and the opportunity to represent what has always been home for me in this organization – there’s no greater honor I could’ve asked for. And with that, I want to prove that you don’t have to be from [Waseca] to represent it well.”

She also said she’s ready to give back to a community which believed in her even when she didn’t believe in herself. She mentions the benefits of her friendship with Baillie Thom, the 2023 Waseca Sleigh and Cutter title holder. “I admired her immensely,” Kotek says, remembering, “I know I have big shoes to fill, but

“I’m proud I’m able to transform my trials and tribulations into triumphs.”
— Jasmin Kotek

there are no others I’d rather fill.”

“I love doing cross fit and coaching different sports,” she says with enthusiasm as she lists the ones she participates in: She’s the head coach of the Northfield Highliners Dance Team, the Cannon Falls Dance Team, the Tri-City United cheer team, and an assistant coach for the middle school girls’ softball team in Fari-bault.

With these leadership qualities, passions, and skills, she has many avenues where she actively seeks to be there for her students and athletes. She shares how she has grown over the years, especially by participating in the beauty pageant.

“I’ll never forget the moment I was sitting, crying because I had these emotions that were so much bigger than I could explain,” Kotek says. “There was this thought in my head that kept telling me I can’t get past this alone.”

Those thoughts stayed with her when she sat in the doctor’s office with her diagnosis of general anxiety disorder and depression after indicating on an assessment she experienced certain symptoms.

“It’s a trial-and-error process because it’s not one size that fits all,” Kotek observes. “Growing up, I saw first-hand how family members struggled and then I went through my own struggle with mental health.”

She mentioned a cousin who committed suicide in 2008 when she was in fourth grade; she said she saw his battle to find the counselor and the medications and solutions for his specific needs. But through the grief, it sparked a desire in Kotek to reach out and help others like her and her

cousin.

While attending college, Kotek created a non-profit organization called Culture Change. The community service initiative is one she promotes all year. “It expanded from being something small to now reaching 200 universities,” Kotek adds, noting how thankful she is to the Miss America Beauty Pageant for providing a platform to help promote her cause.

Remembering the inspiration her own teachers provided, Kotek says she now strives to become the same model for her students and athletes. “I’m teaching kids to become good humans,” she says. “When they’re heavy with emotions and learning who they are and what their beliefs are, I’m there.”

“[Some of them] don’t get that anywhere other than school, unfortunately,” she says.

For Kotek, the most important aspects of personal beauty are character and empathy. “When I say that, I mean how we treat others and make them feel – like the most important person,” Kotek says.

With that, she also believes in investing in other women and their passions; it’s what builds friendships. Right now, Kotek says she is proud of who she is.

“I’m proud I’m able to transform my trials and tribulations into triumphs,” she says. “I’m hoping to bring home the crown of Waseca, so we’ll see.” Also among Kotek’s plans is pursuing her Master’s degree in Education; in the realm of fitness, she would like to start her own business and become a personal trainer who also incorporates mental health as part of her program.

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OBITUARIES

Brady Anderson

BRADY ROSS ANDERSON, age 43 of Waseca, died unexpectedly although peacefully at his home on the afternoon of Saturday, January 27, 2024.

Brady was born in Waseca on September 24, 1980, to parents Mark Anderson and Janice “Jan” Ross. He attended school in Waseca before beginning a lifetime of hard work that he loved. He began by working in the dairy industry, then was employed by A&A Manure Pumping, and later at C&D Oil. About a year ago he was very proud to have the opportunity to move from employee to owner of his business. He was passionate about his oil recycling company and was loved by his clients, many of whom became close friends. Brady’s whole heart was loved by his girlfriend Abbie Hanson, and together they were excitedly expecting a baby boy due in March. Before his passing, Brady was able to give his future son his name, Clay Matthew. Brady was a selfless man that would be quick to help anyone that needed him, and he was also quick with a one-liner if that was what was required. He had a great sense of humor, and he loved metal and wood working, cutting wood, collecting antique Herter’s snowmobiles, restoring antique cab-over trucks, and fishing and spearing. He was a long-time member of Trinity-Wilton Lutheran Church.

Brady is survived by his girlfriend Abbie of Waseca; his future son, Clay; his mother, Jan Ross of Waseca; his brother Darin (Nora Lindsay) Anderson of Hudson, WI; two nephews, Myles and Archer Anderson of Hudson, WI; his



Brady Anderson

grandmother, Bonnie Ross of Waseca; and many aunts; uncles; cousins; and other relatives. He was preceded in death by his father; three grandparents, Burt and Helen Anderson and Edward Ross; and an uncle, Bruce Ross.

Visitation will be held from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, February 2, 2024 at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca, and will continue for one hour before services on Saturday. Friends and family are invited to wear their favorite plaid/flannel to both the visitation and the funeral service in honor of Brady.

Funeral services will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 3, 2024 at Trinity-Wilton Lutheran Church. Interment will follow at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca, and a luncheon will be held for friends and family at the Waseca Christian Assembly.

dsfuneral.com

Brent Possin

BRENT THOMAS POSSIN, age 50 of New Richland died on Friday, January 26, 2024 in Cancun, Mexico.

Born on April 18, 1973 in Waseca, Minnesota, he was the son of Richard and Sharon (Owens) Possin. He graduated from NRHEG High School in 1991. While in high school Brent was active with FFA. He went on to graduate from South Central Technical College in Mankato with a degree in Agriculture Business. Brent married Lianne Preuss on February 20, 1999 at the Evangelical United Methodist Church in Waseca and together they raised their family in rural New Richland.

Farming was Brent’s passion. At an early age, he began farming with his parents and grandpa learning how to crop farm on the family farm. At

the age of 15, he grew a love of hogs and in 1994, he built his first hog barn. His love for the land was evident. He received multiple awards including: the Young Farmer of the Year in 2004, Farm Family of the Year in 2014, and the Conservation Farmer of the Year in 2016. When he wasn’t thinking about farming, Brent loved bowling, golfing, snowmobiling, and spending time with his family. He loved to travel with his family, especially to the National Parks. He also enjoyed camping, going up north in the summer, and collecting tractors – both big and small. Brent was strong in his faith and devotion to the Lord and often shared his faith with others. He was a member of Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato.

He is survived by his wife, Lianne; three children, Bayli (Adam Kuball),

Kyra (Christian Ottati), and Braxtyn (Kennedy Jewison); and one granddaughter, Margaret. He is also survived by his parents, Richard and Sharon Possin; one sister, Mandy Possin; mother-in-law, Carol Preuss; brother-in-law, Jeff Preuss; sister-in-law, Lisa Preuss; and nephews. He was preceded in death by his grandparents and father-in-law, Richard Preuss.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, February 4, 2024 from 1-5 PM at the State Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca. Visitation will continue on Monday, one hour before services at the church.

Funeral services will be held on Monday, February 5, 2024 at 11:00 AM at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato. Burial will follow at First Lutheran Cemetery in Waldorf.



Brent Possin

dsfuneral.com

Betty Larson

Betty Jane Larson, age 96, died peacefully at her home with family by her side on January 26, 2024.

Betty was born on May 6, 1927, in Deer Park, Wisconsin, the daughter of Alfred and Nellie (Webb) Boe. Betty grew up on a dairy farm, graduating from Amery High School in 1945. She then attended University of Wisconsin, River Falls receiving her bachelor’s and teaching degree in 1948. While in River Falls, she met Spencer Levi Larson, her “handsome sailor”. They married April 1, 1950, in Deer Park, Wisconsin. Both were teachers in Ellsworth, Wisconsin before welcoming twin daughters Laurie and Lynne in 1953.

Betty left teaching to raise her new family and Spencer went to work for Allis Chalmers. This adventure took them to Marshall, Minnesota where Julie, Joel, and Scott were born. They then lived in Huron, South Dakota and Little Falls, Minnesota until 1964 when they moved to Waseca, Minnesota as new owner-operators of the Waseca Dairy Queen. Betty served as co-owner and co-manager

with unquestioned equal partnership in business with Spencer. As an important member of the Waseca community, she influenced, mentored, and counselled numerous employees and patrons. She and Spencer always had time for those who arrived after the business was closed who just needed to talk to a trusted friend. Betty cherished her 18 years running the Dairy Queen with a capacity for work that was unrivaled. She remained active in the community, volunteering for the Waseca County Fair Board, substitute teaching, and teaching in the prison reading program. She was active with Grace Lutheran Church and later Christ the King Lutheran Church.

Her extraordinary love was expressed through her gifts of hospitality, her written words, and showing up. Her home was welcoming and full of love, life, and laughter. She valued the written word with handwritten notes, cards, and Christmas poems, recognizing the important days in the lives of others. She understood the importance of showing up, whether it was dance recitals, graduations, weddings, sporting

events, family gatherings, or simply a cup of coffee with her neighbors.

Betty was a ‘Flower Girl’, always surrounded by flowers and plants which she tended and nurtured. She also loved birds, gardening, fishing, and springtime, ‘the season of new life’! Betty greeted everyday as a joyful gift from God and lived it with optimism and gratitude. She leaves her family and friends a legacy of faith, honesty, courage, love, and joy.

The last lines of a recent poem she wrote is her goodbye to us:

“Miss me a little, be a bit sad, just remember the wonderful life that I’ve had”.

Betty was preceded in death by her beloved spouse, Spencer Larson, her cherished daughters, Laurie Massina and Julie Witte, her parents Alfred and Nellie Boe, her brother Danny, and her sister Daisy. She is survived by her daughter Lynne Gronert, her sons Joel Larson (Michelle) and Scott Larson, her brother Benny, her sister Fay, her 13 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be from 4:00 – 7:00 PM on Thursday, February 1, 2024, at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-



Betty Larson

Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral & Cremation Service in Waseca. Visitation will continue for one hour prior to the service at the church on Friday.

Funeral Service will be 11:00 AM on Friday, February 2, 2024 at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Waseca, reception to follow. Burial will be at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca.

Dale L. Fell

DALE LAWRENCE FELL, age 79, of Waseca passed away at his home on Thursday, January 25, 2024.

Born on July 28, 1944 in Waseca, Dale was the son of Lawrence and Ida (Kath) Fell. He attended country school. He worked various jobs as a mason, most notably working for Clint Sommers. He loved to read, tinker, and create wonderful pieces with metal. He was a quiet, humble man who will be dearly missed.

Dale is survived by his sister, Irene Madson of Waseca; many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and good friend, Terry Anderson.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lawrence and Ida Fell; sister, Ruth Fell; nephew, Steve Cahill; brothers-in-law, Jim Madson and Robert Cahill; nephew-in-law, Michael Sikel; and



Dale Fell

great-niece, Emily Buker.

A celebration of Dale’s life will be at 2:00 PM on Sunday, February 4, 2024 at Barden’s Bar. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service is handling arrangements.

Dsofuneral.com

Paul Lienke

Paul Henry Lienke, 72, of Ashland, Nebraska, entered into rest on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at Lakeside Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska. He was born November 30, 1951 in Waseca, Minnesota, to John and Eileen (Prail) Lienke. Paul graduated from Waldorf-Pemberton High School and Mankato State University. He served his country in the U.S. Army until he was honorably discharged. On December 29, 1989, Paul was married to Jeanine Ness in Iowa City, Iowa.

Paul worked as an office manager for several construction companies throughout the country. He also worked for the City of Ashland and S&L Hardware in Ashland. Paul was a city council member and past mayor of Ashland. He was a member of the American Legion Post Number 129.

Paul was an avid Minnesota Vikings and Gophers fan. He enjoyed gardening, collecting antiques and all types of bears. He had a hearty laugh and always



Paul Lienke

made people feel happy.

He is survived by his siblings Gary (Eleanor) Lienke, David (Geraldine) Lienke, Wesley (Sharyn) Lienke, Ione Lienke and Theola (Daniel) Doss, along with many nieces, nephews and friends.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Jeanine Lienke, and by his parents, John and Eileen Lienke.

Identify Frosty and win \$1,750

It’s time again for the annual Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Identify Frosty event. This year’s event is the 27th installment of the annual contest.

Who is Frosty?

Identify FROSTY and win some cash! Prize money totaling \$1,750.00 is waiting to be won. FROSTY is a Waseca County resident chosen to be an ambassador for the Waseca Sleigh & Cutter Festival. Follow the clues and guess FROSTY’S name.

Grand prize is \$350.00. If you are at the official unmasking at 9:00 p.m., on Friday, February 16, 2024, you will win an additional \$50.00. Unmasking is at the VFW Club 113 West Elm Avenue, Waseca, MN. First correct guess from Janesville, New Richland and Waseca win \$150.00; and if you are at the unmasking you will win an additional \$50.00. Only five names will be drawn for \$100 – must be present. Five names win \$50.00 – attendance is not necessary.

Contest rules

1. Clues are published by the Waseca County News (waseca-countynews.com and Facebook); NRHEG Star Eagle; Waseca Chamber of Commerce; Waseca County Pioneer and KOWZ/KRUE radio.

2. One guess allowed each week.

3. Each entry must have a name and complete address. Entries without complete information will not be entered.

4. Entrants must live in Waseca County and be over 18 years of age.

5. If there are multiple correct guesses, a drawing will be made to determine the winner.

6. If there are no correct guesses, a drawing will be made from all entries received.

7. Entries must be received before 3:00 p.m. on Friday, February 16th, 2024.

8. Submit entries to:

A. WASECA: Submit entry at Waseca Music; 111 South State, Waseca, MN 56093; or via mail.

B. JANESVILLE: Mail or drop off at Waseca Music; mark your entry as Janesville.

C. NEW RICHLAND: Drop off at NRHEG STAR EAGLE NEWS; or mail to Waseca Music - mark your entry as New Richland.

Frosty sponsors: CULLIGAN, iWEALTH, Brad Connors, DOMINOS, MEDIACOM, ICAN, SUBURBAN FURNITURE, and EXCEL ENERGY. Please thank these sponsors for supporting the 27th Annual Frosty Contest!

Frosty: Week 1 Clue

*It’s that time of year again,
As we say hello to 2024,
And enter the 74th Festival season,
The Frosty contest is one not to ignore.*

*Much like the past 27 years,
And in Sleigh and Cutter tradition,
This year’s Frosty
To the Waseca community, is an addition.
Follow along each week,
As there is money you have a chance to win.
Compile the information and make a guess,
For the contest, today it will begin.
Will you pass Frosty in public,
As you support businesses in town?
Likely, that is very possible.
Use the clues to narrow Frosty down.*

Frosty: Week 2 Clue

*Like all that have come before,
This year’s Frosty calls Waseca Home.
All these years, Remaining in the area
Away from Waseca, they did not roam.
To Waseca,
Frosty is tried and true
Graduating as a 2-sport athlete,
A Bluejay Forever - Go. Big. Blue.
But first, Growing up on a farm,
Located on the outskirts of town,
Frosty helped in raising animals and crops.
In the fall, they helped to knock them down.
Moving to town,
Not long after
Frosty continued their hard work*



*Filling the air with laughter.
Frosty: Week 2 Clue
Have the clues given enough?
Who will be the first to guess?
There’s little to go off of,
That I must confess.*

*To add some more facts
And aid in the identification,
This year’s Frosty
Is a wealth of information.*

*Supporting the Legion
A member for 50 years plus
The stories in their time,
That would be something to discuss.*

*50 years a member,
Gives clue to Frosty’s age
Born in the late 40s,
A clue to help you gauge.*



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Taylor Zinkle

Zinkle announces candidacy for 19B

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher

Two Republican candidates, Mick Ditlevson of Owatonna and Taylor Zinkle of Waseca, have thrown their hats in the ring for Minnesota State House District 19B representing parts of Waseca and Steele Counties.

With the announcement Republican Representative John Petersburg will not be seeking a seventh term in the State House of Representatives, an open race for District 19B is underway.

Zinkle was the second Republican to announce his candidacy on Friday, January 19.

He released the following public notice:

“Growing up here in Southern Minnesota I have learned the values of hard work and service. I’ve been a lifelong resident of this district, and I’ve seen how in hard times we put our faith in God to carry us through and we help our neighbors, because that’s what we do in Minnesota.

“In my life, service has been my north star, and service is what I want to bring to this district and the North Star State. I have been blessed to be able to work with patriots like Congressman Jim Hagedorn and others to help our veterans, our elders, our farmers, and help our legal immigrants navigate the red tape of the country and state we love. In the spirit of service, I humbly announce

my candidacy for Minnesota State House, District 19B.

“We here in Southern Minnesota are generous folks who would give the shirts off our backs to help someone in need. But with all-time high surpluses getting spent down to the dime, we don’t see it going to the needy. We see a half billion dollar palace for politicians being built in St. Paul. We see our hard-earned dollars going toward pet projects that will only cost us more in the long run. Make no mistake, Tim Walz and the DFL Majority in St. Paul are coming for everything we have down to the kitchen sink.

“I am running to be your servant in St. Paul, and if elected I will spend every day working to be your voice and hold them accountable when they try to tax you out of house and home. Politicians should not be feasting off our tax dollars when we can barely afford to put groceries on the table. Together we will derail this gravy train of endless taxes going in blackhole projects instead of benefitting our state.

“I am humbly asking for your support and your vote. You can check out my Facebook page and website to join and support me on this journey; I look forward to seeing you all on the campaign trail.”

District 19B includes the northern two-thirds of Steele County, the city of Waseca and two townships in central Waseca County.

Petersburg will retire on Dec. 31.

Ditlevson announces candidacy for 19B

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher

Two Republican candidates, Mick Ditlevson of Owatonna and Taylor Zinkle of Waseca, have thrown their hats in the ring for Minnesota State House District 19B representing parts of Waseca and Steele Counties.

With the announcement Republican Representative John Petersburg will not be seeking a seventh term in the State House of Representatives, an open race for 19B is underway.

Ditlevson was the first to announce his candidacy. An Owatonna High School graduate, Ditlevson is a fifth-generation farmer in Steele County. He earned a bachelor degree in economics from Pepperdine University in California. He is an ardent environmentalist and practices no-tillage regenerative agriculture.

Prior to joining the University of Minnesota Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (RSDP), which works with residents of Southeast Minnesota to create and sustain healthy ecosystems, strong local economies and vibrant, self-reliant communities, Ditlevson worked at the U.S. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C.

Ditlevson said he left his position at the nation’s capital to the operation of the family farm.



Mick Ditlevson

A press release reads, “He is excited to leverage his federal policy expertise and hands-on experience to identify unique solutions to pressing agricultural and energy-related issues facing southeast Minnesota.”

Ditlevson’s campaign slogan is “It is Time to Reel it in,” directed toward what he calls reckless spending at the state level. As an economics major and owner of local farmland, he has gained insight into measures he believes can be implemented in rolling back the state budget.

Ditlevson claims his experience in money management, in addition to his education and experience in finance, will allow him to be a needed voice in St. Paul.

He describes himself as a “committed and hard-working individual who intends to make Minnesota an even better place to live, work and enjoy the benefits of our communities.”

District 19B includes the northern two-thirds of Steele County, the city of Waseca and two townships in central Waseca County.

Petersburg will retire on Dec. 31.

Council approves \$5 million street project

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

The Waseca City Council approved rehabilitation on parts of Eighth Avenue Northeast and Eleventh Avenue Northwest during its meeting on January 16. When the floor was opened for a public hearing, several concerns were expressed.

One resident worried the tax burden for work on the street would be formidable. Council member Mark Christiansen clarified that all residents who live on these streets would either pay the balance up front with no interest or over a decade as part of their taxes with interest charged.

The resident commented, after calculating the entire cost, that more than \$5 million for a whole road was still a lot of money.

“I would agree with you,” Councilmember John Mansfield said. “I’ve argued up here at the council that this should be dispersed over the entire city because everybody uses this road just like everybody benefits from the street lights. I can’t get anything passed for you right now, but I’m with you.”

The resident said he understood the stance taken by the other council

members because of another street he recalled driving on only twice in twenty years. At the same time, he repeated his belief that \$5 million is a lot of money for 40 households on that street to pay for.

Another resident questioned when the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) grant would be applied to these street projects. City Engineer Nate Willey responded that the city wouldn’t know if it had received the grant until sometime late in March.

If awarded the grant funding, Willey said, staff would bring alternative plans for assessment back for the city council to consider. Among such options might be waiving the assessments, assessing only the general fund costs, or moving forward with the assessments. Willey added that along with approving the reconstruction of the streets, the city would update ramps which transition from the street to sidewalk level as needed in order to comply with Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards.

Councilmember James Ebertowski asked how the project at Eleventh Street would affect Taylor Gates’s property at the intersection of Eleventh Street and North State Street, previously brought to the council at their January 2, 2024,

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

meeting. City Manager Carl Sonnenberg responded that he had sent an email to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and will work further with Gates to gain access to his property at the corner.

In other city business, the council authorized the release of a “request for proposal” for the preparation of a feasibility report and the design of the Second Street Northwest reconstruction project; approved a joint powers agreement with Waseca County for economic development services; and approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the International Brotherhood of

Monica Wendland has served tables at Red Lobster in Mankato since the restaurant first opened more than three decades ago. In 2017, she opened her own specialty store called Glitter and Grace, located in the Verizon building at 1800 North State Street in Waseca.

“I love working with people and being busy, helping them,” Wendland said. “I could never do a desk job.”

While she stayed pretty busy at Red Lobster, customers loved coming into her store so much that they kept asking her to be open for more hours. Eventually, Wendland told the restaurant managers she had to pull back and put more time into her store. She remarked on how gracious and generous the managers’ attitudes were: They told her that, since she had worked there for so long and was so well acquainted with the menu and customers, they’d be happy to have her come in any day she needed hours.

Out of six siblings, Wendland says she is the only one with the “decorating gene.”

She mentions “Everything is displayed so beautifully” as the most common remark customers make when they spend time in her store.

Something one might not know about Wendland is that she was born in Germany and into a military family. Her dad moved to Phoenix when she was a year old and then again to Waseca when she was in fifth grade. She lived in her new home town until leaving for college, then returned home afterward to pay off her college debt. Electrical Workers (IBEW) regarding the electric utility supervisor position.

Meihak contract renewed through '27

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

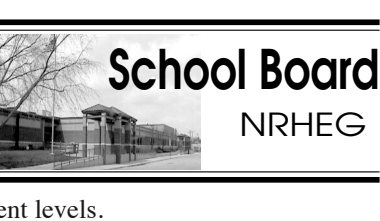
At their January 16 meeting, members of the NRHEG school board approved a contract retaining Michael Meihak as the district superintendent. The contract takes effect July 1 of this year and continues through June of 2027. Under its terms, Meihak will receive a 1.5% pay increase for the 2024-25 school year, being paid \$145,250.

During the “public comment” portion of the meeting, board members heard from Tracy Smith, who is both a district employee and parent of an NRHEG student.

Saying she knew of more than one case when students had received the wrong medication, she stated “for the health and well-being of all students, there should always be a licensed nurse staffing the nurse’s offices at both school sites.”

Reached for comment later, school nurse Carrie Petsinger stated it is the practice to have a licensed nurse on staff every school day. She noted one member of the team had been away on maternity leave but has now returned. Petsinger acknowledged errors in delivering medication had occurred, but said she could not release further information.

During the “reports” section of the meeting, teaching and learning coordinator Jason Toupence informed board members he is working on acquiring the teaching materials needed for a new state-required “earth science” course for freshmen. He mentioned that scheduling is underway for the annual Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) testing which will involve most of the district’s students at many different



ent levels.

He said staff members had found the Jan. 15 “professional development” day, during which they met and collaborated with their counterparts in the Blooming Prairie school district, as a strong opportunity to share information and teaching methods.

Superintendent Meihak complimented district building and grounds department head Scott Schuller for facilitating some facelift projects during the holiday break. He thanked board members for attending the annual Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) convention held January 11-12. He reported that preparatory meetings are underway for the major construction work scheduled for this summer. The work will include resurfacing parking areas both in Ellendale and New Richland, and will also entail some interior remodeling, including replacing many wooden doors to be compliant with modern codes.

He also informed board members the district had received \$9,400 in donations over the past month. \$1,000 had been given toward the purchase of new choir robes, \$200 had been donated to the DECA club, and about \$8,000 had been given to support the Cheerleading team’s upcoming trip to national-level competition.

Grant awarded for laundromat

By JESSICA LUTGENS
Staff Writer

Two EDA grant payments along with one EDA Homestake building extension were among the consent agenda items approved during the New Richland City Council’s second meeting of the month on Monday, Jan. 22. One grant totaling \$5,000 was given to Bruce Meyer for the local laundromat, and the second totaling \$952.54 went to Bohlen Plumbing for a fence.

The care center report, presented by Bob Johannsen, stated that the center had an average census of 33 for the month of December. Of the 36 referrals the center received last month, seven admissions were made. Financially, the center saw a loss of \$68,000 in December, due in part to having three payrolls during the month as well as an annual PTO buyout.

As for staffing, the center continues to use agency staff, though it

was noted that more applications have been received in December and January.

“Our college and high school students came back to help us [in December and January],” Johannsen said, “which reduced the amount of agency staff that we had in the building at the time and saved us a lot of money. They did wonderful work.”

Johannsen expects the center to see new staff members this summer, including local students that will be completing the CNA program in the late spring as well as potentially three nurses through the international nursing program. Currently, the center is still looking for nurses, nurse aides, and people interested in working in the community. The report was approved.

The PeopleService report was presented by Shell Johnson, who noted that cleaning and televising of troublesome areas in town was completed in December. Also completed

NEW RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL

last month was the installation of new lights, a new transducer was installed in the lift station, and a preliminary exhaust fan was repaired. The report was approved.

Eric Hendrickson presented the streets and water report, which stated that 34 blue cards were issued in December resulting in one shutoff due to lack of payment. Purchase requests for trailer water setup at a cost of up to \$1,400, a new pump at a cost of \$8,970.64, and a test kit were approved, along with the report.

In new business, the consolidated garbage contract with Waste Management and Thompson Sanitation, which expires in March of 2025, was discussed. The council agreed to change to a single hauler after the contract expires and accept bids for

the service.

Councilperson Jason Casey requested a discussion on the possibility of a city-run municipal dispensary in the future, and while City Administrator Tony Martens expressed caution due to potential liability issues and noted that both the city and county attorney are against the idea, it could potentially be a significant revenue source for the city. Councilperson Loren Skelton suggested asking the citizens of New Richland for input, and Martens agreed to put a poll on the next water bill as a first step in gathering information on the idea.

The council also agreed to have Martens draft a resolution for the next meeting regarding keeping the state flag as is, and the purchase of a new computer for the assistant city clerk was approved along with turn-out gear for the fire department at a cost of \$16,064. The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

County purchases electric pickup

By TRISTAN GEHRING
Staff Writer

The purchase of an electric pickup truck, approved by county commissioners during the November board meeting, is currently waiting on the approval of the use of funds at the federal level. The purchase is being made through a cooperative agreement with Blue Earth County; staff there are handling the purchase itself and will deliver the vehicle to Waseca County. The estimated cost to Waseca County is \$15,320, with 80% of the purchase covered by federal funding through the State of Minnesota and the Carbon Reduction Program. Waseca County Engineer Jim Kollar says he anticipates soliciting bids from dealerships in March or April, with the delivery date of the vehicle to be determined based on

come in 5.5 percent below the engineers’ estimate. Once board members had accepted the \$985,000 low bid on the project, Kollar stated work is likely to begin in July.

Michael Malouf, a five-year resident of Waseca, was introduced to board members as the newest member of the county’s internet technology department.

Prior to the morning’s board meet-

ing, commissioners had taken part in a “work session” during which county department heads Chris Howard and Maame York discussed possible revisions to article 5 of the county’s Universal Development Code (UDC).

The lengthy document, available for review on the county’s website, lists expectations and requirements for various types of “development”

these EVs into our fleet and try them out, see how they work for us.” He expects the truck will be used mostly by the engineering department for tasks such as construction site visits, but does hope to test its limits in regards to towing and other uses. Kollar added, “Regardless of where the market is right now, EVs are probably here to stay.”

occurring within the county. Article 5 covers drainage, ditches, shorelines and other matters involving water-including wells.

According to Howard, the county’s document was instituted in 2009; county leadership is in the process of reviewing it to assure it aligns with current practices and expectations.

Straight A Honor Roll

The following Waseca High School students from grades 7 through 12 earned Straight A's during the first semester:

Liah Adams, Rylee Ahlschlager, Abigail Berge, Brayden Butler, Bryan De Jager, Maahin Lad, Maurice Lopez, Braxton Nelson, Gavin Riehm, Carson TRUE, Tomas Vasquez-Neigebauer, Allyson Holmseth, Oriana Jewison, Charley Kietzman, Maren Schimming, Cyrus Wilson, Ryan Yoder, Addison Zimmerman, Madelynn Benzick, Lauren Holmseth, Colby Hoof, Violet Rohwer, Savanna Vagts, Katelyn Weber, Slade Barnett, Paige Dufault, Hannah Heusinkveld, Layla Keith, Kaylee Lawson, Vivian Mader, Corrick Medina, Pearl Moore, Logan Reger, Jaiden

Honor Roll

The following Waseca High School students from grades 7 through 12 made the A Honor Roll during the first semester:

Hector Beltran, Keenan Collins, Isaac DeLeon, Maxwell Deml, Sheila Driessen, Shylo Driessen, Nolan Dufault, Gavin Farley, Chloe Hagen, David Haley, Nicholas Harguth, Dalisaya Howe, Abigail Jarrett, Jaiden Johnson, Jacob Jyrkas, Kooper Lindquist, Dominik Mansfield, Ava Miller, Kenna Miller, Libby Miller, Lilly Miller-Williams, Nicholas Nelson, Wyatt Partain, William Peavy, Macy Peterson, Jaxson Roemhildt, Hannah Sommers, Cadence Stenzel, Myles Stenzel, Samantha Sutton, Connor Vosejпка, Aiden Walker, Sophiel Weber, Evan Worke, Jenna Yoder, Quinn Yoder, Ava Young, Wyatt Arndt, Armaan Bhatti, Isaiah Dymeck, Ashlynn Eldeen, Ashley Fliflet, Mailee Gilmore, Brier Hayes, Kelly Hernandez-Verde, Toby Jeske, Jack Kelly, Jacob Knutson, Ty Krautkremer, Allison Mader, Max Malouff, Khloe Nelson, Archer O'Brien, Lillian Petersen, Enoch Possin, Violet Ray, Reese Rodriguez, Claire Roemhildt, Mandi Root, Hannah Rugger, Patsy Sandoval, Asha Sharif, Ava VanDenHemel, Grace Chawra, Makya Donovan, Noelle Drake, Brody Dufault, Zoey Dunn, Chelsia Eneboe, Isabella Garza, Jacob Harguth, Megan Hudak, Henry Huttemier, Kasey Ibarra, Jacey Jensen, Abigail Lapides, Landon Lewer, Taylor Markeson, Nolan McQuery, Belle Miller, Coy Miller, Kaylie Morrissey, Tristan Nelson, Elsie Owens, Otto Schoenrock, Owen Wieseler, Aera Zimprich, Brooklyn Anderson, Andrew Bartelt, Brooke Bartelt, Natalie Berndt,

Schafer, Sadie Schimming, Andres Vasquez-Neigebauer, Ellery Waldron, Nathanael Andrs, Kendall Bowers, Sophie Chawra, Jack Chen, Jade Dauchel, Collin Dettmer, Benjamin Hagen, Tanner Hanson, Isaac Kehler, Melanie Krueger Eineke, Jaya Kunkel, Elizabeth Manthe, Kyle McGuire, Lily Owens, Addison Pfeifer, Levi Root, Nevaeh Sampson, Leah Scheffert, Jackson Tesch, Cody Weber, Kendra Young, Sage Barnett, Lylah Bauman, Noah Dahle, Emily Gordon, Dominic Grunzke, Mason Jes, Daniel Kohler, Josie Madson, Alison Mumme, Evelyn O'Brien, Ava Omtvedt, Oliver Rohwer, Norah Schimming, Ethan Stenzel, Trista Stinehart, Cherilyn Thissen, Addison Wieseler.

Maximus Bodenweiser, Ella Bulfer, Alexis Claybaugh, Lauren Grant, Wyatt Hager, Kody Hess, Ethan Hiller, Sophia Hillsman, Jenna Hudak, Anders Jorgenson, Haley Kahnke, Allen Kopetzki, Madilyn Larrabee, Jolee Larson, Gabriella Maas, William Mansfield, Mia Marik, Remy Mitchell, Catherine Murphy, Chloe Olson, Madison Roemhildt, Jett Roessler, Wyat Rohl, Brady Sanchez, Caleb Schroeder, Reed Stagman, Adrian Teague, Andrick Tlougan, Alexis Wulf, Caden Anderson, Emma Arreguin, Eden Balderas, MaLanie Brinkman, Isaac Danner, Lucas Donnay, Jennifer Eads, Brayden Engel-Mueller, Brayden Feldkamp, Tyler Groll, Chloe Hernandez-Verde, Peyton Hesch-Priem, Mia Hoof, Remy Jelium, Catherine Johnson, Clarissa Kalbow, Cameron Kanewischer, Jacob Kelm, Noah Krause, Cody Ludwig, Isabelle Lynch, Andrew Matz, Colton McMurphy, Kayla McQuery, Emma Meyman, Elijah Mlenek, Preston Moore, Isabel Patel, Amanda Pickett, Andrew Radke, Colton Rupe, Kayla Russell, Clarissa Sandborg, Jacob Schroeder, Noah Sell, Isabelle Slattery, Chloe Wadd, Peyton Wilson, Mia Wirtz, Addison Wobschall, Sierra Anderson, Bennett Androli, Kennedy Bjerke, Mason Bruhn, Katlyn Cruz, Lucan Dahle, Simon Eldeen, Ella Farooq, Aiden Flatau, Isabella Guritz, Hailey Haley, Colton Hansen, Reed Hasselquist, Adrian Hodgkins, Andrick Hyland, Alexis Johnson, Jacob Keith, Emma Miller, Elijah Miller, Preston Olson, Isabel Riecke, Elijah Robran, Aiden Schroeder, Mia Schulz, Andrew Seeley, Colton Stagman, Kayla Thompson, Elijah Thompson, Emma Vagts, Lauren Wilhelm



A BIIIIG JOB - Interpreter Scott Roemhildt describes the challenges of logging camp life to Charm on the Farm visitors Lincoln Hermanek and Anywyn Bently. Pioneer photos by Deb Bently



FOR THE BIRDS - Olivia Bartelt, 4, presses her pine-cone-and-peanut-butter bird feeder into a bin of birdseed. The craft was one of several offered during Farmamerica's event, which will take place again Feb. 3.



LEISURELY RIDE - Sorel Percherons Belle and Renee, driven by Josh Grunzke and Marc Pittman, gave visitors a leisurely ride around the Farmerica grounds.



BUILDING COMMUNITY - Louie Trevino, 2, and Oliver Kirchner, 5, enjoyed the elaborate play table in Farmamerica's entry hall. The play space allows children to envision the many facets of s'mores.

Charm for all at Farmamerica

By DEB BENTLY News Editor

Well over 100 people attended "Charm on the Farm" Saturday, January 27 at Farmamerica. The day offered indoor and outdoor activities ranging from scavenger hunts to making pipe cleaner snowflakes and pinecone bird feeders to sawing wood, horse drawn rides and "logging camp" work.

The same activities will be offered February 3 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. There is a \$10 admission fee. Light concessions are also available. Tickets can be purchased online in advance or upon arrival.

"We had a really busy day," com-

mented Scott Roemhildt, who manned the logging camp. Someone who has actually done the "young man's work" of logging forests using teams of horses and oxen, he showed participants how to split logs, use a two-handed saw, and even "brand" logs as lumberjacks once did so they could be identified by the sawmill downstream.

Three-year-old Belle and four-year-old Renee, both Sorel Percheron mares driven by Josh Grunzke of Wells and Marc Pittman of Bixby, provided horse drawn wagon rides. Two fires supervised by Farmamerica program coordinator Kari Wadd offered the opportunity to make

"The idea is to acquaint people with our facilities and the many facets of agriculture which are part of both our past and our present," said Wadd. "We worked to find activities that would be fun for all ages." With temperatures above freezing,



The Pastor's Column

God is teaching us all differently

By PASTOR KEN ANDRS

I love playing board games. I have a variety of games that I own, and I struggle to find people to play with me. My kids are all off doing their own things, but even when they were home, we were too busy to play a game. My wife would like to just play a game that doesn't require much thinking, chutes and ladders is one of her favorites, add candy land to it and all of a sudden it is the greatest night in the world.

My personal favorite games right now are games that most people haven't heard of. Patchwork is a competitive quilting game, hilarious name but how do you make a quilt in a board game? Sushi Draft is a competitive sushi eating game, amazing concept and game play but not everyone loves sushi. Flapjacks and Sasquatches is a lumberjack game with babe the blue ox. Settlers of Catan is a world conquering game based on trade and strategic development. Did you notice the theme of the games? They are all highly competitive.

Even when my kids were little, they knew Dad plays to win. The most fun I have is when the game is competitive and comes down to decisions rather than luck. If I can think deeply about a game, develop a strategy to win and execute it, whether I win or lose I have fun. Although, winning is more fun than playing.

I share this information about games for a specific reason. When I play games, I play against others, and I want to win. It can be very easy to make a game uncomfortable

to play by being too competitive or choosing to not play by the rules. The same thing can happen in life, we can begin to compare ourselves to others, rate our abilities based on a variety of metrics like how many sales we made this month, how high our customer satisfaction is, if we have a lot of friends, if we are first chair in band or if we made it to the end of the month and had money left over.

One of the things that I had to learn, is that God is teaching each one of us a different lesson at any given time. Perhaps He is teaching us how to win well, or how to lose well, maybe how to play with others, or how to be alone. Each lesson that He has for us is designed to draw us closer to Him and more reliant upon Him. God is at work in our lives, can you see what He is doing?

I would encourage you to consider the choices you make in life, whether at work or at play. Do your choices reflect God's work or His glory? Or do your actions reveal something else? Paul reminds us that our lives reveal what God has done in Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

In your work, work for God's glory, in your recreation, play for God's glory, in your winning and losing at life and play do it all for the glory of God. And if you want, I can teach you how give God glory while you lose to me at some competitive quilting.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-835-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m. * * *	CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS 1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca 507-835-4640 Sacrament meeting 10:00 a.m. * * *	New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 412 N. Main Street, Janesville Interim Pastor Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:15 a.m. Worship * * *
4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m. * * *	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 1221 8th St SE, Waseca 507-835-2213 Sunday worship 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m. * * *	VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Brian Schanil Pastor Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship, 9 a.m. Sunday School Tuesdays: The Shepherd's Robe Ministry, 1-3 p.m., 6-8 p.m.; Bonfires and Yard Games, 6 p.m. until dark * * *	JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 401 N. West St., Janesville Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship * * *
FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m. * * *	CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY 900 14th Ave SE, Waseca 507-833-1082 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m. * * *	ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Father Glenn Ferichs Friday - 10 a.m. on 1st, 3rd and 4th Fridays p.m. Mass Sunday - Mass at 8 a.m. * * *	BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 43089 180th St., Morristown Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Summer worship hours, (10:45 a.m. Worship, winter) * * *
CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH 309 6th St NE, Waseca 507-835-9176 Worship Sundays traditional 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Sunday School/Fellowship; 10:45 a.m. contemporary service * * *	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School, Choir and Choir; 10:30 a.m. Worship Monday - 1 p.m. Quilters Wednesday - 7 p.m. Worship * * *	FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Larry Sipe Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class * * *	ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH 307 W. 2nd St, Janesville 10 a.m. - Mass * * *
ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH 401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca 507-833-1703 Sundays 9:00 a.m. * * *	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Otiso, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship * * *	IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship * * *	ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH Alma City, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * *
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH 314 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-2647 Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m. * * *	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Mary Iverson Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting * * *	ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Pastor Ava Adams-Morris Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday — 9 a.m. Worship * * *	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Smiths Mill, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship * * *
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-4548 (office email: 1cwasceca@hickory-tech.net) Worship Sunday 10 a.m. * * *	LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting * * *	ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC Waldorf, Minnesota Father Brian Mulligan Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship * * *	NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA 404 30 120th St. Waseca Pastor Sarah Krolak 507-234-6463 Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship, Second Sunday "Young at heart" Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. confirmation * * *
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m. * * *	FIRST CONGREGATIONAL New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Pamela Jensen Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * *	THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS Brad Donner, Branch President Waseca, Minnesota www.lds.org Sunday — 10 a.m. Sacrament Mtg.; 11:20 a.m. Sunday School Wednesday — 7 p.m. Youth Activities, ages 12-18 * * *	NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER. * * *
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca Father Glenn Ferichs 507-835-1222 Worship Sundays 10:00 a.m., Tues. and Wed. at 8:30 a.m. and Thurs. at 7 a.m.; Saturdays at 5:15 p.m. * * *	VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH * * *		
REAL LIFE CHURCH 620 W Elm Ave, Waseca 507-607-8245 Sunday worship 10 a.m. * * *			



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Argus Archives

100 years ago - 1923

-In the fall of 1877 Waseca County witnessed a very spirited political contest. In those good olden days elections came every year and every year the politicians had rich picking. Towards the close of the campaign the editor of the Argus, C. E. Graham, and the editor of the Radical, J. E. Child, became very personal and very bitter. Child supported Warren Smith for treasurer. Mr. Graham opposed him. It will be remembered by those who were on earth at that time in this particular neck of the woods that Mr. Child was an ardent advocate of temperance and had espoused the cause of the prohibition party. Such being the case, his sincerity in supporting Smith was questioned by Graham. Smith himself was a temperance man and a man above reproach. But he had compromised himself not long previously by becoming a surety for a saloonkeeper on a saloonkeeper's bond. This gave an opening and in the eyes of Mr. Graham was inexcusable from the standpoint of the professions made.

-Through a combination of respective interests, including the village, Alton and Janesville township, the two cemetery boards and the churches, whose contributions cover the cost, the road from Main Street on Finley's corner to the Catholic cemetery is being graveled. E. T. Dieu-donne has the contract and is now working it out with trucks and teams. The gravel is secured at Lake Elysian from Roy Keyes and from the Jewison point.

-Cris Dalton brings in the information that on Tuesday night last a large barn on the farm of Martin Convey was burned to the ground. The origin of the fire is a mystery. It was located in Freedom Township. Thirteen cows were destroyed and eight horses. There was an insurance of three thousand dollars, but the amount does not cover the losses.

-Petitions have been circulated among the citizens of the village asking that leniency or parole be given to a local young man who unfortunately side-stepped the narrow path. Some 250 have signed their names to these lists asking that the law be more lenient with the young man. He has been a fine young fellow, hard working and congenial, and this his first offense could be overlooked when we realize that he would not delve into anything shady in the future.

75 years ago - 1948

-Outstanding community cooperation, the response to the tuberculosis Christmas Seal Sale, was praised today by Mrs. Fred W. Arnoldt, chairman of Janesville. "Janesville can be proud of the good work in the Christmas Seal Campaign," she continued, "and proud of the generous response of all its citizens." The Seal Sale for Janesville and surrounding community amounted to \$258.24.

-The Golden Bears suffered defeat Friday night at the hands of a tough, undefeated Claremont five, 38-6, before a record-breaking crowd of 400. The Claremont Parrots simply had too much drive and height over the Bears, and led by Theimann and Eggert, they scored almost at will to have the local quint another defeat.

-Rev. O. F. Krause, former pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Janesville, now at Fairmont, has been appointed to the Advisory Committee for planning a statewide "Dr. Martin Luther Memorial Service" to be held in the Twin Cities.

-In spite of sub-zero weather, eleven 4-H club boys and girls braved the cold weather and got through the drafted roads to make the trip to Rochester. These boys and girls received this trip as an award for the special achievement in the 4-H club health activities.

-A report was received this morning from Sheriff R. G. Lowe giving us the information that the Janesville robbers, who hooked \$157 from the Boss Implement Co., a vacuum cleaner and some brushes from Cal Mende and nine gallons of gas and oil from the Kuehn Oil Station, were caught yesterday at LeRoy, Minnesota. Their Janesville job was pulled off in October 29, 1945. It appears that the gang of four thieves, two of them from Le Roy and two from northern Iowa, had been operating quite extensively in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa.

50 years ago - 1973

-How do you solve the problem of kids going all the way through high school - and sometimes college - without having the slightest idea what kind of work they want to do in life? Nobody has all the answers to this complex question, but five area high schools are trying to fill this vocational gap through the establishment of the Waseca County Vocational Center. Norvin R. Rueckert, director of the proposed center, explained the idea to the Janesville Rotary last Thursday and said the purpose of the center will be to provide programs which the individual school districts have not been able to offer individually. "We hope to come up with a program that will make students aware of the jobs available and the actual demand for workers in each of the occupational areas," he said.

-Sixth graders of Janesville Public School tried their hand at copywriting this past week as they turned out the first in a series of student-prepared advertising messages for Janesville State Bank. The completed advertisements will be judged by bank officials this week and the three top advertisements chosen. Prizes of five, three and two dollars will go to three sixth graders placing advertisements in the top three. Other students will receive honorable mentions for their copywriting abilities.

-Births in the Village of Janesville were down by 13 and deaths increased by 13 during 1972 according to statistics released by Lawrence P. Krause, Clerk of District Court. Twenty three children were born to village residents in 1972, compared to 36 in 1971 and 32 in 1970. Deaths, on the other hand, took a dramatic jump from 12 a year in 1971 to 25 during this past year. From 1968 through 1971 an average of 14 people died per year. This almost doubled during 1972.

- "We lost to a good team" were the words coach Mike Niemczyk used to describe Janesville's 27-15 loss to Waterville. The defeat, for all practical purposes, put the locals out of the running for the Gopher championship; to have a shot at the title, the Bucs would have to lose to Glenville or Blooming Prairie. That is not likely.

25 years ago, 1998

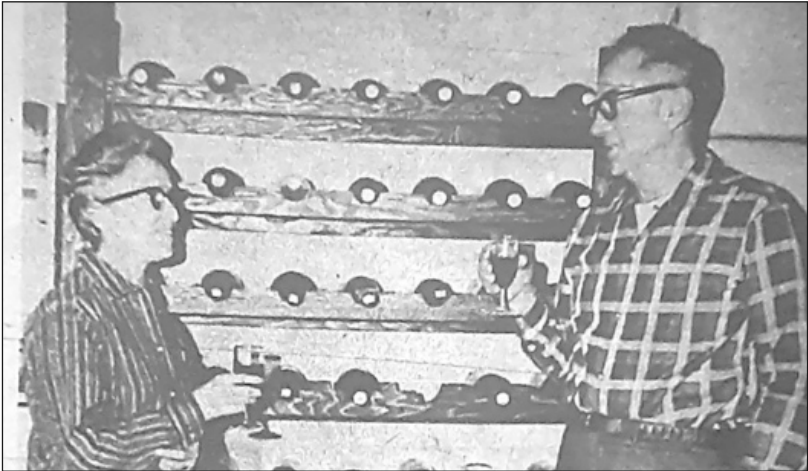
-A 10-point scoring advantage in the second quarter proved to the difference for the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton girls' basketball team. The Lady Bulldogs outscored Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 19-9 in the second stanza, leading them to a 66-57 Gopher Conference victory at Waterville. The victory was the third straight for the Bulldogs, and their sixth in the last nine games.

-Trinity Lutheran School, Janesville, recently received \$5,300 from Lutheran Brotherhood through the Member Matching Gift program. The latest payment matches 53 gifts from Lutheran Brotherhood members made during the fourth quarter of 1997. Lutheran Brotherhood's Primary Partners program matches members' gifts of \$25 to \$100 per year to Lutheran elementary and preschools nationwide. Since the beginning of the Primary Partners gift program in 1987, \$42,359 has been received by Trinity Lutheran School.

Waseca Archives



Milt and Winn Clemons have sold their bus company to their son, Mike and his wife, Beth. Milt and Winn founded Clemons Bus Lines in 1946. Pictured, from left: Mike, Beth, Winn, and Milt.



Winemaking is a big hobby in the Greeney home. Howard and Lucille have been making homemade wine for over a year. There are 15 different kinds of wine in the cellar. Shown here is one rack.

Waseca County News, 1998

-After 64 years of going to school every day whether it was raining, snowing, or the sun was shining, Milt Clemons has decided to retire. He has not been attending class that long. Clemons and his wife, Winn, have been responsible for getting the students of the Waseca School District to and from school as safely as possible for the last 52 years. The Clemonses have sold their bus business to their son Mike and his wife Beth effective Jan. 1.

-There is a new industry coming to town but it is not going to employ any new Wasecans. The Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) through its UNICOR program will start manufacturing shorts for the military beginning this summer. An 18,000 square foot manufacturing facility is still being built on the grounds. The construction began in June and is expected to be finished in early April. An accompanying 10,000 square foot warehouse built for UNICOR will be finished in mid-February.

-Originally from the Winnebago area, Don Robertson has moved from rural life to being a financial advisor. Robertson began full-time at American Express Financial Advisors, Inc. on Nov. 19. Robertson said American Express is known for its three independent subdivisions; the credit card company, travel services, and financial advising. All three of these areas are nationally recognized said Robertson. "We're doing great nationwide."

-The Waseca boys' basketball win streak came crashing down with a thud last weekend. The Bluejays not only saw their six-game streak come to an end, but blew a golden opportunity to move to the top of the South Central Conference as well. Waseca missed 11 of 15 free throws in the final quarter and turned the ball over 34 times in falling to St. Peter for the second time this year at home. St. Peter's two wins over the Jays are its lone two conference victories this season.

Waseca Journal, 1973

-Robert Fowler, Mankato, has accepted the position of Manager at the Big Swede Drive-in, north of Waseca on Highway 13. Fowler has been managing the drive-in for three weeks. He is filling the position left open by former manager Charles Bengston. Bengston managed the drive-in for eight months before accepting a position as the manager of Country Kitchen in Hutchinson.

-The University of Minnesota Technical College-Waseca may have a housing problem for students in the near future. What could be done to solve the problem before it occurs was discussed last night at a special meeting at UMW. Student numbers are coming along faster than projected, Dr. Ed Frederick said, as other college enrollments are going down. He said the enrollments at Waseca and Crookston are rising because they are "practical" colleges. Enrollment has been expanding at the college and projections for the next 10 years show more expansion going from 131 students in the fall of 1971 to an expected 1,000 in 1981.

-The Bluejay wrestling squad had to fight for its life for a come-from-behind 22-18 win over New Richland Tuesday night on the Jays' home mat. The Bluejays started out like they would run away with the Cardinals at 13-0, but then the Cards took over in the heavier weights and took an 18-16 lead with two matches remaining only to lose both to the Jays.

-Vern Dahl, owner of Waseca Graphics announced the sale of his commercial printing business to a Minneapolis man Wednesday afternoon. William A. Butzler, president of the Barnes Printing Company and his partner, Ronald L. Ruehling, purchased the business Dec. 1. There will be no changes in the business with the exception of five employees instead of three. Dahl will be employed as the manager. Butzler is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and the Dunwoody Industrial Institute. He has a background in various print shops on machinery ranging from small duplicators to large four-color web presses. Butzler, his wife and two children will be moving to Waseca in a few months. Partner and Vice President Ruehling will remain in Minneapolis to manage the Barnes Qwik Print Company.

Waseca Herald, 1948

-Lavern Rosenthal of Waseca appeared in district court Friday afternoon before Judge Axel B. Anderson and pleaded guilty to the charge of attempting to receive stolen property. Judge Anderson referred the matter to the state parole and probation officer for a pre-sentence investigation. Rosenthal faces a maximum penalty of five years.

-O. R. Cochran, New Richland High School agriculture teacher, has been appointed state supervisor of agricultural education with the vocation position, State Department of Education, according to an announcement by Harry C. Schmid, director. He assumed his new duties on Monday and succeeds Leo Knuti, who resigned to continue graduate work at the University of Illinois. Mr. Cochran was formerly an agricultural instructor at Sleepy Eye and Lancaster, Wis. before accepting a position with the New Richland High School. He also participated in education programs for out-of-school farm youths and evening classes for farm men and women.

-The Sacred Heart basketball team lost Sunday afternoon at the Mankato Armory with a score of 41-26, when it played Loyola in a DeSmet conference game. The game was a hard, competitive four periods of play with Loyola moving out in front in the third quarter to make a nine point lead. The first quarter had Loyola leading 8-6 and the half was 16-11. The third quarter ended with Loyola totaling 26 points to Sacred Heart's 17 and the four was 41-26.

-The March of Dimes drive for funds which supports the National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis received an extra push this week with the report that a 14-year-old boy at Ellendale was suffering with polio and is now at the Sister Kenny Institute. He is Ardell Anderson, a freshman in the Ellendale High School. Suffering from what was thought to be the flu, he was taken to the institute when his trouble was diagnosed as polio. The case is unusual since polio does not often strike in the winter months.

Looking Back (New Richland)

77 Years Back - 1947

• Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Madison, Mr. and Mrs. Herb Shwenke and family, Mr. and Mrs. James Madison and family, and Mrs. Wm. Steinhaus were guests for dinner and supper at the H.O. Schwenke home. In the evening they were joined by Wm. Lange.

• John Kent, recently of Mapleton but formerly a farmer in the vicinity of New Richland, has rented the Sorenson Bros' farm east of town and will move there March 1. Marvin Becthold, who conducted the farm the last few years, is to occupy the Christ Newgard farm just over the line in Freeborn county and has already moved his family there.

• Mr. and Mrs. Hans Thoreson of Albert Lea, Mrs. Elling Ellingson of Ellendale, E.A. Brecht and Charles of Minnesota Lake, Mr. and Mrs. C.A. Newgard, and Mrs. Hans Sunde were guests of Mrs. Clara Feiring and Miss Dorothy Huesby Sunday.

• Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Longshore, who for the last few months have lived with the former's parents, are to locate on the Longshore farm near Matawan, occupied the last few years by Clifford Johnson, who has purchased a farm.

• Mrs. W.J. Cherrington and MRs. B.C. Rotegard called on Mrs. Martha Donovan Thursday afternoon. Mrs. Donovan served a light lunch.

• Mr. and Mrs. Frank Klessig of Meriden and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Echternach and daughters were guests at a potato pancake dinner at the Art Klessig home Sunday.

50 Years Back - 1974



Members of the New Richland FFA's first place district Wildlife contest team are pictured here with some of the props which help them learn about wildlife. They are from left: Doug Bartz, Brad Nelson, Gred Swenson and Allen Hagen. They not only took the top district honors, but also the first four places.

25 Years Back - 1999



These girls did all of their celebrating before the Minnesota Vikings' 30-27 loss to the Atlanta Falcons Sunday. Now they have canceled their plans to travel to Miami next week. They are from left: Kelly Jessen, Tegan Stringfield, Kristin Jessen and Amy Sack. In spite of all their work fashioning this quarterback snowman, the Vikings just couldn't pull off a victory and make their Sunday happy.

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Way up north

WHS icemen take trip to Warroad

The Waseca High School boys' hockey team skated with the Thief River Falls Prowlers last Thursday.

The Bluejays just couldn't score with them.

The Prowlers tallied two goals each in the first two periods while shutting down the Jays with a 6-2 nonconference decision at Warroad.

Based on shots - where Thief River Falls held a 30-28 advantage - the game was closer than the final score, but the Prowlers cashed in on two of three power plays while the Bluejays were 0-for-4 in extra-man opportunities.

It was 5-0 when Griffin Storey got Waseca on the scoreboard at 11:40 of the third period. Brayden Hesch-Priem assisted.

After another TRF goal, Hunter Anderson scored on an assist from Storey at 15:55.

Carter Martens started in goal for WHS, making 20 saves while allowing four goals in 34 minutes of ice time. Josiah Schmidtke made four saves and gave up two goals in 17 minutes.

Thief River Falls, 2-4 in Mariucci Conference play, improved to 12-7-1 overall.

The game was a part of Hockey Day Minnesota in Warroad. The Waseca Hockey Association posted a thank you on the Internet for Road to Warroad sponsors Jeff Brogel and Patty Brogle Bluff County Properties, 212 Waseca, 4 Seasons

Apparel and More, Blake's BETtor Spread, Colony Court, Dynamic Fire, Fraternal Order of Police, HyVee Owatonna, Luther Auto Mankato, Meisner Roofing, Noah and Samuel Priebe Memorial Fund/Michelle Priebe, Minnwest Bank, New Richland Fire Department, O'Brien Tax and Accounting, Small Town Media and Production, Smart Sort, VFW Post 1642, Tralo, and Waseca Glass.

The Bluejays' Charlie Cariveau was the recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship on behalf of Warroad's Shannon O'Hara Foundation. Shannon O'Hara was 12 when diagnosed with a brainstem glioma tumor, a terminal diagnosis. She died Jan. 6, 2012 after a nine-month cancer battle. It was said Shannon lived her life with a positive attitude, always working hard for what she wanted, and being a good friend and teammate. In her memory, the foundation supports youth who carry on those ideals.

The Bluejays throttled Redwood Valley 11-0 at Redwood Falls the previous Tuesday, leading 1-0 after one period and 7-0 after two. They outshot the home team 55-15, connecting on one of two power plays.

Cash Lynch, Jayden Gehring and Hesch-Priem scored two goals apiece, with one each by Henry Huttemier, Otto Schoenrock, Lucas Groll, Storey and Jackson Tesch. Storey had four assists, Hesch-



AT HOME IN HOCKEYTOWN — The Waseca High School boys' hockey team made the long trip to Warroad — Hockeytown USA — to take on Thief River Falls last week.



FRUITFUL TRIP — At left, WHS senior Charlie Cariveau, recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship. At right, the Bluejays gather before the opening face off against Thief River Falls.

Priem three, Huttemier and Preston Miller two each. Adding one assist apiece were Schoenrock, Lynch, Jayden Gehring, Beckett Srp and Jude Gehring.

Schmidtke registered the shutout for the Jays, stopping all 15 shots he faced.

Redwood Valley's record fell to 1-18 overall and 1-14 in the Big



At right, the Bluejays gather before the opening face off against Thief River Falls.

South. The Bluejays, 10-8 overall and 8-3 in the Big South, play Saturday at 3 p.m. against St. Paul Johnson at Gustafson Phalen Arena. They play

Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. at Doug Woog Arena against South St. Paul.



HERE WE GO BLUEJAYS! — At left, members of the Waseca High School gymnastics huddle before a recent meet. At right, the Bluejays' Hannah Parks. The WHS girls split in a pair of recent dual meets, falling to Martin County Area and defeating St. Peter.

Photos by Kennedy Lynch



Mixed results for WHS gymnastics

The Waseca High School gymnastics team had mixed results last week, falling to Martin County Area at Fairmont Tuesday, Jan. 23 and bouncing back to win at St. Peter on Thursday.

The Bluejays ran into a strong MCA team, which totaled 135.950 points to the Bluejays' 131.925.

Layla Keith captured the all-around crown with 35.7 points, winning the balance beam with an 8.525 and the floor exercise at 9.750.

MCA's Hannah Cole, edged by Keith for the all-around title, won the vault at 9.45 and the uneven parallel bars at 8.80.

Other all-around scorers for Waseca: Hannah Parks 32.375, Lindy Caldwell 31.575, Katelyn Weber 31.075, Elli Hoban 23.1, Haydn Lynch 7.6.

Scoring by event for the Jays: Vault - Keith 9.125, Weber 8.6, Caldwell 8.525, Hoban 8.45, Parks 8.3.

Bars - Keith 8.675, Parks 7.95, Lynch 7.6, Caldwell 7.05, Weber 7.9.

Beam - Caldwell 7.95, Parks 7.7, Weber 7.625, Hoban 6.35.

Floor - Parks 8.425, Hoban 8.3, Caldwell 8.050, Weber 7.850.

The Bluejays defeated St. Peter Saturday at Gustavus Adolphus College, totaling 133.625 points to 130.45 for the Saints.

Keith was again the all-around champion, totaling 35.725 points.

Also in all-around: Parks 32.625, Weber 32.125, Hoban 23.025, Norah Schimming 15.850, Lynch 15.775, Beth Wikan 8.475

By event: Vault - Keith 8.750, Weber 8.7, Schimming 8.5, Hoban 8.45, Parks 8.250.

Bars - Keith 8.55, Wikan 8.475, Parks 7.825, Lynch 7.65, Weber 7.35.

Beam - Keith 8.625, Weber 8.225, Parks 8.15, Lynch 8.125, Hoban 6.575.

Floor - Keith 9.35, Parks 8.4, Hoban 8.0, Weber 7.85, Schimming 7.325.

The Bluejays host Austin Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 6 p.m.

WHS boys rebound from tough loss at St. Peter

Less than a week earlier, the Waseca High School boys' basketball team sustained one of the toughest losses you can imagine.

But the Bluejays bounced back nicely, defeating Jackson County Central and Sibley East.

Coach Seth Anderson and the Jays were hopeful traveling to St. Peter last week, where they dropped a heartbreaking 79-77 decision in overtime.

The Bluejays staged a remarkable comeback, rallying from 14 points down with 3:45 to tie it and send it to overtime, where they promptly scored the first five points.

But that's where the highlights ended. The Saints clawed back while the Bluejays struggled down the stretch.

"It was fun to see that we didn't stop competing, but heartbreaking when you battle to win and still

come up short," said Anderson. "We are still trying to find who we are and how to do things more consistently."

The Jays had four scorers reach double digits, Damarius Russell with 19, Deron Russell 18, Laird Keeton 17 and Zach Hulscher 10. Jacob Thompson scored eight, Caden Danner five.

The Bluejays defeated a strong Jackson County Central squad 68-

64 on Friday. Waseca led 34-21 at halftime.

"We played a great first half," said Coach Anderson. "We played so well defensively and that gave us a great opportunity to get a win."

Damarius Russell scored 24, Deron Russell 22 and Carson Ohnstad 12.

The Bluejays traveled to Sibley East Monday and won 82-43.

"We played very well," said

Anderson. "The guys came out with a great intensity and focus to them."

Hulscher led the way with 18 points. Keeton and Ohnstad scored 13 each. Andrew Robran scored 10 points and pulled down 10 rebounds.

The Bluejays improved to 10-7 overall, 3-1 in the Big South East. They play Friday at Blue Earth Area and Tuesday, Feb. 6 at New Ulm.

James moves to No. 2 in JWP scoring

Memphis James just keeps on scoring, and the JWP boys' basketball team keeps on winning.

The Bulldogs pulled away from Kenyon-Wanamingo to win 79-64 last Friday as James scored 19 points, moving into second on JWP's all-time scoring list.

And he had some company as Daulton Bauer scored 20 and Ryan Krohbach netted 18.

The Bulldogs are 15-4 overall and 5-0 in the Gopher Conference West, alone in first place.

James pushed his career total to 1,487 points, surpassing Ben Kipp, a 1992 graduate who scored 1,485 points for his career. Josh Ziemke, a 1998 graduate who went on to play at Mankato State, is No. 1 on the list with 1,679 points.



James



JWP's Alexis Dahlberg navigates the ball up the court.

File photo by Jim Lutgens

Already successful season gets even better for JWP girls' basketball

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton girls' basketball team is enjoying a great season, and it got even better this past week.

The Bulldogs won twice, defeating USC 77-34 Tuesday after knocking off Kenyon-Wanamingo 62-43 last Friday, improving them to 16-5 overall and 4-2 in the Gopher Conference West, tied for second one game out of first place.

Scoring for JWP against USC: Katie Olson 16, Ali Olson 11, Nevaeh Weimert 10, Presley James 8, Lilly Strauss 8, Kwynn Krause 5, Mikayla Wheelock 5, Lexie Dahlberg 4, Onikia Herme 4, Autumn Thissen 3 and

Aubrey Adams 3.

Katie Olson netted 21 against Kenyon-Wanamingo. Others: James 7, Wheelock 6, Hope Dimmel 6, Strauss 6, Ali Olson 5, Weimert 5, Krause 3, Dahlberg 2.

After hosting Maple River Thursday, the Bulldogs play Monday at Medford.



K.Olson

‘Tough stretch’ finally ends for NRHEG basketball girls

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Coach Onika Peterson wasn't kidding when she said the NRHEG High School girls' basketball team was in for a tough stretch of games.

It finally ended last Friday when the Panthers defeated Bethlehem Academy on Senior Night in New Richland.

The rest of the week didn't go as well.

The previous Monday, the Panthers fell 65-55 at home to Tri-City United. They trailed 37-27 at halftime, and at one juncture rallied within one point.

"We put ourselves in a hole that we had to crawl out of," said Peterson. "We cut their lead to one, but never could get over the hump. I'm proud of this team's second-half fight. We're looking to bounce back against a Gopher Conference foe tomorrow. It'll be nice to have two days of practice after that. Having three games in a row vs. a couple really tough teams gets long."

The VanMaldeghem twins were the lone NRHEG scorers to reach double figures. Quinn totaled 17 points, along with 11 rebounds, three steals and an assist. Camryn had 15 points, seven rebounds, four steals and four assists.

Others: Faith Nielsen 4P, 3R, 1A, 1S; Izley Boerner 1R, 1A; Hallie Schultz 2P, 5R, 4A; Addy Stadheim 1R, 1A; Preslie Nielsen 9P, 3R, 2S; Kyrie Olson 8P, 7R, 1S.

The next night, the Panthers traveled to Mapleton and dropped an 80-73 decision to Maple River.

"We knew that this stretch of five games was going to be extremely tough for us, and it was," said Peterson. "We faced some great teams these last two weeks. Tonight we did a lot of things really well. Unfortunately, Lexi Thomas put on a show with her three-point shooting. She went 6-for-8 from the three-point line and finished with 30."

Individually for the Panthers: F.Nielsen 9P, 5R, 1A; Q.VanMaldeghem 14P, 12R, 6A, 2S; Boerner 6P, 1A; Schultz 14P, 11R, 3A, 1S; C.VanMaldeghem 20P, 7R, 3A, 2S; P.Nielsen 3P, 2R, 1S; Olson 7P, 6R, 1A, 1 blocked shot.

The Panthers got back on the winning track against BA, leading 31-12 at halftime en route to a 56-32 victory.

After a bit of a slow start, the Panthers went on an 11-0 run late in the first half, punctuated by two three-pointers from Presley Nielsen and one by Clara Buendorf.

"It was a great team win," said Peterson. "We started off the night celebrating our four seniors: Hallie Schultz, Faith, Preslie, and Hope Nielsen. We appreciate all their hard work, effort, and dedication that they have given to the NRHEG basketball program over the years."

Individually: F.Nielsen 8P, 2R, 2A, 1S; Q.VanMaldeghem 10P, 10R, 5A, 7S; Boerner 5P, 6R, 1A, 1S; Buendorf 3P, 1R, 2A, 3S; Schultz 4P, 7R; C.VanMaldeghem 10P, 3R, 3S; P.Nielsen 6P, 1R, 1A, 1S; H.Nielsen 6P, 1R, 1A; Olson 4P, 2R, 1S, 2B.

The Panthers cruised at Medford 66-19 Monday, Jan. 29.

"It was a great team win," said Peterson. Individually: Chloe Riewer 1R, 1A; F.Nielsen 12P, 6R, 3A, 1S; Q.VanMaldeghem 2P, 11R, 6A, 2S; I.Boerner 4P, 1R; Buendorf 8P, 4R; Schultz 13P, 6R, 3A, 1S; C.VanMaldeghem 12P, 11R, 4A, 4S, 1B; Ezra Boerner 2P, 1R, 3A, 1S; P.Nielsen 3P, 3R, 3A, 1S; Savannah Farr 4R, 1R, 1A; Olson 6P, 8R.

The Panthers, 15-5 overall and 8-3 in the Gopher Conference West, played Thursday at Triton and Friday at USC before hosting WEM Tuesday, Jan. 6.



SIX POINTS FOR A FALL — NRHEG'S Reese Routh, top, pins his Westfield opponent during the teams' Gopher Conference wrestling meet at New Richland last week. The Panthers lost, 48-30. Below, the Panthers' George Roesler throws his opponent.
Photos by Johnnie Phillips, Steele County Times

Rally falls short for NRHEG matmen Panthers can't catch Westfield

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Any time you start a wrestling dual meet trailing 36-0 after six matches, it's awfully tough to win.

That was the situation for the NRHEG Panthers last Thursday as they hosted Westfield.

While the Panthers wrestled well in the middle weights, a miraculous comeback was not in the cards as the visitors prevailed 48-30 in New Richland.

"The timing of this dual was tough for both teams," said NRHEG coach Shawn Larson. "I do not believe that either team was at full strength, and that could make things definitely different. They have a good team and they came over with a lot of intensity, and deserved the win."

The Razorbaks pinned Charlie Tuft at 107 pounds and Dakota Schlaak at 114. The Panthers forfeited at 121 and 127 and, after a loss by fall for Parker Bunn at 133, NRHEG forfeited again at 139.

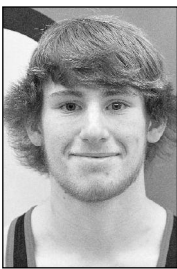
That's when the Panthers made it interesting — for a while anyway.

Deven Parpart scored a 42-second fall at 145, Reese Routh got a first-period fall at 152, Harbor Cromwell got a forfeit at 160, and Ryan Schlaak and George Roesler took first-period pins at 172 and 189, respectively, pulling the Panthers within 36-30.

The Razorbaks responded by pinning Cole Hutchens at 215 and Jace Ihrke at 285.

"We wrestled a decent match, although it will be better for us if we can get everyone competing at the same time," said Larson. "It is hard to win when there are so many forfeits."

The Panthers are home again Thursday, Feb. 1 with a triangular against WEM/JWP and St. Clair/Mankato Loyola. Wrestling starts at 5 p.m.



Parpart



NRHEG boys top Medford, 62-40

Daxter Lee scores 30 in loss at BA

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The NRHEG High School boys' basketball team was not due for a win.

It was overdue.

The Panthers, who last tasted victory Dec. 18 at Rochester STEM Academy, hosted a winless Medford crew Monday night and snapped an 11-game losing skid 62-40 in New Richland.

"Medford is playing a limited schedule due to age and numbers this season, so we were fortunate to be able to keep one of our games with them on the schedule," said NRHEG coach Dan Schmidt.

It was also good timing for the Panthers, who were absent two starters.

"It was a good game to get some of the guys extended minutes, as well as a little rest leading in to two more games this week," said Schmidt.

Hudson Chrz led the Panthers in scoring with 13 points. Jackson Chrz kicked in 11 in limited minutes.

Greyson Schaefer had a great game with seven points and 11 rebounds. Jared Lee and Ricky Zapata added six apiece. Sam Olson kicked in five points, Jordan Brouwers and Brendan Schmidt four each. Levin Kitzer, Brooks Gilliland, and Jase Knudson each scored two. Knudson added seven rebounds.

"This was a total team effort, and we felt going into it that it would be an opportunity for a lot of guys to get to play, while resting our normal starters," said Schmidt. "Games like this can be tough to keep up the intensity, but I feel we did a good job maintaining that."

A Panthers rally fell short 59-51 at Bethlehem Academy last Friday.

"This game started out very ugly for us defensively," said Schmidt, whose team trailed 28-9 at halftime as the Cardinals' Hudson Dillon scored 20 first-half points.

The second half started much better for the Panthers as they began hitting some shots.

"Unfortunately, BA matched us," said Schmidt.

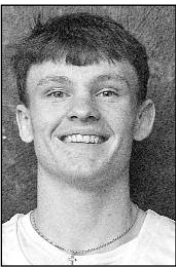
The result was a 26-point lead for BA. With about 10 minutes remaining, NRHEG started to make a move, going on a 32-16 run to finish up the game. They pulled within six points a couple times, but had to foul towards the end sending BA to the line to knock down some free throws.

Daxter Lee led all scorers with 30, including 26 in the second half. Jackson Chrz added 11 second-half points. Schaefer had five points, Olson three, Knudson had two.

The Panthers lost 70-60 to Maple River Jan. 23.

Jackson Chrz had 19 points and six rebounds, Will Tuttle 12 points and six rebounds, Daxter Lee nine points and five assists. Jordan Brouwers scored six, Kitzer four, Olson three, Schaefer three, Hudson Chrz two, Jared Lee two.

The Panthers 3-14 overall and 0-4 in the Gopher Conference West, played Tuesday at Waseca, host USC Friday, travel to Hayfield Monday and to WEM Tuesday, Feb. 6. The USC game is also the Panthers' Senior Night.



D. Lee



The Bluejays' Slade Barnett, top, was one of three Waseca winners in a nonconference dual meet against Plainview-Elgin-Millville.
File photo by Jim Lutgens

WHS matmen fall to PEM

The Waseca High School wrestling team fell short 57-18 in a dual meet at Plainview-Elgin-Millville last Friday.

Bluejay victories were by Matthew Veroven, who scored a first-period fall at 215 pounds, Slade Barnett, who registered a second-period pin at 152, and Kellen Klinger, who won by forfeit at 160.

Also wrestling for Waseca were Archer O'Brien, 107; Jacob Knutson, 121; Oliver Staloch, 133; Peyton Sommers, 139; Jaiden Schafer, 145; Landan Madsen, 172; and Ton Bethke, 189.

The Bluejays forfeited three matches.

Waseca wrestles in the Cannon Falls Invitational Saturday at 8 a.m. The Jays have a triangular at Lake City Thursday, Feb. 8.

Grizzlies garner four dual-meet victories

The WEM/JWP High School wrestling team tacked on four dual-meet victories last week, defeating visiting Medford Friday before sweeping a Saturday quadrangular.

It was 33-33 when the 285-pounders took the mat Friday.

And it didn't take defending state champion Keegan Kuball long to decide it as he claimed a first-period fall, lifting the Grizzlies to a 39-33 victory.

Also winning for WEM/JWP were Bre' Ana Masso, 107; Carson Petry, 127; Reed Sammon, 145; Gavin Krause, 172; Isaac Quast, 189; Avery Fall, 215.

On Saturday, the Bulldogs edged Eden Prairie 36-35 as Kuball scored a second-period pin. Eden Prairie was deducted a point for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Other wins were by Masso, 107; Parker James, 121; Krause, 152; Quast, 172; and Maddox Moreno, 189.

The Grizzlies dispatched Trinity School at River Ridge 59-17 behind wins from Masso, 107; Petry, 127; James, 133; Keegan Lamont, 145; Patrick Adams, 152; Krause, 160; Quast, 172; Moreno, 215; and Kuball, 285.

It was 48-18 against Tri-City United, with victories by Masso, 107; Petry, 127; James, 133; Lamont, 145; Krause, 152; Quast, 172; Fall, 189; and Kuball, 285.

The Bulldogs bested Sibley East 42-28. Wins were by Petry, 127; Krause, 152; Adams, 160; Quast, 172; Moreno, 189; Fall, 215; and Kuball, 285. Kuball pinned his opponent in 10 seconds.

After wrestling Thursday at NRHEG, the Grizzlies host a tournament Saturday at 10 a.m. in Janesville.

WHS ice girls fall to Luverne, top Windom

The Waseca High School girls' hockey team hosted Luverne Tuesday night and was overpowered 7-0 at Waseca Community Arena.

The Cardinals outshot the Bluejays 23-5 in the first period alone while taking a 3-0 lead. It was 4-0 after two. Final shots on goal: Luverne 67, Waseca 13.

Ellie Van Batavia had a hat trick for Luverne, with goalie Emma Saarloos posting the shutout.

Ilamay Draheim was in the nets for Waseca.

The Bluejays fell to 12-9-3 overall and 6-6-1 in the Big South while Luverne improved to 13-10 and 9-3.

The WHS girls made the long road trip to Windom Monday and posted a 2-0 shutout.

Madalyn Benson and Emma Keith scored for the Bluejays. Ava Hopkins assisted on Benson's goal. Draheim secured the shutout in goal as Waseca outshot Windom 37-25.

The Bluejays ended the regular season Thursday at Minnesota River. They begin section tournament play Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Waseca basketball girls can't contain LCWM

The Waseca High School girls' basketball team hosted Lake Crystal/Wellcome Memorial in a nonconference game Monday and lost 42-30.

Bluejay scoring: Addison Weiseler nine, Callie Dufault nine, Avery Gaul eight, Lexi Kanewischer two, Grace Guritz two.

The Bluejays' record slipped to 4-16 overall. They'll look for their second Big South win of the season Friday when Blue Earth Area comes to town with a record of 2-15 overall and 0-4 in the Big South. The Jays host New Ulm Tuesday, Feb. 6.



The Nelson Family

Nelson honored posthumously by MN Association of Counties

The Association of Minnesota Counties posthumously honored Blair Nelson with an Outstanding Service Award. Blair's family accepted the award December 8, 2023. The following was shared regarding Nelson, during the program. Blair Nelson served as a Waseca County Commissioner for more than 13 years until his passing in May, 2023. Blair found his true calling when elected commissioner in 2010. One of his proudest achievements was initiating the purchase of a weed harvester to bring Clear Lake back to its beauty and recreational use for the local community. Blair was also very proud to be part of the Waseca

County Veterans Memorial project. Blair enjoyed networking with local, state, and national leadership, and was active in AMC and NACo. At the time of his death, Blair was serving as District 7 Director and a member of the AMC Board of Directors. He had previously served as the General Government Policy Committee Chair. He will be remembered by all who knew him for his selflessness and willingness to always help someone in need. Blair is dearly missed by his colleagues and friends in county government. Commissioner Nelson's family attended the ceremony to accept this award.

Baptism



Waseca Pre-K/Kindergarteners and parents learned about Baptism as part of our their Baptismal Promise Nights last month at Waseca's Grace Lutheran Church.

Honored



Coach JD Delgado was honored with a trophy and signed soccer ball in thanks for 25 years of service to the Waseca Soccer Club on the eve of his retirement, January 12, during the organization's sports club's steak fry fundraiser at the American Legion. "I found this beautiful soccer club," Delgado said about getting his start in Waseca, "and I knew that was my calling." He will be replaced as head coach by David Vasquez, and while he said retirement leaving his post is hard for him, he trusts Vasquez will do an excellent job. Pioneer photo by Tristan Gehring

33,000 transactions Waseca's License Bureau

Residents save money by going in person compared with online users

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

As most folks probably know, the Waseca County License Bureau is located along Waseca's "main street" at 300 State Street North, in the East Annex building to the east of the historic courthouse.

County residents know it's the office they need when they want to renew their driver license or vehicle tabs and plates. Based on a list provided by department head Jean Steffens, though, that's barely the beginning of the services handled through her office.

In 2023, she and her three fellow staff members carried out just over 33,000 transactions, about 635 a week.

Many of them, Steffens says, are easily guessed: driver licenses, vehicle tabs and plates, registration for boats, snowmobiles and ATVs, fishing and hunting licenses, and title transfers for vehicle sales and watercraft. But she suggests people might be surprised to learn they also need the office for marriage licenses or to register as a notary public. Anyone born in the state of Minnesota can get a copy of their birth certificate there. Those whose marriage licenses were issued by Waseca County can get copies of their marriage certificates. Death certificates are also available. Persons who wish to be a legal officiant for a wedding anywhere in the state can even register their "certificate of filing" at the license bureau.

Steffens acknowledges that some of the services offered at her site—for example, renewing vehicle tabs—can also be carried out online or through the mail with the state department of driver and motor vehicle services. Folks might be interested to know, however, that when they use the statewide service, they are charged a filing fee which is intended to help cover the cost of maintaining local offices like hers. Users pay the fee, don't get the personal service and assistance, and the state keeps the filing fee—about \$8 in the case of renewing motor vehicle tabs.

Steffens adds that, when applicants are missing information in the online form, they often end up being referred to the local office anyway.

While she makes no claims of perfection, Steffens says folks transacting business at the Waseca office are usually grateful for the quick, personal assistance they receive. She has heard stories of "lines out the door" at certain Minnesota sites.

Although she believes wait times at the Waseca office are always reasonable, she acknowledges that the "busy season" is February, when licenses for commercial and farm vehicles, RVs and campers, trailers, motorcycles and mopeds all come due. Even then, however, the renewals are spread out across a few months, and there's seldom a substantial wait.

Steffens also wants the public to know about the REAL ID option for their driver licenses. By May of 2025, folks who wish to board a domestic flight



Staff at the Waseca County License Bureau include (from left) department head Jean Steffens, Mary Knoll, Brenda Streng and Marnee White. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently



Minnesota's new "blackout" plates.

will be required to present either a passport or a REAL ID card. The fee for a REAL card is about the same as for a driver license, but a range of documents must be provided when it is requested, so Steffens suggests people call or visit her office to get the details. A list also appears on the public E-Services site, drive.mn.gov.

One level up from the "real" ID is an "enhanced" driver license. The enhanced card costs \$15 more, but in addition to allowing access to domestic flights, it can be used to cross borders "by land or sea." This means it will be useful for Canada, Mexico, and some countries in the Caribbean.

People who expect never to board a plane, Steffens says, can retain the traditional driver license format.

Also a relatively new item of interest are some specialized vehicle plates. Available at the county bureau is a "blackout" plate, which has a black background with white lettering. There are also sports plates which can be ordered through the state. These feature the Minnesota Vikings, Twins,

"We're here to help our customers in any way we can, so please keep it local by coming and seeing us."

— Jean Steffens

Wild, Timberwolves and Lynx. All these have a \$30 contribution fee; in the case of the blackout plates, the fee goes to the department of driver and vehicle services. The fees for the sports logo plates are contributed to a charity foundation managed by each professional team.

"I know it all seems complicated," Steffens empathizes. "But we're here to help our customers in any way we can, so please keep it local by coming and seeing us."

Snow

from Page 1

"Barbie/Pink Out," "Dress Your Best," and concluding with "Team Theme or School Spirit."

Friday, students are encouraged to

show their school spirit and wear student colors and/or colors representing their dodgeball team in preparation for an afternoon pep rally and student dodgeball tournament. At 12:25 p.m. there will be a "Geography Bee."

Windows, doors, and signs throughout the school will be colorfully decorated by students for the week-long celebration.

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LEGAL NOTICES

CITY OF WASECA PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the City of Waseca Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 14, 2024, in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, located at 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN.

NOTICE is hereby given that the City of Waseca City Council will hold a public hearing at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 20, 2023, in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL,

located at 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN.

The purpose of the hearings is to gather information from the public and consider the following:

Floodplain Ordinance Revisions: The City of Waseca is requesting revisions to Chapter 154 of the City of Waseca Zoning Code regarding development within floodplains.

A complete copy of the proposed revisions is available in the office of the City Clerk, Waseca City Hall, 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

Those interested in commenting may appear in person or by counsel or may submit written comments to Attn: Nathan Willey, Waseca City Hall, 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

Upon request, accommodations will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Waseca services, programs, and activities.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on Friday, February 2, 2024.

Nathan Willey
Director of Engineering

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the Waseca City Council will hold a public hearing on **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Council Chambers, 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093, to consider the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. 1111 – Regulating Mobile food vending to include food trucks, vending wagons, food stands & Food Carts

A complete copy of Ordinance No. 1111 is available for public inspection in the office of the City Clerk, 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

Published in the *Waseca County Pioneer* on Friday, January 26th, 2024, and Friday, February 2, 2024.

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The American Legion "Adult Carnival" brought above-21 fun for participants on Friday, Jan. 26. Photos by Deb Bently

Fun at Legion Carnival

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

At least 200 visitors and about 50 volunteers made the Waseca American Legion's annual "Adult Carnival" a success, according to committee member Gary Bohm. The winter event, which took place the evening of Friday, January 26, has been held at the Legion for more than a decade, and was born out of a whim to bring summer to wintertime, Bohm recalls.

"We thought we'd create a fair-like atmosphere, including the kind of food people get at the fair," he said. But since there would be no children present, planners incorporated an "adult" element. Among this year's games were "Pin the Tassel on the Pinup" and "Unlock the Lock Box." With no way to know red from white, sweet from dry, "Wine Wall" players took their chances on choosing a vintage that matched their own tastes. Bohm mentioned that the event planning committee, chaired by Mary Jo Knudson, works to come up with at least one or two new adult-themed games each year.



Live and silent auctions offered excitement later on in the evening. Two of the highest bid-getters were a baseball bat autographed by Joe Maurer and a one-year personal reserved parking space in the Legion parking lot.

According to Bohm, money raised by the event will go toward a variety of causes, including veterans' causes and supporting youth activities such as the high school choir and band, the boy scouts and local sport teams. Some will also help maintain and support the Legion Hall, where many community events take place, and which is frequently made available at no cost to area fundraisers and charities. "We do a lot for the community," Bohm observes. "The money we raise helps support those causes."

Bohm expresses his gratitude for the many people who give their skills, talents and time to assist with Legion events and projects. "We're incredibly lucky," he said. "We have many community members who support our events, and we have amazing Legion members and volunteers who make those events happen."



Universal truth, but not for all

By TRISTAN GEHRING
Staff Writer

The Waseca Drama Department presented its 2023-2024 Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Contest One Act Play, "A Truth Not Universally Acknowledged" by Hannah Byron. January 20-21 the troupe performed at home for audiences in preparation to take the show on the road to Maple River High School January 27. "Even if you don't like Jane Austen I think you'll enjoy it," said Director Anna Pollock before the show, "but for people who love Jane Austen you'll be grinning the whole time."

The title of the play comes from the first line of Pride and Prejudice, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." The play itself follows Jane Austen, author, in the wake of a marriage proposal from Mr. Bigg-Wither. This part of the story is grounded in reality, but from that point on fantasy takes a role. As Sadie Schimming, playing the part of Jane Austen, deliberates over the proposal, characters from Austen's novels come to life to advise her. The show centers on themes of love of all kinds, and its importance in life.

Hannah Byron, author of the play, is a Waseca High School graduate. Since graduating, she has worked writing skit comedy in Chicago. She wrote the play after Anna Pollock,

director for the One Act, approached her with the proposal. Pollock says she asked Byron, "Do you want to write, like, five skits?"

Competitive One Act Theater is an MSHSL-sponsored activity, in which theater troupes formed of a maximum of 20 students in grades 9-12 compete and are judged on the execution of their play. According to MSHSL rules, a One Act troupe is limited to twenty students including technicians. This year, Pollock says the production hit that maximum with eighteen actors and two techs. The first competition is subsections, followed by sections and then state competition. "I'm just really excited to see other people's One Acts," Schimming said in advance of the subsection competition. "I don't feel very competitive, I just want to have fun with this." Ryleigh Ebnert, playing Caroline Bingley of Pride and Prejudice, added "I'm a little nervous because it's my first competition; but I'm really happy and excited."

The cast also discussed working directly with Byron during the rehearsal period for the play. Her advice ranged from period-appropriate dress and behavior to helping the young actors and actresses unpack the period-appropriate dialogue. "It was a lot of fun, I love her so much and she worked so hard on our costumes," said Ebnert. "She's a great person, and so is her sister who wrote the music," Schimming commented.



Scenes from the Waseca Drama Department's play, "A Truth Not Universally Acknowledged." Pioneer photos by Tristan Gehring



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Thank You

The family of Brian Sommers would like to sincerely thank our friends and community for your kind expressions of sympathy and support during this difficult time.

We are overwhelmed to realize the impact that Brian had on so many people. We will all miss his smile that could light up a room, so in honor of Brian, smile today.