



1 56852 35609 116

Inside:

- 3 - Christmastime
- 4 - Obituaries
- 5 - Government
- 6 - Defying the odds
- 8-10 - Sports
- 11 - Classifieds
- 12 - Youth football
- 13 - Large donation
- 14 - Christmas sounds

What to do with the county jail?

More than 100 attend two listening sessions Tuesday

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

“No one likes change,” said Waseca County Board of Commissioners Chair Brian Harguth. “But there are changes coming in May whether we want them or not.”

“The question could be put to the general populace.”

“The question” is what to do about the Waseca County Jail. Built more than 50 years ago, the jail no longer meets Minnesota Department of

Corrections (DOC) standards. The county was warned in May of 2022 that its lack of a recreational facility and schedule for incarcerated individuals, and its practice of walking such individuals through public spaces to deliver them to the county courtroom for hearings and trials are both serious enough that, if not changed in time for the DOC inspection in May of 2024, they will result in a “downgrade” of the jail. Currently authorized to keep prisoners

“The question could be put to the general populace.”

— Brian Harguth

Listening continued on 2



WHAT TO DO - Janesville Police Chief Steven Johnson speaks to the Waseca County Commissioners during their morning listening session, Tuesday, December 12, 2023. Photo by Deb Bently

Live Nativity at St. John Lutheran Church Dec. 15 and 16

A live outdoor nativity scene will be on display at St. John Lutheran Church (401 Third Avenue NE, Waseca) the evenings of Dec. 15 and 16. Viewers may drive or walk past. There is no cost to attend.

Starfire Event Center Holiday Craft Show 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 16

The Starfire Event Center is presenting a craft show with more than 50 vendors from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3 at its location at 206 Second Ave SW.

Christmas Day Meal at Christ Community Church or for delivery Noon, Dec. 25

The Greater Waseca Ministerial Association is sponsoring a meal for senior citizens and those who will be alone on Christmas. Diners may join others at noon on at Christ Community Church, 2200 Fourth St NE, in Waseca, or arrange to have their meals delivered. No more than 5 meals will be delivered to any single household. There is no cost for the meals; free will donations will be accepted.

Fun at Farmamerica begins Dec. 29

The following events are taking place at Farmamerica.

December 29, 2023 - blood drive by appointment.

January 12, 2024 - Raise a toast at 6 p.m. A women's night out Four course meal and entertainment.

January 27, 2024 - Winter Charm on the farm from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Celebrate winter with carriage rides, snowshoeing, s'mores, hot chocolate, snow painting and more.

Tickets can be purchased on Farmamerica's website.

Waseca Hockey Burger Fry at Waseca V.F.W., 4 to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30

A burger fry to benefit the Waseca High Schools hockey program will be from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30 at the Waseca V.F.W.. Cost will be \$12 for a meal.

Briefs continued on 7

A word from The Word

Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe he exists and rewards those who seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

A beautiful show

Holiday Train stops in Waseca, Janesville

First visit in four years

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

As the Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) Holiday Train rolled into Janesville the evening of December 6, a crowd of 2,000 to 3,000 people were waiting on the plaza near the Veterans' Memorial.

“Nothing makes me happier,” proclaimed Janesville Mayor Andy Arnoldt. “Janesville is the greatest community in the world.”

Arnoldt said CPKC first contacted him in October about coming to Janesville; the city and the train company collaborated for about three months to arrange the details for the visit, the first since about four years ago, as the mayor recalls. Calling the process “painless,” Arnoldt observed “They couldn't be any better to work with.”

The colorful 12-car Holiday Train is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary of traveling around the central United States and into Canada. Its sides are elaborately decorated with holiday images which change color and sometimes appear to move. Among the designs are swinging bells, a laughing Santa (Ho! Ho! Ho!) and a CPKC train engine coming through a tunnel.

The train had stopped in Waseca at 5:30, where many hundreds of people had also gathered to see not only the brightly-lit displays, but a brief concert sponsored by CPKC. As the train rolled between Waseca and Janesville, many vehicles were parked along the roadside to watch it pass.

The mood was festive prior to the train's 7:15 arrival in Janesville.

Adding to the mood was a hospice tree set up in the park by the Janesville Beautification committee; the tree, which hadn't been used since it was donated in 2003, was decorated with newly acquired lights.

Members of the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP) band and choir performed; band and choir teachers Adam Hille and Josh Sorenson were festively decorated in lights. Mayor Arnoldt's family members were giving away candy canes and hot



The Canadian Pacific Kansas City Holiday Train made stops in Janesville and Waseca December 6, 2023. Photos by Eli Lutgens and Rachael Jaeger



cocoa mix. A number of groups set up food sales tables; among them were the members of the school Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) who hosted a bake sale and the Boy Scouts served hot chocolate with a freewill donation.

A group of JWP high school students served different kinds of chili at the event to raise money for a Florida trip in the spring to play baseball.

Gavin Kruse, a senior student baseball player, said the chili cookout was the fifth or sixth one the team had done for the year, including Bulldog Night Out, which involved a food truck at the golf course. Kruse mentioned the team also received generous donations from local businesses.



“We're so grateful to them,” Kruse said. “One of the donations from Bulldog Backers covered all our transportation.”

Apparently in touch with people along the route, members of the crowd discussed the train's progress toward Janesville. “It's halfway here,” one father told his children. “In ten minutes or so, it will stop right in front of us.”

Show continued on 4

Neurodiverse authors write Pickleball Knight

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

Over a five-week period beginning in October, ten area residents who experience neurodiversity took part in a creative writing class led by teacher Jenny Hughes. The participants have varying learning differences and levels of ability, but all were asked to consider the value and meaning of expressing themselves in writing.

The class met weekly in the Waseca Library. Writers were sometimes given prompts to work on during the week, sometimes they used

class time for writing. One method they learned, according to Hughes, was to select a page in a book, look at all the words recorded there, and circle the ones they found meaningful.

Class member Angie Ulman used that method to write “Church.” Smile Church The Bible tells us that we can have eternal life.

Another piece written by Ulman is titled “Innocent Love.” Yes, indeed, I believe in love at first sight. Two

Author continued on 13



Contributors to the book “Pickleball Knight” were members of a fall creative writing class for neurodiverse writers: Alex Blake, Mary Sue Hagerty, Beth Lieser, Anna Marken, Angela Motz, Jessy Oeffler, Benjamin Sather, Tammy Squires and Angie Ulman. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2024 levy discussed

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

The members of the Waseca County Board of Commissioners began their day Thursday, Dec. 7 with an 8 a.m. work session at which they discussed what the final property tax levy for the county will be.

The preliminary levy was listed as a 1.5% increase on September 30. Commissioners speculated regarding the impact it might have on county services if the final levy amount were to be set at a lower rate. County administrator Michael Johnson agreed to provide commissioners with numbers which would allow them to compare the effects of a 0%, a .5%, a 1%, and the anticipated 1.5% levy changes.

Generally speaking, once a preliminary levy has been specified in September, it can be lowered by the time the final levy is chosen at the end of the calendar year, but it cannot be raised.

The discussion also ranged to valuations given to agricultural land; Johnson shared that the valuation increases in neighboring counties were similar to those in Waseca County, thus placing a greater share of the tax burden on the agricultural community than it had experienced over the past few years, when the values of residential properties were rising quickly.

Commissioners expressed that they want to keep taxes as reasonable as possible. Information provided by the county indicates that its annual budget for 2023 is \$33,300,000. The budget for 2024 is \$39,500,000, an increase of more than 18 percent. Yet the county is looking at increasing the levy by 1.5% or less. In an interview with the Pioneer, Johnson had previously explained county staff members energetically pursue funding from non-property-tax sources to help cover the costs of many projects and purchases.

Also part of the tax discussion were abatements given to new businesses as an enticement to locate within the county. Although commissioners have apparently received complaints regarding these abatements from constituents, they agreed among themselves the short-term reduction in taxes paid by these businesses could be seen as an investment.

“We have aggressively pursued the opportunities that have come,” commented DeAnne Malterer. “We want more businesses to come here and we want them to grow and thrive. Tax abatements are one of the tools we are always going to

County continued on 5



Compostings

by Al Batt
copyright © 2022 by Al Batt

On-the-road training

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING
I had the hiccups for a week.
Did you try breathing into a paper bag?
I did.
Did it help?
No, I still had the hiccups, plus I had a paper bag full of hiccups.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE
I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. It's the time of the year when Halloween decorations are covered in tinsel. My lawn is greener in December than it was this summer. A fellow said he was sick of winter. It was 47 degrees and the sun was working. I assumed he wasn't an original Minnesotan.

I was about to sneeze. It was a photic sneeze reflex due to the bright sunlight. One in my family always wore long-sleeved shirts. That way, he didn't have to carry a handkerchief. But I had an "ah" without a "choo." It was disappointing. Where did the choo go? This one went to a church potluck in Iowa where a woman told me whose hotdishes I should avoid because the cooks lived along busy highways that provided roadkill.
I asked a friend, who was a driving instructor, how it had been going. He replied, "This week, we've learned how to fill out accident reports." Based on his facial expression, I assumed it was on-the-road training.

OVERHEARD AT THE AUDIOLOGIST'S
How's it going?
I'm having a little problem with my ears.
Good to hear.

I OVERHEARD EVERYTHING AT THE COFFEE SHOP
There was a staff meeting at the neighboring table. Larry, Gary, Barry and Harry chronically interrupted one another or tried to talk louder than the other three. They had learned their meeting styles by watching debates and listening to sports talk radio. I've been told the only reason men listen is to give them something to do until it's their turn to talk. These four didn't want to listen, but they forced me to hear everything until another table opened.

I'VE LEARNED
It doesn't matter if your pants have a lot of wrinkles because wrinkles are better than having ants.
If you look around, you'll know it's never too early to put up Christmas decorations.
Lutefisk needs a better name.

Vending machines dispensing headphones and other electronic devices are at airports. That's a terrible idea. I've seen people go ballistic when their bag of Cheetos doesn't come out of a vending machine.

CHRISTMAS CARDS
I listened to a TED Talk. The man doing the talking was not named Ted. That seems like false advertising, but he was interesting. He said that each of us will meet 80,000 people in our lifetime. I'm amazed it came out to an even number, but I believed him. That's because my mother tried to send 80,000 Christmas cards each year. We had to lick the postage stamps in those days of yore. My tongue is still showing distress.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT
What's red and white and falls down chimneys? Santa Klutz.
Disabling cookies used to mean eating the legs off a gingerbread man cookie.
What rhymes with orange? No, it doesn't.
What do you call an old dad joke? It's a granddad joke.

NATURE NOTES
I read an interesting item from the Hickory Knolls Discovery Center (Illinois), saying when a squirrel hops and lands, its larger back feet land parallel and in front of its smaller front feet. The resulting shape is square-ish. Rabbits land with one forefoot in front of the other. The line of those two prints behind the two larger hind footprints resembles the letter Y. Squirrels leave SQUARE tracks and Ys are the tracks of a bunny. I'd add that rabbit tracks can have the shape of a triangle and that rabbits stop to nibble and squirrels dig for nuts buried under the snow. A rabbit has furred toes, blurring the toes in a track, while a squirrel has long, skinny toes that are likely to appear in the tracks. If the tracks lead to a tree and stop, it's a squirrel.

I marveled at a starry sky. Marissa Meyer wrote, "I'm still thanking all the stars, one by one." As I thanked as many stars as I could, I recalled the words of James Thurber, "There are two kinds of light—the glow that illuminates, and the glare that obscures."
The sky illuminates and is immense, but so is a square foot of my yard. The next morning, firmly in the spirit of the season, I forgave those squirrels who'd trespassed against us.

MEETING ADJOURNED
"I tried to be useful," was what Charlie Munger suggested as his epitaph. Try to be kind.

What is there to do during winter in Miami?



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

Well, I have successfully made it through the thick of my finals and have come out on the other side still alive. I had my difficult media law final last Thursday and a midterm on Monday for my psych research methods class. A midterm! My final for the research class is bright and early on December 21. After that I will be home free—literally: I will be at home and free to do what I please (for the most part).
This semester has been fun. I think it's been a good balance between the relaxed exploration of last semester in Spain and the stressful trials of last fall. I made it through my classes, played pep band for men's hockey games, played oboe in an orchestra, and wrote seventeen fun news stories for the campus newspaper, the Minnesota Daily.
I could list everything that I've learned this semester, but that seems like a waste of my time and yours. Who doesn't go to college and learn something, either in class or about life? Surprisingly, I learned quite a bit about being a journalist in the real

world in my media law class, such as the fact that the public and the press have a first amendment right to attend criminal trials and that we can challenge judges when they want to close the court to the public. Cool stuff, no?
I'm looking forward to a couple of things this winter break:
Seeing family. Obviously I am greatly looking forward to leaving this concrete jungle for a couple of weeks and spending time in the comfort of my home. I'm anticipating baking and cooking with my family, playing cards, and general funtime "familyness." Also, I miss my dogs when I'm away all the time, so I plan to get in some good walks and romps.
Having time for my hobbies. With school and work, it's hard to find time for myself and things I enjoy. Maybe I will finally finish the fifth book of the Outlander series. Hopefully I will have enough time to work out consistently. Who knows, maybe I'll even take up running (unlikely). I'm hoping to start watching a new TV show as well, so maybe I'll even have time for that. But all this seems a little out of reach. Most likely, I'll just be napping and working.
Miami! My friends and I have booked a trip to take a couple of days to go down to Miami and enjoy the

warmer weather and the beach. The selected destination wasn't really my first choice, but someplace warmer than here is fine with me, even though this has been a mild winter so far. I am nervous, though, because my friend group can be pretty divided in what they want to do. Some friends want to go to the beach and party all the time, others want to tour and go to museums and such. So it will be interesting to see what happens.
I'm probably putting too much weight on the minimal week's break I will be getting between the semesters. But one can only hope, no? Maybe I'll just spend the entire time in dreamland, napping my time away.
My Determination: "When we are children we seldom think of the future. This innocence leaves us free to enjoy ourselves as few adults can. The day we fret about the future is the day we leave our childhood behind." - Patrick Rothfuss, "The Name of the Wind"

What makes a great coach?



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

Friday morning Mr. Tim Loonan called me. I missed his call so I stopped in to see him.
He appeared pleasantly surprised as he informed me that Waseca's Youth Football Association would be holding an event on Monday he thought I might like to attend.
He was right, and I'm glad I attended.
Before we get past Friday, though, I must comment on the conversation I had with Tim. As I was leaving, I mentioned that nearly every piece we write at the paper is a story or event suggested by a reader. Judging from his reaction, he appeared confused and maybe like he was being a burden. That couldn't be further from the truth. It makes me feel like we're doing our job at the paper when we write about people, places, or events which people in Waseca ask us to.
Monday night wasn't different. Many great stories were shared.

Stories I wouldn't have been privy to if Tim hadn't thought to give me a call. The night was a lot of fun.
I talk sometimes about what makes a coach great. Generally, it's what they get out of the high school students they are coaching. Every coach is dealt a similar hand when it comes to the talent and dedication of their players. When a coach builds a winning program, it's the result of long-standing, consistent team building that leads and inspires players to consistently apply their skills and abilities as their coach has instructed. To do that, I like to say, a coach has to create a machine, or a system which can achieve this.
I often reference Jeff Reese when talking about this. Jeff, a hall of fame baseball coach at NRHEG, ran his baseball practices to the second with a stopwatch. Every player was taught to hit the same, field the same, and pitch the same. Team members were expected to work hard: Nothing less was tolerated. With Jeff's coaching method, NRHEG had 20-win baseball teams every season and were contenders every year. He finished his head-coaching career as one of the winningest baseball coaches in

Minnesota state history.
Jeff coached groups that were more athletic than others, but as Brad Wendland claims, the secret to success is hard work, determination, the ability to face adversity...and coaches who know how to get the most out of their players while also teaching them the fundamentals. These axioms apply to the entire coaching tree all the way down to the third-graders, where it starts.
It made me glad to see the involvement and dedication Brad and his coaching tree show to Waseca football. Because of people like Brad, Ed Hoehn, Bob Jeske, and all of the other coaches, Waseca produces not only great football players, but quality young men and women who succeed beyond high school athletics.
"Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard." – unknown
"To be prepared is half the victory." – Miguel Cervantes

■ Listening

from Page 1

indefinitely, the jail has been warned the maximum time may become 90 days or, in a worst-case scenario, 72 hours.
Since receiving the 2022 DOC report, the county has been seeking solutions to two sets of circumstances.
As described by county administrator Michael Johnson, the first problem is how to respond when the downgrade occurs. Even if still authorized to keep prisoners 90 days, the jail will need to find alternate locations to have longer-term inmates housed. Being downgraded to a 72-hour maximum would mean even more individuals will need to be taken elsewhere.
The second question centers around the long-term response, according to Johnson. The county has been working with Twin Cities design firm BKV to investigate various plans. Over the course of the discussion, these have included adding on to the current building; replacing the jail with a 32-bed facility; and building a new "justice center" which would house court-related offices and tasks, but would have only "intake" and "temporary holding" type facilities when it comes to persons taken into custody. Under the justice center option, there would be no county jail; essentially all incarcerated individuals would be housed at jail facilities in nearby counties.

Harguth and fellow board members DeAnne Malterer, Doug Christopherson and Brad Krause all gave brief comments as the second of two "listening sessions" ended around 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 12. The morning session had lasted from 9:30 until past 11 a.m. Roughly 50 people were present for the first gathering, more than 70 for the second, although a fair number of people attended both. A total of at least 35 speakers had approached the podium and given statements. Although the request was to limit time at the front to 3 minutes, few managed to do so.
Though commissioner Brad Krause joked that he "would trade places with just about anyone right now," he assured those in attendance "At

"We do not need a new justice center. We need a new jail."

— Judge Carol Hanks

this moment, we're in the eye of the storm. But I want everyone to know we [commissioners] are involved. We know what's going on. We'll make the right decision."
Krause's statement may have been in response to a number of comments in which commissioners were asked whether they had considered a wide range of questions and complications which might arise under each of the scenarios being considered. Although most speakers thanked the board members for their work and acknowledged that they were facing a difficult decision, some spoke with an admonishing—or even accusatory—tone.
Among the more critical comments made was that the commissioners seemed to "have already made up their minds" to house prisoners elsewhere and were giving "lip service" to anyone with doubts. Waseca City Council member Mark Christianson told board members they should be sure to make a "long-term decision" that "protects county infrastructure."
While a few speakers in each session expressed concern about the financial impact any new construction would have on property owners and businesses, the majority of comments in both sessions were from individuals who want to see the county maintain its own jail. Among the most common observations was that "you can't put a price on public safety."

Many who expressed this concern were addressing the amount of time county law enforcement officers—whether deputies or city police—would spend away from their jurisdictions if they were forced to deliver inmates to other counties. Safety officers mentioned that there would not only be the time to drive to the new location, but also time needed to deliver and process the in-custody individual. "It won't be a 'tuck and roll,' " joked one speaker.

BY THE NUMBERS

The numbers and dollar amounts here were provided during the listening session. Many, if not most, are estimates.
- The county budget has been managed to cover up to \$20 million in construction cost with no impact on the property tax levy.
- If money is borrowed for any construction costs exceeding \$20 million, the impact on the levy will be about a \$750,000 increase for every \$10 million borrowed.
- If \$20 million were to be financed, the estimated cost over the 20-year life of the loan would be an additional \$1,790 total for a \$250,000 home. An additional \$4,755 total for a \$350,000 commercial business. An additional \$14,280 total for an agricultural operation of 350 acres or fewer. An additional \$108,810 total for an agricultural operation with 1,500 acres or more.
- The cost of adding square footage and remodeling the current jail was determined to be about \$33 million
- The cost of building a new "justice center" that includes personnel offices and a new courtroom, but has only "intake" and "holding" facilities for in-custody individuals is \$43.8 million.

Waseca County District Court Judge Carol Hanks and Rice County District Court Judge Karie Anderson both stated that justice services would be severely delayed and complicated if there were no local option for holding prisoners.
Mentioning that state law requires the release of anyone who does not receive a bail hearing within 36 hours of being taken into custody, Hanks commented there could easily be "people released who would otherwise be kept in jail."
She praised the dedication and collaborative spirit of Waseca County's jailers and law enforcement personnel. "I would put them among the best in the state," she commented, adding that any discussion of closing the jail "disregards their loyalty to Waseca County."
Judge Anderson spoke of her experiences in Rice County where many inmates are housed elsewhere. She spoke of delayed and canceled hearings. Acknowledging that there was a trend toward virtual hearings over the past few years she commented that the pendulum has swung the other way because virtual hearings do not have the same dignity or impact as having the accused person present in the courtroom.

"We're all willing to scale down," commented Hanks about any new construction. "We do not need a new justice center. We need a new jail."
Law enforcement personnel shared incidents regarding in-custody individuals whom other facilities will not accept. "It's becoming the new norm," said Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas, "that inmates are coming in with severe mental health needs. When we have had to find alternate placements for such individuals, other facilities often will not take them."
An example of a female inmate who was a danger both to herself and to others was shared. Dulas said jailers had contacted nearly every county facility in the state—and even the federal prison in Waseca. "No one would take her," he said.
Similar concerns were shared by many members of law enforcement.
Dulas also cited the many tasks of officers must take care of when they report to an incident. "Individuals must be secured quickly, kept separate, and interviewed promptly. The integrity of the crime scene must be protected."
"How can they do all that and transport the suspected perpetrators as well?" asked Dulas.



SERVING THE WHOLE OF WASECA COUNTY
including the communities of Waseca, Janesville, New Richland, and Waldorf

PHONE: 507-837-6767

email: news@wasecacountypioneer.com
Address: Office at 111 Elm Avenue West
Mail: PO Box 578, Waseca MN 56093

DEADLINES: Pioneer: Noon Tuesday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

ELI LUTGENS
JON LUCCA
DEB BENTLY
JIM LUTGENS
AMELIA ROESSLER
TERESA ROSACKER
JESSICA LUTGENS
TRISTAN GEHRING
RACHAEL JAEGER
MELISSA DUNN

Publisher
Ad Design
News Editor
Sports Editor/Dad
Editorial Assistant
Advertising Sales
Staff Writer
Staff writer
Staff Writer
Staff Writer

Contributing writers/photographers: Dave Zika, Santiago Ramirez. Al Batt

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. Periodicals Postage at New Richland, MN. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Waseca County Pioneer, P.O. Box 578, Waseca, MN, 56093.



This first-year Waseca youth robotics team competed in Byron on Dec. 9.



Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce leader Ann Fitch was selected by the Waseca Rotary Club for the 2023 “Service Above Self” award. The acknowledgment is based on the International Rotary Club’s pledge which states, “I am a Rotarian. I will always seek to promote the greatest good for the greatest number of people in the spirit of Rotary service. I am a Rotarian. I will always observe Rotary International’s motto: Service Above Self.”

According to the Rotary International website, the honor is the highest one bestowed by the organization; no more than 150 receive the local honor. They are then eligible to be considered for the international award.

Fitch was surprised with the honor during the Rotary’s Dec. 7 meeting.

“I am very humbled by the choice,” commented Fitch. “Of course I’m honored, but not because of the recognition. It feels good to be part of a community where people work together and appreciate one another. That’s the real honor.”

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently



Delaine Caster, Choir Booster; Ezra Skains and Natalie Loeffler, Select Choir students; and Rebecca Volovsek, choir parent, posing with Santa Claus at the inaugural Choir Craft Fair, raising funds for their trip to New York.

Pioneer photo by Tristan Gehring



Waseca County Dairy Princesses McKenna Eichhorn, Katy Eldeen and Allie Eldeen pose with Santa Claus at FarmAmerica’s Santa Experience before serving hot cocoa and cookies to attendees.

Christmas at the Mill

Save next year’s date, December 7, 2024

More than 300 kids attend third annual get-together

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

Well over 300 children and their accompanying adults—for a crowd of roughly 750—attended “Christmas at the Mill,” a community gathering which, according to Matt Petsinger, whose Matthew R. Petsinger Agency LLC helps organize the event, defies definition.

“It’s really not possible to explain what it is,” he says lightheartedly.

Held at “The Mill” along Waseca’s Elm Avenue from 1 to 7 p.m. on December 9, Saturday’s event offered four different photo scenes—one of them a colorful Christmas sleigh—where families and individuals could pose their own group shots. Santa was also available, both for gift requests and for pictures. Wandering among the crowd were Olaf, Elsa, the Grinch, and a six-foot-tall polar bear.

Children could decorate cookies, color, have their face painted, make Christmas crafts, and write a letter to Santa which could then either be deposited for sending or delivered personally. Santa presented many of the children who visited him with stuffed toy animals.

Free Christmas books were offered by the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center.

And all of this with no admission cost or fees.

A drawing for a Grinch prize package was offered: 16-month-old Effie Schauer, daughter of Deon Schauer and Cate Krauth, was the lucky winner.

“It’s Christmas,” says Petsinger of the many preparations needed to bring the busy event to fruition. “It’s for the kids.”

Though he, his wife Becky, and employees of his company put in many hours planning, publicizing and decorating, Petsinger says he cannot claim full credit for the success of the event, now in its third year.

He tells of one community member who baked more than 700 cookies, an area resident who allows use of the decorated sleigh, the craft leader who not only chooses the available projects, but provides many of the supplies and equipment.

“It’s definitely a community endeavor,” he says. “It’s the season of giving, and boy, do the community members give. Everyone who helped put this on had at least as much fun as the kids.”

Petsinger observes, “We are very happy with the turnout we had, especially since there were so many different events scheduled that day. We’re fortunate the community supports what we do.”

The date for next year’s “Christmas at the Mill” has already been set, Petsinger says. “I guess we’ll see everyone again next year,” he quips. “Put Dec. 7 on your calendars.”



A drawing for a Grinch prize package was offered during “Christmas at the Mill” on December 9. The lucky winner, 16-month-old Effie Schauer, is the daughter of Deon Schauer and Cate Krauth. Below, left, Matt Petsinger is interviewed by a local radio station to help promote the event.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently
Other photos by Leah Zimmerman



Berg, Moen bring music home for the holidays

By Melissa Dunn
Staff Writer

Nearly 350 people enjoyed the vocal and instrumental sounds of the season at the second annual Home for the Holidays concerts featuring NRHEG graduates Gavin Berg, Adam Moen and Eva Wayne, which took place at Trinity Lutheran Church in New Richland last Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon. The event, sponsored by the New Richland Area Foundation, brought in over 7,000 dollars to benefit needs in the area.

Berg, a 2002 graduate of NRHEG, is an accomplished keyboard player currently serving as organist at Westwood Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park. Moen, a 2008 graduate, has performed in numerous productions at the Ordway and Guthrie theaters and took the weekend off from his role in “Jersey Boys” at Chanhassen Dinner Theater. Wayne is a 2023 graduate and currently attends the



New Richland residents enjoyed a delightful concert as Adam Moen and Gavin Berg performed for a New Richland Foundation fundraiser at Trinity Lutheran Church Dec. 9 and 10.

Photo by Jodi Wayne

University of St. Thomas, majoring in Business Law & Compliance.

An additional surprise to all (including the participants themselves) was the special “performance” given by mothers Julie Moen and Connie Berg. “We have to do something to top last year when our dads led the carol sing-a-long,” their sons exclaimed gleefully from the front. “So this year we thought...” and out came parade batons

from their hiding place behind the communion rail to the delight of the audience. Both moms, who had been drum majorettes and expert twirlers “back in the day” choreographed a short routine during intermission (after recovering from the initial shock) which was performed to rousing applause.

OBITUARIES

Gerald Thor

GERALD JAMES THOR, age 85, of Waseca passed away surrounded by family at his home on Saturday, December 9, 2023.

Born on May 13, 1938 in Moun-tain Lake, MN, Gerald was the son of Archie and Mabel (Johnson) Thor. He graduated from Comfrey High School. He then attended the University of Minnesota – St. Paul Campus for agriculture. Following his education, he returned home to Comfrey and took over the family farm. On April 6, 1963, he was united in marriage to Carol Dahl at Tracy Lutheran Church in Tracy, MN. They enjoyed sixty wonderful years together. He would claim, “Everything good that has hap-pened was because of Carol”.

Gerald was a skilled craftsman. He created beautiful furniture and unique pieces for his family and churches. He showed his love to others by his acts of service. Whether he was a listening ear, problem solver, or handyman, Ger-ald was always someone to be counted on. He was a faithful and humble servant of God where he would worship and serve at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Waseca. He was a loving husband, dedicated dad, grandpa, and papa who was cherished and will be dearly missed.

Gerald is survived by his wife, Carol Thor of Waseca; children, Mary (Jim) Schumann of Sauk Rapids, Nyla Hagen of Waseca, Kari Hyland of Waseca, Karl (Kristie) Thor of Prior Lake;



Gerald Thor

grandchildren, Courtney (Evan) Leffler, Ryan (Colleen) Schumann, Hank Hagen, Joe Hagen, Ellen Hagen, Jack Hyland, Sam Hyland, Emma Thor, Grace Thor, Olivia Thor; great-grandchildren, Poppy, Brody, Sonny, Lolly; and brother, Marvin Thor.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Archie and Mabel Thor; and sister-in-law, Norma Thor.

Funeral service for Gerald will be at 11:00 AM on Saturday, De-cember 16, 2023 at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Waseca. Visi-tation will be held two hours prior to the service at the church. Inter-ment will be at New Hope Faith Cemetery in Comfrey, MN at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations pre-ferred to Tunnel to Towers Foun-dation (t2t.org) which Gerald considered a most deserving cause. Dsofuneral.com

Fae Whissemore

FAE DELAINE WHISSE-MORE, age 70, of Waseca passed away suddenly on December 7, 2023.

Born on February 3, 1953, in Long Prairie, Minn., Fae was the youngest daughter of Louis and Rosalie (Doese) Sadlemyer. She grew up on a dairy farm and at-tended the country schoolhouse in Gutches Grove. After graduating from Long Prairie High School, Fae moved to the Twin Cities.

It was on a trip to Lutsen with her sister, Susan, that Fae met Grant. The two were married on July 29, 1972, and moved to Owa-tonna for a short time until they purchased a home in Waseca. Fae worked briefly at E.F. Johnson Company before starting a home daycare so she could be at home to raise her two daughters. On Janu-ary 3, 1989, Fae started working for Waseca Public Schools as a paraprofessional. Fae touched the lives of so many children in Waseca. Countless times former students and daycare kids would approach her in town to share memories. In June of 2018, Fae re-tired from the school district. She enjoyed reading, crossword puz-zles, and doting on her two cats. She would never miss an episode of Days of Our Lives. She loved it when her daughters would visit and enjoyed watching her two grandsons grow up.

Fae is survived by her husband



Fae Whissemore

of 51 years, Grant Whissemore of Waseca; daughters: Tabitha Whissemore of Silver Spring, Md., and Stacey (Adam) Larson of Cottage Grove, Minn.; grandsons: Alec and Sam Larson also of Cottage Grove; sister, LuRae Christensen of Coon Rapids, Minn.; and brother, Rick (Carol) Sadlemyer of Long Prairie, Minn.; nieces, nephews, other re-latives, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents and sister Susan Colby.

Funeral Service will be 2:00 PM on Sunday, December 17, 2023, at Grace Lutheran Church in Waseca. Interment will be in Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis. Visitation will begin at 12:00 PM on Sunday and continue until the time of the service at church. DSOFuneral.com

William Evenson

William “Bill” Frederick Evenson was born on August 18th, 1955 in Red Wing, MN. He passed away on December 2, 2023.

Bill had a passion for nature and spending time outdoors. He spent nearly 30 years tree trimming start-ing in the Redwood Forest, Cali-fornia and ending with Asplundh Tree Service in Minnesota. He loved spending time with his daughters and unwinding with a good movie as well as catching live music and going fishing when

time allowed.

Survived by his two daughters, Megan McDurmont (Jesse) and Ashley Evenson , and ex-wife Sheila. He is also survived by his siblings, Ron Evenson (Rae), Tom Evenson (Kay), Sandee Evenson (Patrick), and Cathy Applen (Greg).

Bill is also preceded in death by his parents, Ron and Adelaide Evenson.

A Celebration of Life will be held in the spring.

Local art shines

Feature artist, Janesville native Jack Dahl

Waseca Art Center display

By TRISTAN GEHRING
Staff Writer

Two shows are currently on display at the Waseca Arts Center. Both will continue through January 6.

Showing in the side room is an every-other-year display which invites all interested members to submit their creations. Currently available for ap-preciation are works in many different media from about 15 different local artists.

In the main room, the featured artist is Reverend Jack Dahl, a watercolor painter who graduated from Janesville High School in 1957 and currently resides in Waseca.

Rev. Dahl holds two master's degrees, one of which is in art. Shortly after graduating high school, he joined the Navy and was deployed to Vietnam. He remained there until 1965. After re-turning he met his wife, whom he calls a “master gardener.” The pair were married in 1967 and have four children, all of whom Dahl says have been successful in life. “God has been good to us,” he says, attributing his good fortunes to prayer and the grace of God.

In his early marriage, Dahl maintained a studio where he first painted acrylics before transitioning to watercolors. “The kids were hungry,” he ex-plain-ed, and watercolor paintings can be produced and sold faster than acrylics.

In the 1980s, at 40 years old, Dahl went to semi-nary, was ordained, and was assigned to a church in Iowa. “I thought I could paint and minister at the same time, but I’m not a multitasker,” he ex-



Jack Dahl, a watercolor painter who graduated from Janesville High School in 1957, currently resides in Waseca. His art will be on display at the Waseca Art Center until January 6, 2024.

Pioneer photo by Tristan Gehring

plains. During his years in the ministry, Dahl vis-ited the homebound; this is a duty he chose to con-tinue into retirement.

Dahl retired from the ministry 17 years ago after 27 years of service; his goal was to return to paint-ing. When moving back home, Dahl says he and his wife viewed thirteen houses in Mankato before finding the home in Waseca they've settled into, with space for his painting and his wife's gardens.

Dahl takes photos of the things that inspire him: He says he composes the pictures with the intent they will serve as foundations for paintings. He then creates his watercolors. “You can feel my feelings,” he says about the emotions evoked by his works. “I love to make people feel well.” Dahl says trains are a favorite subject for him because of the level of detail they demand. Many of the paintings on display are of local scenes.

State Street Singers



The Waseca High School music program's State Street Singers, under the direction of Megan Kreinbring, performed for a joint meeting of the Waseca Rotary and Exchange clubs on December 6.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

County jail options shared with council

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

After the annual truth in taxation public hearing, the Waseca City Council listened to Waseca County Administrator Michael Johnson share facts and details about the county's plans for the county jail/and or its new justice center.

Johnson told council members that each option he was describing was purely hypothetical until the com-missioners make their final decision. He also stated all county residents are encouraged to attend a listening session—one at which county leaders hope to hear the public's opinions—regarding the topic on Tuesday, Dec. 12.

“Any decision affects Waseca greatly,” Johnson observed. “Waseca is the population hub of the county. This is a very difficult fiscal narrative to look at and requires public input.”

A regular Department of Correc-tions (DOC) inspection in May 2022 informed county leaders of what they already knew, that the jail was not in compliance and will not be allowed to continue in its current state. The jail does not have adequate exercise space, along with other various spac-ing issues.

“Physical infrastructure is the only thing wrong with the current facil-ity,” Johnson clarified.

Generally, jails last 20-25 years. Per the DOC, the Waseca County Jail has been operating since 1970 and was built in 1962. The DOC will be carrying out another annual inspec-tion in May and will issue further di-rectives at that time. Johnson pointed out that, even if construction of a new facility were approved and un-derway, there is no way the county will have a facility that meets DOC standards in place by the upcoming inspection.

A handful of well thought out, de-tailed plans were shared during Ad-ministrator Johnson's slide show presentation.

Options ranged in price from \$26 million to \$53 million. The cheaper options include a new “Justice Center,” a campus-like facility for court services offices, law enforce-ment workers and district court which would not include a new jail. This option would see the majority of justice-related services consoli-dated to one location. The new struc-ture would be to the west of the current courthouse, in what many might consider the “back parking lot.”

Other options include using the buildings already in place, and add-ing on.

Another option, the most expen-sive, includes a new Justice Center

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

and new county jail.

Johnson explained if the county chooses not to build a new jail, indi-viduals arrested and charged with crimes by Waseca County law en-forcement officers would likely be transported and detained at the Steele County detention center.

Johnson explained the county's budget could absorb a \$20 million project without raising its tax levy burden on homeowners. Asked about a timeline, Johnson reported that once a plan is approved and a con-struction plan agreed upon, building the new facility would likely require 18 to 24 months.

Upon learning Johnson's estima-tion that the staff and resources re-quired to house each inmate in the current Waseca County jail cost the county about \$144,000 a year, Waseca Mayor Randy Zimmerman observed: “\$144,000 is staggering. On average we spend \$7,000 per stu-dent on education... That's not an issue we'll solve here. It's just crazy.

Council member Jeremy Conrath asked about how this would affect other cities in Waseca County.

Johnson said the county wants as

little to change as possible. Persons who are arrested would be brought to a Waseca holding facility and then the county would handle everything—including any transportation to other locations—from there. Essentially nothing would change for law en-forcement officers in New Richland, Janesville, Waldorf and the surround-ing townships.

Asked about other funding sources, Johnson said if the county were to take federal funding dollars, it would have to follow federal stan-dards; the result, he postulated, would be a project no one could af-ford.

It was also pointed out that the county could choose not to build either a new jail or a justice center. Johnson revealed, though, that DOC inspectors faulted the county for its current practice of bringing prisoners to court using pathways also shared by members of the public. This shortfall and others will need to be fixed, and a new structure is nearly the only way to do so.

“We absolutely have to have a plan by May 1,” Johnson concluded.

The next DOC inspection is ex-pected in May or early June.

Two listening sessions were held Tuesday at the East Annex in Waseca.

\$4,500 check was displayed—money raised by CPKC to be donated to the Janesville area food shelf.

Tony Staloch from the food shelf noted that it had received the most food donations – 1,135 pounds in contrast to some 800 odd pounds in previous years.

“We actually got a few more vol-unteers, so that was a good thing, too,” he said.

Collaboration. Scale. Excellence.

GUARDIAN ENERGY

Janesville
507-234-5000

■ Show

from Page 1

People traveled from different towns, including Mankato residents Luke and Chelsea Hoff. They were among the many families in the crowd with four-year-old Adaline in

a wagon and one-year-old Bill who liked to stay close to his dad.

Chelsea said she had seen the event come across Facebook days earlier and set aside the time to go see it.

“I didn’t expect it to be so busy,” Chelsea said.

When the train arrived, one car specially outfitted to serve as a stage opened up and a 20-minute concert

budget featuring well-known musical artists Tenille Towns and Breland. Each performed three songs. Towns announced, “Wow! What a crowd. I was told 2,500 people live in Janes-ville, but there must be at least that many people here now.”

Also an element of the stage pres-entation was having Arnoldt and school superintendent Jeremy Erler take a few moments to speak. A giant

Levy increase cut by more than half

By JESSICA LUTGENS
Staff Writer

The 2024 tax levy increase has so far been reduced by over half, it was announced during the New Richland City Council's second meeting of the month on Monday, Nov. 27. The preliminary tax levy, approved in September, was set at about 19%; at the time of the meeting, City Administrator Tony Martens informed the council that it was around 8.44%. Martens expects the final increase to be at about 9% when it is approved at the next meeting on Dec. 11.

"I think it's commendable," said council member Loren Skelton. "It was twice this two months ago."

Council member Jason Casey asked whether the tax levy could be further reduced by discussing cutting costs with department heads.

"We are to the point where we are at the cost of doing business," said Martens, adding that to reduce the budget further would mean cutting services for the community.

The care center report was presented by Bob Johannsen, who stated that the average census during October was 34.9. The center continues to use a high amount of agency staff, roughly 65-70% in October, which costs a considerable amount. Johannsen noted that the center is still looking for staff, specifically CNAs, RNs or LPNs, and laundry and dietary aide workers.

As for projects at the center, 25 self-contained air conditioning units have been purchased and are being installed in resident rooms; 10 new beds have been purchased, and tablets were purchased to replace desktop computers to improve Point of Care charting. The report was approved.

NEW RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL

Shell Johnson presented the PeopleService report. As she shared information regarding the wastewater treatment facility, she noted the primary clarifier was drained and three remaining gate valves have been installed in the basement. Issues with the overhead service door at the shop were discussed, and repairs to the wastewater lift station were approved at a cost of \$2,317.73. The report was approved.

Eric Hendrickson presented the Streets and Water report, stating that 35 blue cards were delivered in October resulting in two shutoffs. A fire hydrant leak earlier in the month showed fittings that were frozen/welded to the bottom of the hydrant, resulting in a new hydrant being required. The council approved a cost of \$7,488.45 for the new hydrant along with \$1,533 for carbines for the snow plow wing. The report was approved.

In new business, one Homestake lot application, which was already approved by the EDA, was approved by the council. A bullet-proof vest for the new police officer was approved at a cost of up to \$1,500, half of which will be reimbursed by the state and the other half by the federal government if funds are available.

In the administrator's report, it was noted that the city did not receive the small cities grant for the hydraulic study, and completion of final requirements for the USDA grants for turnout gear and the warning siren is in progress. Resolution 23-20 amending the city fee schedule was approved, and the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Council sides with existing business

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

Following a truth in taxation public hearing and a presentation about the state of the Waseca County Jail and a potential new justice center, the regular work of the Waseca City Council got underway Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023.

Nancy Walters runs a Home-stead goods store on North State Street. A new coffee shop is set to be constructed across the street from her property, on the west side of State Street across from the former Family Video store, along the same street as Waseca's Past and Present.

Walters received a letter informing her that all but two of the parking spots along Eleventh Avenue would be voided with the addition of a "lane shift" set to accommodate the new coffee shop.

After hearing Walters' emotional story, council members later decided unanimously not to approve the proposed lane shift.

"We like to be pro businesses, but not at the expense of another established business," Mayor Randy Zimmerman stated.

In the consent agenda, the airport land lease agreement was moved to the action agenda. It was eventually unanimously ap-

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

proved after further discussion. Also, the airport board welcomed board members Kaitlyn Hoehn and Ben Priebe to their second term.

A number of street construction projects were discussed.

Feasibility studies and public hearings dates for Eleventh Avenue NW and also Eighth Street NE were approved.

When discussion came to the planned project on Eighth Street, council members addressed whether the street surface should be asphalt or concrete, eventually deciding the feasibility study will be for concrete at an additional expense of about \$500,000. Council members stated their belief the extra cost is worthwhile since a concrete surface is likely to maintain its structural integrity 20 to 30 years longer than an asphalt one. This project uses funds from the city and county. Both entities agreed that property owners along the street should be assessed at a level aligned with the cost of an asphalt surface rather than the more expensive concrete.

The meeting adjourned a little after 9 p.m.



Waseca County leaders with new dispatcher Sarah Weed and newly promoted sergeants Joseph Fliflet and Josh Langr during the most recent meeting of the Waseca County Commissioners. Pioneer photos by Deb Bently



Joseph Fliflet has been a patrol deputy with the Waseca County Sheriff Department since 2016, and also went through the promotional process to be appointed a sergeant. Here, Joseph's daughters Ashley and Avery place the pin on his uniform.

County from Page 1

need."

"Tax abatements are on the improvement in value made on the property, not on the value of the property altogether," pointed out Johnson. "It's illogical to say that anyone else's taxes went up because of a tax abatement, because that is definitely not the case. Full taxes are still being paid on the original value of the piece of property."

Commissioners heard a summary of the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) plan. Under state statute, the county must have a plan to prevent the spread and respond to reports of invasive plant species in area waters. A major part of that plan is having watercraft inspectors who check boats as they enter and leave selected lakes. They not only provide assurance the "clean, drained, dry" expectations are followed as boats move among bodies of water, they also raise public awareness of the risk of

invasive species. Mentioned during the report were having identified Eurasian Water Milfoil in both Reeds and Clear Lakes. The AIS project currently has a balance of \$190,000; it was pointed out, however, that it might be helpful to keep a strong fund balance in case an aggressive response is needed for some future AIS problem.

Commissioners were also informed regarding the weed harvester on Clear Lake. The harvester has received state approval to "harvest" up to 98 designated acres of the lake's 650-acre surface area. In 2022, the first year the harvester was active, 75 acres were harvested. Some 200 truckloads of pondweed were collected and removed.

In 2023, the harvester had state approval to harvest 167 acres. Only 40 truckloads of pondweed were collected.

It was stated that, although it seemed the harvester was showing reduced effectiveness from 2022 to 2023, it might be an indicator that the lake has less of the invasive plants, which would be regarded as a gain.

The final action taken during the



Waseca County Sheriff Department Deputy Josh Langr was promoted to Sergeant during the December 7 meeting of the Waseca County Board of Commissioners. Langr has been with the sheriff's department since 2004, when he began as a jailer. He later became a deputy and recently went through the promotional process to be appointed a sergeant.

It is customary for a family member to pin the sergeant emblem on the promoted officer's uniform. Here, Josh's brother Christopher, who is an officer with the St. Paul Police Department, places the pin in Josh's uniform while their mother Joan, looks on. Langr is a 2nd generation law enforcement officer with his father Phil having retired from the Waseca County Sheriff's Office after serving in law enforcement for 30 years.

meeting was to grant a conditional use permit which will allow Windy Hills Sportsman Campground, near Janesville, to increase the number of campsites available on its grounds. Owner Grant Wildgrube told commissioners he will be building an additional 15 sites, most of which will be "seasonal," meaning recreational vehicles will remain parked there for the full camping season. He also reported he would be adding a mound septic system which will service the

new sites. Commissioners approved the request unanimously. Commissioner Malterer stated the campground has been a benefit both to the community and to the economy of the Janesville area, mentioning that the facility has allowed the city community education department to offer swimming lessons in its pool for the past few years.

A look at Waseca's 2024 budget

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

Waseca finance director Alicia Fischer summarized the city's 2023 budget during a legally required "truth in taxation" meeting held the evening of Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023.

Fischer used a PowerPoint presentation to show an overview and numerous details regarding city taxes, the 2024 budget, tax levies, and impact on property owners.

It appears the city's final levy will be between a .8% decrease or a .8% increase for taxpayers. The majority of council members present indicated they preferred the increase. Mayor Randy Zimmerman and council member John Mansfield appear to be the most adamant advocates for a decrease.

Due to a decrease in median assessed value of homes this year,

homeowners will be paying about 4% less in taxes for 2024 compared to 2023.

This year's final levy expects to total \$5.6 million, down about \$300,000 from last year's. Compared with similar-sized cities, Waseca ranks relatively low on total amount of taxes levied, with the city of Baxter, population 8,800 levying more than \$8.6 million.

The estimated tax rate capacity is down about 7%. Tax capacity is calculated as 1% of a home's median tax value; Depending on a homeowner's tax classification, that number can shift either up or down. The City of Waseca's tax levy comes in at 71.7% of that "tax capacity." For comparison, last year the tax rate capacity was 78%, 91% in 2020, and 92.6% in 2019. New Richland, Janesville and Waldorf, also for comparison's

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

sake, have preliminary capacities at 97.5%, 65%, and 127% respectively.

Finance director Alicia Fischer explained where taxpayer dollars go per \$100 collected.

In the model provided, \$55.19 of every \$100 in taxes collected from Waseca homeowners goes to general fund taxes. Of that, the police department garners (\$21.48), administration (\$6.67), streets (\$6.48), recreation (\$8.27), fire department (\$3.87), engineering (\$4.19), community development (\$3.32), and \$0.93 for other expenses.

The rest of that \$100 goes for capital levy (\$29.25), debt services (\$9.89), tax abatement (\$3.75), and waterpark debt (\$1.92).

The revenue collected by the city comes largely from the state in the form of local government aid (40.1%) and the rest from taxes and utility transfers.

Director Fischer encouraged homeowners to contact Waseca County Assessor Brock Nelson with any questions about home value. She encouraged anyone with budget/levy questions to contact her or interim city manager Carl Sonnenberg.

Brock Nelson, Waseca County office: 507-835-0640; email brock.nelson@co.waseca.mn.us

Alicia Fischer: 507-835-9746; email:financedirector@ci.waseca.mn.us

Carl Sonnenberg: 507-835-9713; email: CarlS@ci.waseca.mn.us

The final budget is expected to be approved at the Dec. 19 city council meeting.

PHEASANT CAFE

• SINCE 1942 •
Great Home Cooking • Catering
Full Breakfast Menu • Daily Lunch Specials
104 State Street, Waseca MN • 835-1259

BATTENFIELD LAWN CARE

Lawn Maintenance & Residential Snow Removal
Zach Battenfield
507-521-0226
zachbattenfield@gmail.com

UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP!

DAVE'S Body Shop

Waseca, Minnesota

715 S State St,
Waseca, MN
(507) 835-8615

Hours:
Sat-Sun Closed
M-F 8 AM-5 PM

Ali and Willy Malecha are excited to continue to bring you the excellent service you have come to expect at Dave's Body Shop!

Serving Waseca and the surrounding areas for more than 30 years!



WASECA FLORAL

Life's Moments Deserve Beautiful Flowers - Let Us Help!

810 N. State St.
Waseca, MN 56093
(507) 835-3790
wasecafloral.com
rickmorris982@gmail.com

Family owned and operated since 1972

Store Hours
Mon-Fri 8 AM-6 PM
Sat 9 AM-5 PM
Sun Closed

Defying the odds

Family remembers harrowing experience

Wadd family hosts blood drive in honor of Mason

By STAN POPOVICH

A December 29 blood drive scheduled from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Farmamerica Community Room (7367 360th Avenue, Waseca) is in honor of a Southern-Minnesota teen who probably would not have survived infancy if he had not received blood donations.

Seventeen-year-old Mason Wadd is not your typical eleventh-grader. Not only is he active in his school's speech, theatre and drama clubs, a member of 4-H and Future Farmers of America, he's also an entrepreneur who owns and co-operates a 5-acre sweetcorn business with his sister Kloe. A strapping young man with a bright future ahead, you would never know that Mason was born extremely premature at 26 weeks due to a rare blood antibody disorder; he needed numerous blood transfusions to help save his life.

At just 18 weeks it was discovered that Mason had inherited an antigen (Kell) that caused antibodies to destroy his red blood cells – leading to severe fetal anemia. Even before he was born, Mason received his first blood transfusion through his umbilical cord. Two

more transfusions followed and soon after, Mason was born at 26 weeks weighing just 2.8 pounds and measuring 14" long.

Mason had a rough start. The preemie was in the NICU on a ventilator for the first 5 days of his life. During his 77-day stay in the NICU, Mason required surgery to have a blood clot removed from his brain and also received an additional eight blood transfusions due to being anemic before he was strong enough to go home. Remarkably, the Wadds were able to take Mason home from the hospital just days before his original due date.

"We credit blood with helping save our son's life," says his mother, Kari Wadd. "Without blood being available when Mason needed it, he may not have survived."

In November 2022, Mason faced the possibility of needing more blood products during a mechanical heart valve replacement surgery. The hospital had to ensure they had blood available if a transfusion was required, but they were able to use Mason's own recycled blood.

When Kari heard the Red Cross had a blood shortage this fall, she felt compelled to help by hosting a

Red Cross blood drive in honor of Mason. "It's the perfect time to do our part now that Mason is old enough to understand the importance that blood has played in his life," Kari says. "This blood drive is a celebration of Mason's one-year post heart surgery and a way to help raise awareness of the need for blood donations."

The Red Cross has always held a special place in Kari's heart. In 1998, when her family's farm was hit by a tornado that ravished the St. Peter, Minnesota community, the Red Cross was there to help. "The only thing that was left on our farm was the house and the Red Cross came and asked us what we needed," Kari vividly recalls.

In college, Kari went on to help organize Red Cross blood drives and still helps at community blood drives. Even Mason's sister Kloe advocates for blood donations through her Miss Southern Minnesota platform and Community Service Initiatives while competing in the Miss Minnesota competition. "It's so much a part of our lives – she knows how important it is too," says Kari.

The Wadds are grateful to blood donors and encourage others to give



The Wadd family from left Kloe, Trent, Kari and Mason.

to help ensure a stable blood supply. "When it's something so simple to do – it doesn't cost you a thing, just time – we want to encourage others to donate so if their family is ever in need, they wouldn't have to worry about blood being there."

Mason is thankful for blood donors too. "I feel guilty even asking others to donate because I can't myself, but it is so important," he says. Persons interested in donating on Dec. 29 can contact 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit

RedCrossBlood.org and enter "Farmamerica" to schedule an appointment. The same contact information will make it possible to make an appointment for any Red Cross blood drive.



The Pastor's Column

Hard to sit with people you don't like

By PASTOR KEN ANDRS

The table. Not so much the meal or the food, but the table is important. Every Christmas at my family's house, we could not open presents until the table was full and the meal was shared. I have had good meals and bad meals at Christmas, but the common factor for all the meals was the table. We sat down at the table together and ate a meal.

It is hard to sit at a table with people that you don't like, you need to look at one another. You are in relationship with each other, you are vulnerable together, and you are sharing things in common. The table is where we are most open and can't escape relationship. When we sit down together, we must deal with our relationships one to another.

Paul reminds us in Colossians 3: 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

As God's chosen people we have been given a high calling and responsibility. We invite people to our table, physically and figuratively, and share our lives with one another. Our calling is to be the hands and feet of Christ in relationship with those people that need to be in right relationship with Him. We are to invite people to God's table and join in the fellowship.

God's table is large, sometimes we are the sinners in need of forgiveness, sometimes it is others. We do not know the pains and hurts others experienced in their lives, nor the hurts that they hold onto. We do know how we are to respond to all situations.

As we prepare for the table we set it purposefully with the implements that are needed to enjoy the meal. Even as we prepare the table, we are to prepare ourselves to enjoy the meal with others. We deal with ourselves and our attitudes and put on the very best of Christ for the benefit of others.

Let us prepare our own hearts with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. In doing so we expand our table to make allowances for others. We make room in our hearts to compassionately forgive and offer the hope of Christ.

When we sit down at the table with one another this Christmas season, let us do so with vulnerability. Let us do as Christ has done. He offered forgiveness to those who deserved no forgiveness. He extended relationship to those that hurt others, He was willing to pay the price of sin for His enemies. Through His sacrifice and forgiveness we have been given the opportunity for unity at our tables.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-835-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m. * * * 4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m. * * * FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m. * * * 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. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH 401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca 507-833-1703 Sundays 9:00 a.m. * * * ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH 314 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-2647 Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m. * * * FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-4548 (office email: 1cwaseca@hickorytech.net) Worship Sunday 10 a.m. * * * GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m. * * * SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca 507-835-1222 Worship Saturday 5:15 p.m., Sundays 8:00 and 10:00 a.m., weekdays 8:30 a.m. Tues., Wed. and Fri., 7:00 a.m. Thurs. * * * REAL LIFE CHURCH 620 W Elm Ave, Waseca	507-607-8245 Sunday worship 10 a.m. * * * CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS 1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca 507-835-4640 Sacrament meeting 10:00 a.m. * * * GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 1221 8th St SE, Waseca 507-835-2213 Sunday worship 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.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. * * * 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 * * * ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Otisco, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship * * * 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 * * * FIRST CONGREGATIONAL New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Pamela Jensen Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * * 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 * * *	VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship * * * 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 * * * ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Father Brian Mulligan Saturday - 5 p.m. Mass * * * FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Rev. Michael Mathews, pastor Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class * * * IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship * * * ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Pastor Ava Adams-Morris Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship * * * ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship * * * TRINITY LUTHERAN Wilton Township Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor Sunday - 10:30 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 * * * TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 412 N. Main Street, Janesville	Interhim Pastor Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:15 a.m. Worship * * * JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 401 N. West St., Janesville Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship * * * 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) * * * ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH 307 W. 2nd St, Janesville 10 a.m. - Mass * * * FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 Owen St., Janesville Pastor Sarah Krolak * * * ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH Alma City, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Sunday - 10 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 * * * 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 * * * NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.
--	--	--	--



Daniel J. Johnson ACCOUNTING LLC

115 North State Street, Waseca, MN
(507) 201-2484

Our Services

- Financial Planning
- Accounting Services
- Bookkeeping
- Payroll Services
- Tax Planning & Preparation
- Return Preparation Services
- Estate and Trust Planning

PERSONALIZED PRINTING & APPAREL



PRINT LOCAL!

Barb & Mark Buker
100 S. STATE ST - WASECA MN
PHONE: (507) 835-7555
INFO@PPRINTWASECA.COM

WE PRINT

BUSINESS CARDS, SIGNS, BROCHURES, PACKAGING, MULTIPART FORMS, LABELS, ENVELOPES, POSTCARDS, EVENT TICKETS, FLYERS, ADVERTISING, CARDS, ...AND EVERYTHING ELSE!

& DESIGN

INSURE CAREFULLY. DREAM FEARLESSLY.

CALL (507) 835-2770 FOR A NO-OBLIGATION FREE QUOTE.



American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I.
American Family Insurance Company,



Matthew R. Petsinger Agency, LLC
Matthew Petsinger, Agent
101 S State St, Waseca
MRPAgencyLLC.com

6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783
006441 - Rev. 11/15 ©2015 - 10793941

Argus Archives

100 years ago

-Congressman Anderson has been notified by the postoffice department that three names eligible to appointment as postmaster of Janesville have been certified to by the civil service commission - Mathew W. Keeley, the present postmaster, Fred B. Volz and Fred G. Fratzke. The examination was held last June. A selection will be made within the next two or three weeks. In the meantime, the supporters of the respective eligibles are putting in their work.

-Several towns along the line of the Northwestern road affected by the train service have taken up the matter of restoring the trains suspended last July. It is not overstatng the fact when we say that Janesville is probably interested to a greater degree than any other town. The two trains referred to are No. 6 that passed this point at 1:54 p.m. and No. 507 due here at 7:00 p.m. these two trains more than all others combined gave to Janesville and its people opportunities unexcelled in getting to Mankato and return and to Waseca and return.

-Thursday afternoon the Town Hall was completely filled by an audience, some of whom came from as far as Pemberton, to hear Colonel Dan Morgan Smith, commander of the "Battalion of Death" in the great war. The speech had been extensively advertised through posters sent out by the National Anti-Saloon League from its headquarters in Ohio. Letters to many people from the same source also heralded the event. This was supplemented by readers and display advertising in the local paper, contributed for the good of the cause.

-The editor does not want anyone to send him any more copies of his paper in which they find mistakes. If they find a perfect copy, however, he will pay a big price for it. If the fool critic who hunts for mistakes in the newspapers would find them all, he would be kept busy. We will be pleased to buy copies of any paper which can be proven entirely free from errors, either typographically or in statements of fact.

-Like all its preceding events, the supper and bazaar given by the ladies of St. Ann's congregation held on Wednesday, the 6th, at the Town Hall, was a great success. Hundreds availed themselves of the privilege and opportunity to partake of the supper served from five o'clock. Later the various articles upon which chances had been sold were disposed of. It was as genuinely a happy even in this respect as it was alluring and enjoyable.

75 years ago

-Lads were "hot" - Waterville defeated by score of 41-27 - after losing to New Richland High School in basketball, the Golden Bears jumped right back into the win column Tuesday night by trouncing the fast Buccaneers of Waterville High School by a good point margin, the score reading 41-27 when the final whistle sounded. Coach Chiodo's lads showed a marked improvement over the ragged play displayed at New Richland when they lost 26-19.

-The Janesville Water and Light Board is offering \$50.00 in prizes for a combination of outside and inside Christmas lighting of Janesville homes over the Christmas season as follows: 1st prize, \$20.00; 2nd prize, \$15; 3rd prize, \$10; and 4th prize \$5. The contest will be open to all residents of the community except members of the Water and Light Board, their families, and employees of the local Municipal Utilities.

-In a setting of white tapers and white chrysanthemums, a Twilight Recital was presented by the piano pupils of Ruth Vivian Westby at the high school auditorium. Pupils taking part in the musical program ranged from six years of age to adults, as follows: Laura Ewert, Alverna Berndt Schroeder, Lois Erdman, Kathleen Galler, Oloris Dugan, Patty Janson, Beulah Britton, Ardis ?Heath, Joan Gardner, Louise Galler, Chucky Arnoldt, Diane Sommer, Kyle Glynn, Joanne Strom and Jeanine Strom of Elysian, Roger Wiste, Fern Priem, Jean Claire Pedersen, Jane Strunk, Mary Helen Galler and Sally Schoenstedt.

-Once again no accidents of loss of time or serious injury have been reported in the county this week. About one third of all accidents occur in our homes, and falls are the most numerous of these accidents. Right now ice is probably the worst hazard. Gravel, ashes, or salt should be scattered generously over all slippery places as soon as they are discovered. When salt is used, the ice melts rather quickly so that it can be cleared off the sidewalk.

-Chuck Scheuneman, Janesville lightweight amateur boxer, will again be a co-headliner on the amateur boxing card sponsored by the Mankato Junior Chamber of Commerce scheduled for Saturday night, December 13, in the Mankato armory. Scheuneman, runner up to Dick Mays for the district lightweight crown a year ago and considered the likely contender for the title this year, will be matched with John Hennessy of Rochester in one of two main event fights of the evening.

50 years ago

-How's the artificial Christmas tree business affecting the sale of fresh trees? That's the question the Argus set out to answer by visiting the Joe Britton and Rod Searle farms. Both area men sell "real" Christmas trees. The Brittons buy their trees up north; the Searles have been growing trees for the past 10 years. Both men are aware that some people are turning to artificial trees for a variety of reasons, but neither has any trouble selling fresh trees. "We can't see where artificial trees have cut in that much," Britton said. "We get 100 trees every year and don't have any trouble selling them. Of course, I would hate to try and sell 200!"

-Robert Hendricks, who has been serving as a Vocational Adjustment Coordinator in the Waseca County Schools has resigned effective January 1, 1973. He developed Vocational Rehabilitation plans with handicapped students who were preparing for work while they completed their secondary education in various community schools. Mr. Hendricks will be assuming a position as Placement Director at the University of Minnesota Technical College, Waseca.

-For sale - 1973 Berters 44 Nitro Snowmobile. Jerel Cowdin, Phone 234-5321. So reads the classified advertisement Jerel Cowdin placed in the Argus this week after completing his short, and not so sweet, snowmobile season. The Janesville man went out riding his brand new Nitro G machine on Lake Elysian Saturday when he decided to turn around. The machine his a ridge of ice, turned over and dumped its rider. The snowmobile didn't get so much as a scratch, but Cowdin limped away with a dislocated shoulder and several pulled ligaments. His doctor told him, "No work for three weeks and no snowmobiling for three months!" "It was only my third ride on the machine," Cowdin said, "but what else can I do but sell it and start over next year?"

-The District 830 School Board learned Monday night their application for the "Right to Read" program had been accepted for the second phase. This means Janesville will become one of 200 Minnesota schools to become involved in the new reading program during the coming months.

-Steve Erdman of Janesville will be participating winter quarter in an internship program developed by the Mankato State Accounting Department. Steve will be working for Elmer Fox & Company of Minneapolis. The internship program is designed to give accounting majors on-the-job training at public accounting firms throughout the area. The students work full-time and are salaried at the same level a new employee would be.

25 years ago

-The way the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton wrestling team has been performing as of late at the Don Eustice Memorial Wrestling Tournament, the tournament committee may have to come up with a new name for the tourney. The Bulldogs made it three championships in a row at Waseca by racking up 188 points. JWP won the last two years, and agains in 1994. The 1995 tournament was canceled because of poor weather.

-Time is flying by for students and staff in the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton School District. With plans to begin construction in May, the JWP School Board revised its current school calendar for an early dismissal in May. The district will will dismiss school on Friday, May 15, and will hold graduation on Sunday, May 17.

Back in the day (Waseca)

25 Years Ago

- Fifty-one Waseca homes and five businesses have entered the 1997 Great Holiday Lighting Contest in Waseca. Judging will take place Thursday night between 8 and 10 p.m. Participants are asked to have their lights on during those hours. Homeowners will participate in three different categories: religious, traditional, and contemporary. First place winners will receive \$100 savings bonds, second place winners will receive \$50 savings bonds, and third place winners will receive \$20 city utility credits. In addition, all participants will have a chance in a drawing, in which 20 \$10 utility credits will be given away.

- In its first title defense of the year, a veteran Waseca gymnastics' team had no problems. The Jays, coming off a 10-0 season that included winning both the South Central Conference dual and tournament titles, rolled past St. Peter 137.45 to 123.25 Thursday. Waseca swept the vault and floor exercise, while placing first and second in bars and first and third on the beam. The Jays' best event was the 35.5 they scored in the floor exercise.

- A man named Homer Land kept local authorities busy after he escaped from a TransCor America prisoner transport vehicle in Owatonna at noon Thursday. The Waseca County Sheriff's department had five officers involved in the manhunt. Sheriff Ed Kubat said that his office coordinated with Steele County authorities to assist in the search. Although Warden Jim Tippy wouldn't comment on what the Waseca Federal Correction Institute's transport policy was, he did say that it would probably have more guards than TransCor America had. The private company had only two guards for 11 prisoners. The escape occurred when one of the guards went into Burger King to buy lunch for the 11. Three of the inmates overtook the remaining guard and left with the van.

50 Years Ago

- Kevin Kanne, Barb LaMont and Gary Reinhardt, all of Waseca, have just finished participation this fall in the Mankato State College Warrior Marching Band. The band, under the direction of Dr. Clayton Tiede, played at two home football games and made its annual trip to Sioux City, Iowa, where it performed in the Morningside-Mankato State football game. It concluded the season with the third annual indoor marching band concert.

- Two accidents were reported in Waseca Tuesday with the first heavy snowfall of the season and Chief of Police Earl Halleck said both accidents could have been avoided. Both fender benders occurred at intersections. Halleck said that "people must know that intersections with stop signs are going to be slippery after a fresh snow." He said that with many cars stopping at the signs it causes the snow to become compacted and form a slick layer of ice. He added that not only the stop sign intersections but all streets become slippery after numerous cars have traveled over them. Halleck said that if each person cut his driving speed by at least 10 miles per hour it would stop a lot of needless accidents.

- The board of education met in a special noon session Tuesday at Central Middle School. The meeting was primarily devoted to authorizing bids for capital improvements. The first consideration was the proposed site plan for the new Waseca High School. The board had previously requested Foss, Englested & Foss, the architectural firm for the building, to go ahead while designing a masterplan for the high school site. The idea is to insure that the site is not developed in a piecemeal or haphazard fashion, but rather progresses logically as funds become available. Also requiring capital improvements are the elementary and middle school libraries which are in need of various types of revamping.

75 Years Ago

- Some 2,500 small pickerel which were stranded in the creek between Watkins and Rice lakes, have been saved by the efforts of sportsmen and are now in Clar lake growing into bigger and better fish. There were several hundred transferred last summer and over 2,000 were saved in the last 10 days when members of the Sportsmen's Club and others got busy. The ice was broken in the creek and the fish trapped, put in cans and taken to Clear Lake.

- Fox hunting has turned into a real sport this fall in Waseca county and hunters have turned out to make an extra dollar while they enjoy the sport, according to Art Brisbane, county auditor. Monday two hunters brought in six red fox pelts to be checked by Toy Tollefson, deputy game warden, who authorizes payments of bounties by the county auditor. They were Ervin and Marvin Flitter who had the six red fox pelts as proof of their hunting luck. The six were half of the 12 killed in the past three weeks by a group. Foxes bring \$6 bounties, \$2 from the county and \$4 from the state, and about \$1 for the hides.

- The American Legion Sunday afternoon observed December 7, 1941, the day that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and World War II started. [Note that the war had been going on for awhile at that point.] The American Legion firing squad formed at the Legion hall and marched to the corner of State and Elm. Following three volleys and a minute of silence, taps were played.

100 Years Ago

- "Tell the people we have the biggest and best poultry show in southern Minnesota." That was the statement made last night by Dr. Edmund Mackey, president of the Waseca County Poultry Association, to the editor of the Herald. You may or may not take the Doctor's word as final, but a visit to the Lewer, Woodhall, Cunningham garage will convinced the most skeptical that this year's poultry show is certainly the best ever. There are over 1,000 birds on display, representing the finest specimens of the most popular breeds of turkeys, ducks, geese and chickens to be found in Minnesota.

- T. F. Slattery has opened a new cash and carry grocery store in the building formerly occupied by Tom Hagerty's lunch room. Mr. Slattery had several years' experience in conducting a store at Greenland, le Sueur county, and is well equipped to care for his customers.

- M. J. Broderick returned last week from northwestern Minnesota with a fine bunch of high grade dairy cows which he bought from farmers who could not afford to keep them over winter. He bought the animals in Red Lake, Pennington and Marshall counties and got them at very reasonable figures considering the quality. He says the farmers up there had a big crop of potatoes and can get nothing for them. He was told that one man who shipped a carload East was notified that the shipment didn't bring enough to pay the freight. About the only marketable product these farmers have is their dairy cows and they must sell some of them in order to meet necessary expenses. Many farmers who bought land at a high figure two and three years ago would sell at most any price now but can't get a buyer. Southern Minnesota farmers are on easy street in comparison with a lot of those in the northwestern part of the state, Mr. Broderick says.

Looking Back (New Richland)

100 Years Back - 1923

Robbers broke into the Barden & Koplen clothing store at Janesville Monday evening or Tuesday morning and made away with men's clothing valued at between \$2,500 and \$3,000. The loot comprised 100 suits and one sheep lined brown overcoat.

The manager of the Broadway Theatre at Albert Lea turned the show house over to the city of Albert Lea on Thursday, December 13, and the entire receipts of the three shows that day went to the care of the needy of the city during the winter months.

The toll charge for the big bridge over the Mississippi river at Winona has been removed the past week and Winona citizens held a genuine jollification on Saturday over the event.

The Emil T. Hanson home in Otisco is under quarantine for scarlet fever. Harold Hanson, who is afflicted, is improving.

Dr. H. O. Hagen has received the many parts for a new X-ray machine which he has purchased from the Wappler Electric company. A man is expected from the factory within a few days to install the machine.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Recknor and family, Mr. and Mrs. Enoch Root and Melvin and Marie O'Riley spent Sunday evening at the Earl Nelson home.

Cyril Hawkins was elected captain of the Waldorf boys' basket ball team and Miss Margaret Dinnéen is captain of the girls' team. Both teams won in a contest with the Freeborn players Friday night. The boys by a 21 to 9 score and the girls, 31 to 19.

77 Years Back - 1946

A normal Yuletide is again with us in New Richland with Christmas street decorations in place and the business section alight with vari-colored bulbs shining forth from beautiful evergreen boughs. It's a sight to make one feel that peace is again with us even though for an indefinite length of time.

By virtue of a tie of 123 votes, the village of Ellendale, 11 miles east of here, remains in the "dry" column.

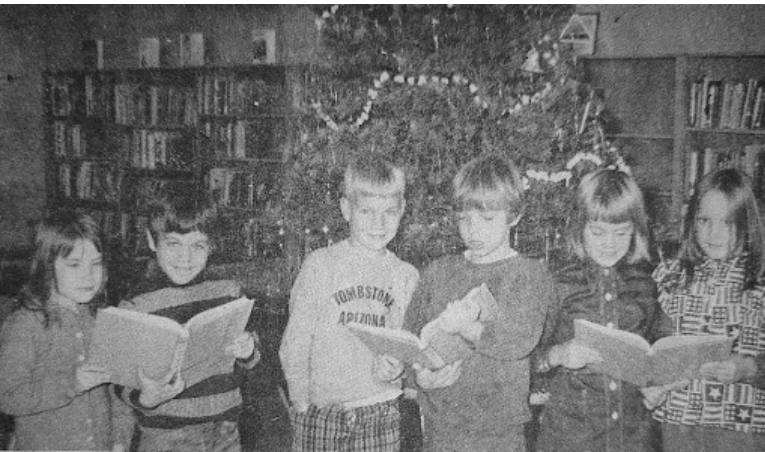
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Anderson entertained for dinner Sunday: Mr. and Mrs. Ray McMullen of Albert Lea, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Schaezke and children of Waseca, Mr. and Mrs. Milan Anderson and family, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Anderson and family and James Paulson.

Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Hendrickson and son, Gordon, and Mrs. G.O. Hatle attended the fellowship dinner given for returned service men and women and their families, Thursday evening at the Hartland Lutheran church.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Nelson visited their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Skelton, at Medford Tuesday afternoon. That evening they were supper guests of Mrs. Nelson's sister, Mrs. Kate Dodge at Waseca.

Mrs. George Keen, Mrs. I.B. Swenson, Mrs. Oluf Liane, Mrs. Rudolph Plitingsrud, Mrs. Emil Finseth, Mrs. Oscar Rugroden and Mrs. Andrew Loken attended Ladies aid at the Trinity church parlors Thursday afternoon.

50 Years Back - 1973



These New Richland first graders have been busy practicing with all of the other elementary students for their annual Christmas program. They are Kristina Johannsen, Michael Simser, Dennis Bolduan, Todd Sailor, Carla Roesler and Tracy Wagner.

25 Years Back - 1998

The first place prize of \$50 in the residential competition of the Christmas lighting contest sponsored by the New Richland Commercial Club was Anita Staloch. Tom Gislasons placed second and received \$30. The third place prize of \$20 was awarded to the display at the Russell Hanson home.

The Panther girls' basketball team more than doubled their opponents' score when they defeated LeCenter, 53-24, Tuesday, December 8. Friday they downed Glenville-Emmons 50-40. The local squad, the Gopher Conference defending champions, are now 5-0 overall and 2-0 in conference play.

The New Richland Trail Association installed a cement bridge over Boot Creek, west of New Richland, last Friday morning. Among those who spent a good part of the day working on the installation were Scott Routh, Paul Stennes and Milton Nelson.

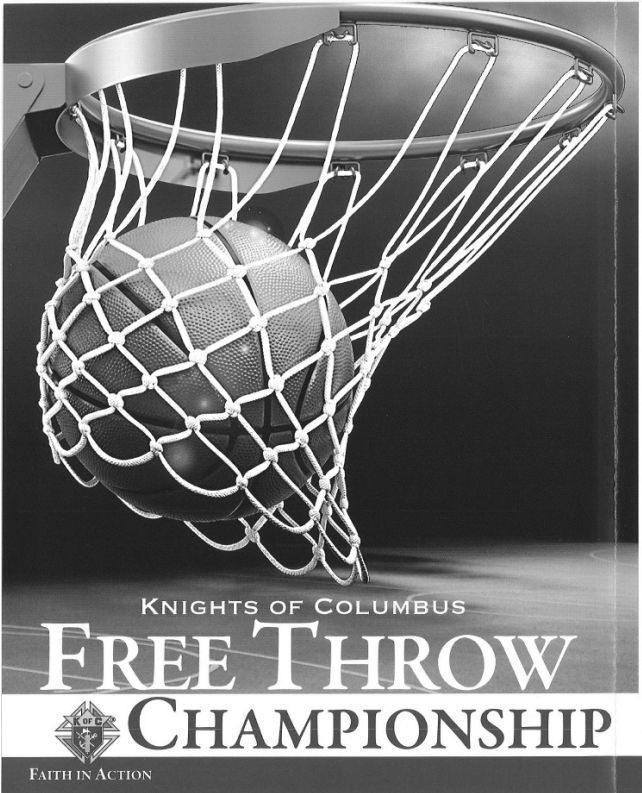
Farewell service for pastor Matthews Jan. 7 in Waldorf

Farewell service for Waldorf Pastor Michael Matthews January 7, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.

After 24 years, Pastor Matthews has accepted a call to service in Arizona. Following the farewell service will be a potluck dinner. All are invited.

Free throw championship Jan. 7 at Waseca high school gym

The Knights of Columbus are sponsoring a free throw and three point contest for boys and girls ages 9-14 on January 7, 2024 at Waseca high school beginning at 3 p.m. Please contact Jeff Kummerfeldt at 507-676-2166 if interested.



Boys and Girls, Ages 9-14

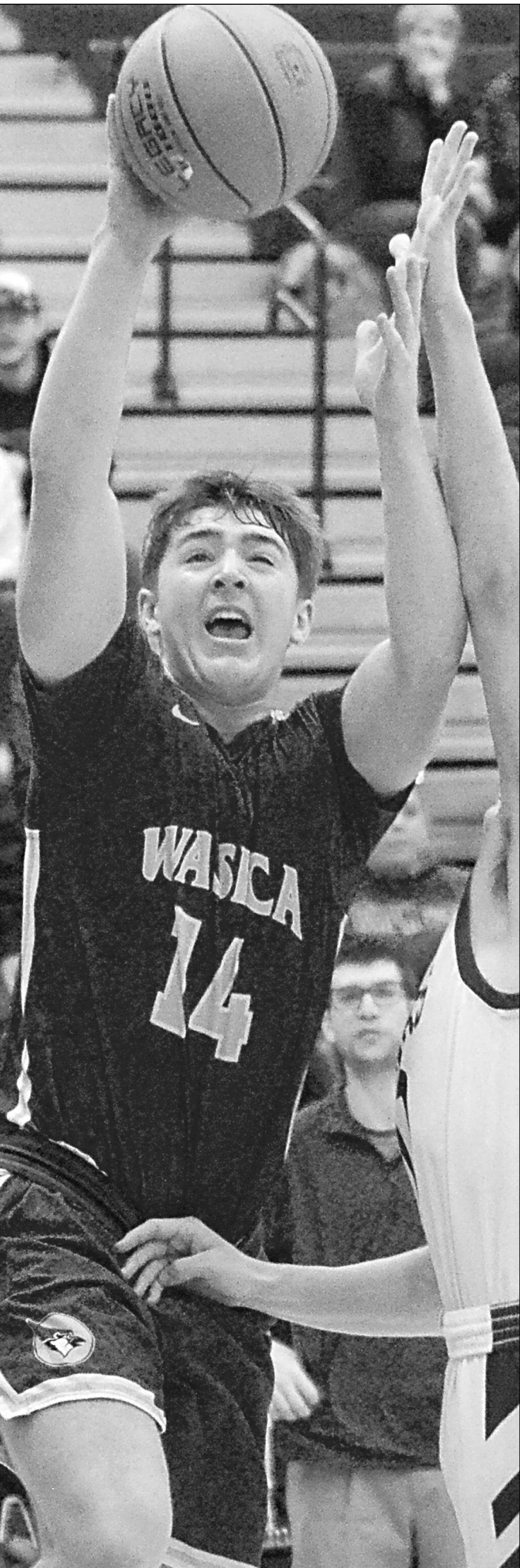
Location: **Waseca High School Gym**

Date: Jan 7, 2024 Time: 3:00 PM

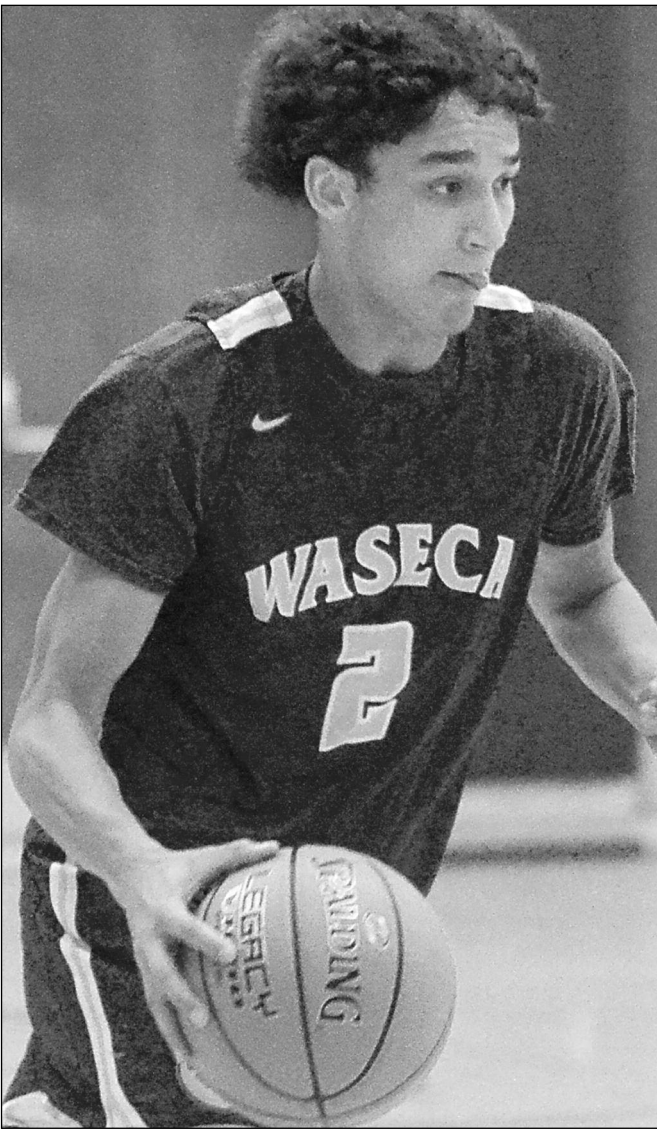
Sponsor: **The Waseca Knights Of Columbus**

Contact: **Jeff Kummerfeldt 507-676-2166**

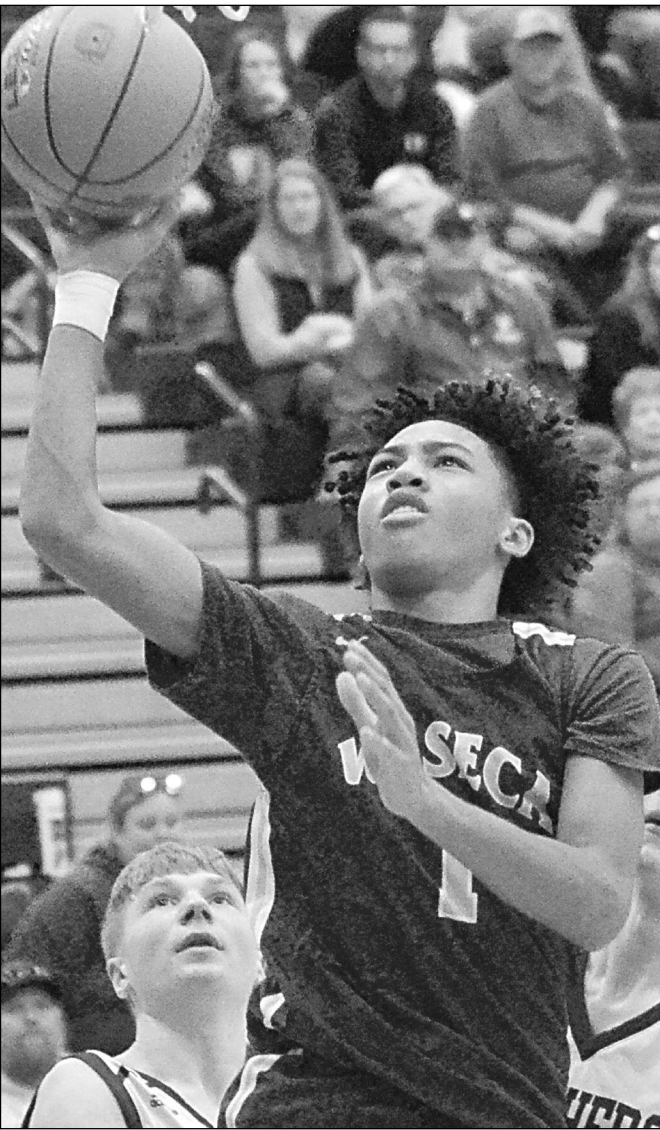
Please note: Entrants may compete in only one local competition. Please Join us for a fun afternoon of basketball. In addition to the free throw contest, there will be a 3 point contest



TRANSITION GAME — The Bluejays' Zach Hulscher (14) takes the ball to the hoop. The senior had seven points and six rebounds against Fairmont. Pioneer photo by Jim Lutgens



DECISIVE VICTORY — The WHS boys' basketball team defeated Fairmont by 15 points Friday Dec. 8. Pictured in the season opener are Laird Keaton (2) and Deron Russell (1). Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



Bluejays best Fairmont, 60-45

Russell scores 22, Ohnstad 13 for WHS boys' basketball team

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

After a season-opening nonconference loss to Pine Island, Waseca High School boys' basketball coach Seth Anderson was expecting continued progress for the Bluejays' Big South opener with Fairmont.

He got it.

The Bluejays, still without the services of junior standout Damarius Russell, hosted the Cardinals Friday, Dec. 8 and claimed a decisive 60-45 triumph.

"We played a great all-around defensive game," said Anderson.

And the Bluejays implemented the coach's game plan all night.

"I loved the way we executed our game plan and did our job over and over again," said Anderson. "We competed on the glass and our help side defense was the best it's been in a long time. I'm very

"I loved the way we executed our game plan and did our job over and over again."
— WHS coach Seth Anderson

happy with the job our guys did tonight."

The Bluejays held a 27-20 halftime advantage.

Deron Russell, a sophomore, paced the Jays with 22 points, making eight of 15 shots, including three three-pointers. He added four assists, one steal and one rebound.

Carson Ohnstad also reached double-digits with 13 points, making nine of 15 shots and two threes. He had three assists and two blocked shots.

Also for Waseca: Ethan Hiller 3R, 1A, 1S; Laird Keaton 5P, 4R, 2B; Cody Vagts 1S; Zach Hulscher 7P, 6R, 1A; Jacob Thompson 2P, 2B, 5R; Andrew Robran 6R, 1A, 1S; Cameron Karsten 3R.

Oliver Torsden was the lone Fairmont scorer in double figures with 13.

The Bluejays play Friday, Feb. 15 at Jackson County Central and Tuesday, Dec. 19 at WEM.



Ohnstad

Gymnasts shine at Mankato

Keith scores career best in all-around

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Last Saturday, Dec. 9, was a day to remember for the Waseca High School gymnastics team.

The Bluejays scored the most points in head coach Kim Wendland's eight seasons, totaling 131.9 for second place behind Mankato East's 139.475. Mankato West scored 131.825, St. Peter 131.725, New Ulm 131.325, Austin 131.1, Faribault 131.

"What a great meet for us!" said Wendland.

One of the highlights for the Bluejays was Layla Keith's career-best 34.825 points in all-around, good for fifth place. She finished first on the uneven parallel bars with a career-best 8.4, sixth in vault at 8.75, third in floor exercise with a 9.35.

Bella Wikan was 10th with 33.6 all-around points, third on the balance beam with 8.9, ninth on floor with 8.85 and 12th on bars at 7.625.

Hayden Lynch totaled 32.05 all-around points, Lindy Caldwell 23.35, Katelyn Weber 15.0, Elli Hoban 14.975.

Weber placed 11th on vault with 8.55 points.

"It's so much fun to see the girls getting stronger and putting in some new and bigger skills," said Coach Wendland.

In junior varsity competition, New Ulm totaled 116.35 points, Waseca 115.35, St. Peter 98.3 and Mankato East 49. Avery Carda scored 27.90 all-around points, Angelica Lopez 26.55, Hannah Parks 23.0, Norah Schimming 21.25, Katelyn Weber 15.6, Elli Hoban 15.05. Parks won vault at 8.4, Weber scored 8.2 for first on floor exercise.

After competing Tuesday at New Ulm and Thursday at home against St. Peter, the Bluejays are off until the Fairmont Invitational Jan. 6.



Keith



Wikan



Lynch



TOO CLOSE TO CALL — Above left, the Bluejays' Maizee Storey (26) handles the puck as Marshall's Peyton DeMuth defends, with Katlyn Schlueler in the background, during a 1-1 tie Saturday in Waseca. Above right, Emma Keith (21) brings the puck up the ice. In the background are Ryley Bartz (13), Madalyn Benson (5) and goalie Ilay Draheim. Below left, Emily Gordon (10) collides with Kenda Beernaert. Below right, Isabela Slechta gathers the puck. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



WHS girls blank MN River, tie Marshall

Two games, no losses.

It was a good week for the Waseca High School girls' hockey team, which shut out Minnesota River 3-0 at Waseca Community Arena Thursday, Dec. 7, two days before a 1-1 overtime tie with visiting Marshall Saturday.

Maizee Storey and Katlyn Schlueler scored unassisted goals against Minnesota River, with Emma Keith scoring on an assist from Emily Gordon.

Waseca goalie Ilay Draheim secured the shutout, stopping 31 shots. The Bluejays had 16 shots on goal.

Waseca was penalized four times, Minnesota River three.

On Saturday, Storey netted the Bluejays' lone goal, with assists going to Kaylee Lawson and Ryley Bartz.

Draheim faced 40 shots while Waseca put 12 shots on goal.

The Bluejays drew six penalties to Marshall's five.

The Bluejays skated to a 2-2 tie with Rochester Mayo at Graham Arena in Rochester Tuesday, Dec. 12.

The Bluejays host Winona Saturday at 1 p.m. Then they're off until the Dec. 28 and 29 holiday tournament hosted by Rochester Century.



Barnett leads wrestlers at JCC tourney

The Waseca High School wrestling team made a long road trip to Jackson County Central last Saturday and finished 13th among 13 schools in the Pizza Ranch Invitational with 27 points.

Adrian Area scored 168 to edge JCC by three points for the team title. Hutchinson and LCWM had 155.

The Bluejays' top placewinner was Slade Barnett, who won 1-0 in the third-place bout at 152 pounds.

Class A No. 1-ranked 145-pounder Nolan Ambrose of Jackson County Central and 114-pound teammate Dallas Gossen claimed the only individual crowns for the tournament runner-up. Ambrose also was named the event's outstanding wrestler.

After hosting a triangular Thursday, the Bluejays are off until the Norwood-Young America Invitational Saturday, Jan. 6.

Both ends of the scoring spectrum

Bluejays overwhelm Worthington, rally for overtime win over Marshall

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The Waseca High School boys' hockey team hit both ends of the difficulty spectrum last week.

The Bluejays were able to win both, and another.

Waseca won three games in three tries, overwhelming Worthington 19-1 at home Dec. 5, winning 11-1 at Windom Dec. 7 and rallying to top Marshall 4-3 in overtime Dec. 8 at Waseca Community Center.

The action brought the Bluejays' record to 5-2.

Waseca put on a scoring clinic against Worthington, outshooting the Trojans 13-6 in the first period, 29-5 in the second and 12-4 in the third while taking leads of 5-0 after one period and 14-0 after two.

Individually: Jude Gehring six goals; Cash Lynch four goals, one assist; Brayden Hesch-Priem three goals; Griffin Storey two goals, four assists; Keaton Roeker one goal, one assist; Otto Schoenrock four assists; Easton Danks three assists; Jayden Gehring two assists; Hunter Anderson one goal, one assist; Lucas Groll one assist; Beckett Srp one goal, two assists; Jackson Dahl two assists; Preston Miller three assists.



Anderson



Miller

Waseca goalie Carter Martens made 16 saves.

No penalties were called in the game.

The Jays had another lop-sided contest Dec. 7 while leading Windom 4-0 at the end of the first period and 7-1 after two.

For the game, Waseca outshot Windom 54-19.

Individual statistics: Jayden Gehring 3G, 1A; Storey 2G, 2A; Hesch-Priem 2G, 1A; Henry Huttemier 1G, 2A; Schoenrock 1A; Danks 1A; Lynch 1G, 2A; Anderson 1G, 3A; Srp 2A; Jude Gehring 1A.

Josiah Schmidt was in goal for Waseca, making 18 saves.

The Bluejays were in the penalty box for 16 minutes on eight infractions. Windom was penalized four times for eight minutes.

The Bluejays rallied past



OFFENSIVE FIREPOWER — The Waseca High School boys' hockey team has had plenty of it lately. Above left, Henry Huttemier (5) prepares to shoot against Marshall last Saturday, with Beckett Srp (21) in the background. Above right, goalie Carter Martens makes a save with Preston Miller (31) in the background. Below, Griffin Storey (12) handles the puck. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



Marshall Saturday in an exciting, penalty-filled contest that saw them trailing almost all afternoon.

Marshall led 1-0 after one period and 2-1 after two. It was 3-1 early in the third as the Tigers scored on a penalty shot.

Then it was Waseca's turn.

With a two-man advantage, Hesch-Priem scored on an assist by Lynch at the 10:15 mark. Hesch-Priem scored on a Storey assist at 10:44 to knot it.

Waseca won it 5:08 into overtime, when Anderson scored a power-play

goal on assists from Storey and Hesch-Priem.

Martens made 33 saves as Marshall outshot the Bluejays 36-34.

The Bluejays were whistled eight times for 24 penalty minutes, Marshall eight times for 16 minutes. Both teams were 3-for-7 on power plays.

After hosting Red Wing Dec. 12 and Red Wing Dec. 14, the Bluejays host Austin at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 19. They travel to face LaCrescent Thursday, Dec. 21 at 7 p.m.



NEVER SAY DIE — Above left, Ella Krautkremer of Waseca races down the court on a fast break Tuesday night against WEM. Above right, Mia Kanewischer steals the ball from the Buccaneers' Addison Condon. Below, the Bluejays' Lexi Kanewischer hustles to keep the basketball in play. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



Lady Jays look for offense to match their defense

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

If there's one thing, or two, that you can say about the 2023-24 Waseca High School girls' basketball team, it's that the Bluejays do not have an overabundance of height or varsity experience.

It's usually a tough situation.

And, so far, it has been for the Bluejays, who hosted Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Tuesday night and came up short in a nonconference contest 53-43.

It was the sixth straight setback for first-year head coach Anthony Jackson and the Bluejays after a season-opening victory over Medford.

"I am proud of my team's defensive effort tonight," said Jackson. "We just needed to get a few more buckets to drop. Waterville did a nice job breaking pressure this evening and scored the ball pretty efficiently. They played well as a team and deserved the victory."

Waseca scoring: Lexi Kanewischer 2 points; Callie Dufault 6P; Ella Krautkremer 4P; Addie Wieseler 15P; Mia



Dufault



Wieseler

Kanewischer 8P; Avery Gaul 5P; Lily Owens 3P.

The Bluejays lost 54-18 to Glencoe-Silver Lake in the Maple River Holiday Tournament Saturday, Dec. 9. Dufault scored nine points, Wieseler and Gaul four apiece.

Last Friday, the Jays traveled to Fairmont and dropped a 75-51 decision. Individual scoring: L.Kanewischer 6P; Dufault 9P; Krautkremer 5P; Wieseler 8P; M.Kanewischer 7P; Owens 5P; Gaul 8P.

The Bluejays, 1-6 host Jackson County Central Friday, Dec. 15 at 7:30. They face Rochester Lourdes at home Dec. 19 at 7:30.



SECOND STRAIGHT — The JWP boys' basketball team improved to 2-0 with a 66-45 triumph over Hayfield in Janesville last Friday. On top, the Bulldogs' Cole Schlueter (44) wears a look of determination as he takes the basketball to the hoop. Below: Caleb Quast (10) drives as Isaac Fjerstad defends. Photos by LeAnn Kavitz

JWP boys trim Hayfield, outscore Lester Prairie

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School boys' basketball team stayed unbeaten after two games with a 66-45 victory over Hayfield Friday, Dec. 8 in Janesville.

The Bulldogs shot 55.9 percent on two-point field goals, making eight of 26 three-point tries for 30.8 percent.

JWP was up 38-17 at halftime. Daulton Bauer and Memphis James led the Bulldogs in scoring with 12 points each. Bauer added four assists. James had three assists and three steals.

Also for JWP: Caleb Quast 8P, 5S; Gavin Bauer 7P, 3R; Steven Dimmel 6P, 2A, 2S; Landon Johnson 5P, 2 blocks; Austin Quast 4P, 3R; Cole Schlueter 4P, 5R; Carter Miller 2B; Ryan Kronbach 3P; Isiah Berndt 3P; Ethan Born 2P, 3R, 2A, 2B.

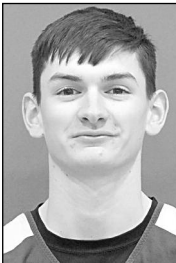
The Bulldogs made it three in a row with an 82-78 victory over

Lester Prairie Tuesday night in Janesville.

JWP shot 52.5 percent on twos and 52.5 percent on threes (10-for-19). They were outrebounded 57-43 but kept turnovers to 14, six fewer than the visitors. The Bulldogs led 40-36 at halftime.

James had a big night with 25 points, two assists and a steal. Others: D.Bauer 19P, 3R, 3S; G.Bauer 9P 2S, 1B; C.Quast 6P, 3R, 4A, 2S; Kronbach 9P, 3R, 2A, 1B; Born 2P, 4R, 1B; Schlueter 12P, 9R, 3S.

The Bulldogs had a home game Thursday before traveling to face Blooming Prairie Friday at 7:15 p.m. and at Maple River Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 8 p.m.



James

NRHEG wrestlers bounce back big

Panthers 3-0 in quad at Lamberton

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

NRHEG High School wrestling coach Shawn Larson was hopeful his team could keep it close in a dual meet against Maple River/USC Thursday, Dec. 7.

A big early deficit made that impossible.

The Longhorns led 36-6 through seven matches and went on to a 45-24 victory in New Richland.

"In general, we had some good things happen for us," said NRHEG coach Shawn Larson. "It was a great night with a fun crowd."

The Panthers' Charlie Tufte, Dakota Schlaak and Mason Reeder lost by fall at 107 pounds, 114 and 121 before Seth Staloch got NRHEG on the scoreboard with a first-period pin at 127.

Parker Bunn, Deven Parpart and Noah Weller were pinned at 133, 139 and 145, respectively.

Aiden Schlaak scored a 9-1 major decision at 152 and Harbor Cromwell prevailed with a 10-0 major at 160, but Ryan Schlaak dropped a 7-3 decision at 172.

George Roesler won by fall at 189 and Cole Hutchens won 10-2 at 215.

Jace Ihrke was pinned in the 285 bout.

"I thought going in that we had an opportunity to make this a tight match, and realistically it could have been," said Coach Larson. "They are a decent team and I thought they wrestled well tonight. Our downfall right now is coming from our younger inexperienced wrestlers. We are in a better situation than we have been at this point for a few years, and I am proud of the effort. We will work on trying to

keep the bonus points in check against us, and if we can do that, we have a chance in matches like this in the future. On the other hand, every one of our wins were bonus point wins including falls from Staloch and Roesler."

The Panthers bounce back in a big way in a quadrangular at Lamberton Friday Dec. 8, winning three dual meets.

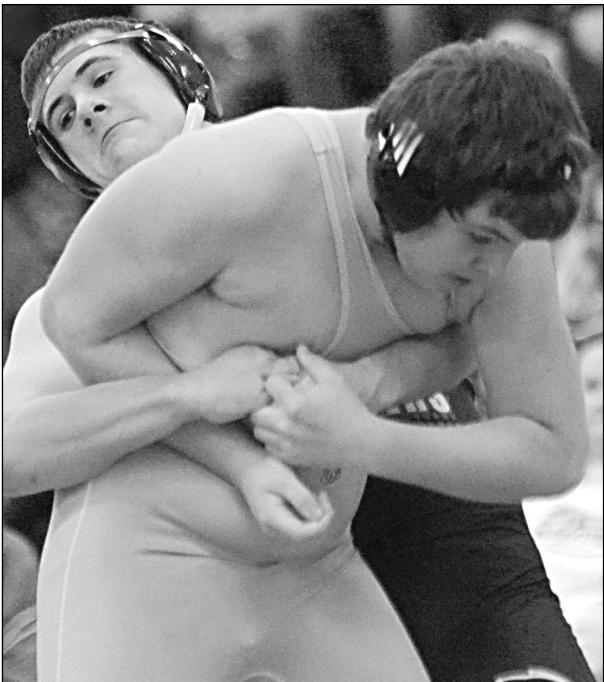
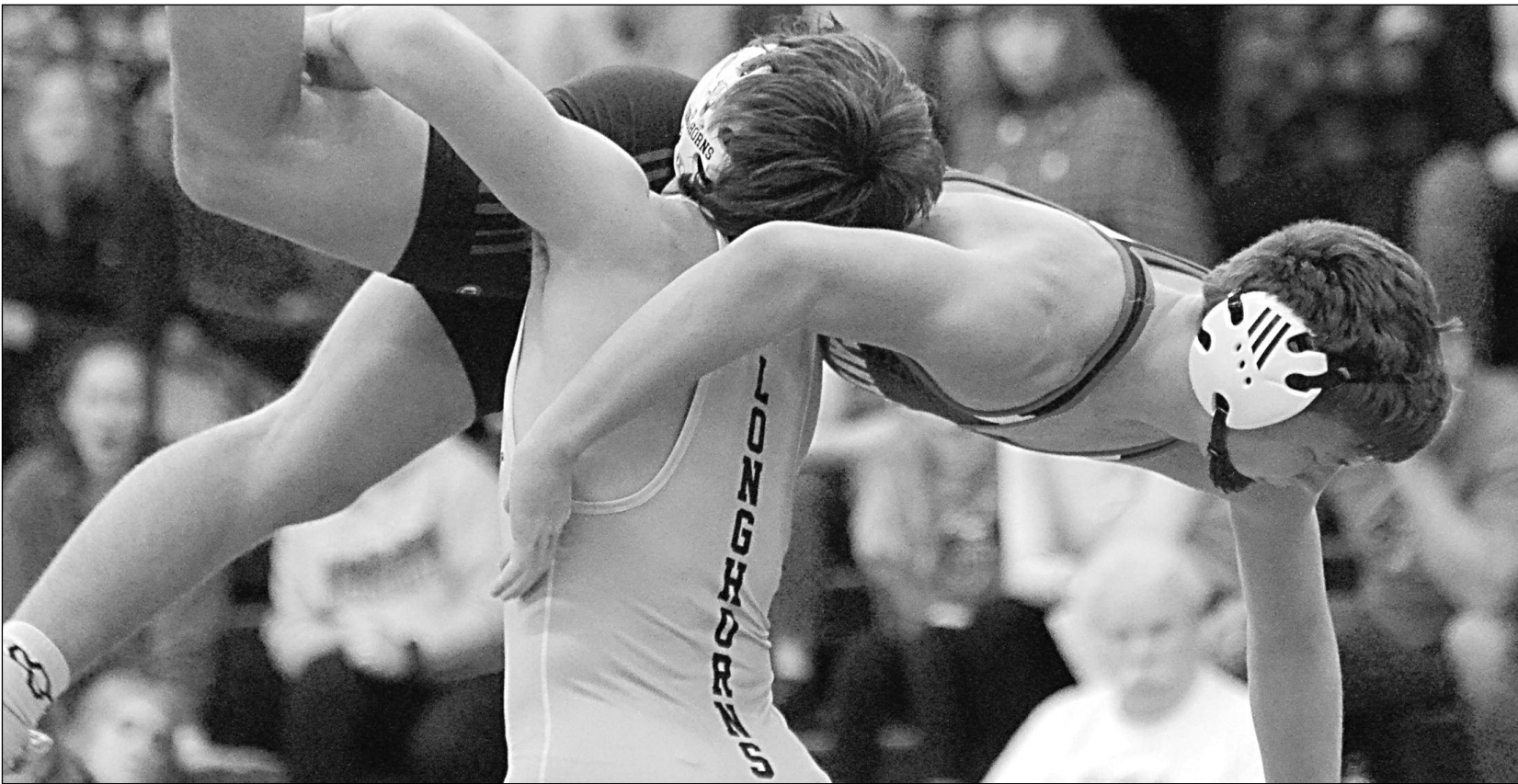
The Panthers eclipsed Red Rock Central 45-30 in the opener. Winning were Reeder, 121; Staloch, 127; Bunn, 133; Parpart, 139; Cromwell, 160; Ryan Schlaak, 172; Wyatt Larson, 189; Roesler, 215; and Ihrke, 285.

The Panthers topped St. Clair-Mankato Loyola 46-24 behind wins by Dakota Schlaak, Reeder, Staloch, Bunn, Parpart, Noah Weller, Roesler and Ihrke.

The Panthers defeated Madelia/Truman 30-10, with victories by Dakota Schlaak, Parpart, Aiden Schlaak, Ryan Schlaak and Larson.

"It was a lot of fun to come out with some wins tonight," said Larson. "We were a little slow after a long bus ride, but as the night progressed, we did a nice job. I am very happy with how our team has been competing and I am really looking forward to this coming weekend, when we will be at the Redwood Riot. It will be a good measuring stick for many of our wrestlers."

The Panthers wrestle three times at Lakeville South on Thursday, Dec. 14, starting at 5 p.m. Then the Panthers will be in Redwood Falls Friday and Saturday for the Redwood Riot, a 36-team tournament.



BOUNCING BACK — The NRHEG wrestling team rebounded from a loss to Maple River/USC in New Richland last Thursday, winning three times in a Friday triangular. On top, the Panthers' Ryan Schlaak finds himself in a precarious position against Byron Getchell of MR/USC. Lower left, NRHEG's Cole Hutchens hangs on tight against Max Fuller. Lower right, MR/USC's Isaiah Gomez hands onto a single-leg takedown on Parker Bunn. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

NRHEG boys display definite improvement against Triton

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

It wasn't a victory. But it was definite improvement for the NRHEG High School boys' basketball team.

The Panthers, who dropped a lopsided decision in their season opener at Blue Earth Area, gave visiting Triton a tussle before falling 78-68 in New Richland Friday, Dec. 8.

"We had much better effort tonight on both ends of the floor, from start to finish," said NRHEG coach Dan Schmidt. "Our communication was better on defense, as well as offensively. We moved the ball much better this evening, as well. There were a lot of great things to see in a battle with a team that could win the Gopher Conference East."

The Panthers trailed by 10 at half-time and by as many as 14 in the second half.

"But we never quit," said Schmidt. "We'd go on a little run to cut it to 5-6 points, and couldn't quite get over the hump. We feel

like we had a little breakthrough as a team tonight, and I hope the players can see it."

Senior Dexter Lee led NRHEG in scoring with 26 points, adding 7 rebounds and 6 assists. Sam Olson chipped in 13 points, with three 3-pointers. Will Tuttle played a strong game, getting a double-double with 10 points and 10 rebounds. Stepping in and playing some crucial minutes down the stretch, Hudson Chrz kicked in 10 points with a couple threes, Greyson Schaefer scored 5 points and grabbed 5 rebounds, and Jared Lee stepped in and played solid defense and ran the point down the stretch, while hitting a 3-pointer of his own. Jackson Chrz chipped in 1 point, but secured 6 rebounds on the night.

Pierce Petersohn of Triton led all scorers with 33 points, including 17-for-27 from the free-throw line. Kayden Ellingson hit six 3-pointers on his way to 21 points.

The Panthers fell 71-43 at Blue Earth Dec. 5 despite being short-handed and trailing by only three

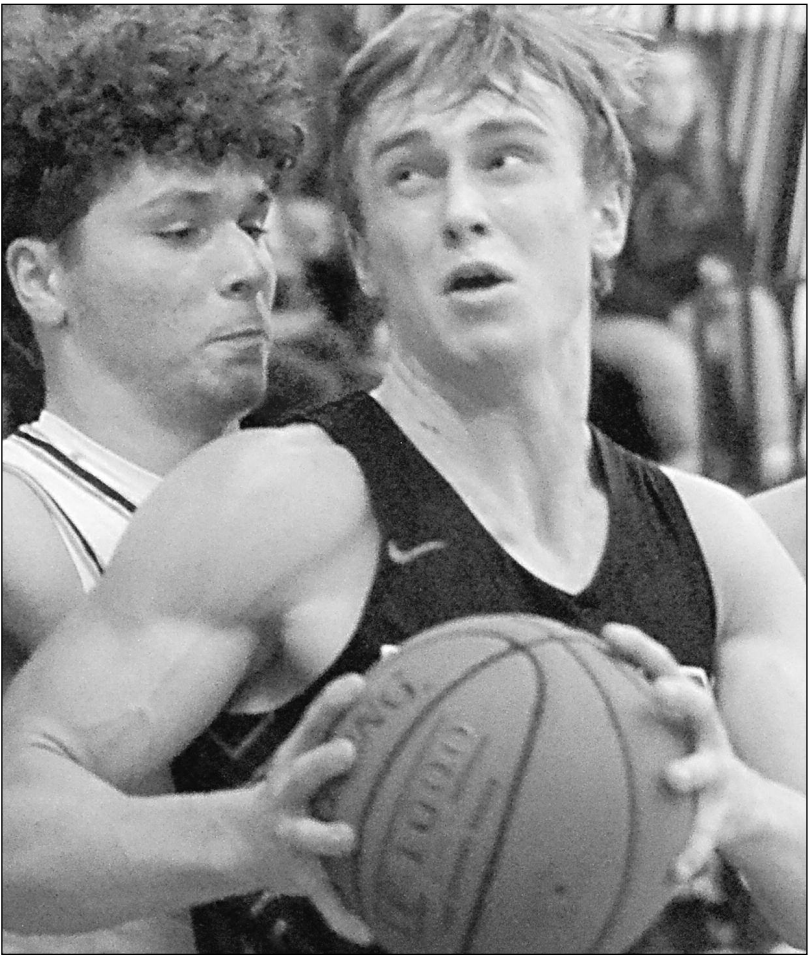
points at the intermission.

"We played hard despite being undermanned, with two out due to illness, one due to injury, and another played fighting illness," said Schmidt. "It was a back-and-forth battle the whole first half. A timeout with 10 minutes to go in the game saw us down by seven points, and we just ran out of gas after that, with such a limited bench."

Individually: Jackson Chrz 8 points, 5 rebounds; Tuttle 13 points, 5 rebounds; Dexter Lee 1 point, 8 rebounds, 8 assists, 4 steals; Olson 6 points, 3 rebounds; Jordan Brouwers 2 points, 4 rebounds, 2 steals; Hudson Chrz 6 points; Jared Lee 5 points; Ricky Zapata 2 points.

NRHEG will look to rebound Thursday, Dec. 14 in a non-conference matchup at Kenyon-Wanamingo.

They Panthers play at Randolph Friday and at STEM Academy Monday.



TIGHT QUARTERS — The Panthers' Will Tuttle, right, eyes the basket as Triton's Jayce Leonardo defends during last Friday's game in New Richland. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

Grizzlies pick up pair of wins

The WEM/JWP wrestling team competed in the Byron Invitational dual-meet tournament Saturday, Dec. 9, winning one of three meets.

The Grizzlies lost 57-17 to Dover-Eyota. Winners were Carson Petry, 127 pounds; Lucas Morsching, 145; and Keegan Kuball, 285.

The Grizzlies fell 42-20 to Rochester Mayo, with wins by Petry, Zach Quast, Morsching, Gavin Krause, Maddox Moreno and Kuball.

The Grizzlies defeated Byron 37-36. Wins were by Brenden Masso, Parker James, Petry, Quast, Morsching, Krause, and Kuball, 285.

The Grizzlies dropped a 50-18 meet to LCWM Tuesday. Victories: Petry, Morsching; Krause, I.Quast, Kuball, 285.

The Bulldogs defeated Blue Earth Area 39-35 Tuesday. Wins were by Petry, James, Trenton Huber, Morsching, Krause and Kuball, 285.

The Grizzlies are in action Tuesday, Dec. 19 at St. James and Dec. 21 at Westfield.

Lady Panthers 1-1 in tourney

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The NRHEG High School girls' basketball team won one of two games in the Winter Showcase hosted by Maple River, falling 58-43 to Winona Cotter Friday, Dec. 8 and defeating Norwood-Young America 53-41 the next day.

According to Panthers coach Onika Peterson, Winona Cotter's defense and overall physicality proved to be too much to handle.

"Their full-court pressure defense caused us a lot of problems," said Peterson. "It is hard to imitate and prepare for their physicality."

The Panthers trailed 41-16 at halftime, but never gave up.

"The girls came out in the second half fighting," said Peterson. "We cut the lead to 12, but never could get over the hump. We need to take better care of the ball and cut down our turnovers."

Individually for NRHEG: Faith Nielsen 16 points, 2 rebound, 1 assist; Quinn VanMaldeghem 10P, 10R, 5 steals, 2A, 1 block; Izley Boerner 6P, 1R; Hallie Schultz 2P, 9R; Camryn VanMaldeghem 5P, 2R, 3S, 2B; Chloe Stork 5R, 2S; Presley Nielsen 3P, 1R, 3S; Kylie Olson 2R, 1S.

The Panthers broke open a close 25-23 game at half-time to win by double-digits over NYA.

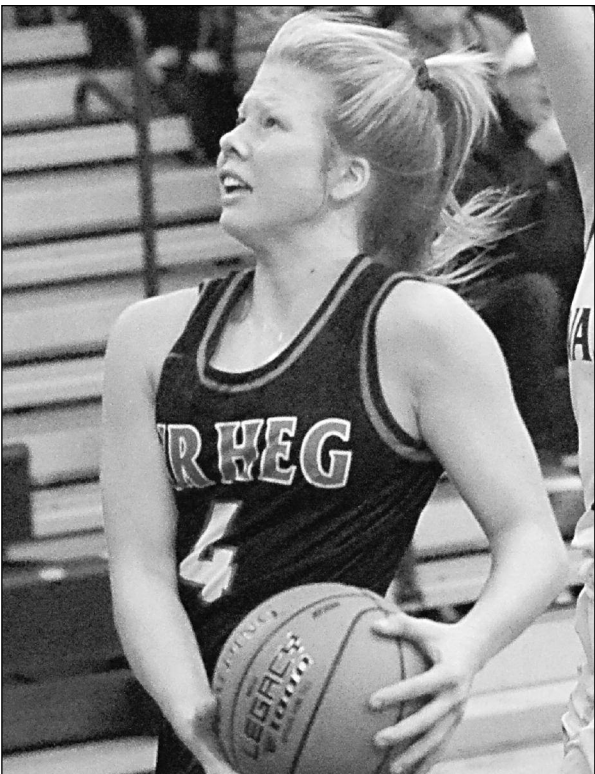
"I'm extremely proud of this team," said Coach Peterson. "We took one on the chin the night before to a tough and physical Cotter team."

The Panthers put themselves in a hole, trailing by eight points with three girls on the bench with two fouls apiece in the first half. This time, they were able to overcome it.

"We were able to climb our way out of the hole and keep the lead the whole game," said Peterson. "We have had a couple of younger athletes step up in big roles these last couple of games with Izley Boerner and Kylie Olson."

Individually: F.Nielsen 6P, 6R, 2A, 2S; Q.VanMaldeghem 9P, 9R, 1A; Boerner 5P, 2R, 1S; Clara Buendorf 1R; Schultz 6P, 9R, 5S; Stork 2R; C.VanMaldeghem 10P, 5R, 1A, 4S; P.Nielsen 7P, 2R, 1A; Olson 10P, 8R, 1S.

Peterson said the Panthers have a couple tough games this week, hosting Belle Plaine Tuesday and Randolph Friday.



FAST BREAK — Scoring for the Panthers in last week's nonconference victory over Waseca are Quinn VanMaldeghem (4) and Faith Nielsen (2). Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

Legal

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF WASECA
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No.: 81-PR-23-831
In Re: Estate of
MARILYN J. QUIRAM.

Decedent
NOTICE AND ORDER OF
HEARING
ON PETITION FOR FORMAL
PROBATE OF WILL AND AP-
POINTMENT OF PERSONAL
REPRESENTATIVE IN UNSU-
PERVISED ADMINISTRATION
AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TO ALL INTERESTED PER-
SONS:
It is Ordered and Notice is
hereby given that on the 3rd day of
January, 2023, at 8:15 a.m., a hearing
will be held in the above Court at
Waseca Minnesota, for the formal
probate of an instrument purporting
to be the will of the above named
decedent, dated November 29, 1989,
and the first codicil of the above
named decedent dated July 30, 2020,
and for the appointment of Pamela
K. Quiram whose address is 5929
Fairfax Ave, Edina, Minnesota
55424, as Personal Representative of
the Estate of the above named deced-
ent in unsupervised administration,
and that any objections thereto must

be filed with the Court. That, if
proper and no objections are filed, a
Personal Representative will be ap-
pointed to administer the Estate, to
collect all assets, to pay all legal
debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to
sell real and personal property, and
to do all necessary acts for the Estate.
Upon completion of the administra-
tion, the representative shall file a
final account for the allowance and
shall distribute the estate to the per-
sons thereunto entitled as ordered by
the Court, and close the estate.
Notice is further given that ALL
CREDITORS having claims against
said Estate are required to present the
same to said Personal Representative
or to the Court Administrator within

four months after the date of this No-
tice or said claims will be barred.
Dated: 12/07/2023
/s/ Shannon M. Asselin
Waseca County Court Admin-
istrator

PATTON, HOVERSTEN &
BERG, P.A.
Hayden J. Roslansky, #402545
215 E Elm Ave, PO Box 249
Waseca, MN 56093
Phn: 507-835-5240
Published in the Waseca County
Pioneer on December 15 and De-
cember 22, 2023.

**Rick's Appliance**
ricksappliancewaseca.com

**Speed Queen**

**Whirlpool**

Sales & Service
507-461-9615

Hours
M-F 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM
Sat 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Sunday Closed

Visit our new Showroom!
405 West Elm Ave, Waseca MN

Waseca Music
C O M P A N Y

10-5:30 M-F, 10-2 Sat, Closed Sunday
- Since 1952 -

- Rent/Buy/Lease&Band Instruments new/used)
- Best Seller • Repairs • Accessories
- Sheet Music & Books
- Guitars & String Instruments
- Piano & Digital Keyboards
- Drums & Percussion
- CD's, DVD's & Vinyl

507-835-2980
wasecamusic@gmail.com
www.wasecamusic.com
111 South State Street • Waseca, MN

**SUMMIT
ON SECOND
APARTMENTS**

FOR RENTAL INFO CALL
507-201-3474

We are accepting
applications for:

1 bedroom apartments
Income guidelines apply
Vouchers accepted

2 bedroom & 3 bedroom
Rent based on income

Professionally managed by:

**BRUTGER**
EQUITIES, INC.

**Johnson
APARTMENTS**

507-456-9514

OPERATING IN
WASECA, STEELE,
FREEBORN
COUNTIES

johnsonrents.com

The New Richland Care Center dietary
department is currently looking for indi-
viduals to join our team. We have posi-
tions open that offer flexibility to fit your
needs. If you have prior dietary experi-
ence or restaurant work experience, these
positions offer an easy transition to a re-
warding job.

Dietary Aide 7 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday
Dietary Aide 5:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Fri,
Sat, Sun, every other weekend
Dietary Aide 5:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
every other weekend
Dietary Cook 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. part time

We offer an attractive wage and com-
pensation package. To learn more about
these opportunities, contact Brad Hartin
at 507-417-4509 or email at
bhartin@nrcarecenter.com or apply in
person at the care center.

WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

P.O BOX 578 • Waseca, MN 56093

Send me 1 year of the **WASECA COUNTY PIONEER!** Enclosed is:

NEW ☐ \$55 (Waseca Countyt)

NEW ☐ \$65 (Minnesota resident)

NEW ☐ \$75 (outside MN)

Subscription For: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL • NEW CONSTRUCTION • REMODELING

- ☐ SHINGLES, STEEL, RUBBER ROOFING
- ☐ VINYL, STEEL, & CEMENT BOARD SIDING
- ☐ WINDOWS & DOORS: INSULATION, SHEETROCK
- ☐ ALL FLOORING: CONCRETE, PATIOS, DECKS
- ☐ SEAMLESS GUTTERS & GUTTER PROTECTION SYSTEMS
- ☐ CERTAINTEED® CLAIMS SPECIALIST

GREG WILMES EXTERIORS LLC • BUILDING CONTRACTOR #BC793885

*"Footings
to Finish"*

GREGWILMESROOFING.NET
GREGWILMESROOFING@GMAIL.COM
(507) 202-7070

SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					7 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm CIVIL AIR PATROL BIRTHDAY	2 CRAFT SALE 9am-3pm
3	4	5 Burger nite 5- 7pm	6 6pm BAR Bingo	7 7pm BINGO NATIONAL PEARL HARBOR DAY	8 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	9
10 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am -Noon Your Host	11 7 PM POST & AUX MEETING	12 Burger nite 5- 7pm	13 6pm BAR Bingo U.S. NATIONAL GUARD BIRTH- DAY	14 7pm BINGO	15 WALLEYE or SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 to 7pm	16
17	18	19 Burger nite 5- 7pm	20 6pm BAR Bingo	21 7pm BINGO	22 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	23 TOM and JERRY'S 4pm
24 OPEN 11:00- 5:00 VIKINGS -LIONS	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Burger nite 5- 7pm	27 6pm BAR Bingo	28 7pm BINGO	29 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	30 New Year SUPER BINGO 7pm Hocky Burger Night 5pm-7
31						

HOURS OF OPERATION
SUN.- MON. CLOSED
TUE.- WED.-3pm to 11pm Tue. Is Lady's nite 2 for one-Men Busch light \$2.50 from 4 to 6pm.
THUR.-1pm to 11pm
FRI.- SAT.-11am to 1 am
POST & AUX MEETING 7pm club open 6pm MEMBERS only. Mn. Gambling license number 00385

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

Join the professional directory for free today with purchase of any regular weekly advertising

Phone: 507-837-6767, Mail: P.O. Box 578, email: news@wasecacountypioneer.com, physical address 111 W. Elm Ave.

**Patton, Hoversten & Berg, P.A.**
A Professional Association / Attorneys at Law

Waseca
507-835-5240
888-835-5245

Janesville
507-234-5106
888-835-5245

Owatonna
507-451-9000
866-451-9010

Faribault
507-332-7425

www.phblawoffice.com

Mon-Fri 8-6;
Sat 9-5

**WASECA FLORAL**

Your local resource for plants, flowers, gifts!

(507) 835-3790 wasecafloral.com

**DENNIS STEFFEL OMTVEDT**
FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICE
109 3RD STREET NE, WASECA, MN 56093
WASECA • JANESVILLE • WATERVILLE

**Daniel J. Johnson**
ACCOUNTING LLC

Our Services

- Financial Planning
- Accounting Services
- Bookkeeping
- Payroll Services
- Tax Planning & Preparation
- Return Preparation Services
- Estate and Trust Planning

115 North State Street, Waseca, MN
(507) 201-2484

Collaboration. Scale. Excellence.

**GUARDIAN ENERGY**

Guardian Energy
4745 380th Avenue
Janesville, MN 56048
www.guardianNRG.com

Marianna Mayo
Associate Merchandiser

O: 507-234-5002
C: 507-720-1443
F: 507-234-5011
Marianna.Mayo@guardiannr.com

**INSURE CAREFULLY,
DREAM FEARLESSLY.**

CALL (507) 835-2770 FOR A
NO-OBLIGATION FREE QUOTE.

**AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE**

**Matthew R. Petsinger Agency, LLC**
Matthew Petsinger, Agent
101 S State St, Waseca
MRPAgencyLLC.com

American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I.
American Family Insurance Company,

6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783
006441 - Rev. 11/15 ©2015 - 10793941

Future of Bluejay football

22 youths make high school commitment

Annual program celebrates team

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

About 100 friends, family, coaches and football players gathered Monday night as almost two dozen Waseca sixth-graders signed their “letter of intent” to continue their Bluejay football careers.

The tradition, organized by the Waseca Youth Football Association, began in 2017 and was briefly interrupted by Covid. About 80 local youths from grades 3 through 6 participate in Waseca’s Youth football program which plays in a 19-team Southern Minnesota league.

After the conclusion of their season, which culminates with a youth football “jamboree,” the Waseca group celebrates at the local American Legion hall. A hot meal of sloppy joes, French fries and cheesecake was followed by speakers Bob Jeske and Ed Hoehn. The two introduced the keynote speaker of the night, Waseca head football coach Brad Wendland.

“Our goal is to teach them to be great young men through football,” Jeske said.

Hoehn provided some background about Waseca’s youth football program which started in 2006, the same year coach Wendland joined the program.

Hoehn said he was in New Ulm and witnessed the youth program there.

“It was that moment I decided we were going to have a youth program,” recalled Hoehn, who serves as the organization’s president. “But it’s more than that. My son was in fifth grade then. I do this in memory of him. This is the seventh year since [his passing]. This is special for me.”

Hoehn went on to introduce coach Wendland saying Waseca is lucky to have him.

“He puts in more hours than you know,” Hoehn said. “Each year I get asked how we’re going to do. And each year I have the same answer: State Contenders.”

“Since 2010, the Waseca high school football team has captured 5 section championships. Those five championships are the only times in school history which Waseca has qualified for the state tournament.”

Wendland promised the kids present that, with enough scratching and clawing, one day Waseca will be on top.

Wendland recounted what it was like moving to town in 2006. Hoehn was one of the first people he met.

“My wife and I were shopping for a house,” Wendland said. “And here I am sitting in the car talking to Ed about Waseca football.”

Wendland said he knew Ed was “his kind of guy” the moment they met.

“I walked into his house and the only picture on his wall was a picture of John Randle,” Wendland continued. “Randle and his mean mug. I saw that picture and knew I was in the right place.”

Wendland states, adamantly, that Waseca is the best place to play football in Minnesota. “Period.”

“Waseca is big enough where playing football here is a big deal,” he said. “But also small enough that everyone willing to work hard

“Playing football here is a big deal.”

— WHS Head football coach Brad Wendland

has a chance to play.”

Wendland shared that all youth levels received new shoulder pads, jerseys, and new everything essentially.

“It’s a powerful feeling to believe in the person standing next to you on a football field,” Wendland said.

Wendland said the number-one thing football can teach youth is commitment, followed by facing adversity and finally hard work.

“Kids today have a lot of instant gratification, everywhere,” Wendland said. “High school sports are more important now than in the history of history. Life is not instant gratification and neither is high school football.”

Some history of this year’s senior class was shared.

Per Wendland, this year’s twelfth-grade players, about 16 in number, were not a good youth program.

An angry parent approached Wendland when they were in seventh grade.

“She pointed at my chest and asked me, told me, ‘How are you gonna make sure we have a seventh-grade football team?’

“The answer,” Wendland continued. “The secret? Hard work. People who work hard are going to get better. Look no further than this year’s senior class.”

When the group was eliminated by eventual state champion Stewartville in the first round of the state tournament, the head coach for Stewartville told Wendland that Waseca was the best team they played all season.

After speaking his piece, Wendland handed the microphone over to junior captain Brandon Joshua who has played football since the third grade.

Joshua encouraged the youth to get in the weight room, work hard and remember “Our community here, it’s one of a kind.”

All coaches of the third- through sixth-grade teams were surprised with footballs signed by every member of their teams.

The entire program took about an hour and a half and concluded with about 20 youths shaking hands with coach Wendland and Hoehn before signing their “contracts” and posing for pictures.

Members of the sixth-grade youth football team included #1 Owen Arndt; #3 Trey Bohannon; #7 Wyatt Bartz; #8 Carter Dickson; #11 Keegan Glynn; #12 Lincoln Castro; #13 Carter Walker; #13 Brody Gray; #15 Ryan Harguth; #18 Joe LeMieux; #20 Julian Rodriguez; #21 Xander Berg; #27 Jayven Parrott; #32 Owen Sommers; #44 Jackson Sepulveda; #47 Mayson Smith; #53 Luke Jeske; #54 Adrian Naser; #57 Noah Riedl; #61 Colin Selvik; #93 Ben Androli; #97 Charles Galle.



Wearing their new jerseys, members of the sixth-grade Waseca Football program with their coaches.

Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



Wyatt Bartz hugs his dad



Waseca head football coach Brad Wendland, Owen Sommers, and Ed Hoehn.



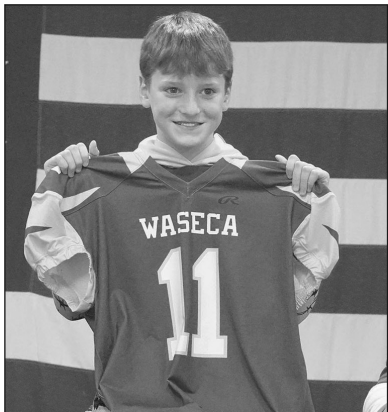
Owen Arndt shakes Coach Wendland's hand



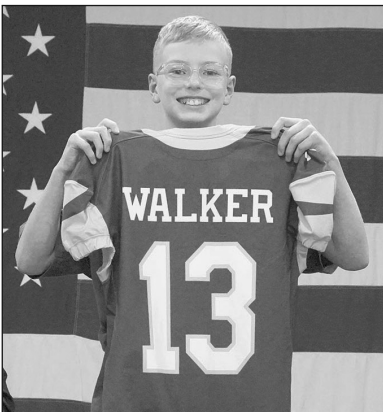
Charles Galle



Luke Jeske



Keegan Glynn



Carter Walker



Colin Selvik



Coaches from the Waseca Youth Football Association program with their children. Coaches were presented with team footballs signed by all of the players.



DENNIS STEFFEL OMTVEDT
FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICE
109 3RD STREET NE, WASECA, MN 56093
WASECA • JANESVILLE • WATERVILLE



Patton, Hoversten & Berg, P.A.
A Professional Association / Attorneys at Law

Waseca 507-835-5240 888-835-5245	Janesville 507-234-5106 888-835-5245
Owatonna 507-451-9000 866-451-9010	Faribault 507-332-7425

www.phblawoffice.com

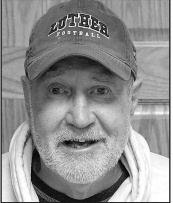
Tesch Service Center
Family-Owned Automotive Repair

- wheel alignments
- brake services
- suspension repairs
- towing & more!

Call us today!



321 Elm Ave W, Waseca, MN
Call Us! (507) 835-4610
teschservice@mediacommbb.net



Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika



'Tis the season

'Tis the season—the season of the best sports viewing for this old sports enthusiast. I can now find a sporting event to watch every night of the week.

On most Sundays I can grab a bag of Cheetos, settle in, and watch the Vikings sail on their quest for a football playoff spot. Will they win without Captain Kirk as their leader? Can the new quarterback Dobbs, or one of the other backups lead them to victory?

Oh boy, Jefferson is healthy; can't wait to see the offense shift into high gear. The defense gets better every game; can they blitz enough, create turnovers and lead the team to a hard-fought victory? It's a lot of fun being a Vikings fan and watching their games. Win or lose, it's great entertainment.

I didn't used to be an NBA basketball fan, but this season the Timberwolves have caught my attention. I'm actually enjoying watching their games. One nice thing about watching professional basketball is, you don't have to spend three hours watching a game, just tune in somewhere in the fourth quarter. Your Timberwolves may be leading or trailing by 20 points during those first hours, but everything heats up sometime during the fourth quarter. Through some magical process, they've finally learned how to play defense, share the ball, and play for each other.

The Wolves have three stars in Anthony Edwards, Kat (Karl Anthony Towns), and big man Rudy Gobert. The "supporting cast" has really developed a team chemistry. Conley, a veteran NBA guard, really distributes and takes care of the basketball. Walker, McDaniels, Brown Jr., and crowd favorite Naz Reid, along with others, have all contributed greatly to the fact that the Timberwolves currently own the best record in the NBA.

I don't know much about hockey (and really can't tell you what an "offside" is), but I also enjoy watching The Wild play. They weren't doing well to start the season and so they fired their coach. Now that the new man is in place, they've started winning hockey games. To me, hockey is simply all about having an outstanding goal tender. I look forward to The Wild finding their stride and again becoming a winning Minnesota favorite.

College sports are now also prime time viewing. I enjoy watching both the men and the women. Gopher basketball and Gopher hockey are now on channels throughout the week, with the Big Ten network hosting a variety of different teams. I especially enjoy watching the ladies play volleyball; so athletic, they leap and spike in the blink of an eye. Wisconsin and Nebraska from the Big Ten are now in the semifinals for the national championship. I root for the Big 10 conference.

Oh, yes, the football bowl games are cranking up. There seem to be an endless number of bowl games, one to view every day in mid December. I look forward to the national college championship game: Go Michigan!—the representative from the Big 10.

High school winter sports are also now in their prime time. I hope to get to a few boys' and girls' basketball games. Many Bluejay athletic events are now streamed, so I watch some of them on TV. Dan White and Kugie do a wonderful job broadcasting Bluejay contests on the radio; I'll be tuning in for some exciting play by play.

Every grandparent enjoys watching grandkids play sports, participate in band or choir, or become active in other extracurricular events. When I share my stories with other grandparents and they share theirs with me, we talk about how long the walk always seems to the farthest diamond in the complex on a 90-degree day, or how far the "nearest" parking spot was away from field number 6. There are also the back injuries we acquire from carrying chairs or sitting on hard, uncomfortable bleachers. Despite the hardships, it's a real joy watching your fifth-grader carry the football for a long touchdown run on a cold, frosty, windy, blustery fall morning.

'Tis the season in sporting events that is truly a favorite—watching my grandsons play basketball in the Mankato West program. Grandsons Nathan, a fourth-grader; Ryan, a seventh-grader; and Evan, a sophomore, are all busy participating in basketball games. I choose the contests that are fairly nearby and have great handicap parking. I've watched Nathan play three games in Janesville and four games in Owatonna. The games didn't have a long down time in between, so I watched a ton of basketball. Janesville had a wonderful facility; I even watched one game from comfortable auditorium seating. At the new Owatonna high school, there were four gyms full of action. Nathan played against Waseca in one of the games; it was really fun watching one of my former students coach the Waseca team. I've watched Ryan on some streamed games on my TV; I'll wait to watch in person when he plays closer to home. I attended a B-Squad game and watched Evan in Owatonna. What a beautiful, state-of-the-art new gym. The scoreboard is unbelievable—Huskies emblems everywhere, a shiny new floor, a gym truly worth visiting. The new 35-second shot clock had absolutely no effect on the game.

As I drove home after the excitement on a calm, dark, beautiful winter evening, I really noticed farms and homes decorated with Christmas lights all throughout the countryside. As I came into Waseca, there were many homes festooned with colorful features.

I felt the warmth, the joy, the "merry" of the season. I felt "holiday happy," even without any snow.

It really 'Tis the season, the best season of the year.

Season of donating

More than \$10,000 given to Neighborhood Service Center



Members of the iWealth team present their giant \$12,745 check to board members of the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

14th annual iWealth holiday drive

Amidst the spirit of giving, Brad and Trudi Connors, alongside the dedicated iWealth team, culminated the 2023 Holiday Food Drive by presenting a generous check to the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center. The combined effort of community contributions, totaling \$9,745, complemented by the substantial \$3,000 donation from the iWealth Foundation, resulted in an astounding total of \$12,745 raised for this noble cause.

Brad shared, 'The genesis of the food drive stemmed from our outreach to iWealth clients and the local community, seeking their financial support to ensure that local families would not go without a Christmas meal. Recognizing the seasonal need, we resolved to make a meaningful difference.'

The iWealth Foundation further contributed \$3,000 which annually allocates one percent of iWealth's net profits to philanthropic endeavors.

These funds will generously supply Christmas meals to over 230 families within the local community. On December 15, Waseca High School students and dedicated volunteers will assemble food baskets, which will subsequently be distributed on December 16 with the invaluable assistance of Scouts BSA Troop 85. Any surplus funds will fortify the WANSO Backpack Program, a vital initiative providing food for 275 local children weekly.

This year, the Holiday Food Drive saw support from more than 72 families and businesses, marking the fourteenth consecutive year of iWealth's sponsorship. Over the years, these collective efforts have amassed donations exceeding \$118,726, a testament to the enduring generosity of our community.

Brad reflected, "At iWealth, our commitment to community support stands as a core value, and in these times, it resonates more profoundly than ever. We remain deeply touched by the community's unwavering endorsement of this noble cause."

iWealth Donation Photo Cutline: Members of the iWealth Waseca team and the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center board gathered as iWealth presented a food shelf donation of \$12,745.

■ Author

from Page 1

people fell in love. Met at Olive Garden. Went to a park. They took breadsticks with them. They take lots of pictures. And they fell in love forever and always at first sight.

After the creative writing class ended, a variety of pieces written by the students were selected for publication in a small-scale book created through "Cow Tipping Press."

The publication company was started by Waseca resident Bryan Boyce about five years ago to give neurodiverse writers an opportunity to publish their work. Cow Tipping Press makes its services available to writing groups like this one via its website, cowtippingpress.org.

Available to be checked out from the Waseca Library are not only this most recent publication, titled "Pickleball Knight," but also books produced by previous sets of students,

some of whom have returned to be advisors or co-teachers to subsequent classes.

"Pickleball Knight" was debuted on Tuesday, Dec. 5 during a gathering at the Waseca Library. About 25 people attended. Seven of the ten class members read examples of their work, and copies of the book were available for sale.

The title piece, "Pickleball Knight," was written by Ben Sather: One day the princess was out picking flowers. She went into the Dragon's garden and she got kidnapped by the Dragon. She screamed for help and the knight heard her. He got on his brown horse and rode to help save her.

The Dragon doesn't want the knight to save her.

The knight pulled out his pickleball paddle and he beat the dragon and saved the princess. He married her. The End.

A piece titled "Always a Maybe" was written by class member Jessy Oeffler: To say I have been a rebel in my youth would be an understatement.

I rebelled against everything and everyone, the rules, the schools, the parents, everything. If you said not to do something, you know I'd do it just because. Now my only form of rebellion is my own mind telling me what is there, isn't there, and what isn't there is truly there. Did you hear that, I ask myself? And my reply is always a maybe. Never the truth. With a head full of lies and a heart full of hope, I still keep fighting myself for freedom, justice and the liberty that only I can give myself. And yet I have to wonder if I am telling myself truths and only hearing them as lies. Or am I telling myself lies and hearing the truth hidden within?

The answer, is always a maybe.

The class and the printing of the book were made possible through a grant from the Prairie Arts Council.

Boyce mentioned that the name of the publication company comes from one of the pieces published in the company's very first book.

"Cow Tipping in the Dark" by Chad Sommer. Have you ever been cow tipping? When you tip them over they have a heart attack. If there's a bull there you run, run so fast! If there's a bunch of bulls you should run so fast to get out of there or jump a fence. When you go cow tipping, you scare them and you say Rah! And you tip them over.

They can't see at night. They have bad eyesight.

Get your news in the Pioneer

- news@wasecacountypioneer.com
- Call (507) 837-6767
- Stop in person 111 Elm Ave. West

FINANCING FARMERS, BUSINESSES

AND YOU, *Since 1878*



Member FDIC

220 ELM AVE EAST,
WASECA, MN 56093

507-571-3130
MYBANKFM.COM



Turn your quality items into cash at **WaSeekers**! Write a short description, bring your items in and they will go on **WaSeekers** next auction. We sell just about anything! **WaSeekers** takes in new & gently used items, lists them on our online auction platform, & displays them in our safe & secure store where you can inspect them in person!

Store hours: W-T-F: 10 am – 6 pm,
Sat: 9 am – noon

Contact Tina Mittelsteadt
507-351-4608
tina@wasekersonlineauction.com

LIVE AUCTION WEBSITE & SHOP FOR LOCALS, BY LOCALS!

WASEKERONLINEAUCTION.COM



Tons more to see! • wasekersonlineauction.com
or come in person at: 1372 South State Street, Waseca
507-833-SEEK(7335)

Montessori, Sacred Heart Christmas concert • Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023



Sounds of the season

Students present Christmas concert

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

The Children’s House Montessori preschool students and the entire student body of Sacred Heart Elementary School presented a concert and Christmas program at the Central Building auditorium the evening of Thursday, Dec. 7.

After an opening prayer, the preschoolers began the program with a variety of songs celebrating Jesus.

Once the preschoolers had finished, the kindergarten through fourth-grade students took the stage. Their opening song, “Back to the Manger” set the tone for a play in which the fourth-graders acted out an on-going story while the younger grades provided musical flavor.

The story centered around a cynical young girl named Jackie (played by Emily Harguth) who sees no reason she should waste her time by attending the seventy-ninth annual Carol Outreach being held at her grandmother’s church.

After being dragged to the event, she is befriended by Jasmine (Eleanor Koble), Gloria (Nora Olson), and Norman (August Pearce) who try to convince her she should pay more attention to the meaning of Christmas.

All of them are soon distracted, though, when Norman shows them a time machine which has been constructed by the church’s janitor, Mr. Henry Olson, who was played by none other than Sacred Heart principal Chris Dahle.

Mr. Olson tells the four children that, with his invention complete, he is going to be rich enough to buy happiness. He is in the process of showing it to them when he is called away to deal with a problem. Though they have instructions not to touch anything, the time machine is touched and the children are transported back in time.

They end up at the same Carol Outreach program where they meet people—and perform to music from—the ‘70s, the ‘80s, and then even the 1940s. Unknown to them, they meet Hank Olson (played by Owen Kelm), the future church janitor and inventor of the time machine.

Because Hank unknowingly pushes the lever on the time machine a long way in the wrong direction, they end up in Biblical times at the site of the first Christmas. Here, both he and the cynical Jackie finally see the deeper meaning of the season and kneel alongside the Wise Men (played by Lylah Jorgenson, Lillyann Jewison and Josephine Selthun) near Mary (Peyton Ockwig), Joseph (Noah Harguth) and a shepherd (Kaylee Holthus).

After their visit, the group uses the time machine to return Hank to the 1940s, then back to their own present-day Carol Outreach.

They are surprised when the event closes with a statement of thanks to Mr. Hank Olson, who has been the church’s pastor for the past 45 years. In his farewell, Pastor Olson speaks of the enduring, immeasurable riches to be found in Jesus’ love, and says he could never ask for more than the chance to serve his fellow Christians.

The music of the performance was widely varied and presented with tremendous energy by the elementary students. Songs included “Can You Hear the Bells,” “Come, Let Us All Adore Him,” “Ring, Ring-a-Ling,” “Peace on Earth” and many others.



Star Eagle photos by Deb Bently