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WASECA
COUNTY
PIONEER

LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY

No. 48 Vol. IV \$2

Office at 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca

Thursday, November 27, 2025

■ Page 9



Shade of Noir



The 2025 Waseca Bluejays Football season ended Saturday, with a loss in the Minnesota Class AAA State Title game 17-7 to undefeated Annandale. Playing their final high school football game were seniors Cyrett Long, Jordan Johnston, Deven Parpart, Malachi Noble, Ethan Hiller, William Mansfield, Deron Russell, Riley Mitchell, Jett Rohl, Liam Biddle, Jacob Root, Allen Kopetzki, Julius Oviedo, Matthew Veroeven, Lucas Selthun, Kaden Garza, Caleb Wulf and Nathan Kaiser. The long journey began with an undefeated regular season, including Section playoff victories over TCU 21-0 and Luverne 31-12; state tournament wins over Holy Family Catholic 14-0 and Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton 14-13. More photos, full story on Page 12.

Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Eternal gratitude for an unforgettable season

State championship setback can't temper enthusiasm

By ELI LUTGENS
OPINION

Thank you for bringing us along for the ride, Waseca Bluejays football.

And what a ride it was. To win 12 games in a row is impressive.

And to qualify for the school's first-ever football state championship game is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, some might say.

Saturday didn't go the way we wanted, a 17-7 loss to undefeated Annandale in the state title game.

In the end, the 2025 Waseca football season will not be forgotten. The Bluejays were a special group. This team qualified for only its fifth-ever state tournament, going further than any football team in school history.

Give credit to Waseca, its coaching staff, players, and its incredible community supporters.

After the game, sitting in the post-game press conference room, reporters were asked if they had a final question for coach Brad Wendland or his players.

During that first game of the season, could you see yourselves playing for a state championship? I certainly didn't. A 7-6 win at St. Peter didn't give me high hopes for the season.

Boy, was I wrong. I've never been happier to have been proven wrong.

An important message from a proud football mom:

"To our high school football team: I am a mom of four boys, ranging from fourth grade to ninth who play football. Four boys who watch you.

lose, they see you. They. See. You.

"On Saturday, my youngest was shaking with excitement and anticipation for a game his Bluejay football team was about to play at U.S. Bank Stadium. In his Bluejay gear, bouncing around on his purple chair he said to me, 'Mom, I don't care if they win, this is so cool. This is such a cool experience.' To him, on that day, you were the young men he got to see all season put in the work. The young men who stopped to give him a high five after practice and then again when you ran through the tunnel during Friday night home games. The young men who gave him knucks as they left the locker room

walking out to your cars. The young men he cheered for on Saturday morning as the buses went by. The young men whose numbers he memorized so he could cheer you on by name when he saw you on that field. I know the loss on Saturday was hard. Harder on all of you, no question. But please hear me. This mom wants you to know to him, you are forever champions, a seed sown of greatness, strength and perseverance; a product of hard work rooted in community. To him, you are the young man he one day hopes to be. To him, you are heroes. And for that this mom is eternally grateful."

As are we all.

Farmamerica Turkey Trot 5k Nov. 28

Farmamerica's "Turkey Trot" 5k event will be Friday, Nov. 28 with check-in starting at 9:30 a.m. and the race beginning at 10 a.m. Cost is \$20 and includes a Turkey Trot t-shirt and race medal. Must register by Nov. 18.

Waseca Fairgrounds Holiday Lights food drive starting Nov. 28

Holiday Lights will take place at the Waseca Fairgrounds starting from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 28 and Saturday, Nov. 29, Dec. 5 and 6, 12 and 13, 19 and 20. Non-perishable food items donations will be collected at the entrance.

Santa Sip and Shop at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Nov. 29

The Santa Sip and Shop vendor show will take place at the Indian Island Winery from noon till 9 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 29. Sip some win and shop small businesses, there will also be door prizes, Santa and Mrs. Claus from 1-4 p.m. This is a family friendly event.

A word from The Word

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:6-7

Local leaders express concerns at listening session

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

"A win for one of us is a win for all of us," observed Waseca County Administrator Michael Johnson during a "legislative luncheon" that brought local leaders together with state-level representatives and spokespersons from national offices.

About 50 area leaders were present at a legislative listening session held in the county annex over the lunch hour on Wednesday, Nov. 19.

State representatives Keith Allen (19A), Tom Sexton (19B), Senator Gene Dornink (District 23), and John Jasinski (Senate minority leader and district 19) attended, as did spokespersons from the offices of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar and Con-

gressman Brad Finstad.

Jasinski acknowledged that "bonding," that is, the allotment of state funds to help with local projects, will be a highly significant element of the 2026 session. Of his fellow senators, Jasinski said, "They know I will not vote for a bonding bill unless Waseca is in it [to receive funding]." With the senate nearly tied in the number of party representatives (34 DFL, 33 GOP) he suggested bipartisan cooperation will be the only way to move forward.

Senator Dornink pointed out he is not only a legislator, but also a business owner who works in the community and personally experiences the consequences of actions taken at the state capitol. He pointed out 2026 is an election year, which puts pressure on legislators to meet with community

leaders and learn about local needs. He said his priorities this year include focusing bonding funds toward infrastructure needs.

Sexton stated that, with party divisions in an even 67-67 tie in the House of Representatives, "We're going to have to work across the aisle quite a bit to get anything accomplished."

Allen agreed, saying competition for state support is very tight, with many, many municipalities seeking funding for major infrastructure projects.

Spokespersons for Klobuchar and Finstad assured those present they should feel free to contact the two representatives, both of whom have a number of local offices within the district.

Session continued on 2

Safety agencies to ring the bell for Salvation Army

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

On Dec. 6, the Waseca fire department, police department and the Waseca County sheriff's office will be vying for the public's attention.

That day, all three departments will bring their respective eye-catching resources to the Walmart parking lot, where they will be staffing the Waseca County Salvation Army's iconic red kettle.

The contest is to see which group can bring in the largest amount in donations across an assigned two-hour time slot.

The Sheriff's Department is on deck from 10 a.m. to noon. Sheriff Jay Dulas, a few deputies, and members of the Waseca County mounted sheriff's posse will be there, complete with mounts.



CARING - Waseca safety agencies will be competing for the fourth time to see which of them raises the most money for the Waseca County Salvation Army during the six hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6 in front of the Waseca Walmart store. Representing their respective agencies here are (from left) Ryan Bruegger from the Waseca Fire Department, Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas, local Salvation Army president John Petersburg and Waseca Police Chief Kris Markeson.

People who stop by may have the chance to offer a pony or horse an apple or carrot and will have opportunities for personal conversation with group members.

Members of the police department will be braving the weather from noon until 2 p.m. Folks in the vicinity should not become alarmed when they see flashing lights and emergency vehicles in front of the store—it's all part of the plan to get people's attention

Salvation continued on 9

Coffee with Tom Sexton addresses Clear Lake bonding tour

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Community members gathered once again for Coffee with Representative Tom Sexton at the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism offices on Friday, Nov. 14. In attendance from the Chamber network were Board President Mikhail Rostislavovich, former Minnesota State Representative John Petersburg, Gyles Randall, Dwight Thostenson, and Ann Staloch.

Representative Sexton opened with reflections on the recent Minnesota House Capital Investment Committee bonding tour held Nov. 5 at Clear Lake Park. He described that a small fragment of a shattered 1922 clay pipe served as an unexpectedly effective teaching tool during the visit. "Having that pipe there made the explanation for inflow and infiltration much easier," Sexton said. "They didn't have that over in Rochester, which made it that much more difficult to explain on their bonding visit."

From there, Sexton moved into a broader update on statewide financial trends. He noted that Minnesota continues to hold one of the highest corporate income tax rates in the country.

Bonding continued on 5



Compostings

by Al Batt

‘Kind words are a verbal hug’

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING

What are all those little bottles? They’re Wite-Out. I’m collecting them.

Why? Because they’re corrector’s items.

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. After my father had died, I joined my mother and my siblings to find homes for some of Dad’s things. There was a box filled with mismatched, orphaned gloves, and caps meant for either winter or summer. There were battered caps to wear when doing farm work, and then there was the good cap. The good cap was the one worn to town. When I was a little boy, I’d accompany my father, who was wearing his good cap, to Vivian’s Cafe, where he sat with other farmers, all of them enjoying a cup of coffee with a sweet roll or piece of pie. They’d all worn caps into the cafe and then removed them to eat. Unlike today, very few of the caps promoted a brand name. They weren’t that interested in advertising for a company.

I’VE LEARNED

At every Thanksgiving table, there is a Normal Lee who says, “Normally, I don’t eat this much.”

When I slide headfirst into an MRI, I remind myself and I’m reminded by the healthcare professionals that I need to remain as perfectly still as possible. I should be able to do that as I’m typically exhausted after spending a day in the clinic. But once the machine begins capturing images, I suddenly gain the energy of a squirrel and want to scurry all about.

A friend told me that when she and her husband had a young family, she realized they were eating out too often when she yelled, “Let’s eat!” and the kids all ran to the car.

I stayed at a towering hotel. I rode the elevator to my room. As I traveled from the 12th floor to the 14th floor, I saw there was no 13th floor, but that’s another story. Many hotels have no 13th floor due to a widespread superstition and fear of the number 13, known as triskaidekaphobia.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

When scientists combined the DNA of a cheetah with the DNA of a crab, things went sideways fast.

Today, I’m wearing pink to raise awareness of people like me who forget to separate red laundry

from white.

I went to a bookstore recently. A guy was throwing Stephen King books at everyone. I wondered why he was doing that. Then “IT” hit me.

The neighbor evaporated. He’ll be mist.

I just moved 20 cents from my left pocket to my right pocket. It was a pair o’ dime shift.

What is faster than an escalator? An escanow.

NATURE NOTES

Squirrel nests may look like haphazard clumps of leaves, but they have a complex construction with layers of different materials. Leaf nests (dreys) are made from twigs, leaves, mosses and other material. Green twigs (often with leaves attached) are woven together to create the floor of the nest. Squirrels pack soft, compressible materials, such as damp leaves and moss, on top of the floor to reinforce the structure. The squirrel weaves a spherical frame of twigs and vines around the base, creating an outer shell to the insulated core. The finishing touches involve stuffing in leaves, mosses, shredded bark, twigs or paper to line the inner cavity. Squirrels take advantage of locations offering built-in support, like the fork of branches. Some build nests in tree cavities rather than high in branches. In his fascinating book, “Winter World,” Bernd Heinrich found many dreys were “piles of junk” and suggested they may have been fake nests built to distract predators. Others were well-engineered. He counted 26 layers of flattened, dried green oak leaves in one nest and discovered that the multiple sheets of leaves served as watertight, interlocking shingles, as the nest was dry inside. Speaking of leaves, I caught three falling leaves before they hit the ground this fall. Folklore says that if you catch a falling leaf, you will have 12 months of happiness. A leaf is good fortune tumbling from the sky. Corraling a dancing leaf brings good luck and might require good luck. Catch a falling leaf before it touches the ground and then make a wish. I did that after I caught the first leaf. I wished I’d catch two more leaves, and my wish came true.

MEETING ADJOURNED

“Be thankful for what you have; you’ll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don’t have, you will never, ever have enough.”—Oprah Winfrey.

Kind words are a verbal hug. Happy Thanksgiving.

There were six types of humans

I am currently reading the book “Sapiens: A Brief History of Human-kind,” a 2015 more-than-a-million-sold nonfiction book by Yuval Noah Harari.

The book delivers some surprising information. Delivered in no particular order, here are some facts which caught my attention: Neanderthals were “human,” not the “pre-human” I’ve always thought them to be. Neanderthals actually had larger brains than “homo sapiens,” the group modern people fall into. Along with that, Harari says there were as many as six types of humans for many centuries. One actually consisted of “dwarves,” humans who were isolated from others because they lived on an island with limited resources where smaller people were more likely to thrive. Homo floresiensis, according to archeological evidence, was less than four feet tall when fully grown.

Harari also paints a pleasant picture of what it was like to be a “hunter-gatherer,” that is, to live a subsistence lifestyle using existing resources: collecting fruit, berries, nuts and roots and also harvesting what live land and water animals



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

they could with only rudimentary tools and weapons. He suggests that, since they lived in tropical climates and so didn’t need to worry about winter, they would spend the day out finding food, then return to camp for a relaxed evening of socializing.

He compares that with being a farmer, which entailed backbreaking work beginning at dawn and not always ending at dusk. Along with the ever-present possibilities of flood or drought, Harari points out, growing the same crop year after year led to numerous possible causes of poor harvests including nutrient depletion, parasites, and diseases.

I’m only about halfway through the book, so I’m sure further fascinating surprises await me, but even the briefly summarized highlights above are extremely thought-provok-

ing.

What if Floresiensis had turned out to dominate the planet? Think how much smaller our houses would be, how many fewer resources it would take to build, heat and cool them. Maybe we would have gone on to use goats as our mounts rather than horses...

The Smithsonian website mentions archeologists have given Floriensis the nickname “Hobbits”; the reason is perfectly obvious, of course.

By the way, large predators and other natural dangers are not the reason Floriensis no longer exists: Homo Sapiens are. The book is not kind to Sapiens, by the way: it points out that, as many different species as modern practices have put at risk, sapienkind exterminated many, many

more on its road to becoming the planet’s dominant species.

The advantage Sapiens have over every other species on the planet, Harari postulates, is our ability to visualize and place trust in “unreal” things. Among these are money, social hierarchies, and human rights—all concepts which have been fundamental to society, but whose meanings and consequences have changed depending on the time and culture. He also claims gossip is essential to organizing society: by giving people information about who is reliable and who is not, gossip allowed early humans to decide what hunter-gatherer bands they would align with and who they would support as their leaders. He goes on to claim it is still more than the much-maligned pastime the word has come to imply—that we still base vital decisions on what we learn from gossiping and backbiting.

Harari has gone on to write a sequel he named “Homo Deus,” Latin for, essentially, “humans as god.” I guess I’ll finish “Sapiens” before I decide whether to read that one.

The solution? Turning to man’s best friend

I know I’ve been talking a lot recently about how my life here in Denver is post-grad, so I’m just going to continue on that train.

I’m still trying to make friends, in case anyone is curious. As time rolls on, I realize it’s not just me. I’ve been trying to keep in touch with those that I graduated with and see what adventures they are up to. I have a few friends who also moved to a new state by themselves and are struggling to make new connections. I guess it’s something about being alone in a new city, post-grad, in your twenties; it seems they all combine to complicate forming relationships.

I joined a Facebook group shortly after I moved here that was meant to connect young women who had just moved to Denver looking to make friends. I had connected with a few people, but only ended up meeting in person with one girl, whose name is Emily. I’ve spent a few hours with Emily a few times since, but every time is hit or miss I believe. From Texas, Emily moved here to be a



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

nanny and be closer to some relatives. She is super nice, but sometimes when we hang out, we struggle to come up with conversation and often end up sitting or walking in silence as we both try to think of the next thing to say. We have quite a bit in common, so it baffles me that conversation can be this hard. Honestly, if Emily were a man, I probably would’ve ended the relationship by now due to the lack of spark. But she’s not, and it’s still nice to hang out with someone.

I’ve been so busy recently between work and other things that I haven’t been something that I’ve been stressing about. Every once in a

while, like on a Friday or Saturday night, when I’m in my pajamas watching television instead of going out, I will get sad that I don’t have any friends to spend time with. Luckily, Jack invites me every once in a while to hang out with his friends, but only when their girlfriends are also present.

For example, I went to my first CU Buffalo football game on Saturday in Boulder, and I was only invited because other girlfriends were going to be there. Thankfully, it doesn’t bother me. I like spending time with him (obviously) and I like his friends’ girlfriends. Hopefully, as I continue to hang out more with

them, we can start actually mingling without the boys.

But until then, I have decided to turn to a different solution: man’s best friend. Jack and I have signed up for and are going to a fostering orientation so that we can start the process and application of becoming foster parents for dogs. I’m excited.

In Denver, and in Colorado in general, there are dogs everywhere. While it’s great to see a dog every time I go out, it also brings home the point that I miss the three adorable puppies I left in Minnesota. Nothing rivals coming home to a pet who loves you unconditionally.

My Determination: “Such short little lives our pets have to spend with us, and they spend most of it waiting for us to come home each day. It is amazing how much love and laughter they bring into our lives and even how much closer we become with each other because of them.” — John Grogan, “Marley and Me: Life and Love With the World’s Worst Dog”



Letter to the Editor:

A recent article was printed in the Pioneer stating it’s okay to cut off the top two to four feet of specially grown spruce trees. “Don’t worry, they grow back. It takes a few years, but they do come back.”

A spruce tree will not grow back a new leader from a topped

area because there are no buds there. New smaller leaders may be produced from the branches below, but the cut itself will not grow. These leaders will be weak branches that need shaping.

This also opens the tree to possible internal decay, disease or damaging insects; it also removes the most productive part of the tree. Lateral branches of tentimes are pruned from coniferous trees and bushes, causing little to no harm. My vote is to trim laterally and let the tree tops be. Jackie Peters

Waseca Community Ed winter sessions beginning

Area residents can begin signing up for a wide range of community education classes and activities when the 2025-26 Winter Program Brochure opens online on Dec. 15. Options include courses and opportunities for all ages, inviting folks to build connections by taking part in athletics, arts, enrichment, special events, and lifelong learning.

The offerings support connection, creativity, wellness and community involvement. Some events

are free, others require a registration fee.

Questions can be addressed to the Waseca Community Education Department at 507-835-5626. When it is live, the online brochure can be accessed at <https://waseca.ce.eleyo.com>. Anyone who would prefer a printed brochure can request one at the office, located in the Central Building at 501 E. Elm Avenue, or call.

being experienced by law enforcement agencies statewide.

Community corrections and probation leader Jon Schiro asked that, when legislators make a change which will lead to extra work for corrections staff, they also provide funding to help facilitate the expected workload increase. He mentioned the specific example of the MRRA, explaining that releasing inmates and placing them under the supervision of corrections workers would require a significant amount of extra time for his staff.

Chris Howard of Land and Water Resources brought up changes to water and drainage management laws made in 2023 which will have disastrous affects and lead to vastly increased expenses if they are kept as part of the law. He requested that legislators revisit the phrasing of the statute before some of the elements he described are due to take effect.

Numerous other county staff members spoke, as did each of the commissioners, each one highlighting accomplishments and matters of concern.

cent accomplishments made by their staff members and students. Eric Hudspeth of the Waseca district told legislators, “We don’t need any more mandates telling us what we need to do as we work with our students. The more flexibility we can get, the better we can manage for our students’ needs.” Jeremy Erler of the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP) district requested more support for mental health initiatives, and expressed a hope that a statewide health insurance program could be formed. New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) superintendent Michael Meihak thanked legislators for some recent changes which allowed more flexibility in funding long term facility maintenance tasks and invited legislators to contact school leaders whenever they had questions about how new rules might affect schools and students.

Several county department leaders took a few minutes each to share special concerns. County Attorney Rachel Cornelius addressed the 2023 law known as the Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act

(MRRA). The Act has the consequence of allowing incarcerated individuals to shorten their time behind bars by taking part in programs aimed at rehabilitation.

Cornelius stated some of the people she has prosecuted and who would be eligible to reduce their sentences have committed criminal sexual conduct involving minors. She suggested having such individuals return to the community earlier than expected could be traumatic for victims, and requested that at least some elements of the law be revised.

Cornelius offered to bring individuals to the capitol to testify about the negative affects the new law may engender.

Sheriff Jay Dulas suggested the legislature should increase penalties for individuals who imitate police officers, either by wearing uniform-like clothing and equipment, or by using certain types of accessories on their vehicles. He also asked for increased penalties for drivers who endanger public safety by fleeing from a scene and asked that steps be taken to help alleviate the workforce shortage

■ Session

from Page 1

Waseca mayor Randy Zimmerman addressed the legislators thanking them for the \$2.1 million which funded the city’s reconstruction project to reduce “inflow and infiltration” in the water systems under Second Street Northwest. City manager Carl Sonnenberg said that, with the Second Street project taken care of, he will be petitioning the state to allow \$750,000 allotted to the project to be “redirected” toward constructing a water tower that would replace the aging structure next to city hall.

Sonnenberg stated three inter-related goals for the near future: moderating both utility rates and property tax increases without reducing city staff. He went on to reveal the number of city employees today is the same as it was 20 years ago when he joined the Waseca staff, yet more work is being accomplished.

The county’s school superintendents each spoke briefly, sharing re-



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GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

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Got news? • 837-6767 • news@wasecacountypioneer.com

**Santa Anonymous
Auction at Boxcar Bar
Saturday, Nov. 29**

The annual Santa Anonymous Auction at the Boxcar Bar will take place at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 29. Organizers are currently reaching out to local businesses looking for donations. All donations will go directly toward bringing holiday joy to children and families.

**Waseca Chorale
holiday concert at
Sacred Heart Church
Sunday, Nov. 30**

Members of the Waseca Chorale will present their holiday concert "Joy! He Shall Reign" at Sacred Heart Church at 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 30. Tickets will be for sale upon entry. Adults are \$10, children 12 and under \$7.

**Steele County Toys for
Tots kicks off 2025 Toy
Drive application
deadline Dec. 1**

Toys for Tots is currently accepting toys at numerous locations found here, <https://owatonna-mn.toys-fortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/donate-toys.aspx>. For those looking to request toys for children, applications must be printed and filled out, applications can be picked up at the following locations: Minnesota Prairie County Alliance, 630 Florence Ave., Owatonna, Owatonna Public Library in children's area, Community Pathways of Steele County, Steele County Public Health, Blooming Prairie Public Library, Lerberg's Foods, Ellendale Food Shelf, Krause Feed & Supplies, State Bank of Red Wing. The application deadline is Dec. 1.

**Just Friends concert at
First Lutheran Dec. 3**

First Lutheran Church in Waldorf is having a "Just Friends" concert on Wednesday, December 3. Refreshments will be at 6:30 p.m. and the concert will start at 7:30 p.m. Handicap accessible.

**Waldorf Community
Christmas Dinner
Thursday, Dec. 4**

There will be a Community Christmas Dinner at the Waldorf Community Center on December 4 at noon. The menu includes turkey and all the trimmings for \$10. Please order takeouts ahead by calling Susan Kipp at 507-420-8973. Takeout pickup is at 11:30. Walk-ins and everyone are welcome!

**Holiday Lighting
Ceremony at Waseca
Arts Center Dec. 4**

A Holiday Lighting Ceremony at the Waseca Arts Center located at 200 State Street North will begin at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4. RSVP at info@waseca-chamber.com by Nov. 30 to attend.

**Christmas Cocktails
with My Famous
Friends at The Mill
Friday, Dec. 5**

The Mill in Waseca will be holding a Christmas Cocktails with My Famous Friends from 7-11 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5. A funny multi-media rock 'n' roll experience. Ugly sweaters encouraged, adult beverages available.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT - Waseca County commissioners (from left) Brad Milbrath, Brad Harguth, Doug Christopherson, Brad Krause and De Malterer were taken by surprise when they were presented with the Waseca County 4-H organization's Distinguished Service Award during a recent celebration.
Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Commissioners surprised with service award

The members of the Waseca County Board of Commissioners were surprised during the Waseca County 4-H Achievement Celebration the evening of Nov. 14 when it was announced they were receiving the organization's "Distinguished Service Award."

Commissioner De Malterer, who was present at the event but unaware of the approaching honor, stepped forward to receive an engraved plaque on behalf of the board. She shared it with fel-

low board members during their regular meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 18.

"It was quite a delightful surprise," she told them. "I'm glad I could be there to accept it."

University of Minnesota Extension youth development leader Amy Nelson shared the text used as the award was announced:

The Distinguished Service Award is given to recognize people who have given to the 4-H program over several years.

These people go above and beyond the call of duty.

The Waseca County Board of Commissioners have been huge supporters and advocates for the Waseca County 4-H program, and Waseca County Extension. Because of their belief in the program that it changes lives for the better, they work tirelessly to ensure our Extension department is adequately funded. In 2024, they saw the need to reach more youth with 4-H, and took a huge step to

hire additional staff. This is the county's first Extension staffing increase in over 30 years! They show up at the county fair to cheer on our 4-Hers, and lend their time to help 4-H make meaningful partnerships within our county. We are extremely grateful for their support, and would like to congratulate the Waseca County Board of Commissioners on being named this year's Waseca County 4-H Distinguished Service Award recipients.



**Hunter
Carlson
latest
Drug Court
graduate**

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Hunter Carlson graduated from the Steele Waseca County Drug Court program the afternoon of Wednesday, Nov. 20. Surrounded by family and friends, the Honorable Judge Hanks, and of course the Steele Waseca County Corrections team, Carlson completed the agreed-to steps to finish his commitment to the state.

With twenty-six months of reform under his belt, Carlson walked out of the Waseca County Courthouse with a plaque acknowledging his accomplishment and a letter from U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar. Since October 12 of 2023, Carlson has been dealing with the drug team, they know him by name and by the connection they've made with him. He's graduate number 119 from the program. His girlfriend, Heather, was in the spectator seats, as were his daughters, Vienna Mae, a curly blond toddler who was waddling around, and newborn Zella.

The team had words of encouragement and provided some amazing facts. Nicole Grams, Drug Court Coordinator, who worked closely with Carlson said, "For those who don't know, new entries into the Steele Waseca County Drug Court have steps they need to take. By coming into the drug court you avoid jail time. The minimum length of the program is 18 months, but the average is two years. Someone comes into the program, they need to be classified as high risk/high need, and willing to participate. They need to be a Waseca or Steele county resident and referred to us on a probation violation or new offense; Hunter's was a probation violation. When participants get into the second phase, still in treatment, still focusing on mental health, this will help get them into the work force. Mapping out getting a GED if nec-

Drug court continued on 4

**Kelsey Draeger
commits to
Waldorf
University track**

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Waseca Junior Senior High School senior Kelsey Draeger signed her letter of intent the morning of Wednesday, Nov. 19. Surrounded by her mother Delain, her sister Kendra, classmates and friends, she signed her commitment to Waldorf University's Cross Country/Track and Field, located in Forest City, Iowa.

The Performing Arts Center was full of chatting students and fellow athletes as Kelsey sat down to sign. With a stroke of her pen, she received applause. Introduced by Activities Director Joseph Hedervare, she also got a shout out from Coach Abel, "We're excited for her future, running some cross and some track at the next level. For those of you who are thinking about the next level, Kelsey puts in hard work and runs the miles, and has a great attitude. That's what coaches are looking for, that you can come into the program, step right in and make a difference. Kelsey is a great example of that, she knew what was expected of her and never disappointed."

Draeger said, "I would like to thank everyone for being here; I would really like to thank my mom who supports me and everything I do. Also thanks to Coach Abel for being here for me as such an amazing supporter." She went on to thank her sister Kendra and her friends who attended the signing. "I can't wait to see where my future goes."

Draeger received offers from numerous col-



RUNNING INTO THE FUTURE - From left: Delain Castor (mom), Kelsey Draeger and sister Kendra were just two of the many people present as Kelsey Draeger signed her letter of intent to run cross country/track with Waldorf University in Forest City, Iowa.
Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

leges and universities including New York, Minnesota State, Concordia Moorhead, California, Wisconsin University and Hamline. She toured Bethany and Concordia, Augsburg and Waldorf. She said about Waldorf, "I liked how small the school was, the teachers were also super nice. But it was Coach Langrell from Waldorf that made my decision; that, and it is pretty close to home." For her long-term plans she would like to manage track and cross-country teams. She said her mother forced her into track in the seventh grade, "I didn't really like it for the first two years," she remembers, "but by ninth grade I was really into it, that's when we went to state, in 2023." In total she's been running for six years. She specializes in the 1 and 2 mile, for fun she likes to do the four

by eight. She loves her team and wants to be clear, "We are all supportive with each other, we compete but it's all good natured." On a bad day she says, "Running calms me down, so does being surrounded by my team." She maintains a 3.3 grade point average and is on the B honor roll.

The mascot for Waldorf University is War- rick the Viking Warrior, the campus has around 2,600 students. Waldorf U is a little over an hour from Waseca, near Forest City, Iowa which has a population of just over 4,000. She says she will miss the Waseca track fans who persistently came to cheer her on at state and away competitions, "Waseca community is so supportive, they really want us to win. That's what I will miss most about leaving home."

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OBITUARIES

James Larsen

Jim left us for his heavenly home on November 13th 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

James Willard Larsen was born in Waseca, MN on August 16, 1939 to Fern (Dahnert) and Willard Larsen. He attended Waseca public schools and graduated in 1957. Jim was active in sports and class plays during his years in school. Jim lettered in four sports, football, basketball, baseball and track in his junior and senior years. He was later inducted into the Waseca High School Athletic Hall of fame. He then attended Mankato State University for two years before enlisting into the US army. On February 24, 1962 Jim entered into the best years of his life when he married the love of his life JoAnn Pitcher. Jim and Jo raised two wonderful children, Brett and Brenda. Jim was a postman in Waseca for 37 years until his retirement in 2000. Jim and Jo owned two homes in Waseca until building their dream home on ten acres in rural northwest Waseca. Upon retirement they purchased a second home in Florence, Arizona where they spent 15 winters escaping the cold Minnesota temperatures. Jim also continued working on their hobby farm and driving veterans to the VA Hospital in Minneapolis for 17 years. Jim was active in many civic organizations and over the years held many offices at the St. Paul Lutheran Church in Waseca. He was also a long-time member of the American Legion and past president of the Waseca Sportsman's Club.



James Larsen

Jim is survived by his wife Jo, son Brett; brothers, Mike (Ruth), Rick (Deb), Dave (Jo); sisters Linda, Kim(Tim), Bonnie, Vicky; sister-in-law, Cheryl; cousins, aunts and many nieces and nephews. Jim was preceded in death by his daughter, Brenda; his mother; father; sister Judy; brother Bob; and his nephew, Johnathan and many aunts and uncles.

A funeral service will be held on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 11:00 AM at St Paul Lutheran Church in Waseca, MN; Rev. Michael Grannis will officiate. Jim's family will greet guests at a visitation on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis Steffel Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca and one hour prior to the service at the church. Interment will be at Woodville Cemetery and the Waseca Honor Guard will lead military honors at the cemetery.

Donovan Dickie

Donovan Miner Dickie, age 95, of Waseca, was welcomed home to heaven on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, joyfully reunited with his beloved wife, Rita M. Dickie, and his youngest son, Todd Dickie. With his family gathered around him, he passed in peace and comfort at home.

Don, the son of Russell and Aletha (Miner) Dickie, was born on April 28, 1930, in Waterville, Minnesota. He grew up on the family farm, where he learned the value of hard work and dedication. He attended St. Peter High School, where he earned first place in the 1947 and 1948 Regional Track and Field Champion-

ships. During his senior year, he set a new meet record of 53.1 in the 440-yard dash, graduating in 1948.

While in school, he met the love of his life, Rita—affectionately known to him as “Smooches.” They were united in marriage on July 2, 1950.

Throughout his life, Don was truly a jack of all trades. He worked as a police officer, realtor broker, insurance agent, mail carrier, and every-day handyman—just to name a few.

Don was a devoted husband, father, grandpa, and great grandpa. He loved golf and playing cards, but what he cherished most of all was his family, whom he loved unconditionally.

Don is survived by his sons Mark,

Jeff (Jackie), and Kevin (Cindy) Dickie, all of Waseca; his daughter Jane Dickie of Manly, Iowa; 13 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; siblings Ross, Gene, and Janet; and many other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his loving wife Rita, his son Todd, his oldest brother Keith, his sister Wilma Lee, and his parents.

Visitation will be held from 10:00 a.m. on Friday, December 5, 2025, at St. John Lutheran Church, with the funeral service beginning at 11:00 a.m. at the church. A luncheon will follow at 1:00 p.m. at the Waseca Legion. A private burial will be held at a later date.



Donovan Dickie

Nancy Berndt

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Nancy (Reinhold, Fliflet) Berndt, age 72, who passed away at her home surrounded by family on the evening of November 21, 2025.

Nancy was born on April 14, 1953, to Howard and Mary Reinhold. She was the oldest of three children, growing up alongside her siblings Michael and Patricia.

In 1970, Nancy married William Fliflet, and together they welcomed three children: David (Jennifer) Fliflet, Debra (Eric) McAlister, and Joseph (Kristin) Fliflet.

In February of 1994, she married Norman Berndt in Waseca, gaining two stepsons: Aaron (Maike) Berndt and Lucas Berndt.

Nancy's greatest joy in life was her family. She will be forever remem-

bered for her fierce love, unwavering devotion, and the warmth she brought to every gathering. Her home was always filled with love, laughter, and the comforting smell of something delicious cooking. Family was everything to her, and she leaves behind a profound legacy in the hearts of those who loved her.

After raising her children, Nancy worked as a cook at Lakeshore Inn and Colony Court before spending 18 years at Itron, where she retired in 2020. During her years in Waseca, she was an active part of the senior community. She enjoyed visiting with friends and neighbors, shopping, playing Bingo and cards, and taking the occasional trip to the casino where she often seemed to find a small jackpot waiting for her.

Nancy is preceded in death by her parents, Howard and Mary, her hus-

band Norman, and her great-grandson Mykel.

She is survived by her children, siblings, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren: Brittany, Joshua, Faith (Chanse), Jordan, Daniel, Lucas, Kady, Ashley, Kylie, Avery, Ava, Paisley, Adelaide, Gavin, Josephine, Paislee, Leo, Grayson, and Pepper, as well as extended family and many friends who felt like family.

Her memory will be cherished always, and she will be missed immensely.

A celebration of Nancy's incredible life will be held on Friday, December 5, 2025, from 1–3 PM at Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral Home, 109 3rd St NE, Waseca, MN. Burial will be at Woodville Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are



Nancy Berndt

preferred to the Waseca Senior Citizen Center in Nancy's name.

Mark Paulson

Mark Jeffery Paulson, age 69, of rural Waseca, passed away on November 19, 2025, at the Mayo Clinic Health Systems in Mankato following a lifelong battle with muscular dystrophy.

Born on September 13, 1956, in Waseca, Mark was the son of Robert Olaf Paulson and Ruth Eleanor (Hagen) Paulson. He attended Waseca Public Schools and graduated in 1975. After completing high school, Mark pursued an electronics degree with computer programming at Mankato Area Vocational-Technical Institute.

Mark grew up on his parents' farm in rural Waseca, where he enjoyed helping with farm chores. He loved playing softball with his siblings and neighborhood kids. Mark attended North Waseca Lutheran Church and was confirmed in 1972. Camping in the woods near his home with friends was one of his favorite activities. He was a member of the Palmer Sunbeams 4-H club and took pride in exhibiting his projects at the Waseca County Fair. Mark also enjoyed owning and driving classic cars.

After graduating from Mankato Area Vocational-Technical Institute, Mark moved to Woodbury, where he began working for the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation in the IT department. Later in life, Mark returned to rural Waseca and retired in



Mark Paulson

2005.

Mark is survived by his siblings: Susan (Robert) Elwood of Cresco, IA; Dale (Connie) Paulson of Elysian; Gary (Barbara) Paulson of Waseca; Pamela Frohn of Waseca; and his caregiver of 11 years, Sarah Marzinske of Alma City. He was preceded in death by his parents, two nephews, Lee Paulson and David Elwood, one sister-in-law, Debra Paulson, one great nephew, Zachary Paulson, and one great niece, Alicia Paulson.

Visitation was held at the Waterville Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service on Saturday, November 22, 2025 from 2-3:30 PM. Graveside services followed visitation on Saturday at North Waseca Lutheran Church.

■ Drug court

from Page 3

essary and a driver's license, which a lot of the time is getting fines paid. The third phase is cognitive skills. Participants are encouraged to identify thoughts, feelings and attitudes, and look for new ways to respond to problems. The last phase is to get integrated into the recovery community; this is different for everyone, but Hunter has built a strong network of recovery individuals to help him. He has to stay sober and demonstrate his ability to do so. The average person takes anywhere from two to four urine analysis tests a week; Hunter has taken 206." With this fact there were gasps of surprise throughout the crowd and another round of applause.

The Honorable Judge Hanks summarized a few positive impressions she'd made but she wanted to give Carlson a chance to read a letter he wrote. "To Judge Hanks and the drug

court team, I want to thank you for the opportunity to be in the drug court program. I've been sober for 591 days; I now have a license, my GED, and have completed treatment successfully. All because of you guys, the support you have given me gave me hope and made me feel I could do it." Carlson had to take a moment to collect himself, and wipe a tear. He made the rest of his speech a little more quietly, which made it hard to hear in the back of the room, but at the end he received another round of applause, and more wiping of faces.

His two daughters were born through this rough time. Along with Heather, Zella Mae and Vienna Mae, his mother Nancy was online through a Zoom call. In the crowd were Davis, Josh, Dillion, Maggie and Casey. At the end, Carlson took his plaque, his letter from Klobuchar, and his two daughters and walked out of the Waseca County Courthouse with his head held high, reporting he was on his way home to bake cookies.

NRHEG FFA "Parli" team headed to state

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

In mid-December, eight NRHEG FFA members will be traveling to state-level competition in St. Cloud to show their skill in "Parliamentary Procedures," a category whose name is frequently shortened to "Parli Pro" by those who must say it often. The objective is to demonstrate excellent understanding of Roberts Rules of Order—the protocols and procedures frequently used to run an orderly meeting.

Six team members and two alternates began early morning practices in the category this fall and won the seat at

state during a Nov. 14 regional competition at South Central College in North Mankato. The competing team members are August Bethke, Ellie Clark, Kaitlyn Dobberstein, Camellia Lynne, Makenna Reeder and Grace Riskedahl. Alternates, who must be contest-ready in case of an absence, are Emily DeLaCruz and Lauren Wakefield.

Team members explain they are given 11 minutes to present an opening ceremony and then conduct a meeting. Kaitlyn Dobberstein takes the role of president for the group; she describes her job as "making sure the meeting



RULES OF ORDER - Taking first place in the FFA Region 7 Parliamentary Procedure Leadership Development Event were NRHEG team members (front, from left) Makenna Reeder, Kaitlyn Dobberstein, (back, from left) Gus Bethke, Camellia Lynne, Grace Riskedahl, and Ellie Clark. Also part of the team but not pictured are Emily DeLaCruz and Lauren Wakefield.

goes smoothly." Other team members are assigned to present certain actions or types of motions; they only learn which ones as the round is about to

begin.
Competition can be nerve-wracking

Parli continued on 8

Janesville approves first reading for Midco agreement

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

After the City Council in Janesville heard from Government-Relations Representative Manager Ellie Burrows from Midco about construction of a fiber network, the council accepted and approved the first reading for franchise agreement with the city. The fiber network would offer cable television services, internet, landline and cell phone services after its construction which would begin in Spring of 2026 and end at the end of the year.

Midco is based out of Sioux Falls and provides services in wide areas of South Dakota, North Dakota, and Minnesota, and limited areas in Wisconsin and Kansas. City Attorney Jason Moran stated he has worked with Midco in some other area communities.

"By and large, I would say you guys do a good job," Moran commented. "Your speeds, from what I'm hearing, are top notch. You got more and more people streaming as opposed to your traditional cable."

Moran pointed out to council members the terms of the proposed agreement would provide services to city buildings at no cost.

Midco project construction manager Ryan Barr estimated installing main underground infrastructure in the city would take about three months. Once it was in place, providing individual connections to properties which wish to purchase the company's services would be handled by a local team.

Council member Ivan Maas expressed concerns about whether the underground installation would interfere with wires or pipes already in place.

Barr assured the council Midco checks for any utility lines prior to

JANESVILLE CITY COUNCIL

placing its lines. Saying "communication is key," Burrows said, "We know that installing fiber can be a slightly disruptive process and so we try to provide any sort of information that you would like to put on your website, social media, city newsletters, things like that."

Burrow stated door tags will be used to inform property owners when work is done in their area; the tags provide contact information that can be used if people have concerns.

Since Waseca County Commissioner De Malterer was present at the meeting and Arnoldt noted she had worked with Midco before, he asked if she had any input. Malterer responded that, given how important internet access has become, she welcomes any conversation which helps provide it to households that are currently unserved. She suggested it would be helpful if Midco would be willing to expand outside city limits. "I'm looking forward to the partnership," she said.

Katelynn Kratz, a contract attorney for the city of Janesville through Community and Economic Development Association (CEDA), provided an Economic Development Administration (EDA) report which included an update on city-owned property at 109 North Main Street.

"We have sent out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for fixing the walls and have heard no response," Kratz stated. "So we are at a standstill."

Arnoldt interjected that he had been in contact with an interested party and expects a bid will be received.

"Oh great," Kratz responded. "We can't really do anything with it until

we have a proposal."

She explained further that, in July, an application for \$50,000 for the T-Mobile Hometown grant was submitted but the city was not awarded.

"We have discussed a plan of action if we want to apply again," Kratz said. "Future use of this property has not been decided on, but a gathering place seems to be the general consensus."

In other matters, Kratz said Dave Schmidt provided the city EDA with a drafted Business Challenge policy that has implemented in multiple CEDA communities, including Jackson and Mapleton. Essentially, it was a phased competition for business owners who are seeking to expand or entrepreneurs who are looking to open a business. She added that it remains open to anyone in the region who wants to apply.

"Both communities saw success from this program and multiple businesses opened in their business district," Kratz stated. "Even some who didn't win the challenge opened their businesses anyway due to the tools they learned from the tools they learned in participating in the program."

She said that Waseca County EDA approved \$10,000 to put towards the prize package and the Waseca Chamber of Commerce agreed to as-

sist with the marketing. She said she herself applied to the SMIF Economic Development Grant for funding to put towards marketing the program in the region and award decisions will be announced within the next month.

"We hope to launch the program in early 2026," Kratz added.

In other news, Amy Schaefer and Macey Becker from Blue Earth Rural Entrepreneurial Venture (REV) group told council members of their desire to hold a meeting offering free technical assistance, and even a free lunch, to area business owners. The program was made possible through a grant from GreenSeam and Minnesota State University in Mankato. Unfortunately, Kratz reported the attendance as being low and so the hosts have offered it virtually instead and provided a personal link via email.

In other matters, Kratz said the Storefront Enhancement Program received 11 applications and provided funding to ten applications which involved exterior projects. It increased the total available funding from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

The council approved the purchase of a new \$7,000 spreader to replace the old one on the Prairie Ridge Golf course. The council adjourned at 7:42 p.m.



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Meeting highlights special education

By MELISSA DUNN
Staff Writer

At the Nov. 20 regular business meeting, members of the Waseca school board heard from special education director Geoffrey Wagner. Wagner said that despite the challenges to finding qualified teachers and staff during the school year, all of the programs in the district are filled. "In the last couple of years we have had very little turnover among our staff," Wagner said, "which we know that consistency makes a huge difference with our special ed students. We've been really lucky that way."

Wagner told the board that he and teaching and learning director Brooke McGuire continuously examine curriculum for the best match to academic focus, flexibility, and specific learning goals of students.

WASECA SCHOOL BOARD

Wagner said the needs within the district have increased, as have needs all over the state and nation. Currently special ed is targeting early interventions, which Wagner said is "pivotal for student success." An early childhood Thursday afternoon class and a Friday morning class were recently added to current programming, as well as a new sensory space. Among Waseca students, 21 percent receive special education services.

Superintendent Eric Hudspeth gave a fall "wrap-up" to the strategic plan, and concluded with a reminder of the Truth in Taxation Public meeting at 6:00 p.m. Dec. 18.

■ Bonding

from Page 1

"We're down almost \$200 million in corporate taxes received over the first four months," he said, explaining that many Minnesota-based corporations are choosing to remain in the state but are no longer expanding here.

Sexton also addressed growing concerns about fraud within the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). "Since we started the fraud committee, we've been getting tips left and right," he said. "We also know the checks and balances in place are simply not sufficient. Auditing is not as rigorous as it needs to be."

A question about the Metropolitan Transportation Council and their request for an additional \$75 million led to a larger discussion about ridership and transit efficiency. Light rail usage was cited as an example, with low rider counts even during peak times. Personal experiences were shared, including a trip from the Mall of America to the Target Center that took an hour and a half.

Sexton suggested that "it would almost be better to simply fund Uber in Minneapolis" than continue heavy investments in light rail operations that are not recovering their costs.

On a more local note, Sexton praised the Waseca County Board. "Hats off to our county commissioners for taking care of our courthouse within their budget on their own," he said.

Chamber President Rostislavovich echoed the theme of local collaboration.

"I've seen our community pull together more than it has in years," he said. "We're now seeing the county work with the city, the city working with the county, the Chamber working with all three, and getting our businesses involved. I've seen a lot of change go on here in the last few years, and it's for the positive."

He also noted the excitement surrounding downtown holiday lighting efforts and the long-awaited apartment complex now moving forward. "It makes us look vibrant," he said. "People start to come in, saying 'this is where I want to live.'"

Attendees also heard updates on emerging groups and initiatives. A new "Young Entrepreneurs" group is forming, and early conversations about a food cooperative are underway, with agreement around the table that "word of mouth works very well" in Waseca. "This is a pivotal moment in time with everything that's going on for Waseca," said Rostislavovich.

The discussion concluded with a reflection on FarmAmerica. While some noted the organization has historically focused heavily on the past, there was a shared desire to see more emphasis on the future of agriculture. The group voiced strong support for FarmAmerica Program Coordinator Kari Wadd. "That woman is a force to be reckoned with," Rostislavovich said. "She's joined multiple organizations, she's excited, and it's all benefited the farm and the children that visit."



TOM TURKEY - Director Cindy Kohlander accepted the donation after educating the service group on what services her organization provides.

Lions Club Donates Tom Turkey Funds to Waseca Area Service Center

The Waseca Lions Club hosted Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center Director Cindy Kohlander at their final meeting of the year where she spoke about the recent construction on Second Street and its impact on their donations and traffic for the thrift store. She also spoke about the Food Shelf; Backpack Program for after school snacks; In a Pinch Program for help with rent, gas or utilities; Santa Anonymous; and the Holiday Food programs such as the Thanksgiving Baskets and Christmas Holiday baskets. After her presentation to the group, the service organization provided Director Kohlander and the Service Center with the moneys they raised through their "Tom Turkey" drive to help feed the needy this holiday season which totaled more than \$4,000.

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with more than 1.4 million members in approximately 46,000 clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas around the world.

Griffith shares strategies for EMS providers

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

With the holidays approaching, anyone can feel especially stressed. Along with that, there are as few as 10 hours of sunlight, anyone, including emergency medical service (EMS) responders, can become depressed or "get the blues." After being an EMS director of the south-central Minnesota region for 23 years, Mark Griffith shared some information about the health services in the darker part of the year. For one thing, "Energy goes down and people are harder on themselves."

Both stress and the shorter days play a role.

"Within this next month, responders may react to a call differently than they would in July," Griffith said.

"The decrease of Vitamin D from the sun leads to an increase of both short-term and long-term depression," Griffith said. "You don't have to take my word for it. There are several studies out there."

Some of the simplest steps to take, Griffith recommends, are getting plenty of sleep, eating well, avoiding or limiting alcohol consumption, and watching nicotine use since it can cause physical stress. Providers, he added, are people too. He hopes they recognize the importance of reaching out to others and having trustworthy people they can talk to.

Thanksgiving and Christmas, Griffith added, can involve pressure in the form of expectations that people should host a celebration or visit family or friends they haven't seen in a while.

"The little things tend to add up," Griffith said.

Those who have lost or become separated from loved ones may feel lost about what to do for the holidays because their traditions have been disrupted. They may either behave reclusively or feel a form of "survivors' guilt."

"Outside of our normal routine, a lot of us probably don't eat 14 pounds of turkey in a week," Griffith pointed out. "So your diet has changed and your routine is out of whack so it leaves you wide open to an emotional change."

For EMS workers, stress may increase because of an uptick in calls, sometimes because of diet-related issues, or simply because they're lonely and they're looking for personal connections.

Griffith encourages EMS responders to stay healthy since they can face the same challenges as everyone else and have the added complication of not knowing if or when they may get called away. Those extra stresses may be particularly hard on EMS providers who live alone and have no one to talk things over with. "That's where the trouble starts, when someone gets so overwhelmed that they're out of sorts and they're stressed. But when they can talk to someone, the fog clears."

For that reason, Griffith said he encourages providers to talk to their coworkers, family members, friends, or a pastor—but whatever they do, to find an outlet. If responders need to discuss a recent call that struck them during the holidays, a critical and stress management team can call a peer counselor or give a debriefing to the providers.

Physical signs of stress, he said, include higher blood pressure, an increased heart rate, and even nausea.

Emotional signs include anxiety about spending time with friends or family, a sense of panic or grouching, a desperate need to withdraw, and trouble sleeping. Griffith said people can self-regulate if they recognize these common reactions to stress. One method is maintain as normal a schedule as possible.

"Routine can be a comfort," Griffith stated. "If you notice these huge symptoms, don't make any huge decisions. Don't decide you want to buy an \$80,000 car or you want to take a trip to Fuji. Take that deep breath and come back and rethink decisions. Bottom line, don't be impulsive. It just makes things worse in the long run."

Perhaps the most important thing family members of first responders can do is listen, Griffith said, and spend time together with no agenda.

"But if the person asks to be left alone, let them have that privacy," he added. "Just be available if they need it."

No matter where people are in their life and what profession they work in, Griffith hopes they will remember one thing. "You may feel the weight of the world is on your shoulder, but you're not alone," he stated. "You always have an option to talk to someone. If you have no other number in your pocket, call 988, the suicide hotline."



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Thanksgiving Dinners



THANKSGIVING BASKETS - The Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center (WANSC) and Food Shelf distributed the makings of Thanksgiving meals for 240 families in a drive-through delivery system operated on Saturday, Nov. 22 and Monday, Nov. 24. Volunteering for the task on Saturday were (from left) Marshal Herfindahl; WANSC board members Bev Herfindahl, Brad Milbrath, Lisa Molkoff, and Jim Britton; Executive Director Cindy Kolander and volunteer Amy Jo Lewer.

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann



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Public comment sought for Waseca County’s hazard mitigation plan

Waseca County has completed an updated draft of its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and is now seeking public feedback.

Like all Minnesota counties, Waseca County is vulnerable to a variety of natural hazards such as tornadoes, windstorms, severe winter storms, flooding, drought, and extreme temperatures, which can threaten the loss of life and property in the county. Planning for natural disasters minimizes the impact of events that can cause vast economic loss and personal hardship.

All county residents, interested agency or organizational stakeholders are encouraged to review and offer feedback on the draft plan and proposed local mitigation actions. The review and comment period is open for a period of 15 days through December 8, 2025. The public can access the plan using the following links:

Waseca County HMP Website Homepage (feedback form at the bottom of page)

Waseca County Mitigation Action Charts (feedback form at the bottom of page).

The Waseca County HMP is a multi-jurisdictional plan that covers Waseca County, including all cities and townships within the county. The Waseca County HMP also incorporates the concerns and needs of other key stakeholders such as school districts and related agencies, organizations, or businesses participating in the planning process.

Update of the plan has been under direction of Waseca County Emergency Management in cooperation with U-Spatial at the University of Minnesota Duluth and representatives from county departments, city and township governments and other participating stakeholders. Together, the planning team worked to identify cost-effective and sustainable actions to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life or property from natural hazards.

Examples include infrastructure projects for areas that experience repetitive flooding; construction of safe rooms in areas where residents and visitors are vulnerable to tornadoes and severe storm events; burying powerlines that may fail due to heavy snow, ice, or wind storms; ensuring timely emergency communication to the public through warning sirens and mass notification systems; and conducting outreach to increase public awareness of severe weather and personal preparedness.

Hazard mitigation planning helps Waseca County and other jurisdictions protect their residents. Working with local communities through the process helps identify vulnerabilities and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate the effects of a potential hazard. In addition, increasing public awareness of natural disasters and encouraging personal preparedness helps to create a community that is resilient to disaster, and breaks the cycle of response and recovery. Updating the plan further allows Waseca County and its jurisdictions to be eligible to apply for future FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant program funding for projects that help to reduce or eliminate the impacts of future natural hazard events.

Community feedback is vital to the success of the plan. Waseca County invites public review and feedback of the draft plan prior to submitting it to the State of Minnesota and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for review.

Comments, concerns, or questions regarding the draft plan or ideas for mitigation projects should be submitted either via the Hazard Mitigation Plan website online public feedback form or by contacting Waseca County Emergency Management.

Contact Denise Wright, Waseca County Emergency Management Director at 507-835-0694 denise.wright@wasecacounty.gov

Correction: An article in the Nov. 6 edition of the Waseca County Pioneer included a number of misstatements. The article mistakenly referred to members of the county corrections and probation staff as "drug task force" personnel. It referred to the top floor of the courthouse as being the "third" floor, when in fact, it is the second. A reference to a woman being in another room stated she

was being "separated from the males." There is no policy or expectation that males and females cannot be simultaneously present in the courtroom. Judge Carol Hanks contacted the newspaper saying any implication that there is is potentially damaging. The article's intent was to say that, because the woman was performing childcare matters, she had sought out privacy.



Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration

at Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Saturday, Dec. 13

Mass at 5:00 p.m.

Music continues 6-8 pm

Free & open to public

Music by Mariachi America from St. Paul, performing during the Mass and afterwards in the church hall from 6-8 p.m. Mexican meal following Mass, in the church hall provided by El Molino, Mexican Restaurant, Waseca.



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Grace Lutheran Church sells lots of lefse

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Grace Lutheran Church held its Harvest Mission Festival Brunch at 300 East Elm Ave during the mid-morning of Friday, Nov. 21. The event included three sales: baked goods, thrift items, and, of course, lefse.

On the sidewalk in front of the church, Customer Sherry Scholl-jegerdes was waiting for her ride to pull around while she also enjoyed the warm sun on a chilly day. When asked what she liked best about the brunch she replied, “I liked the fruit and the homemade cinnamon rolls. That and the company I had with me was wonderful.”

Just inside the church, those arriving found the lefse, thrift and baked goods for sale. Among the homemade pastries were tasty possibilities like almond cakes, almond bark, lemon bundt cake, candy cane cookies, banana bars and caramel pecan cream bars. There were also time-tested favorites,: lemon bars, Rice Crispy treats, chocolate chip cookies, brownies, pumpkin bars and cakes.



GOT THE GOODS - From left: Deb Hoyme, Lorraine Harteg, Marlee Kramer, Mary Brenner and Diane Beckman were just a few of the volunteers working at the Grace Lutheran Church Harvest Mission Brunch on Friday, Nov. 21, 2025.

Sitting at the front table in the dining room was ticket taker Linda Born, who said the day had been busy. “By 11:30 a.m., I’d say we’ve had around 80 people come through the line or so. I don’t know how many volunteers we’ve had today, but I know there were a lot of us yesterday prepping for today. All this was done by the Ladies of Grace Lutheran Church. All the proceeds from the lefse sale, the thrift and bake sale and the brunch go towards the mission program.” The brunch items were a variety of oven bakes. Flavors included mushroom, ham and egg, and even sausage and French toast. There were accompanying cups of assorted fruit and large cinnamon buns with frosting. To drink there were pitchers of water or coffee, with plates and silverware being cleared away by volunteers to make room for newcomers.

One of the people clearing tables was Phoebe Praxl. When asked why the church put on the day’s event she replied, “We do this to connect with the community, and try to bring the community to the church.” Out near the thrift store was the lefse table. After starting the morning with 160 Ziplock bags full, sellers had

only 20 left. Larry Born found a Waseca County Pioneer reporter and insisted he buy one for himself and the reporter saying, “You can’t come here and leave without some lefse, that wouldn’t be right.”

All proceeds from the thrift, brunch, bake and lefse sales go toward the Grace Lutheran Church mission. One upcoming event at Grace Lutheran will be the Minnesota Riverbend Brass Choir which will provide a concert at 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7. The concert is free and open to the public. Those in attendance will be invited to make a free will offering.

Toys for Tots kicks off 2025 Toy Drive

The Steele County Toys for Tots Program has kicked off its annual Toy Drive for the season. Volunteers recently delivered Toy Collection boxes to more than 50 participating businesses in Steele County.

New, unwrapped toys may be placed in the boxes through Thursday, Dec. 11. For a full list of Steele County Toys for Tots Toy Donation Sites check the Steele County Toys for Tots website: <https://owatonna-mn.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/donate-toys.aspx>

If you are interested in receiving a toy donation box and becoming a Steele County Toys for Tots Donation Site please contact Mike, Toys for Tots Donation Site Manager at 507-456-0972.

If you need to request toys for your child, applications for the Steele County Toys for Tots Program are available online at the Toys for Tots Website. Applications are also available to pick-up at the following locations:

Minnesota Prairie County Alliance, 630 Florence Ave., Owatonna

Community Pathways of Steele County, 155 Oakdale St., Owatonna

Owatonna Public Library - Children’s area, 105 N Elm Ave., Owatonna

Steele County Public Health, 635 Florence Ave., Owatonna

Blooming Prairie Public Library, 138 Hwy Ave S, Blooming Prairie

Lerberg’s Foods, 120 5th Ave., Ellendale

Ellendale Food Shelf, 200 Sixth St., Ellendale

Krause Feed & Supplies - Hope, 9352 SW 37th Ave., Hope

State Bank of Red Wing – Medford, 115 1st St. NE., Medford

The application to request toys must be printed and filled out. Please print clearly and accurately and include the type of toys your children would like on your application.

The application deadline to receive toys is Dec. 1. Parents/guardians must complete an application and drop it off at Steele County Community Pathways, or put in the drop box at Minnesota Prairie County Alliance, or put in the drop box at the

Owatonna Library Children’s area, or mail to Steele County Toys for Tots at P.O. Box 199, Owatonna, MN 55060. Emailed applications will not be accepted.

Toy distribution will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna on Dec. 15-17.

Toys for Tots of Steele County has been in existence for more than 40 years. It operates within the national U.S. Marine Corp Reserve Toys for Tots program, which began in 1947. Its objective is to collect and distribute NEW and UNWRAPPED toys to Steele County needy children at Christmas. Cash and gift cards received are used to purchase toys as per directives from our national organization.

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 9 a.m., Sunday School/Fellowship 10:15 a.m., Wednesday evening worship 6:30 p.m.
* * *

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
Father Glenn Ferichs
507-835-1222
Worship Sundays 10:00 a.m., Tues. and Wed. at 8:30 a.m. and Thurs. at 7 a.m.; Saturdays at 5 p.m.
* * *

REAL LIFE CHURCH
620 W Elm Ave, Waseca

507-833-0017
Sunday worship 10 a.m.
* * *

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS
1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca
507-833-4640
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
* * *

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 Glenn Ferichs
Friday - 10 a.m. on 1st, 3rd and 4th Fridays p.m. Mass
Sunday - Mass at 8 a.m.
* * *

FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod
Waldorf, Minnesota
Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Larry Sipe
Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class
* * *

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Freedom Township
Sunday – 9:15 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
Father Sammy Pothiredy
Saturday - 5 p.m. Worship
* * *

TRINITY LUTHERAN
Wilton Township
Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor
Sunday – 8 a.m. summer worship; 10:45 a.m. Worship starting Sept. 1
* * *

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
Pastor Jason Wolter
Rev. Timothy Contreras
Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship
Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:30 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
Father Robert Schneider
Sunday - 8:30 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.

Janesville

1925

- Grade crossings of railroads and state trunk highways, many of which are scenes of fatal accidents, are being steadily reduced in number. Out of 932 railroad grade crossings on the 7,000 mile system of state highways, separations of 334 will be recorded by the Minnesota highway department at the end of the year. Almost as many more will be eliminated during the next few years under plans already worked out and the remaining number are now classed as either physically impossible or involving prohibitive expense.

- American Education Week, which has for several years been sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Education and the American Legion, is set this year for the week of November 16-22. The purpose of Education Week is not to stress so much the need of education as to bring about a better understanding and cooperation between parents and teachers. Because this is true, Friday has been designated as "Know Your School Day." The slogans for the day are: "Good Schools for all Communities - Make Your Schools Lovable - Visit Your Schools Today."

1950

- Farmers of Minnesota were urged to join the 1950 Christian Rural Overseas Program by Governor Luther W. Youngdahl in an official proclamation this week, naming Sunday, November 12, as CROP Sunday and officially launching the annual CROP appeal in Minnesota. Minnesota's goal will be 100 carloads of farm products for churches to distribute to the hungry overseas to help relieve the burden of starvation around the world, Dr. J. O. Christiansen, state CROP chairman said.

- Mr. and Mrs. William C. Wedge and daughter arrived last week from Kenton, Ohio, and reside in the rectory of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Waterville, according to the Waterville Advance. Mr. Wedge is the new lay vicar at the parishes in Janesville, Waterville, and Waseca.

1975

- Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dimmel of rural Janesville were honored at an open house Sunday, November 2, on the occasion of their fiftieth wedding anniversary. The event was held at St. John's Lutheran Church, Alma City. Hosts were their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. John Dimmel. Myrtle Hart and Henry Dimmel were married November 1, 1925, in St. James, Minnesota, at the home of the bride's parents. They moved to their present home in 1931, and have resided there since that time.

- Precipitation for November 1975 to the 16th totals 2.30 inches compared to the normal of 1.56 inches. If this moisture had all fallen as snow it would have been nearly 23 inches. As the temperature was near or above the freezing mark much of the snow melted after it fell. A total of at least 2.5 inches of snow was measured during the four days of precipitation. Heavy snows were reported in northern Minnesota during this storm from three to six inches. First snow of last year's winter season was on November 24th when one inch fell.

- After discussing street assessments with residents for two solid hours last Wednesday, the Janesville City Council voted 3-1 to adopt the street assessment role as it stands to include all platted lots and lots of record within the City of Janesville. By adopting the assessment, the Council set into motion the procedure for payment. According to City Clerk Chuck Brandimine, assessments may be paid in full, without interest, until December 11, 1975.

2000

Originally, Peterson said she had wanted to take her students to volunteer at a soup kitchen, but was unable to find any openings. So, they planned a Thanksgiving dinner in Janesville, open to anyone who was looking for a place to spend the day. The project was taken on by all the churches in Janesville, and since that time has become a community dinner. "Our first year we had 125 people," said Peterson. "Since then, we have expanded to include delivering meals to homes and picking people up to bring them to dinner if they don't have a ride. We also make a dinner on Christmas." The dinner is intended for people, who forever reason, don't have anywhere to go on these holidays.

- The Janesville State Bank is offering 0 percent loans to its customers during the upcoming holiday season, bank president Mike Finley announced. This is the 13th year the bank has offered the loan program. In the previous twelve years nearly \$200,000 has been spent locally with the program. The special loans will be good for purchases only at participating Janesville area businesses. Loans are available for up to \$1,000, carry no interest, and must be repaid by Monday, April 16. Finley believes this is a good way to keep dollars in Janesville supporting local businesses.

Waseca

25 years ago

- Are you for or against the construction of a new bicycle/pedestrian path around Clear Lake? Organizers of the public meeting on Monday, Nov. 20, at 7 p.m. at the East Annex Community Room hope people will show up and get informed. "We really want anybody who has any interest to attend," said Waseca County Engineer Jeff Blue. "It's not going to be easy, and everybody is not going to be happy," said Blue. "But I think a bicycle/pedestrian path around Clear Lake would be a big benefit to the community as a whole."

- This weekend in Waseca, residents will have the opportunity to experience the kind of day which can make us remember why we are living in this small, southern Minnesota city. With a fresh coat of snow on the ground, the stage is set for a family-fun kind of day which could put a bit of the holiday spirit in all of us. Christmas In Our City is the kick-off event of the holiday season and it will include something for just about everyone.

- Tom and Nyla Hagen of Waseca are proud to announce the birth of their son. Joseph McCabe Hagen, born on November 14, 2000, at the Waseca Medical Center. He weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces, and was 20 inches long at birth. He is welcomed home by his brother, Henry. Maternal grandparents are Gerald and Carol Thor of Comfrey. Paternal grandparents are Dick and Sue Hagen of Chaska. Paternal great-grandparents are Melvin and Aileen Hagen of Miles City Montana.

50 years ago

- Jose Victor Escobar, 17, a student from San Salvador, South America will spend nine weeks with the Max Lande family, R. 1, Waseca. He is among 43 students visiting Minnesota and North Dakota families as part of the international De Estudiantes AC program. While in Waseca Jose will attend the Waseca High School and visit with people in the community so he can learn the customs, language and observe the everyday way of life. He will visit here until Jan. 20.

- Many of your friends and neighbors attend the Microwave Oven Meeting last week in Waseca. Did you know that just about any food can be reheated except for break and slices of roast beef? That's what Wanda Olson, Household Equipment Specialist, reported as she described to the crowd the procedure for preparing an entire meal in a microwave oven. New cookbooks and newsletters are constantly becoming available. It's apparent, microwave cookery is here to stay!



- Shot this photo of Judy Miller at one of the Bluejay girls volleyball games...she is one of our Bluejay cheerleaders and we might add a very pretty one...like her ice fishing mother Ruth...

- Chuck Noble was elected president of the Lakeside Golf Club last night and four new directors were named to the board. Dave Armstrong, Don Dickie and Lyle Kunz were elected to the board of directors and Jacqueline Storby was appointed to fill a one year term that was vacated by a resignation. Named to the annual committees for the board are membership: Lyle Kunz and Lawrence Clemons; Finance: Don Dickie; Social Activities: Jacqueline Storby and Dave Armstrong.

75 years ago

- Petition asks inclusion of one acre near 7th Ave. and 5th S.W.; City Dads handle routine chores. Waseca is growing! It wasn't much but the city council saw fit Tuesday evening to add one acre of land to the city limits. The added property is located near the intersection of Seventh Ave. and 5th. St. S.W. It was brought in by petition of the property owners because the lots could not be sold until the water, lights and swerve facilities of the city were made available.

- Willard Karsent, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Karsent of Blooming Grove township last Tuesday had his hand injured so badly in a corn picker that it was necessary to remove the member at the wrist. He was released from Waseca Memorial hospital Saturday. According to reports, Willard was operating the corn picker on his parents farm near the Waseca Steele County line in Blooming Grove township. The machine became clogged and he attempted to clear it while it was running. Apparently his glove became entangled in the gears, dragging his hand into the machinery.

100 years ago

- C.H. Erwin, of this city, is in a serious condition at the Miller hospital in St. Paul as a result of an accident Saturday while working for the Northern States Power Company near Northfield. Another workman, Gary Welch, from Prescott, Wis., was so badly injured that he will lose the sight in his right eye and may be totally blind. It was feared Mr. Erwin had suffered a similar fate, but an operation on his eyes seemed to be successful and it is thought that his sight will be restored, according to the report of relatives who visited him the first of the week.

- Miss Sadie Fox, health nurse, who assisted at the children's clinics last week, reports a total of 115 children examined in the county. There were 48 at New Richland and Waldorf; 26 at Janesville and 41 at Waseca. Of the number examined, 94 were found to be defective in some respect, 44 were recommended for dental treatment and 50 were recommended to be sent to their family physician for treatment. A record of each child will be sent to the family physician for reference. The examining physician was Dr. H. Lippman of Minneapolis who is an instructor in anatomy at the University of Minneapolis who is an instructor in anatomy at the University of Minnesota and is especially interested in the child guidance movement.

New Richland

25 years ago



- District Auxiliary President Irene Martin of Hayfield (right) spoke to the New Richland Unit 75 Auxiliary on November 9 at the local clubrooms. At the left Joan Edwards, local auxiliary secretary, is reading through meeting notes. Unit 75 President Ann Jessen (center) conducted the auxiliary meeting following the district president's presentation.

- The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton Middle School 2000-2001 first quarter honor roll. Students named on the honor roll: GRADE SEVEN- Todd Adams, Tanner Barbknecht, Micheal Borneke, Jacob Bruender, Jason Danberry, Gregory Holmes, Molly Jewison, Dustyne Kruse, Terri Peterson, Alisha Rathai, Staci Royer, Jadi Rux, Daniel Sprengler and Annie Ulmen.



- Waldorf Roundbank employees, David Hodgkins (left) and Hazel Brandt (right) joined area residents in welcoming new branch manager Carol Raimen to the staff at an open house at the bank, Friday.

50 years ago



- Dennis Kelly, son of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Kelly of New Richland, won the free FFA jacket for taking top in the local creed speaking competition. He placed third in the district contest out of 16 entries. The creed speaking contest is a contest for freshmen FFA members only.



- New Richland-Hartlands winners in the Winnebago tourney, Saturday, are pictured here. They are from the left, front: Jim Jacobson and John Proehl; back: Randy Warke(138), Kevin Knutson(126) and Chuck Hagen(119). The Cardinals beat both Elmore and Amboy Good Thunder.

- Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bakken are the proud parents of a daughter born to them at the Owatonna City hospital on October 31. The little miss weighed 7 pounds and 4 1/2 ounces and has been named Amy Sue. She has one brother, Steven, who is 2 years old.

75 years ago

- New Richlands entrant in the Albert Lea basketball league had an easy time of it when they met the Banquet Cafe and conquered them 56 to 34. O'Donnel hit the high of 19 points for the evening with Westland getting 16. Charley Dunnette had his long range eye in condition and connected with four field goals from well out in the floor.

- "Mademoiselle" has notified Elizabeth Silvers, a junior at Carleton and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward E. Silvers of New Richland, that she has passed the first hurdle in the magazine's annual college board contest. She is among the 700 appointees who competed this year with students from colleges all over the country for positions on the board.

- Mr. and Mrs. Orlin Lewer of near New Richland, are the proud parents of a son, born to them at the Waseca Memorial hospital Monday, December 18. Mr. and Mrs. Lewer have a daughter, Sandra, and a son, James.

PH
&B

PATTON, HOVERSTEN & BERG, PA
A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION / ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Waseca Office

215 Elm Ave E
Waseca, MN
507-835-5240
888-835-5244

Janesville Office

216 N Main St
Janesville, MN
507-234-5106
888-980-1210

Owatonna Office

150 W Park Sq
Owatonna, MN
507-451-9000
866-451-9010

Faribault Office

415 2nd Ave NW
Faribault, MN
507-332-7425

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HOME FOR THE
Holidays

A Benefit Concert for the New Richland Area Foundation

FEATURING
ADAM MOEN & GAVIN BERG

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
EVA WAYNE & ELLEN JOHNSON

3rd Show Added!

Friday
December 5
7 PM

Saturday
December 6
2 PM

Saturday
December 6
7 PM

FREEWILL DONATION

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
204 1ST ST NW, NEW RICHLAND

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Septic Services

Snow Plowing

Offering Commercial
& Residential Services

Honoring youth Strengthening pathways for lasting bonds

By **PATRICIA HARRELSON**

Each November, National Adoption Month invites us to celebrate families formed through adoption and to reflect on the thousands of children and teens still waiting for a permanent, loving home. But honoring youth means more than celebrating successful matches, it means listening to their voices, respecting their experiences, and strengthening the systems that shape their futures.

Across the nation, thousands of young people in foster care dream not only of adoption but of belonging; to be seen, heard, and valued for who they are. For older youth especially, adoption is not just about legal permanence; it's about emotional connection and stability. Research consistently shows that when young people have at least one committed, caring adult, their chances of thriving in adulthood increase dramatically, regardless of whether that connection is formalized through adoption or another lasting relationship.

As child welfare professionals, families, and communities, we must ensure that adoption efforts begin with honoring youth voices. This means asking young people what family means to them, who they feel safe with, and what support they need to maintain lifelong ties. It means engaging siblings together whenever possible, preserving cultural identity, and ensuring connections between birth families, mentors, and communities remain strong.

Adoption cannot be an isolated



Harrelson

act; it must be part of a broader continuum of permanency, from prevention and reunification efforts to post-adoption support that help families navigate challenges as children grow. When we invest in these pathways, we affirm that stability is not a one-time event but a lifelong process.

To truly honor youth, we must move beyond systems that prioritize efficiency over empathy. Strengthening pathways for lasting bonds means celebrating every connection, kinship care, guardianship, reunification, and adoption alike, that provides a child with love and belonging.

This month let's renew our commitment to making sure every young person has someone who truly shows up for them. Because honoring youth means building a future where every child knows, without question, that they are wanted, supported, and never alone.

■ Parli

from Page 4

despite the calm facade, Camellia Lynne mentions her notes taken during the round were barely legible. "I was shaking," she admits. Still, she believes the team did well because of consistent practices held every Wednesday before school starting in September. The discussion topic for the contest was selecting five FFA members to attend FFA day at the state capitol.

Ellie Clark agrees, "We got lots of practice, and that prepared us to be equitable." She also comments the team's opening ceremony, which includes introducing the team members and their roles, went very well.

Makenna Reeder explains three judges evaluate each team's efforts—one scores for correctness of procedures, one on the quality of the discussion, and a third one evaluates the opening ceremony. She feels the team did well because "we all kind of clicked."

August Bethke acknowledges running a meeting does not sound like an exciting category for competition, but says the skill is very important because it "makes sure everyone is heard, and the majority prevails." He mentions having been exposed to Roberts Rules of Order in 4-H, where it is used for operating meetings and making decisions. His task at the regional competition was to "present an appeal."

Grace Riskedahl was called upon to "request a recess" during the round. She shares that there will be 18 teams competing at the state tournament. The top two will advance to finals and the winning team will go on to nationals.

Lauren Wakefield believes being part of the team has really helped her

build leadership skills. Team members are also called upon to know many of the rules and procedures by heart. They must also appear organized and collected. She has been practicing in the category for three years.

Emily DeLaCruz shares that, as an alternate, she was able to be in the room during the competition round, but was not allowed to speak or take part. She remembers cringing inwardly when a small mistake was being made and a sense of relief when team members recognized and corrected it. She says she was frankly grateful to be on the sidelines, and is part of the team because she someday hopes to run for a leadership role in the local FFA organization, and knows knowledge of parliamentary procedure will be helpful.

Team advisor Barb Roesler compliments the team members on taking in the 700 pages of rules and procedures of Roberts Rules of Order as quickly as they did. She says in addition to learning the procedures and planning the opening ceremony, the category calls upon participants to "work together in the moment" to keep their faux meeting operating smoothly.

She commented that the topic of selecting FFA members for a trip allowed the team members to mention their actual fellow club members and their contributions and projects, which helped keep the discussion lively.

She also revealed FFA will be holding two different state competitions this year. In December, the "leadership development" categories, which include skills such as parliamentary procedures, giving speeches and presentations, and the like will compete in St. Cloud. The more hands-on categories will compete during the state convention in April.



GENEROUS GIFT - Members of the Waseca County Mounted Sheriff's Posse delivered more than \$15,000 to Children's Minnesota hospital. The funds were raised by the Mounted Sheriff 's Posse Wagon Train event which took place in Waseca County this past summer.

Wagon Train raises more than \$15,000 for Children's

The Waseca County Mounted Sheriff's Posse proudly delivered a \$15,329 donation Nov. 21 to Children's Minnesota Hospitals, supporting the health care facility's ongoing mission to provide exceptional pediatric care to families across the state. The funds were raised during the Minnesota Sheriff's Mounted Posse Association (MSMPA) Wagon Train for Youth, hosted by the Waseca County Mounted Sheriff's Posse from September 4 to 7, 2025.

The MSMPA Wagon Train for Youth is an annual event which brings together mounted posse units, horse-drawn wagons, riders, and supporters from across Minnesota. Over the course of four days, the 2025 Wagon Train traveled scenic routes throughout Waseca County, offering a unique blend of tradition, community, and charitable purpose. Participants camped together, rode daily routes, and held family-friendly

activities, all aimed at raising funds for youth-centered causes.

This year's event—planned, coordinated, and hosted by the Waseca County Mounted Sheriff's Posse—resulted in the largest donation the unit has delivered in recent years. Support poured in from riders, sponsors, local businesses, and community members eager to make a difference.

The mounted posse is a volunteer extension of the Waseca County Sheriff's Office; the group is dedicated to community service, public safety support, and charitable engagement. Members provide assistance in search-and-rescue operations, community events, parades, fundraising initiatives, and disaster response when mounted resources are needed. Their commitment to service extends beyond duty—each year, the Posse participates in statewide charitable efforts

such as the Wagon Train for Youth, underscoring their dedication to Minnesota's children and families.

Children's Minnesota is one of the largest pediatric health systems in the country; it relies on community support to continue providing cutting-edge care, family services, and life-changing treatments. Donations like those from the Wagon Train for Youth help fund numerous services. Donations are used toward child and family support programs, including child life specialists, music therapy, and comfort resources that ease fear and anxiety; advanced pediatric medical equipment, ensuring children receive the highest quality care possible; financial assistance programs for families experiencing hardship during a child's medical journey; and research and innovation in pediatric treatments that improve outcomes for thousands of children each year.

Children's Minnesota expressed gratitude for the Posse's ongoing dedication, noting that community partnerships like this directly impact the ability to provide compassionate, specialized care to every child who comes through the doors.

The Waseca County Mounted Sheriff's Posse is honored to support Children's Minnesota and remains committed to making a positive difference in the lives of young patients and their families. The Posse extends heartfelt thanks to all participants and donors who made this year's Wagon Train for Youth a success.

For more information about the Wagon Train for Youth, the Waseca County Mounted Sheriff's Posse, or Children's Minnesota Hospitals, visit <https://www.minnesotasheriffsmountedposseassociation.org/wagon-train-for-youth>

Lennox visits JWP, talks mental health, addiction

By **RACHAEL JAEGER**
Staff Writer

Jason Lennox, a mental health and recovery advocate, visited with all high school students at Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP) schools on Nov. 14 about the importance of paying attention to mental health and the harm that comes from stigma. He told students he hoped they would develop awareness, a new perspective, and a new level of compassion.

Lennox, originally from Massachusetts, grew up mostly in Minnesota. He shared the story of his own recovery from addiction after a drug overdose in 2010. Over the years, he has used his story in his speeches as a transformational speaker at churches, schools, and various other organizations. In 2022, he wrote a memoir called "A Perfect Tragedy," parts of which he read to the JWP students in the auditorium.

During his discussion, Lennox shared some statistics, starting with one that reveals half of adolescents begin to struggle with mental health by the age of 14, including depression. Among all teens, about 40 percent experience consistent sadness and struggle with hopelessness. Distressingly, about six percent of teenagers attempt suicide.

"Suicide and mental health struggles are the second leading cause of death for teenagers in Minnesota," Lennox said. "We are trained to just suck it up," he commented, meaning that many people in crisis choose not to tell others about their struggles out of a desire not to seem weak.

Lennox set the stage as he began with an emphasis on respect and asked students to open their minds and be curious rather than judgmental.

After asking the group how they would respond if they knew someone

was in pain, he gave them a minute or so to talk among themselves before asking what they had come up with. Some answers included being there if the person needed anything without bailing them out, talking with them, and getting help with therapy.

Referring to a mugshot projected to the front of the room, Lennox asked group members for their initial impressions of the individual. Words including "rock bottom," "drugs," "guilt," "scared," and "disappointment" were called out. He went on to caution that emotionally charged judgments are often based on a lack of awareness.

Lennox shared that his own dad died from alcohol abuse at 39. Three years earlier, at 36, he had been warned by a doctor he had developed cirrhosis. The doctor gave him two options: he could stop drinking and extend his life, or he could keep drinking and probably die within a few years. Lennox's mom, who lived in Minnesota, invited the dad to live with her and their two sons under the condition that he give up alcohol. He took her up on the offer of a place to stay, Lennox said, but couldn't stay sober and died two years later.

"It's not a matter of choice or knowing better," Lennox stated. "It's the inability to know something new about an old problem."

For a long time, Lennox said he wondered why his dad couldn't make a better choice but after his years in studying alcoholism and addiction, he learned it's a disease of the mind. Believing that it was all about choice, he added, nearly killed him. There would be times he said he

promised himself he was done with alcohol after he was released from jail but within hours, he found himself at the liquor store waiting for it to open.

"There's a mental lapse that happens when it comes to this disease that does not allow people the choice in that," Lennox said. "That doesn't mean it excuses anything, but I'm telling you, for so long I heard from society that my addiction was a matter of choice: I believed it, which then put me in a spot where I wondered why I was still living. No matter what decisions were in front of me, I kept screwing up. It took me a lot of painful experiences to realize it wasn't a choice."

When Lennox got sober, he said he also realized that people's beliefs and judgments around substance use were unintentional and stemmed from not knowing any better, not because that's what they wanted to believe.

Lennox suggested students can help by observing others in their school and community: "Consider

and observe those around you, and forget about being 'cool.'" Lennox admitted that, during one period of sobriety in high school, he achieved a level of popularity because of his accomplishments as an athlete. He shared that, during that time, he behaved unkindly toward others. After that period, he told himself he could control his use of drugs, then discovered he couldn't as drugs and alcohol again took over his life.

As he closed his talk, Lennox encouraged students to be open with their love and appreciation for the people in their lives, check in with loved ones, and to not leave room for regret. He asked students if they had anything to add. Some of their responses included to always be there for others, involve people who seem alone in events, let them know they can get help, and "just a good hug helps."

"People have stories to share and want to share," Lennox said at one point of his talk. "They just need the space to feel like they can."



Holiday Lights celebration

The Waseca County Free Fair is again hosting its Holiday Lights celebration on Friday and Saturday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. for the next four weekends:

Nov. 28–29, Dec. 5–6, Dec. 12–13 and Dec. 18–19.

Visitors are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items for local food shelves or give a free-will cash donation. Food donations will be given to area food shelves and the monetary donations will be divided between the food shelves and the Holiday Lights committee to support future displays. Visitors will enter at the far east end of the fairgrounds, near the usual parking lot. "People are truly generous," says fairboard member Jennie Johnson. "They often bring whole bags of food to support the food shelves."

Hot chocolate will be available for a free-will donation, and the Waseca Fire Department will host "Cookies with Santa." Weather permitting, Godfather's Pizza will be on-site with pizza for purchase. Watch the Waseca

County Free Fair Facebook page for updated dates and times. Area businesses will also have lighted displays for everyone to enjoy.

The fair board has also added decorations from the Vince Peterson collection. Vince and Virginia Peterson were New Richland farmers whose farm became a popular Christmas drive-by destination thanks to Vince's handmade light-up creations. This year, the lights will feature eight of his displays.

"It's a really neat thing to do as a family," says Johnson. "It's heartwarming to see kids leaning out of car windows, all excited about the displays."

"This is a good thing on many levels," she adds. "Families enjoy the lights, food shelves get much-needed donations, and everyone is reminded how much fun fun they can have at the fair. 'It's a great way to give back to the community.'"

Christmas Time at The Mill!

Organized & Sponsored by:

Matthew R. Petsinger Agency, LLC

With Donation from Area Businesses & People

Food from **KELM'S BBQ**

Free Hotdogs while supplies last

christmastimeevent@gmail.com

501c4 organization

5th Annual!!!

FREE

CRAFTS, SANTA, COOKIE DECORATING, LETTER WRITING, FACE PAINTING, GAMES & MORE

December 6th 2025

1pm-7pm

Join Us At **The Mill** Waseca, MN

Local Choirs & Bands will be playing

The Grinch!!!

was seen in the area!

Be Careful!

100.9 FM

Holiday Cookie Dazzle at Waseca Senior Center Dec. 6

The Waseca Area Senior Citizens Center will host the Holiday Cookie Dazzle from 9 a.m. to noon on Dec. 6. A plate of 12 cookies is \$8; other baked goods will be for sale. The event is organized by Achieving Dreams for Disabilities; all funding goes to support children and adults with disabilities.

Winter Wonderland at Starfire Event Center Saturday, Dec. 6

The Starfire Event Center will host a Winter Wonderland event from 10:30 a.m. till 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6. Will include holiday craft show with a variety of local vendors.

Christmas Bazaar at St. Paul Lutheran Church Dec. 6

There will be a Christmas Bazaar at St. Paul Lutheran Church from 10:30 a.m. till 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6. Enjoy hot beef sandwiches, sloppy joes, homemade pies and coffee for \$10. Crafts, baked goods, Christmas cookies, lefse and horseradish, white elephants and candy shop.

Christmas Time at The Mill Saturday, Dec. 6

Christmas Time at The Mill from 1 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6. Crafts, Santa, cookie decorating, letter writing, face painting, the Grinch, local choir and bands will be performing. This event is free for everyone.

Family Tradition at the Indian Island Winery Dec. 6

The Indian Island Winery will host music trio Family Tradition from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6. They perform old and new hit country music.

■ Salvation from Page 1

Again, people passing by should not be alarmed.

This is the fourth year safety agencies have held this fundraising contest. The police department raised the most money the first two years; the sheriff's department currently has possession of the traveling trophy. Total amounts raised have been in the vicinity of \$5,000 to \$7,000.

"The good news," comments Sheriff Dulas, "is that there is no such thing as a 'loser' in this contest.

"Everybody wins when the local Salvation Army is supported."

Waseca County Salvation Army Chair John Petersburg mentions all funds raised in Waseca County are used to provide assistance within the county. He recalls an August event when 85 pairs of shoes were given to area children in advance of the new school year; free haircuts were also offered. Through the Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) emergency funds are made available for people in crisis, perhaps about to lose heat or even lose their homes. Emergency transportation funds help people get to medical appointments or to work.

"We're grateful to these safety agencies for being willing to call attention to our cause by taking part in this challenge," commented Petersburg.

Anyone wishing to donate to the Waseca County chapter of the Salvation Army can do so in a number of ways. There will frequently be bell ringers outside Walmart on Saturdays. Small "countertop" kettles are set up in many local shops, including in New Richland and Janesville.

Donations can also be given online by logging in to the national Salvation Army site and then navigating to Waseca County.

Folks can access a Register to Ring website if they wish to be bell ringers. Petersburg mentions that a kettle with a bell ringer beside it tends to receive about 10 times more in donations than one standing unattended.

"We're grateful for any support people wish to give," comments Petersburg.

"We promise to put the funds to good use."



DETECTIVES - The play, "A Lighter Shade of Noir," performed by the Waseca Drama Department, took place on Friday, Nov. 21 and Sunday, Nov. 23, 2025.
Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

‘A Lighter Shade of Noir’ at Waseca Performing Arts

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Waseca Drama Department recently had two showings of the play, "A Lighter Shade of Noir" in the Waseca Junior Senior High School's Performing Arts Center on both Friday, Nov. 21 and Sunday, Nov. 23. The play was written by Patrick Derksen and directed by Erin Coy.

The play opened at the dimly lit office of Detective Trent Trowel who was receiving an invitation to a detectives' ball, and simultaneously ignoring the attempts of an insistent Mr. Smith who was trying to offer important information. In attendance at the ball were Mayor Defehr (played by Teagan Neidecker) and famous singer Beverley

Stewart (played by Aileen Lindsay Brothers). There were also the four-some of detectives and their assistants, Ms. Beatrice (played by Charlotte Griffith), a clever elderly woman prone to distraction; Jean Eustache (played by Khloe Nelson,) a French detective with energy. Shirley Holms (played by Sadie Schimming), a Sherlock Holmes mirror image and Detective Trent Trowel, played by Elliot Galle, who talks to himself and is on the lookout for love.

On display at the ball there are valuable items from past cases, including a gold mask and a rare feather. During the festivities, the lights go out; when they come back on, Detective Trowel is on the floor nursing a knock on the head—and

the valuable items are gone. From there all fingers point to the four detectives and an investigation ensues after they make a narrow escape.

It turns out the assistants to the detectives, Dr. Watson, Jane and Monsieur Silencieux, assistant to Jean Eustache. The four were dissatisfied with their bosses and their lack of respect, and decided to frame them for theft. But since they were four of the world's most famous detectives, it was only a matter of time before the truth came out.

The run time for the play was around an hour and thirty minutes. The sets switched between the office of Detective Trowel and the ballroom where the crime was committed. In between scenes the crew

was quick to change the sets. At the end there were three sets of bows, first from the crew, then from the second leads, then the main characters. The cast stayed out in the hallway afterwards for interviews, photos and signatures. Charlotte Griffith, who played Ms. Beatrice said, "We had a little trouble in the beginning, but after a lot of practice we were finally ready for the performance. I practiced my lines every day with my mom and that really helped."

The cast and crew would like to thank Karen Pfarr-Anderson, Tracy Kopetzki, Chuck Pollock, Victor Gilmore, the custodial staff at Waseca Junior Senior High and Karla Jerry and Joe Hedevare for their administrative guidance.

“Quilts by Julie,” keeping warm at Winter Market

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Nov. 22 Winter farmers market at Farmamerica had the main ballroom full to bursting with vendors. One of those who now has two winter markets under her belt is Julie Fasteen, of "Quilts by Julie."

Fasteen had 14 quilts laid out on two long tables. While she stood there, a woman was going through the displays and quickly asked, "If you have a Green Bay Packers quilt, do you also have a Vikings one?" Fasteen pointed to exactly that at the other side of her table, to which the concerned woman replied in a relieved voice, "Good, I was worried there for a moment I was in Green Bay country."

Fasteen says she has been sewing quilts since she was seven years old, "My mother Rita had three boys and five girls. She's the one who taught me how to make them." Most of her sales have been at Farmamerica, "I also worked the Pumpkin Fest out here and that was a good time." Fasteen is from Owatonna, but has stuck to the Waseca area for her sales, "I retired from Viracon over in Owatonna after working there for 35 years. So, I



SEW AWAY - The new Winter Farmers Market held every other weekend at Farmamerica offered a wide variety of crafts and food items. Julie Fasteen of "Quilts by Julie" had a booth at the event for the second time on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025.
Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

went back to quilting now that I have all this extra time on my hands." She has one son, also in Owatonna, and one grandchild, "My son and his wife have another one on the way."

Fasteen says she did not set up for any markets during the summer or fall this year, but believes she will next summer. Up until now she's been selling mostly online through Facebook, and her "Quilts by Julie" handle. She plans on shying away from the Owatonna farmers market because the competition gets to be a little aggressive.

She has a few claims to fame through her product; she's donated a Harley Davidson quilt for a fundraiser. But a few of the more unique items she's made have been, "I've made a few quilts out of those Crown Royal bags the whiskey bottles come in, those have been really popular." She added, "When my brother-in-law passed away, I made a quilt out of his old flannel shirts. His family reacted positively to that and it was really touching." She also made another when a person approached her with their grandmothers' numerous aprons, so she

made a quilt out of those. There was another made when someone brought in their mother's t-shirts, said Fasteen, "I can make a quilt out of just about anything."

Her quilts don't need any special care, "Just wash them in cold water; the dryer is fine. I use all pre-shrunk material, and I buy it by the yard." She expressed sorrow over the closing of Joann's Fabrics, "I used to go in there all the time." Now she buys her material online, and she's always looking for new ideas. Anyone wishing to contact her can call 507-213-9445.

Santa Anonymous Auction set for Nov. 29

"Much anticipated" describes nearly everything about the Santa Anonymous auction scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 29 at the Boxcar Bar in Waseca. "It's a great time," declares organizer Todd Schmidt. "People tell me they wait for it all year."

Items and services donated by Waseca County businesses will go up for auction; bidders will cheerfully pay much more than their usual selling price. "I tell people," says Schmidt, "if you're looking for a bargain you're in the wrong place. People are here to give, and give generously."

The auction has been an annual event for 29 years now, and typically raises between \$30,000 and \$35,000. Schmidt bears the costs of advertising and managing the event, donating every dollar raised directly to the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center (NSC), which uses the money to acquire toys, games and presents to be given to area families who might, otherwise, have to make do without holiday gifts for their children.

Purchases at the auction are tax deductible because they are donations to the NSC.

Clearly, it is a cause Waseca area residents are glad to support, since Schmidt tells of pizzas which sold for \$75 and a novelty lamp which brought in about \$1,200.

The event lasts roughly five hours. Schmidt says the banter, camaraderie and good-spirited competition are as entertaining as any performance or show might be. He attributes the mood to the fact that everyone knows the money spent is "for the kids." He knows for a fact that some of the people buying items at the auction were once benefactors of the Santa Anonymous program.

"We do this all year," says Schmidt of himself and his significant other Tae Born. Schmidt has been the chief fundraiser for the area Santa Anonymous program for the past 25 years and has the process down to a system. Early in November, he sends postcards to dozens of area businesses: He and other volunteers follow up shortly thereafter to collect the many donations, sometimes making repeat trips.

Items may be as compact as gift certificates or as bulky as furniture. All are placed in the Boxcar Bar's storage room to wait for the big day.

The day of the auction, everything is set out for arriving buyers to consider and examine.

"The whole event is open to the public," Schmidt declares. "We can always fit a few more people in; we'd sure love to see some new faces."

The fun begins around 5. Long-time auctioneer Bill Harguth will be sharing the stage with Landen Flemming. Schmidt and his volunteers keep everything flowing smoothly, including being sure money is collected and items are delivered to the buyers. Schmidt mentions he appreciates the dedication every volunteer gives the event: he offers the example of Brittany Ziemke, who is helping for the twentieth year in 2025.

Within a few days, proceeds from the event are delivered to the NSC.

Area families interested in benefiting from the Santa Anonymous program can contact the NSC to find out more about eligibility and procedures.

As for Schmidt, he agrees that being an anonymous "Santa" places demands on his personal energy, time and resources. Not only doesn't he mind, however, he's glad—even honored—to have helped the program.

"It feels mighty good on Christmas morning knowing that, all around the county, kids are waking up to presents they might not otherwise have gotten," says Schmidt. "It makes my Christmas feel even more like Christmas."

	Division of School Finance 400 NE Stinson Blvd. Minneapolis, MN 55413	District Revenues and Expenditures Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 and FY 2026					ED-00110-48
General Information: Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 123B.10, requires that every school board shall publish the subject data of this report.							
District Name: Waseca Public Schools						District Number:	829
Fund	FY 2025 Beginning Fund Balances	FY 2025 Actual Revenues and Transfers In	FY 2025 Actual Expenditures and Transfers Out	June 30, 2025 Actual Fund Balances	FY 2026 Budget Revenues and Transfers In	FY 2026 Budget Expenditures and Transfers Out	June 30, 2026 Projected Fund Balances
General Fund/Restricted	\$ 3,086,448	\$ 5,409,003	\$ 5,833,695	\$ 2,661,756	\$ 4,664,714	\$ 5,537,141	\$ 1,789,329
General Fund/Other	\$ 6,147,722	\$ 22,544,003	\$ 22,039,476	\$ 6,652,249	\$ 23,330,624	\$ 23,603,990	\$ 6,378,883
Food Service Fund	\$ 836,863	\$ 1,566,845	\$ 1,558,317	\$ 845,391	\$ 1,539,735	\$ 1,594,834	\$ 790,292
Community Service Fund	\$ 1,242,853	\$ 1,277,069	\$ 1,140,339	\$ 1,379,583	\$ 1,180,927	\$ 1,140,410	\$ 1,420,100
Building Construction Fund	\$ 47,393	\$ 5,878	\$ 45,713	\$ 7,558	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,558
Debt Service Fund	\$ 734,461	\$ 3,003,422	\$ 2,914,225	\$ 823,658	\$ 2,922,828	\$ 2,906,400	\$ 840,086
Trust Fund	\$ 367,855	\$ 18,739	\$ 21,000	\$ 365,594	\$ 18,451	\$ 19,049	\$ 364,996
Internal Service Fund	\$ 86,593			\$ 71,713			\$ 51,931
* OPEB Revocable Trust Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
OPEB Irrevocable Trust Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
OPEB Debt Service Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total - All Funds	\$ 12,550,188	\$ 33,824,959	\$ 33,552,765	\$ 12,807,502	\$ 33,657,279	\$ 34,801,824	\$ 11,643,175
Long-Term Debt		Current Statutory Operating Debt per Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.81					
Outstanding July 1, 2024	\$ 25,280,000	Amount of General Fund Deficit, if any, in excess of 2.5% of expenditures 06/30/2025				\$ -	
Plus: New Issues	\$ -						
Less: Redeemed Issues	\$ 2,030,000	Cost per student - Average Daily Membership (ADM) 06/30/2025					
Outstanding June 30, 2025	\$ 23,250,000						
Short-Term Debt		Total Operating Expenditures				\$ 29,404,350.73	
Certificates of Indebtedness	\$ -	FY 2025 Total ADM Served + Tuitioned Out ADM + Adjusted Extended ADM				1,749.17	
Other Short-Term Indebtedness	\$ -	FY 2025 Operating Cost per ADM				\$ 16,810.46	
The complete budget may be inspected upon request to the superintendent.							
Comments:							
* Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)							

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CITY OF WASECA

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Bids will ONLY be received electronically through QuestCDN vBid Online Bidding. Bids are due at **2:00 P.M. Local Time, December 18, 2025**, at which time they will be opened through the QuestCDN vBid process. Bids shall be submitted on the forms furnished for that purpose.

Direct inquiries to Engineer's Project Manager, Peter Daniels, at (763) 218-3023 and peter.daniels@stantec.com.

Bids are for the furnishing of all labor, materials, and all else necessary for the following:

THE SUPPLY OF AERATION BLOWERS AND RELATED EQUIPMENT FOR THE CITY OF WASECA, MINNESOTA WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

The project includes the following work:

The work generally consists of the supply, delivery, supervision of the installation of commissioning of four aeration blowers and related equipment, startup assistance, owner training, and other work identified in the Request for Proposals (RFP) which serves as the Bidding Documents for the project.

The blowers will replace existing aeration blowers at the Waseca Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) that were installed in 2009 as a major upgrade to the WWTF. The four new blowers will be high efficiency turbo blowers, 150 hp each.

The aeration blower system replacement will be funded with the Clean Water Revolving Fund (CWRFF) loan funds administered jointly by the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (PFA) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Respondents are responsible for reviewing the Contract Packet and complying with all applicable requirements. This includes compliance with Build America, Buy America requirements.

Bids submitted may not be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all Bids, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and further reserves the right to award the Contract in the best interests of the Owner.

Obtaining the Bidding Documents

Complete digital Bidding Documents are available at www.questcdn.com by inputting **QuestCDN eBidDoc #9953015** on the website's Project Search page.

Bidding Documents may be downloaded from the designated website. Prospective Bidders are urged to register with the designated website as a plan holder, even if Bidding Documents are obtained from a plan room or source other than the designated website in either electronic or paper format. The designated website will be updated periodically with addenda, lists of registered plan holders, reports, and other information relevant to submitting a Bid for the Project. All official notifications, addenda, and other Bidding Documents will be offered only through the designated website. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the designated website.

Instructions to Bidders

For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders and Bid Form that are included in the Bidding Documents. Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on Thursday, November 27, 2025

LIVE & ONLINE FARM ESTATE AUCTION
FOR DENNIS KRENZ & TROY KRENZ

AUCTION LOCATION 5698 240th Street West, Morristown, MN | Live Auction: Thursday December 4, 2025 at 10:00am - Live & Online Inspection Dates: Monday December 1 – Auction Date, 9:00am – 4:00pm, No Exceptions



CIH Tractors

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- '92 CIH 7130 2WD, 5459 Hrs., 18 Sp. PS, 18.4x42, 3pt, 3 Hyd.

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- '13 Horst 30' Head Trailer

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						1
2	3	4 Burger night 5-7pm	5 6pm BAR BINGO	6 2pm HALL BINGO	7 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	8
9 VFW BREAKFAST 8am to NOON Host ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSION	10 2pm Post & AUX & Meeting	11 Burger night 5-7pm Veterans DAY	12 6pm BAR BINGO	13 2pm HALL BINGO	14 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	15
16	17	18 Burger night 5-7pm	19 6pm BAR BINGO	20 2pm HALL BINGO	21 WALLEYE OR SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 TO 7pm	22 <i>Turkey Bingo 7:00pm</i>
23	24	25 Burger night 5-7pm	26 6pm BAR BINGO	27 HAPPY THANKSGIVING CLOSED	28 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	29
30						

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DEFENSIVE BATTLE — For the most part, last Saturday’s Class AAA football game was a defensive standoff. Here’ the Bluejays’ Brady McKenna (58) pressures Annandale quarterback Braylon Fobbe (12).
Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



At left, Malachi Noble (4) chases down Isaiah Turner (41). At right, Cyrett Long (1) exchanges an embrace with teammate Deven Parpart (3).



At left, Lucas Selthun (55) and Julius Oviedo (52) combine to stop Cam Ergen at the goal line. At right, the Bluejays’ Aydan Kath (25) makes a touchdown-saving tackle in the first half.



At left, William Manfield (6) catches Annandale’s Braylon Fobbe (12) in the backfield. At right, Julius Oveido (52), Kaden Garza (56) and another defender combine to stop Colton Purcell (6).



At left, Ethan Hiller (5) breaks up a pass intended for Gabe Westman (1). At right Kallen Glynn (22) and Jett Rohl (23) combine to stand up Isaiah Turner (41).



At left, Malachi Noble (4) pushes Isaiah Turner (41) out of bounds. At right, Waseca head coach Brad Wendland consoles Deron Russell (7).



What a ride

WHS football team falls 17-7 to Annandale in state title game

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

According to many of the so-called "experts," Annandale was favored to defeat Waseca in the 2025 Class AAA state championship football game.

They were correct. But not by much. The Cardinals defeated the Bluejays 17-7 last Saturday at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, finishing the season 13-0. The Bluejays, who ended the year 12-1, were left to ponder a stellar season and their state-championship dreams that fell one win short.

The Bluejays, led by head coach Brad Wendland and his staff, made school history by becoming the first Waseca football team to play for a state title.

They just could not overcome the Cardinals and some costly mistakes on this day.

How closely matched were the teams? Waseca was rated No. 2 in the state by Minnesota-Scores.net at the end of the regular season. Annandale was ranked fifth.

According to Maxpreps' ratings, Annandale was No. 1, Waseca No. 3.

And, according to Strib-Varsity, Annandale was ranked No. 1, Waseca No. 4.

The Bluejays were the No. 1 seed in the south half of the state tournament, Annandale the top seed in the north.

Some wondered if the Bluejays could slow the Cardinals' high-powered offense, which outscored opponents an average of 42.3-6.4 during the season, including outscoring playoff foes 151-41.

That question was answered early when the Bluejays, who held opponents to 7.8 points through 12 games, showed they were up to the task.

In the end, the difference was a couple defensive breakdowns - which led to Annandale's two touchdowns - four Bluejay turnovers and 11 penalties.

"I don't think we played anywhere near our best game," said Wendland in the post-game press conference. "This is the biggest stage. We wanted to put on our best performance. We just didn't do that. We didn't have it today. You cannot give a team as good as Annandale the opportunities that we gave them."

Wendland credited his players for responding to everything that was asked of them all season.

"We coached them hard," said Wendland. "We had so many kids on our team willing to give something and ask nothing, and I am really proud of them as men."

The Cardinals returned the opening kickoff to their own 41-yard line and proceeded to drive into Waseca territory, including a 25-yard pass on third-and-1. They reached the Waseca 20 before stalling on fourth-and-5.

The Bluejays, who outscored opponents 84-7 in the first quarter through 12 games, converted a third-and-five with an 11-yard pass from sophomore quarterback Kellen Klinger to Waseca's superstar, Deron Russell. The drive ended after three more plays and the Bluejays were forced to punt. Waseca punter Devon Parpart fielded the snap off the turf, perhaps indicating what kind of day it would be for the Bluejays.

The Cardinals, buoyed by a 10-yard penalty, took it from their own 22 to the Waseca 38 before a third-and-7 pass fell incomplete, and they too punted.

Waseca's Jordan Johnston ran for a first down as the opening quarter ended in a scoreless tie. The Bluejays took it into Annandale territory before a 15-yard penalty sent them in the wrong direction, as did a sack on third-and-22 that lost 9 yards. Parpart punted, again digging the snap off the turf, and Annandale took over at the Waseca 42.

Seven plays later, on fourth-and-3, Gabe Westman found himself wide open and waltzed into the end zone with a 25-yard touchdown reception from Michael Kovall. A successful PAT kick made it 7-0 with 5 minutes left before halftime.

The Bluejays punted after three plays, again giving the Cardinals good field position at the 50. They quickly marched to the Waseca 9 before the defense stood up, forcing a 25-yard field goal that gave Annandale a 10-0 lead in the final minute of the second quarter.

Klinger ran for 21 yards on second down, but it was nullified by a Waseca penalty. On second-and-20, the Cardinals' Colton Purcell picked off a pass, his first of three interceptions on the day that tied a Prep Bowl record. Waseca was called for a 15-yard facemask penalty, and the Cardinals knelt on their own 38, settling for a 10-0 halftime lead.

The Bluejays opened the third quarter with their best drive of the day, starting with three consecutive Klinger runs and a 39-yarder by Johnston that pushed him over the 1,000-yard mark on the season. Three more Johnston runs took the ball to the 1-yard line and Klinger carried into the end zone. The PAT kick went wide, but the Bluejays got another crack at it thanks to an Annandale penalty. Wendland decided to go for a two-point conversion, but that was foiled by yet another Waseca penalty. This time Owen Rupe was successful with the PAT kick. The drive, which covered 68 yards in eight plays, included 41 yards by Johnston on four carries and four runs by Klinger covering 17 yards.

Annandale bobbed the ensuing kickoff, pinning the Cardinals on their own 12. They punted after three plays.

Three plays later the Bluejays turned it over on downs when Johnston was thrown for a 1-yard loss on fourth-and-1.

The Cardinals then resorted to some trickery and it paid off as a double pass resulted in a 62-yard touchdown pass from Purcell to Westman, who again was wide open in the Waseca secondary. The PAT kick made it 17-7 with 4:01 left in the third period.

Three plays later Purcell got his second interception, but the Bluejays quickly got the ball back with a Russell interception.

On first down, the Bluejays were whistled for a holding penalty and they couldn't cover the 20 yards, resulting in another punt as the third quarter ended.

The Cardinals, taking over at the Waseca 48, quickly moved into the red zone, where a personal foul penalty put the ball on the 3. They got no further as Lucas Selthun recovered a fumble.

The Bluejays threw an interception on second down, putting Annandale on the Waseca 14. Another penalty moved it to the 9. A fourth-down pass fell incomplete, giving the Bluejays the ball on their own 6. On third down, Purcell notched his third interception.

The Cardinals eventually punted, but Waseca's next and final drive ended with an incomplete pass on fourth-and-five from their own 22.

"They were doing things to stop Jordan in the run game that we didn't anticipate that we had to react to," said Wendland. "We had at least three plays in the run game where there was a miscommunication between our center, the offensive line and everyone else." Selthun and Russell said they believed in the Bluejays from the start of the season, and weren't surprised to see the team reach the 43rd Annual Prep Bowl.

Waseca finished with 102 yards on the ground and 65 through the air for 167 total yards and eight first downs. The Bluejays' 11 penalties cost them 82 yards.

Klinger finished 7-for-23 for 65 yards passing and totaled 42 yards with a score on the ground. Johnston ran for 62 yards off 15 carries. Russell had four catches for 34 yards and had nine tackles.

Afterward, Annandale coach Mark Walter said there was no way he was going to allow Russell to beat his team. He also credited the Waseca defense, which he called, "The best defensive team we've faced all year."

Defensively, the Bluejays' Kallen Glynn had nine tackles and assisted on two tackles for loss. Selthun and Aydan Kath each had a tackle for loss.

The Cardinals finished with 276 total yards, 148 on the ground and 128 through the air.

As the Bluejays and their fans realized it was over and their hopes of a state championship finished one win shy, they should remember one thing.

For all the heartbreak they felt, they need to realize the Bluejays made it farther than most people expected, and they took Waseca with them on the ride.

And what a ride it was.



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