



■ Inside:

- 3 - Starfire winter
- 3 - Caregiver award
- 4 - Obituaries
- 5 - Service Center
- 6 - Arena awarded
- 8-10 - Sports
- 11 - Just Friends
- 12 - Condon Farm
- 14 - Cookie Dazzle

■ Pages 8-10



Sports



BEFORE - Leaders of the three organizations which headed up the campaign to get new holiday lights for downtown Waseca stood poised to press the button and turn on the new snowflake-themed decorations. Pictured here are, from left, Mikhail Rostislavovich of the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism; Kelly Olson of the Sleigh and Cutter committee; and Waseca mayor Randy Zimmerman. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

Waseca ceremony lights up the season

“The spirit of Waseca is alive, resilient and shining long before a single bulb is switched on,” declared Mikhail Rostislavovich, president of the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, as a robust crowd of community members gathered at the Waseca Art Center on the evening of December 4 for the debut of the city’s new decorative holiday lights.

The project was made possible through a steering committee under Waseca Tourism and special partnerships. Chamber Executive Director Robin Dulas was an integral part of the project, working diligently behind the scenes. The snowflake-shaped decorations were funded by generous financial contributions from local Waseca civic organizations and some individuals, with the City of Waseca providing staff to mount the lights on downtown streetlight poles.

The 6 p.m. reception featured performances by the Waseca High School sextet singers and members of the jazz band, setting a festive tone before brief remarks from Waseca Mayor Randy Zimmerman, Sleigh and Cutter committee member Kelly Miller, and Rostislavovich.

Zimmerman asked members of the Holiday Lights Committee to stand for recognition, stating, “Tonight’s lighting is more than a switch being flipped; it is the culmination of teamwork, unity, and an unwavering investment in a shared vision.” Committee members include Robin Dulas, Brad Dushaw, Tim Roessler, Stacey Schroeder, Ashley Semmann, Jill Sollin-Strauss, Briana Worke, as well as Rostislavovich and Zimmerman.

Miller emphasized the broader impact: “Investing in these lights was an opportunity to help create a downtown that reflects the warmth and



AFTER - With the “on” button pressed, the new decorations were lit for the first time the evening of Thursday, Dec. 4. They will continue shining into February so that they add a festive touch to after-dark Sleigh and Cutter activities. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

Lights continued on 11

New Richland Public Library Giving Tree Winter Gear for NRHEG

Through the month of December, the New Richland Public Library will be accepting donations of new or gently-used hats, mittens, gloves, scarves and warm socks on behalf of students at NRHEG. There will be a Giving Tree in the main lobby of the library displaying paper mitten ornaments. Contributions will stay local.

Coffee with Rep. Tom Sexton Friday, Dec. 12

There will be another installment of Coffee with Tom Sexton in Waseca at the Chamber of Commerce office from noon till 1 p.m. Friday, December 12.

Holiday Lights at the Waseca County Fairgrounds Dec. 12 and 13; Santa to visit

The Fairgrounds holiday light show will be displayed on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 12 and 13. Santa will be present from 6 to 8 p.m. on Saturday. Non-perishable food items will be collected for the Waseca Food Shelf.

Santa at Farmamerica Dec. 12 and 13

Santa Claus will be a Farmamerica from 4-7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13. Stroll or enjoy a wagon ride down to the farmyard, Santa will be waiting. Sip hot chocolate and meet friendly farm animals.

A word from The Word

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Caribou Coffee to open in former Taco Johns spot

Council discusses levy, approves additional mosquito spray: tax increase halved

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

Two big announcements were made during the Waseca city council meeting, Tuesday, December 2, 2025.

Caribou Coffee will be moving into the location previously occupied by Taco Johns at 1401 N. State St. in Waseca.

Taco Johns operated in Waseca from roughly 1989 (when the building was constructed) until their closure in November 2024. No timeline on Caribou’s opening has been offered, officially.

The other revelation from the meeting was the city’s announcement they had lowered their preliminary 2026 budget by three percent.

In September the city presented a budget/levy with a proposed 6.3% increase from 2025. The budget/levy presented Tuesday came in at 3.2%, about a \$6 million budget for 2026.

Two issues were discussed Tuesday concerning the budget

1. Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center (WANSC) request

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

for \$10,000

2. Mosquito spraying
After a lot of discussion about how much money to give the WANSC and whether the council should do additional sprays, the council yielded to a passionate appeal from Councilman Mark Christiansen.

“We’re dickering over \$5,000 here,” Christiansen stated after every council member had spoken. “We cut it (the levy increase). I thought we’d be at 6.4% and fighting over it. I’m happy to give them the extra... I’m ecstatic. I laid in bed for two nights thinking about this.”

“You’re pretty persuasive,” Waseca Mayor Randy Zimmerman responded. “I’ll change my mind.”

All council members were in agreement of giving funds to the WANSC, but the amount to give was in question. Prior to last year, the city had given the WANSC \$2,850

each year from 2016-2024. Last year they gave \$5,000.

The council agreed and approved \$7,500 as a one-time donation to the WANSC.

After a lot of discussion of mosquito spraying, the council approved an additional spray in September, the week of the Waseca Marching Classic. Each additional spray adds about .04% to the budget, a cost of \$2,400. If the council were to wait until summer or fall to add additional sprays, the cost would be higher due to the higher, last minute demand. The current spraying scheduled for 2026 includes 15 sprays and begins the first week in June and now runs through the third week in Sept, the week of the Waseca Marching Classic event.

One member of the public spoke during the public hearing portion of the annual Truth in Taxation Public Hearing.

Shannon Wicklund, of Waseca, said she is not alone in feeling the burden and stress of higher taxes in Waseca. She compared property

taxes she faces with those of surrounding cities.

Wicklund was met with sympathy and compassion from city council members who said the tax burden is great on residents due to the lack of larger businesses in town.

“It is what it is and it is unfortunate,” Mayor Zimmerman said. “I feel like we’re moving towards growth... Shannon we really appreciate you being here. We know you’re not alone. We’re all in the same boat.”

The final 2026 budget/levy will be approved during the final meeting of the year on December 16, 2025.

The meeting closed after a few brief announcements including congratulation sent to Councilman Gary Conrath and his wife who celebrated 50 years of marriage on Sunday, December 7, 2025.

Mayor Zimmerman also invited the Waseca Football Team to their next meeting to congratulate them on an excellent season.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Christmas Time at the Mill sees attendance rise

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Fifth Annual Christmas Time at the Mill took place during the busy afternoon of Saturday, Dec. 6. With light flurries of snow starting to come down outside, the Christmas spirit was just as refreshing inside, and it was a little warmer. Even the Grinch looked like he was having a good time as people came in, enjoyed the many activities, and moved on. By the end of the day, more than 1,100 people including 475 children had attended.

Besides all the Christmas dazzle and Matthew Petsinger welcoming everyone to the festivities at the front door, the first things to see upon entry into the Mill were a free book table for children, a giant wooden Jenga game and a giant Connect Four game. All three were magnets for children. As the kids screamed and played with the games, a cross-armed Grinch passed by and gave them all a frown.

Pastor Michael Grannis of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church was dressed as St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra. He was joined on stage by fellow pastor Eric Ishimaru of Christ the King church, who said, “We’re going to read a story and talk back and forth, not just words but a discussion about the holiday.”

Ishimaru added, “I was hoping a lot of people would show up today, but this many people here already is absolutely amazing.” Pastor Grannis was a busy man on Saturday because he also helped with St. Paul’s Bazaar earlier. The Story of St. Nicholas was to begin at 3:45 p.m. with the Waseca Jazz Band at 5:15 p.m.

The NRHEG band and choir spent 30 or more minutes on stage alternately playing or singing holiday music to a ballroom full of people and families. Kids were coming and going, some carrying tiny wreaths, the homemade kind children can hang on the Christmas tree, with their names on them. There was a station for constructing those and that was also full of chatty kids. There was another table manned by volunteer Rachel Hinton, she was passing out coloring crayons and markers so children could color holiday pictures, “I volunteered because I love Christmas and I love the holidays.” Joe Hoehn was the holiday bartender for the day and he said, “We’ve had like 500 people here so far, I think I’ve already served 200 or so.”

Tami Gadbow brought her two granddaughters,

Mill continued on 14



WHAT IS HE DOING HERE? - The Grinch caused a moment of confusion for six-month-old Rowan during Christmas Time at the Mill the afternoon of Dec. 6. This year was the fifth time the popular event has been held. More than 1,100 people attended, among them 475 children. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

County looks at taxes, payroll and land surveys

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

During County Board sessions the morning of Dec. 2, county administrator Michael Johnson summarized that the county’s “property tax effect” for 2026 will be a three-percent increase, though official numbers will indicate about six percent due to a bookkeeping change. Namely, the taxes formerly attributed to the county-wide system of libraries are now incorporated into the county’s numbers, since it was discovered earlier this year that the library system is not authorized to levy taxes directly.

Thus, although the county’s listing on property owners’ 2026 tax statements will appear to be six percent higher than in 2025, their county taxes altogether will have increased only three percent because a separate line listing taxes for the library system no longer appears.

Johnson informed commissioners the three-percent increase is the lowest in the state, with Blue Earth County reporting an expected 8.5 percent increase; Brown County, 10 percent; Sibley County four percent and Steele county 5.1 percent.

Taxpayers will be offered a full overview of the county’s budget plans for 2026 at a “Truth in Taxation” session scheduled for 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 16.

During the Dec. 2 meeting, board members enacted a reimbursement policy for county property owners whose privately arranged surveys include locating and certifying a section corner, a process which can cost thousands of dollars.

The policy notes that the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) for Minnesota was established in the latter half of the 1800s by the federal government, and that

County continued on 12



Compostings

by Al Batt

Don't follow in the footsteps of a Roomba

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

We're having a family Christmas party early and then my wife and I are headed to Texas.

Why do you go to Texas each winter? Is it just because it's warmer?

Of course not. I come from good stock, and I can take the cold. I go to Texas each winter because I find it easier to like the weather-man there.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. There is a vast untapped amount of winter ahead, but I had weathered the first storm. Being indoors helped. I'd been chased and cased indoors by the cold and snow. It gets so dark so early, it's difficult not to be a night owl. As W. C. Fields said in the film "The Fatal Glass of Beer," "It ain't a fit night out for man or beast." My brakes had been applied, but after the storm had subsided, I bundled in multiple layers of clothing, giving me sweat equity in winter, and walked to the end of the drive. The snow was deep, the temperature cold, and the wind was knifing. It was bags of fun.

It was 11 degrees. The forecast had been for a low of 15 degrees. I did some quick math and discovered I was getting a bad deal. I wanted those 4 degrees. Did it help to whine, even if only to myself, about the missing 4 degrees? No, it wasn't long before it was 12 degrees below zero.

A neighbor said he figured he'd received 7 inches of snow. He's a humble fellow who underestimates. I told him I'd gotten 7 feet of the white stuff at my place.

TRUNCATED TALES

Don't try to follow in the footsteps of a Roomba. They don't have any feet and they run into walls.

The sign on a jewelry store's window read, "Watch Batteries Installed." I almost went in, but I didn't think it'd be that entertaining to watch.

I found a store worker I knew and asked her where I could find the nuts. I'll bet she wished she carried a mirror so she could show me one.

If humans were meant to fly, being in an airport would be more fun.

In Costa Rica, I learned that the country is the largest exporter of fresh pineapple. That scrumptious and juicy fruit is why Costa Rica is the pineapple of my eye.

THE HAWK

What is the hawk they talk about in Chicago? It could be the nickname of Ken Harrelson, called the Hawk because of his distinctive profile. Ken Harrelson spent 33 years as the play-by-play announcer on the Chicago White Sox broadcast. It could be Harrelson, but I doubt it. I suspect the "hawk" they're talking about refers to the icy-cold, damp winds that blow off Lake Michigan in the winter. It got the name because the bone-chilling winds are as fast as a flying hawk, and the biting cold is as sharp as a hawk's talons. Ken Harrelson said "dadgummit" often and called bloop hits that landed between fielders "duck snorts." He might have watched the TV show "The Real McCoys," starring Walter Brennan as Grandpa Amos, for whom "dadgummit" was his hayseed catchphrase.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

How many 16-year-olds does it take to change a lightbulb? Whatever.

A frog had a DNA test and learned he was mostly Irish, part English, some German and a tad Pole.

A man went to see a doctor about the pain he had everywhere. The doctor told him to touch his shoulder. He did and said it really hurt. The physician told him to touch his stomach. He did and again complained of a terrible pain. The doctor asked him to touch his ankle. He did as directed and writhed in pain. The doctor said, "Just as I suspected. You have a broken finger."

NATURE NOTES

Why did the chicken cross the road? To show the opossum it could be done. Opossums frequently end their lives singing, "On the road again."

Don't eat the blue snow. When eastern cottontail rabbits eat buckthorn, they excrete a chemical from the plant in their urine, which turns blue in sunlight.

Gulls, pelicans, storks, geese and ibises have black feathers on the trailing edges of their wings. The black feathers protect a wing from wear and tear. Black feathers contain melanin, which makes feathers stronger. Feathers with melanin have a tougher layer of keratin—the same substance found in human fingernails—compared to feathers without melanin.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"Kindness is like snow- It beautifies everything it covers."—Kahlil Gibran.

My Christmas spirit has been activated

I was privileged to attend five live music performances in eight days. My Christmas spirit is now fully activated.

It started the Sunday after Thanksgiving with the Waseca Chorale's "Joy! He Shall Reign" concert held at Sacred Heart Church in Waseca. The church, with its stained glass windows, distinctive decorations and elegant architecture provides inspiration and pulls a person into a reflective mood. The music built on that, exulting in God's munificent act of sending a savior.

The rich vocal interconnections made possible by a group of more than 50 well practiced singers suited both the setting and the message, lifting my heart and causing my eyes to brim over. I found myself breathing more deeply, as if to draw it all in.

The Chorale had kindly included a statement of thanks to me and the Waseca County Pioneer for the coverage we had provided in advance to let the community know about the concert. But for me, being there with the task of reporting on the event was a privilege which I wanted to thank the singers for. I went home on light feet, the music still resounding in my head.

On Wednesday evening I so-journed through the cold to First Lutheran Church in Waldorf. Now, let me elaborate on that. Yes, Wednesday, Dec. 3 was a chilly night, but it was made colder by the fact that the blower motor in my car had become unreliable. Sometimes the fan in the dash would come on and distribute the engine's heat nicely throughout the vehicle; sometimes it wouldn't. Wednesday was a "wouldn't" night. Fortunately for me, I was able to benefit from a sudden cancellation experienced by New Richland Auto Repair on Thursday. I can now rely on my heater to warm my hands and feet and keep my breath from be-



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

coming condensate on my windows. But all that is an aside.

Though my fingers and toes were a bit chilled as I arrived at First Lutheran, I was immediately comforted by a warm invitation to enjoy some refreshments, and the equally warming anticipation of a concert about to be performed by the all-male harmony group "Just Friends."

I was not making any comparisons to the Waseca Chorale—I had interviewed the members of Just Friends for a couple of articles in the past and attended a couple of their performances. I knew what the performance would be like, and I was filled with anticipation for the friendly, personal way these men sing and interact.

No formality, but instead frank humility in that they sing because it feels good to sing, and because they find pleasure in praising God.

The ten of them practice together pretty much every week, all year long, and at least some of them feel free to tease one another and make lighthearted jokes at each others' expense. No one takes it personally, and within a few moments they're producing rich harmonies which speak loudly about their willingness to work together so their music is beautiful.

The harmony is even richer when a person realizes these singers ask only for a free will offering to help cover the costs of their equipment, travel, and sheet music: what people don't donate, they cover themselves. In short, not necessarily on Wednes-

day night, but over the course of the year, they are willing to pay for the chance to sing for an audience. Talk about wanting to spread the good news!

On Friday evening I attended the first of the three performances of the New Richland area's "Home for the Holidays" concert. There were 170 people in the pews of New Richland's Trinity Lutheran Church, but had there been standing room only, I don't think it would have detracted from the intimate atmosphere of this, the fourth time home-grown professional musicians Gavin Berg and Adam Moen performed for the benefit of the New Richland Foundation, a local group which gives grants to support causes and projects within the area defined by the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva school district.

Berg is a professional keyboard player who has released an album of his own musical arrangements played on the piano and worked for Twin Cities area churches and organizations for more than a decade, but has recently moved to Owatonna. He commented during the concert that he is being reintroduced to the delights of persistent interactions with his family, including having attended his niece's pre-school music concert a day or two before.

Moen is a professional singer and dancer who has been part of the cast of "Grease" at the Chanhassen Dinner Theater this past year, and is now a cast member in "White Christ-



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

Trying to take care of Spaghetti and Meatball

It's been a busy week here at apartment 543. On Wednesday, Jack and I decided to finally utilize the on-line "portal" that allows us to see what dogs are looking for foster care. I was sitting at my desk on Tuesday and happened to check the portal to see which animals were in need of temporary homes.

That's when two irresistible options caught my eye – two-month-old Australian shepherd mix puppies. They had come in as strays the night before, a brother and sister. They were absolutely adorable and my attention had been wholly captured. I sent the agency an email saying I would love to foster one or both of the puppies. After some discussion (her saying it would be a lot for a first-time foster, but the puppies could play together), I decided we could handle two 15-pound puppies in our home for a couple of days.

Boy, did we learn a lot.

The puppies came without names and without collars or leashes, only puppy pee pads. We ended up naming them Spaghetti and Meatball because we thought it was funny, and we couldn't think of anything else.

As soon as I opened the carrier door, the first thing Spaghetti did was

spread a walking pee all over the rug we forgot to pick up (we had fully intended to, but the excitement of dogs made it impossible to remember everything). That went in the wash, and their cage and pen were set up, creating an area in the living room where they could safely run around while also staying far away from the carpet on our bedroom floor.

They were so excited their little bodies were barely able to contain their wiggles, tails moving so fast and momentous. Sitting on the floor next to them, we gave them all our love. They scrambled into our laps and back out again, nipping at our hands, faces, and each other.

As adorable as they were, they were stinky. They came in as strays, carrying a bit of that dirty, lived-on-the-street smell with them. We were told as fosters, that although we might be tempted to give them baths, to not do so because it might further traumatize already traumatized dogs. So between the smell on their coats and their poo and pee everywhere (they had about a 50% success rate of going on the pads), our apartment had a certain smell for a couple of days.

Despite the number of times I



Meatball, on the left, was the calmer and more clever of the two, while Spaghetti, right, tended to chew on whatever he could get hold of. Including blankets, pee pads and faces.

cleaned up puppy excrement and yelled "Hey! Don't touch that!" it was a wonderful experience. For a couple of days, we were puppy parents, learning how to be responsible and teach the right things so our puppy babies would grow up to be nice and responsible doggy adults.

As we watched them play and nap with each other, it broke our hearts to think they might be adopted by separate families. They were siblings with an unbreakable bond.

We had to say goodbye though, so with sad hearts but grateful noses, we let them go back to the shelter to get ready for adoption. It was heart-

mas." The two professionals were joined by talented fellow NRHEG graduates Eva Wayne, who plays both piano and organ, and Ellen Johnson, who sings.

With four well-acquainted friends on the stage and the blatant honesty about wanting to bring in money for charity, even my seat close to the back—chosen strategically so that I could move around and take pictures—felt like it was in the front row.

The music was deeply engaging, the performances were impressive, and \$15,000 was raised to support local causes.

My fourth musical pleasure was seeing folks from the NRHEG music department at "Christmas at the Mill" on Saturday. I know other groups also performed, but by coincidence, I was there to see band teacher Seth Schaefer use a wooden crate as a percussion instrument and to hear vocal music teacher Krista Reeder play the flute alongside a small group of instrumentalists.

My fifth was attending the NRHEG High School's holiday music concert on Monday.

I found the music beautiful, of course, but in yet another different way: this time the music was enhanced by the pleasure I feel in hearing young musicians in the process of becoming more proficient. What may still be missing when it comes to technical expertise is more than made up for by the energy, enthusiasm and innocence of the musicians. A flower that is partly open is not less alluring than one in full bloom, it is simply and genuinely a different flower than what it will become.

I wish to express my thanks to all the musicians who drew out my Christmas spirit for me. Writing this column has given me the privilege of trying to describe your accomplishments.



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

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My dad will always be my favorite writer



STAR GAZING



by Eli Lutgens

couch. And I remember watching the Bluejays win a state title in basketball together on the same couch. Going to the games, standing on the sidelines, talking about the teams, plays, etc. all while making the many long drives, has been very special.

On the way home from the game

my dad shared the lead—that is, the first few lines—of the story he would have written if the Bluejays had won.

"For the Waseca Bluejays, there are no more practices to attend or games to play. Nothing left to prove. "They have won it all."

It gave me goosebumps.

It still does.

My dad said he's had that lead in his back pocket for 40 years. Still waiting to grace our local sports pages.

Hearing those words filled me with emotion. I wish I could articulate better, in words, the way the sound of those words flowed so smoothly from my dad's mouth. It was like listening to Robin Williams in Dead Poets Society or Gene Hackman in Hoosiers.

I've always said my dad is my favorite writer. Moments like that cement his legacy, in my mind, even further.

LaJune Hagen’s 90th birthday party in Albert Lea on Dec. 13
The birthday party for LaJune Hagen, who will be turning 90 will be held at her home, 915 Maple Hill Drive in Albert Lea from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13.

Post Christmas Party at Waseca Legion Saturday, Dec. 13
The Waseca Legion will host a Post Christmas Party starting at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13. Tom and Jerry’s for the adults, 2 p.m. Santa arrives, 3-6 p.m. live music by In a Bind.

Mariachi Music at Sacred Heart Church Saturday, Dec. 13
Sacred Heart Church in Waseca is featuring Mariachi music from 5 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 13, as part of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration. Mass begins at 5 p.m. Mariachi America will perform during Mass and afterwards in the church hall from 6 to 8 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

Indigo Moon at Indian Island Winery Dec. 13
Indian Island Winery will host Indigo Moon from 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13.

Pinnacle Pro Wrestling at The Mill on Saturday, Dec. 13
The Mill in Waseca will host Pinnacle Pro Wrestling from 6-10 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13. Featuring Royal Flavuh, Paul Virk, Petey Brown, Joey Avalon, Tori Fox, Lonzo “The Chicano” Romero, Carlos Oliva, Calvin Kelly, “Outlaw” Sadie Belle, Manico, Kit Sackett, Garrison Creed and Eli Perez.

Waseca Community Education Brochure live online Dec. 15
The Waseca Community Education winter brochure will be live online beginning Dec. 15. Area residents can visit <https://waseca.ce.eleyo.com/> to learn about and register for courses, activities, and events.

Macrame Stars at New Richland Public Library Dec. 17
There will be a Macrame Stars creation demonstration at the New Richland Public Library at 10:15 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 17. Create sweet stars for decoration during the winter season. For ages 18 and up.

Drawing Club at Janesville Public Library Dec. 18
At this drawing club for artists, teens of all skill levels will learn new techniques and sample a variety of drawing styles, including fashion, anime, nature, objects, illustration, doodles, portraits, and more. Drawing club begins at 4 p.m. Thursday, December 18 at the Janesville Public Library. Exclusively for ages 12-18.

Holiday Party at The Mill on Friday, Dec. 19
The Mill will host a Holiday Party from 6 to 11 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 19. Music from the Mud Dogs will highlight the evening. Part holiday party and part birthday party for community volunteer Mark Pehrson who is turning 75.



WONDERLAND - Left, Kathey Huisman of Grandma's Krunchie Creations was surrounded by Christmas joy during the Starfire Event Center's Winter Wonderland on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025. Right, Eric, Braxtin, and Jordan Hurlbut were all set to enjoy the Starfire Event Center's Winter Wonderland.
Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann



The Starfire makes Christmas official Winter Wonderland vendors supply variety

By **BEN REVERMANN**
Staff writer

The Starfire Event Center in Waseca held its Winter Wonderland event on Saturday, Dec. 6. The vendors, from all over southern Minnesota, were wall to wall and all of them had something to do with the holiday season, making for a very cheerful Christmas happening.
Among those arriving at the event were Eric, his wife Jordan and their son Braxtin, who had come with Christmas on their minds. Said Eric, “We thought we’d come and check it out, take the little guy with us and see what we see.”
The first vendor inside the door was Bee Serene, selling handmade crafts, coffee cups, mouse pads, chap sticks, lotions and soaps. Casey Voneschen was working behind the counter and

said, “Me and my roommate started doing this; we sell just about everything you can think of. You name it, we got it.”
April’s Crafty Space customizes tumblers, wind spinners, car coasters, ornaments, memory bears and much more. Quilt Creations and More focuses mostly on quilts. Corissa’s Creations was unique in that she will make a fancy cake, then teach a class on how to make that same cake, “I get people to sign up so they can make it look like it’s professionally made.” The cake on display had M&Ms and pink lines with white frosting. Mai-raid Orrie had sturdy cloth bowls and baskets she made by hand using a coil design. B & D Country Gardens was selling sweet rosettes and canned goods, pickles, salsas and relishes.
The Cozy Candle Co. was a seller of candles, but in the back were spe-

cial candles made out of old bread bowls. Quaal Designs sold custom signs. Bonnie’s Creation was a seller of wreaths and jewelry. There were also handmade angels and lots of them, she even had a story about seeing an angel once when she was down south, which kind of got her hooked on the angel design. Grandma’s Krunchie Creations were freeze dried items like candies, Oreo cookies and other eatables. Jamie McShane was selling quilts, mugs, ceramics and paintings.
Janae’s Wacky Workshop had wood puzzles and other wood inspired totems. There was also an impossible puzzle that consisted of a bag of sawdust, which is a humorous running gag. Scentsy Wickless focuses on candles. Penny’s Pretty Boots were something wonderful to look at. Natalie of Natalie’s Baked Goods said, “I focus on cookies and Norwegian

baking.” Lori Arnold, who has been selling Mary Kay for the past 31 years said, “In my time with Mary Kay, I have seen plenty of changes in the company.”
Grandma D’s homemade crafts. Crystal Myers of Crochet, Critters and Chaos, reports that her motto is, “Crafting a life full of joy and personality by turning strings into things.” Wendy Johnson doesn’t have a business name, but she does embroidery on jean jackets, towels and children’s matching games, (think puzzles for babies). MKC makes flour-less monster cookies, (and she was giving out free samples). Keck’s Sweets and Treats sells freeze-dried goods. Connie Grande was selling wreaths, swags, and centerpieces, all with fresh pine green branches. There was something for everyone at the Starfire Winter Wonderland event.

Westphal awarded Caregiver of the Year

By **RACHAEL JAEGER**
Staff Writer

Nancy Westphal might say she only had to move one building over to go from the home of her youth to a lifelong home of a different type next door, Janesville’s city-owned Whispering Creek elder care facility. After working there for more than 46 years, Westphal was presented with the facility’s “Caregiver of the Year Award” on Nov. 10.
When she was informed she had been selected for the award, Westphal jokes that the first task faced by the administrator who delivered the news was to convince her that it was true. “My heart just kind of stopped,” Westphal stated. “I was honored and humbled,” going on to say she is one among many excellent employees.
She mentions no one in her family felt any surprise.
As much as she appreciates being honored, Westphal says the most important acknowledgment comes from her clients. She says she loves to hear their stories about the past, and is glad to be there for them in better and worse times. The one thing most valuable to her, she says, is becoming family with them.
Her philosophy regarding the clients she works with is straightforward: Treat them like how you would want to be treated or how

you would want your loved one taken care of,” she said. “You wouldn’t want to see someone who’s unhappy, angry, or didn’t see you for who you are. You have to build a relationship with each one. That makes it easy for them and for you.”
“You know how you want to be treated when you get older or anytime – you don’t want to be overlooked,” Westphal said the relationships are a two-way street. As she’s worked alongside the residents and embraced their smiles and their stories, the experiences have taught her something the value of building a relationship of mutual trust.
She went on to express how blessed she feels to work in a city-owned facility that cares for its employees just as much as she cares for the residents who live there. When asked if it seemed like it’s been 46 years that she’s been a caregiver at Whispering Creek, Westphal laughed.
“It really hasn’t,” Westphal admitted. “When I go down memory lane, I have the perspective of taking each day by day. I try not to look back and I don’t look ahead.”
She does summarize some changes that have occurred over time. Two things she believes have been very pleasant for residents are increased flexibility when it comes to breakfast time, and a cof-



FULL OF CARE - Nancy Westphal has worked for Whispering Creek in Janesville for 46 and a half years.
Pioneer photo by Rachael Jaeger

fee nook where groups can gather for beverages and conversation.
One structural and procedural change across her career has been downsizing from 45 to 35 rooms. She also mentioned an enclosed walkway which allows easy movement between the nearby Park Plaza independent living facility and Whispering Creek. Referred to as “the Link,” the

walkway makes it possible for older individuals who require differing levels of care to get together. “It’s just like if they were in their own home and wanted to go off into the living room and socialize,” Westphal added.
A disturbing change over her 46 years, she goes on to mention, is

Caregiver continued on 12

School board covers Bash, CACR

By **MELISSA DUNN**
Staff Writer

The spotlighted topic at the December work session was presented by Brett Prescher who spoke about heading up, along with his wife, this year’s Bluejay Blast (BB) held on Nov. 22. Prescher told the board he came home one morning and his wife told him that she had “done something,” which is how he found out last spring he and she were in charge of the fundraiser, now in its fourteenth year.

The Preschers, along with the other BB committee members, decided to bring back the adults-only event in the evening in hopes of getting more of the community involved, as well as the usual pancake breakfast and carnival for families during the morning hours. Also new this year was the ability to bid for auction items in an online format.
Prescher said the committee had contingency plans the entire time, since planners knew the Bluejay football team might be playing on the same day in the state tournament. “Everything worked,” Prescher said. The fall event netted \$32,300, bringing the total for 2025 to almost \$57,000. Proceeds from the event are distributed to all the public schools.

A representative from public finance consulting company Ehlers gave a report on the refunding of some of the bonds from the November 2015 referendum. The company’s report determined that due to current market conditions and probable lower interest rates, the proposed issue of refunding the 2027 through 2034 maturities of the General Obligation School Building Bonds would reduce property taxes by approximately \$226,731. Actual results will be determined based on market conditions on the day of sale.
Superintendent Eric Hudspith reported on the state-required Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) program, previously known as the World’s Best Work Force. Hudspith reported the CACR outlines the goals of all children being ready for school, all racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed, all students are ready for career and college, all students graduate from high school, and all students are prepared to be life-long learners.
The data from the 2024-25 school year shows that 93 percent of the Waseca district’s children entering kindergarten are ready to do so, 82 percent of the graduates felt prepared for life after high school, 93 percent of students graduated from Waseca JS High school, and 86 percent of graduates reported feeling prepared for life-long learning.

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OBITUARIES

Bonnie Lewer

Bonnie Jean Lewer, age 100, a lifelong resident of Waseca, passed away on Friday, December 5, 2025, at Lakeshore Inn Rehabilitation Center.

Bonnie was born on February 17, 1925, in Mankato, the daughter of Louis and Lillian (Schleusner) Lewis. She attended Waseca Central High School, graduating with the class of 1943. On May 7, 1950, she was united in marriage to Lawrence Lewer at St. John Lutheran Church in Waseca.

Together they shared 54 years of marriage and raised one son before Lawrence's passing on August 31, 2004.

Following high school, Bonnie worked briefly at EF Johnson before dedicating her life to raising her son and working alongside her husband as they owned and operated the Coast tenCoast Hardware Store. She was known as a great cook and enjoyed playing ball with her grandsons, gardening, and tending flowers at the cemetery. Bonnie took pride in her yard work and, with her characteristic determination, shoveled her own driveway until the age of 97. She was famously known for walking wherever she needed to go around town, embodying her independence and strength.

Bonnie was a devoted member of St. John Lutheran Church in Waseca, where she taught Sunday school for many years, assisted with bulletins, visited shut-ins, and participated in the quilting group. She gave generously of her time, volunteering with Meals on Wheels for nearly 50 years, helping at the Art Center, and serving her community in countless ways. She also enjoyed reading and cherished time spent with her family.



Bonnie Lewer

Bonnie will be remembered as caring, hardworking, dedicated, generous, and deeply faithful.

She is survived by her son, Larry (Lana) Lewer of Coon Rapids; grandsons, Zachary Lewer and Jacob (fiancé, Alyssa) Lewer; as well as nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Lawrence; grandson, Samuel Lewer; and siblings, Marjorie Deef, Betty Caya, and Donald Lewis.

Visitation will be held from 4:00 - 7:00 PM on Thursday, December 18, 2025, at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca. Visitation will continue for one hour prior to the service at the church on Friday.

Funeral Service will be at 11:00 AM on Friday, December 19, 2025, at St. John Lutheran Church in Waseca. Interment will follow at Woodville Cemetery.

Memorials are preferred to St. John Lutheran Church in Waseca. DSOFuneral.com.

Eugene Kuhns

Eugene Donald Kuhns, devoted husband, father, and grandfather, age 83 of Waseca, peacefully went home to milk the Lord's dairy herd surrounded by his family at Foxdale in Waseca, MN on December 7, 2025.

Eugene was born on January 22, 1942, to Donald and Verna (Klampe) Kuhns. He was raised with an unwavering work ethic, a deep appreciation for dairy farming and the land, lessons that shaped his entire life. After meeting at the Kato Ballroom, Eugene married the love of his life, Yolonda "Lonnie" Vulcan on August 17, 1963, and together they raised a family with a belief in faith, hard work, and love.

A lifelong resident of rural Waseca and forever a Waseca Bluejay, Eugene lived most of his life on his farm. He took great pride in being both a dairy and crop farmer. Caring for his cows was more than an occupation - it was his calling and his joy. Spending time in the barns brought him great pride and a sense of peace. Eugene's dedication extended to his community as well, where he served on the Meridian Shippers Association board, Waseca Public School Advisory boards, Wilton Cemetery Board and the Wilton Township board for many years. He pre-

sented the Waseca High School Class of 1960 scholarship numerous times.

After retiring from milking cows, Eugene found a second purpose by becoming a bus driver for Lenz Bus Service. He enjoyed driving students to their events and especially loved his special education bus route, where he cared for the students like his own. Everyone loved driver "Gene." After his daily morning bus route Eugene could be found talking about farming and drinking coffee with his friends at the Pheasant Cafe.

Eugene enjoyed watching high school basketball, but his love of sports grew to include anything his children or grandchildren were playing. Eugene and Lonnie traveled all over the area to watch them on the field, court, or mat, and were their biggest fans.

Family was at the center of Eugene's life. He is survived by his devoted wife of 62 years, Lonnie; his children: Yolinda (Kevin) Meister of New Prague, MN; Keith Kuhns of Monroe, SD; Gwen (Scott) Krueger of New Richland, MN; and Dan Kuhns (Marah Ryks) of Waseca, MN. He was a proud grandfather to Ariel (Matt) Bromelkamp, Brady (Ammami) Meister, Bryan Kuhns (Heather Foote), Melinda Kuhns, Jacob Kuhns, Tessa (Charlie) Royce, Bailey (Ben) Hendrickson,

Buck Kuhns, and Siri Kuhns. Eugene was further blessed with 13 great-grandchildren, each holding a special place in his heart. Also grieving Eugene is his brother, Lyle (Judy) Kuhns of Waseca; and his in-laws Raleen (Curt) Tolzmann of Cleveland, MN; Douglas (Heidi) Vulcan of Lincoln, MT; Dennell (Pam) Vulcan of Mahtomedi, MN; Kollett Kaehlert of Mankato, MN; Ray (Sue) Vulcan of Nicollet, MN; Leland (Diane) Vulcan of Mesa, AZ; Bryan (Darla) Vulcan of Rapid City, SD; David Vulcan of Mankato, MN; and Troy Vulcan of Mankato, MN, as well as numerous nieces and nephews who loved him dearly.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Donald and Verna Kuhns, his in-laws, Raymond and Juanita Vulcan, and his brother-in-law, Bill Kaehlert.

Eugene will be remembered for his devotion to his farming, his love of all things red-especially tractors, and his love for the most important things in his life - family and the herd he cared for. His happiest moments were spent with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, sharing stories, playing games, and sharing his life lessons.

He leaves behind a legacy of kindness, generosity, and love that will be cherished by all who knew him. He will be deeply missed and his memory will



Eugene Kuhns

remain forever in the hearts of those he loved.

Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Thursday, December 11, 2025 at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Services in Waseca, and will continue for one hour before the service at the church on Friday.

Funeral Services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, December 12, 2025 at St. John Lutheran Church in Waseca, with Rev. Ashley Kuhlman officiating. Interment will follow at Wilton Cemetery. Dsofuneral.com

Deron Russell pens his future to North Dakota

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

During the chilly morning of Wednesday, Dec. 3, students at the Waseca Junior Senior High School gathered to witness senior Deron Russell sign his letter of intent to attend North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Coach Brad Wendland introduced Russell, "This signing here today is an indication of Deron's leadership in our school. He's homecoming king, he's a leader in both of his sports, (football and basketball). What I try to do is to get him around young people, and they end up asking, 'What's it like to be division one.'" As a coach I like to step back, point at him and say, "This is what division one looks like, how you treat other people, how you go to class, how you are to your teachers, your teammates." Deron is a really good kid who happens to be good at football, and apparently he's really good at basketball as well."

Wendland's statement garnered laughter from the crowd. Wendland continued, "A lot of people in Minnesota, from around the state, when you tell them you're from Waseca, Deron's name comes up. He's been such an incredible ambassador for us." Russell's brother Isaiah, who graduated in 2012 was in the audience, Wendland made reference to his continuing legacy. "Russell is one of ten finalists in the state for the award for Mr. Football. Then he will start practice for the All-Star game, playing offensive for the south team."

A shout from the basketball coach in the audience



SIGNED - Saiveon Williamson, Bambi Jess, Deron Russell, Isaiah Williamson and Tannea Johnson posed for a photo during the letter-of-intent signing for Deron on Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025.

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

informed everyone, "He broke the school record: 48 points last night." The announcement was met with a round of applause.

Wendland had some Russell statistics, "On offense, 125 career receptions for Waseca 1,979 yards. Six receptions, 11 in his career. School record for receiving yards in a season. Receiving yards in a career, number of receptions in a career. Touchdown receptions, he beat his brother by one. It's been really fun traveling with Deron, little kids try to get a picture with him and he handles that so well, it's been great to be a part of." With that he let Russell take center stage.

Russell, "First I want to thank God; without him none of this is possible. I want to thank my family and friends for being with me through this journey. I want to thank my mom for all her sacrifices; she's always pushing me. I want to thank the coaches for pushing me through every practice and all the support." He kept it short and sweet. As he signed, the audience provided another round of applause. Once

the signing was over, a group of high schoolers joined Russell on the stage to pose for pictures before being ushered back to class.

Russell received 11 offers from schools including Minnesota State, Iowa State, Nebraska State and Washington State, but he stuck with North Dakota. Said Russell, "I toured North Dakota for two days; I talked to the players and some of the defensive backs and everyone there seemed very supportive, especially the coaches." He has a 3.5 grade point average and is on the B honor roll. He had a calf injury but says, "I think I'm back to 85 percent now, not quite 100 but I'll keep at it." Despite his gift of playing defensive back, he'll be playing the All-Star game as a receiver. He has not picked out a major yet, but plans on deciding that during his first year in college.

The mascot for North Dakota State is the Bison; the teams are referred to as the Thundering Herd. NDSU has around 12,000 students and is 250 miles from Waseca.

Susan Baldini

Susan Ann Baldini passed away on December 6, 2025 at the New Richland Care Center in New Richland, MN, surrounded by her family.

Susan was born on July 9, 1948 to Joseph and Mildred (Adams) Valasek in Osage, Iowa.

She was raised on the family farm in Osage, where she worked alongside her dad and uncles in the everyday life of a farm family. She graduated from Osage Community High School in 1966 and went on to further her education at Mankato Community College; where she would meet her future husband, David. On February 23, 1968, she was married to David Baldini in Lawton, OK. They moved back to Mankato so David could finish his education after serving in the US Army. In 1970, they moved to Waseca, where they raised their two sons. She worked at EF Jonson Co and Countryside Motors; later retiring from her position at Christensen Tire and Auto Repair.

She found joy in the simple things; playing card games (especially gin), watching the birds, taking walks, and her beloved dogs. Her garden was one of her greatest pleasures. She and David tended it with care, growing an abundance of vegetables that they shared generously with everyone. She cherished the time spent traveling with her family, especially their many fishing trips to Canada, Lake Winnibigoshish, and Red Lake; both in the summer and the winter. In their retirement years, David and Susan spent as much time together as possible, traveling and creating precious memories that brought them joy and closeness.

As a woman strong in her faith, she especially loved the Advent season. She delighted in decorating her home, taking particular joy in setting out her nativity scene. She cherished how this season brought family and friends together, giving everyone a chance to pause, gather, and step away from their everyday routines.

One of her greatest accomplishments, and something she was most proud of, was being a devoted wife and mother. Watching her sons grow into successful,



Susan Baldini

remarkable men was a joy she truly adored. She loved her family dearly and always made sure to support them in every way she could.

She will be lovingly remembered by her husband, David, of 57 ¾ years; sons, Allyne of Waseca and Aaron of Champlin; siblings, Connie Fischer of Grand Rapids, MN, Ron (Jean) Valasak of Osage, IA, Roger Valasak of Osage, IA, Joe Valasak of North Branch, MN, and Pat Newton of Florida; along with several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, parents-in-law, Dave and Vivian Dassance, grandparents, brothers-in-law, Lonnie Fischer and Peter Baldini, sister-in-law, Carol Visser and her husband Wes Visser, nephew, Scott Visser, and many aunts and uncles.

A funeral will be held on Saturday, December 13, 2025, at 11:00 AM at Faith United Methodist Church in Waseca, MN. Susan's family will greet guests at a visitation on Friday,

December 12, 2025 at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis Steffel Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca, MN and one hour prior to the service at the church. A private interment will be at a later date at Woodville Cemetery.

A special thank you to the Mankato Mayo Hospital, Waseca Therapy Department, Rev.

Kathy King from Janesville Methodist Church, the New Richland Care Center, St Croix Hospice, and all of her physical and occupational therapists for their tender care.

GreenSeam Rural Forum Dec. 4
Senators and Representatives address small business concerns

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

GreenSeam is a Mankato-based organization which works to market southern Minnesota to ag-based businesses and organizations as an ideal region for them to locate in with remarkable resources and versatility. GreenSeam sponsored a regional "Rural Forum" at the Mayo Civic Event Center in Mankato attended by 280 people the evening of Thursday, Dec. 4.

GreenSeam leader Sam Ziegler told the crowd, "The Rural Forum provides an opportunity for ag and community leaders to gain perspective on how business innovation and state policy intersect to shape the industry." Among dignitaries present were Cameron Addington, Minnesota FFA president, and an array of elected representatives who offered their responses to questions regarding Minnesota's small business climate. Among the politicians were Representative Dave Baker (R-Will-

mar), Senator Nick Frentz (DFL North Mankato), Senator Rich Draheim (R-Madison Lake). Keynote speaker for the evening was Jacqueline McCloskey, director of business development of Fair Oaks Farms of Indiana.

GreenSeam leader Sam Ziegler stated in his opening comments, "The

Rural Forum provides an opportunity for ag and community leaders to gain perspective on how business innovation and state policy intersect to shape the industry."

The business climate panel consisted

Forum continued on 14



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Midco communication agreement approved

By **RACHAEL JAEGER**
Staff Writer

At the Janesville council meeting the evening of Nov. 24, the council members approved a franchise agreement with Midcontinent Communications after some of their concerns were eased regarding whether the company was providing adequate staff to complete installing necessary lines. Public Works Director Joe Ziemke expressed that, if company staff is not able to complete work in a timely fashion, there would be a way to hire an outside contractor at Midco's expense.

"I want the council to be aware that it's a huge task when they come in and want to do the whole town," Ziemke stated.

When concerns were raised regarding marking locations of power, water, and sewer lines, Ziemke said he has a number of candidates for the task. City Clerk Sara Jo Vulcan gave assurance that the typical procedure is to mark existing buried lines about two weeks in advance of new installation, leaving plenty of time to address concerns.

Waseca county commissioner De Malterer was present at the meeting and suggested that city staff in Waseca might be able to offer advice, given that similar line installations had been done there last summer.

She also expressed her personal support for "this particular bill and this particular ordinance" since she believes Janesville's citizens will be grateful for access to consistent, high-speed service.

"I would urge you to work with Midco and other companies to make sure that your anchor institutions are well served such as your schools, your library, and your city hall," Malterer commented.

She also shared her belief that reliable and affordable internet is fundamental for future economic development and growth.

During the meeting, the council approved the future acquiring a 2017 MacQueen street sweeper, since the sweeper currently used by the city is nearly 30 years old and has registered 6,300 hours of operation. Ziemke stated the sweeper would probably be delivered in March The unit in question will cost about \$62,000 and has fewer than 2,500 hours of operation. He also stated it would receive an overhaul before being sold.

In response to a question from Councilor Ivan Maas, Ziemke revealed Janesville generally uses its sweeper for about 200 hours each year.

"It's also my anticipation that we will sweep more,

Midco continued on 11

JANESVILLE CITY COUNCIL



VOLUNTEERS - From left: Jean Groskreutz, Faunice Witt, Bev Janike, Bonnie Truebenbach, Gayette Beyer and Marlys Nelson were volunteers at the Waldorf Community Christmas luncheon for the First Lutheran Church on Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

First Lutheran of Waldorf serves 90 Wilkening, Dulas share information at Christmas dinner

By **BEN REVERMANN**
Staff writer

The ladies of the First Lutheran Church of Waldorf offered a community Christmas dinner over the luncheon hour at the town's community center on Thursday, Dec. 5. Among those they served were city Mayor Rob Wilkening and Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas.

Ticket taker Cheryl Dobberstein shared that about 60 diners came in person, while another 30 requested takeout meals. She mentioned that all proceeds for the day go to Women in Mission for the church.

In the center's kitchen was Marlys Nelson, who revealed that as many as 10 of First Lutheran's ladies volunteered to plate and serve the meals, having started planning about six weeks ago. She mentioned the annual dinner at the community center has been a long-standing tradition; a decade or more ago it was offered by the local Senior Citizens Club, with First Lutheran having taken it over afterward.

Mayor Wilkening announced, "We want to thank First Lutheran for their wonderful talent. We want you to know the Veterans Memorial park is now taking requests for dedications. The day of the dedication will take place during Waldorf Days coming up on August 21,22 and 23. Waldorf is a great city, we're currently seeing an 18 percent population growth and that's great news. The baseball field is still moving ahead and just so you guys know how expensive that project is, the lights alone are \$250,000, and they will hopefully be finished next year, nothing is cheap. We have two politicians, Representative Peggy Bennett and Senate leader Gene Dormac, please call your reps and tell them we need funding. We need it not only for the baseball field, but also the sewer line we need installed. I have been applying for grants and bonds, so we'll see what plays out there."

Not to be outdone, Sheriff Jay Dulas also had a few words to add, "Hello everyone, it's always nice to see you. Our Waseca County Sheriff's year in review, we are currently looking for a new dispatcher. We have received 10,000 calls this year and the year isn't even done, but we've so far survived. Thanks to the recent snowfall, there have been no major accidents. We are also working on a new justice center, hopefully next year. We're here if you need us and please remember this is a busy time of year for fraud. Don't give money to someone you don't know. Same with email links, if it looks suspicious, it is. Your bank will not call to ask for money; neither will the IRS." A person spoke up in the crowd and added, "The IRS does not call you unless you have called them first."

The Ladies of the First Lutheran Church of Waldorf said the food for the day was prepared by Infinity Catering of Janesville. Everyone who ate enjoyed a Thanksgiving style meal of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, corn, and cheesecake or cranberry pie for dessert.



SWEET TREAT - Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center (WANSC) board member Mairaid Orrie was among the dozen board members sharing treats, helping shoppers, and answering questions while visitors poured into the WANSC open house held the afternoon of Dec. 4. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

Service Center holds 'tasteful' open house

By **DEB BENTLY**
News Editor

Dozens of visitors enjoyed bargain shopping and refreshments the afternoon of Thursday, Dec. 4, during an open house at the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center (WANSC) on Second Street Northwest in Waseca.

Executive director Cindy Kollander explained the event was a celebration that road construction has finished and the Center is once again easily accessible. It was also a chance to bring the community in to see the redesigned shopping area—a project which was accomplished during a two-week closure the Center took when construction made customer traffic into and out of the store nearly impossible.

The new layout has lines of clothing racks running parallel to one another in the east side of the store, the toys and household goods now in the west side, and two new designated areas—one to display "vintage" items and another for furniture.

During the open house, shoppers were invited to sign up for door prizes.

They were also encouraged to visit the food shelf, where Waseca resident Melissa Olson was serving taco soup, fish tacos, and no-tahini hummus, all of which she made using items currently available at the food shelf.

Olson said she signed up to make and serve the food as a way to demonstrate how versatile the offerings at the facility can be. "I raised my family in a one-parent household with a single income," Olson described. "That really taught me to be creative in my cooking. I found bargains where I could, then made the best of what I found."

"I saw this as a chance to share what I learned."

Olson shared her recipes as liberally as the tasty food.



TASTEFUL - Top, Melissa Olson of Waseca offered customized meal items made from supplies available for distribution at the Waseca Area Food Shelf during the organization's open house Dec. 4. On the menu were taco soup, fish tacos, and Hummus made without Tahini. Bottom, Yolanda Mendoza and her daughter Eiza, 7, were among the many shoppers looking for bargains during the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center (WANSC) open house event the afternoon of Dec. 4. Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

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Fish Tacos
Pan fry white fish in oil or butter with salt, pepper, and cumin until brown.
Make coleslaw using
1 pkg. coleslaw
1 c. mayonnaise
½ c. sugar
1 tbsp vinegar
Let sit to marinate. Serve in corn tortillas with peach or mango salsa

No-Tahini Hummus
1 can garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
1 tsp garlic or more to taste
1 Tbsp olive oil
¾ tsp cumin
Salt and pepper to taste
2 to 4 Tbsp water
Blend in food processor until smooth. Serve with bread, pita chips or vegetables

Taco Soup
1 lb. ground meat (in this case, chicken)
1 can beans
1 can corn
1 can diced tomatoes
32 oz. broth
1 pkg. taco seasoning
1 pkg. macaroni
1 sm. can tomato sauce
Brown the meat with garlic and onion. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer until the macaroni is tender. Serve with shredded cheese, sour cream, and crispy corn chips.

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The Pastor's Column

Christians influence best when humble

By REVEREND MIKE COGLAN

Dr. John Weborg is a retired professor of mine. He was long the most respected teacher at my Chicago seminary. Dr. Weborg suffered from polio as a youth and consequently walked with a severe limp for the rest of his life. Working on the family farm, he was slower than others but he carried his weight. Through perseverance and faith, he overcame his physical challenges.

Then his intellectual gift brought him to the city to study and teach. He often told stories about how his disease had taught him to identify with the down-and-out. In his younger years, he used the public transportation system of the city. Climbing on buses was difficult. Getting out of the way of city cabs was risky. And the worst was using the elevated train system, or the “L” as locals call it. You have to climb up a long set of stairs to get to the trains.

Dr. Weborg would have to climb those awful stairs in the thick of rush hour to catch a train. Chicagoans are not known for their patience. People who were alert would run past him so they wouldn’t get caught behind the slow man with the cane. Those who were stuck behind him often let him know that he was an inconvenience.

In a crowd, no one cared that this man was a scholar who trained hundreds of students for service around the world. They only cared that he was in the way. As crowds rushed past, they even berated him for slowing them down. It made him think of the poor and the oppressed. They, too, were in the way of others. They were pushed about, ignored, and insulted. Their lives didn’t matter to all the achievers who had places to go and important things to do.

During my senior year, Dr. Weborg hired me as his Teacher’s Assistant. One of the most touching memories I have was a business lunch we had near the downtown office where I worked part-time. I remember nothing of the lunch itself, only that my professor was willing to

travel downtown to meet me. In order to get there, he had to take the elevated train.

Dr. Weborg made people feel important whether they were students, colleagues or even strangers. He respected opposing viewpoints. He had friends in the diverse Chicago culture who were of different faiths and different lifestyles. He was loved even by those who vehemently disagreed with him. Dr. Weborg modeled the life of Christ, serving in weakness.

I think about Dr. Weborg often during these days of loud and aggressive voices. We live in a world that prizes strength, visibility, and success even at the expense of civility. However, scripture consistently teaches that God’s Kingdom advances through lives marked by weakness, humility, and dependence on God. Christian influence is less about asserting power and more about revealing Christ’s power made perfect in human frailty.

God assured the apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) Paul responded, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

In Christian life, weakness is not a liability. When believers acknowledge their insufficiency, they point beyond themselves to the sufficiency of Christ. Influence born from weakness is honest, disarming, and deeply human. It refuses pretense and invites others to encounter a God who meets people where they truly are. This life may seem unattainable, but I saw it beautifully modeled by my professor.

I doubt if anyone will ever compare me to Dr. Weborg, except maybe by contrast. I have a temper. I can be pushy. I want to get my way. Dr. Weborg is nothing like that, but I’ve never known a more influential man. In quiet humility he marked my life and the life of every other student who had the privilege of sitting beneath his teaching. I believe the church will be more influential when we return to the quiet humble example of the One we are made to serve.



AWARDED - The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and the Ambassadors announce that the Waseca Community Arena has been honored with the Roots Award.

Celebrating 30 years of service and tradition

Chamber Ambassadors present Roots Award to the Waseca Community Arena

The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber Ambassadors are proud to announce that the Waseca Community Arena has been honored with the Roots Award. This award recognizes long-standing chamber businesses and organizations that have served the community for 30 years or more, demonstrating commitment, stability, and continued service.

Built in 1994, the Waseca Community Arena has been a cornerstone of local athletics and recreation for over three decades. The Arena is home to the Waseca Hockey Association and maintains ice from October through March, supporting youth hockey, adult open hockey, and public open skating. Conveniently located just south of the Waseca Jr./Sr. High School, it also serves as the home rink for the Waseca Bluejay boys and girls high school hockey teams, as well as a wide variety of school and community events.

“The Waseca Community Arena has been an integral part of our community for many years,” said Robin Dulas, Executive Director of the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce. “Its commitment to providing a place for families, athletes, and residents to gather, grow, and stay active truly embodies the spirit of the Roots Award. The Arena continues to positively impact generations in Waseca.”

Chamber Ambassador Chair Katie Gonzales added, “We are thrilled to recognize the Waseca Community Arena for its longstanding contributions to our community. Their dedication to youth sports, community programming, and supporting local traditions makes them incredibly deserving of this honor.”

The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce congratulates the Waseca Community Arena on receiving the Roots Award and thanks them for their continued commitment to enriching the Waseca community.

Winter Farmers Market



FARMERS MARKET FUN - Left, Marita Wadd was operating her stand, Studio Vertu, which offered marble coasters at the Winter Farmers Market at Farmamerica on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025. Right, Blake McCarty of McCarty Farms was in charge of his family's booth at the farmers market. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Attend the Church of your Choice!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-835-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m. * * * *	Sunday worship 10 a.m. * * * *	VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Brian Schanil Pastor Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship; 9 a.m. Sunday School Tuesdays: The Shepherd's Robe Ministry, 1-3 p.m., 6-8 p.m.; Bonfires and Yard Games, 6 p.m. until dark * * * *	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 * * * *
4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m. * * * *	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 1221 8th St SE, Waseca 507-835-2213 Sunday worship 10:45 a.m.; 6:00 p.m. * * * *	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. * * * *	JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 401 N. West St., Janesville Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship * * * *
FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m. * * * *	CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY 900 14th Ave SE, Waseca 507-833-1082 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m. * * * *	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 * * * *	BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 43089 180th St., Morristown Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Summer worship hours, (10:45 a.m. Worship, winter) * * * *
CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH 309 6th St NE, Waseca 507-835-9176 Worship Sundays 9 a.m., Sunday School/Fellowship 10:15 a.m., Wednesday evening worship 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 * * * *	IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship * * * *	ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH 307 W. 2nd St., Janesville Father Robert Schneider Sunday - 8:30 a.m. - Mass * * * *
ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH 401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca 507-833-1703 Sundays 9:00 a.m. * * * *	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Otisco, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship * * * *	ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Pastor Ava Adams-Morris Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship * * * *	ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH Alma City, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * * *
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH 314 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-2647 Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m. * * * *	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Mary Iverson Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting * * * *	ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC Waldorf, Minnesota Father Sammy Pothiredy Saturday - 5 p.m. Worship * * * *	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Smiths Mill, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship * * * *
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-4548 (office email: 1cwaseca@hickorytech.net) Worship Sunday 10 a.m. * * * *	LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting * * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN Wilton Township Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor Sunday - 8 a.m. summer worship; 10:45 a.m. Worship starting Sept. 1 * * * *	NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA 404 30 120th St. Waseca Pastor Sarah Krolak 507-234-6463 Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship; Second Sunday "Young at heart" Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. confirmation * * * *
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m. * * * *	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. * * * *	THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS Brad Donner, Branch President Waseca, Minnesota www.lds.org Sunday - 10 a.m. Sacrament Mtg.; 11:20 a.m. Sunday School Wednesday - 7 p.m. Youth Activities, ages 12-18 * * * *	NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca Father Glenn Ferichs 507-835-1222 Worship Sundays 10:00 a.m., Tues. and Wed. at 8:30 a.m. and Thurs. at 7 a.m.; Saturdays at 5 p.m. * * * *	REAL LIFE CHURCH 620 W Elm Ave, Waseca 507-833-0017 * * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH * * * *	

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Janesville

25 years ago

- Brad and Traci Bartholomew of Janesville are proud to announce the birth of their son, Matthew Benjamin, born Friday, Nov. 3, 2000, at Immanuel-St. Joseph Hospital in Mankato. He weighed 8 pounds, 1 ounce and was 20-½ inches long at birth. He was welcomed home by his brother Jordan, 3. Maternal grandparents are Mike and Vicki Youngberg of North Mankato.

- Leroy Kleimola, son of David and Linda Kleimola of Janesville, has been accepted as a student for admission at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, for the 2001-2002 academic year. Kleimola is a senior at Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School. He hopes to pursue a career in communications and broadcasting. Dordt College is a Christian, liberal arts college in Sioux Center, Iowa.

- If you feel bogged down by the spectre of the responsibility that Christmas brings with it-LIGHTEN UP! The Christmas House Walk, without a doubt, will put a spring in your step at the sound of jingle bells in your ears. As 2000 Chair Theresa Johnson says, "The house walk kind of puts you in the mood, gets you in the spirit of Christmas. This weekend come home for Christmas at Brad and Leslee Milbrath's at 301 2nd Ave. NE find the true meaning of Christmas at George and Darlene Kastle's country home at 1184 37th Ave.



- Left to right: Cassie Goodnough, Adam Huxford, Katie Malterer, Kenny Maas, Angie Manthey and Andy Meyer

50 years ago

- Nancy Ann Schnorenberg was united in marriage with Robert Allen Burhop by Justice of the Peace, Mrs. Everett (Norma) Bohn at her home in Morristown on November 22, at 2 p.m. The double-ring ceremony was witnessed by 25 relatives and friends. The couple's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Schnorenberg, Sr. of Waseca and Mr and Mrs. Eurcell Burhop of Janesville.

- Navy Machinist's Mate Second Class Raymond L. Porter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wolke of 200 Diane, Eagle Lake, has been promoted to his present rank while serving at the Naval Air Station, Kingsville, Texas. A former student of Mankato, he joined the Navy in January, 1972.



- Varsity Cheerleaders - Leading the cheers for winter sports will be these eight girls. In front, from left, Betty Wheelock, Ruth Wagner and Jane Drager. Second row, Mary Ann Donahue, Marie Seys, Bernie Mulcahey and Mary Beth Williams. Balancing on top is Beth Lundquist.

75 years ago

- More than 1,800 motorists forfeited their privilege of driving on public streets and highways in October, the Minnesota Highway Department reports. There were 408 outright revocations and 1,397 suspensions. Nine out of ten of the revocations, or 362, were due to conviction of driving while under influence of intoxicants. Other leading causes of revocations were 20 following commitment as inebriates, 15 leaving the scene of an accident in which a person was killed or injured, and 16 due to three convictions of speeding or careless driving within 12 months.

- Ladies of the Janesville Methodist church will hold a fancy work apron and novelty sale at the Emma Arnolt building Friday and Saturday of this week. Many Christmas gifts and other articles will be offered and it is suggested that you look over the various items when you are gift buying this weekend. The ladies also plan a bake sale, to be held Saturday at the same location starting at 2 o'clock.

- Janesville High School will play their first home game of the season Tuesday evening, December 5, with Ellendale high school. The second team game will begin at 7:15 and the first team game will begin at 8:00. Friday evening, December 1, Janesville will travel to Emmons for a basketball game with Emmons high school. Last Tuesday evening Janesville played at New Richland, the first team winning by a score of 51 to 27, and the second team winning 32 to 17.

100 years ago

- The football season for the local high school closed with the game against New Ulm last week, a game in which our boys annexed a heap of credit for their remarkable showing against one of the most powerful teams in the south part of the state. Though New Ulm won 7 to 0, their score came rather flukily on an intercepted pass, but nevertheless they are given credit for taking advantage of the only opportunity offered.

- The Janesville Township Farm Bureau Unit and the Civic League of Janesville are laying plans for an interesting joint meeting to be held Friday evening, December 4, at the Town Hall. This promises to be one of the most pleasing sessions of the year, as the two clubs have much in common to work for and both organizations hold similar ideas on community advancement.

- The women of St. John's Parish will serve a 50c pancake supper at the home of Mrs. J. W. Jennison, Thursday, Dec. 3, from 5 o'clock until all are served. Old fashioned buckwheat cakes, sausages and maple syrup, wheat cakes, pickles, coffee and doughnuts will be served. There will be a sale of useful and fancy articles suitable for Christmas gifts, in connection with the supper. Everyone is invited.

Waseca

25 years ago

- Waseca senior Kelly Wilder earned All-State honors for the second consecutive year when she finished second in the State Class A Diving competition last week. The state meet was held last Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at the Aquatic Center on the University of Minnesota campus. Wilder was one of 32 divers to compete at state. She stood in fourth place after Monday's preliminary round, when the competitors dove five times. Wilder came back Wednesday and passed two contestants ahead of her to finish second. She had 382.6 points for her eight dives.

- Waseca County Sheriff Tim Dann announced plans for the "Minnesota Sheriff" advertising sales campaign. The "Minnesota Sheriff" magazine is the Official Publication of the Minnesota Sheriff's Association, a non-profit educational organization. Money raised through advertising sales for the magazine is used to support various community projects throughout Minnesota. The purpose of the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association is to provide better education and training for the law enforcement personnel and to educate the general public in crime prevention and public safety methods.

- Coming Home for Christmas is the theme that will welcome visitors to the Brad and Leslee Milbrath home at 301 2nd Ave. N.E., as part of the 12th annual Waseca Arts Council's Sights and Sounds of Christmas House Walk. This year's event is set for Dec. 2 and 3 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Brad and Leslee have a few surprises up their sleeves for visitors that will make them feel at home and part of the Milbrath Christmas.



- The Brad and Leslee Milbrath family are ready for the holiday season and the thousands of visitors who will stop by their home as part of the 12th annual Waseca Arts Council's Sights and Sounds of Christmas House Walk. Pictured (from left:) are Maghan, Lindsey, Leslee, Brad and Jude.

50 years ago

- Eugene P. Miller, R. 4, Waseca was recently named WCCO radio Good Neighbor. The honor was announced on Dick Chapman's "Good Morning" program at 7:55 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 27. Similar awards are made daily to persons who have contributed to the betterment of their communities. All "Good Neighbor Award" winners receive a transcript of their on-the-air citation as broadcast by Chapman, as well as a handsome parchment-type certificate from WCCO Radio and the sponsors of the program.

- A two car accident reported to Waseca Police Sunday shortly after 1 p.m. resulted in moderate damage to one vehicle and no damage to the other. Involved in the mishap at the intersection of East Elm Ave. and 8th St. were John W. Foster, 517 8th St. NE and Edward A. Lunacek, R. 1, Waseca. The cause of the accident is not known, according to police, since the cars were moved from the scene. No one was injured.

- Craig Sutlief shows off his \$1.65 he got from the money scramble sponsored by the Waseca Chamber of Commerce for the 2 to 4 year olds Saturday. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Delency Sutlief

- Directors of Minnesota's 92 soil and water conservation districts will hold the 39th annual convention of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Marshall Nov. 30 through Dec. 2. Theme of the convention is "Proper Land Use Is Our Primary Goal: 1776-1975." Attending from Waseca County will be Mr. and Mrs. Bill Wheelock. The Wheelocks will be honored for being Waseca County's Outstanding Conservation Farmer for 1975.



75 years ago

- Judging from the inquiries and report received by the state Division of Forestry, the 1950 Christmas tree harvest is well under way and will be as large, if not larger than last year. The 1949 Christmas tree cut was 5,900,000 and the 1948 cut was 5,600,000 trees, according to the Forest Industries Information Committee. These figures include the whole trees and the branches used for wreaths, rope festooning and other decorative material.

- Hjalmar Petersen, former Governor of Minnesota, visited in Waseca Friday. Hjalmar publishes the Askov American, a news-aper which has the remarkable distinction of having a circulation six times the population of the village in which it is published. Hjalmar ran twice for the legislature before he was elected. He had in mind that service in the capitol would give him an insight into state affairs which would enable him to publish a better newspaper.

- Helen L. Burmeister of Preston and Marvin Spittler were quietly married Thanksgiving day, November 23, at 4:30 in the afternoon at St. Paul's Lutheran church in this city. Rev. Martin Seltz of Boone, Iowa, brother-in-law of the groom, performed the single ring ceremony. Rev. Seltz is a former pastor of this parish. The bride is the daughter of August E. Burmeister of Waseca and the late Alma Tolzmann Burmeister. The groom is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs William J. Spittler.

100 years ago

- Judge F. W. Senn has filed orders denying motions in two cases, allowing one motion and grinding a temporary writ of injunction in another case. In the case of Gus. Stolz vs. Art Castor, resulting from a dispute over a job of painting, the court denied the plaintiff a new trial. In the case of the First National Bank of Waseca vs. Frank Gear, charged with selling mortgaged property, the defendant requested a change of venue from Waseca county to Rice county, where he now resides. This request the court denied.

- The Waseca Boy Scouts, headed by Coach Joseph Conway, Athletic Director Herman Peterson and Captain Clarence Miller, will officially open the 1925-26 basketball season Friday evening, Dec. 4, at the high school gym against the strong Loyola high school team of Mankato. The Scouts have been working extremely hard to get into smooth playing order so that they might score their first victory in their opening game.

- The Farm Bureau office is today distributing \$816 to the members of Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Waseca county whose exhibits were sold after the recent stock show in South St. Paul. The exhibits were bought by bankers and other business men of the twin cities at fancy prices. The prices received by the Waseca children included 31 cents a pound for chickens, 40c a pound for lamb, 17 cents a pound for sheep and \$14.20 a hundred for calves.

New Richland

25 years ago



- The Advisor-Advise groups at the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Middle school at Ellendale collected 1,692 pounds of food for those in need during the holidays. The food was shipped to the Steele County Food Shelf in Owatonna on Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Richard Aaseth's Advisor-Advisee group topped the collection with 289.6 pounds, followed by Wendy Camerer's group with 235.2 pounds. Marilyn Dobberstein's group finished third in the competition with 166.3 pounds. The students topped their 1999 collection by 781 pounds. Pictured here with their mountains of food are representatives from each of the A-A groups. They are from the left, counter-clockwise: Josh Churchill, Sonny Berg, Kasie Blaschko, Matt Reiter, Alicia Johnson, stacey Ausen, Katarina Werner, Chris Cummins, Carl Pederson, Brody Harmdierks, Navveen Fitterer, Brandon Bartness, Emily Hagen, Nicole Hackett, Taylor Greenwood and Andy Tomsche.

- A son was born to Rod and Michelle Johnson of Byron, Minnesota, on Thursday, November 23. He has been named Ryan James and he has one sister, Ali. His great-grandmother is Leona Jordahl of Hartland.

- Dale Johannsen was elected mayor of Freeborn with 108 votes in the November election out-pulling Cindy Wangen who received 56 votes. Johannsen has experience at the post since he served the city of Freeborn as mayor, finishing the unexpired term of former Mayor Cleone Dulas.

50 years ago



- Here are just a few of the hundreds of area farmers who enjoyed the annual dinner meeting of the Richland Coop Service, Monday evening, here, at the New Richland-Hartland high school.

- A daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Schumacher at the Waseca Memorial Hospital on November 28. The little Miss weighed 9 pounds and 2 ounces. She has been named Jessica Jean. Her brothers are Scott and Timothy along with her one sister, Sheila. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Helmer Schumacher, Robert Eustice and Mrs. Deloris Johnson all of New Richland. Her great grandmother is Mrs. Carrie Radke of Royal Villa, New Richland.

- Lynette Johnson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Johnson of New Richland, received a Bachelor's degree in elementary education at Winona State University, November 26. She began teaching fifth grade at Washington Kosciusko Elementary School in Winona, December 1.

75 years ago

- Dr. Geo. H. Olds is attending a three-day medical short course at the University of Minnesota, beginning today (Thursday). "Care of Elderly People" will be studied. Mrs. Olds accompanied the doctor while their three daughters are to be guests of their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Tabbert at Waseca.

- Mr. and Mrs. Russell Linders are the parents of their first daughter, born at the Owatonna hospital, December 26. They have two sons. Mr. Linders is employed at the Kalke Cement Block and Tile plant. Mrs. Linders is a niece of Mrs. Roy Johnson.

- No doubt a record in artificial breeding has been set at Waseca county the past month. Dale Swenson, our local technician, reports that they have bred over 900 cows, first breedings, so far this month. The association shows a growth of 31 members. A total of 1175 cows have been bred since the beginning of the year, October 1.

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DRIVE TIME — Above, the Bluejays’ Deron Russell drive to the basket during Friday’s game against New Ulm. Below, Wyatt Hager goes to the hoop against the Eagles’ Tanner Backer. Photos by Jim Lutgens

Russell lights it up at Belle Plaine

Senior scores record 48 points as Jays drop OT heartbreaker

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

If there was any doubt whatsoever who would lead the Waseca High School boys' basketball team this season, there was none after last Tuesday's season opener at Belle Plaine.

While the Bluejays lost an 88-84 overtime heartbreaker, senior Deron Russell was nearly unstoppable, scoring a school-record 48 points. Gene Glynn was the previous WHS record-holder, scoring 46 during the 1974-75 season, when there was no three-point line. It also broke the Sacred Heart record of 47 points by Jim Kozan in 1967.

"I'm so glad somebody broke it," said Kozan. "Good for him. Fifty-eight years ago."

The game was high scoring and close throughout, with the Tigers leading 41-38 at halftime.

With the Bluejays trailing late in regulation, Russell banked in a three-pointer from about 8 feet

behind the three-point line.

"Belle Plaine gave us a lot of issues," said Bluejays head coach Seth Anderson. "Our defense isn't where it needs to be yet. You could tell we haven't practiced enough. We got outrebounded badly."

The Tigers pulled down 56 boards to the Bluejays' 39. Nineteen of Belle Plaine's rebounds came on the offensive end. Belle Plaine made 44 percent of its shots compared to 40 for the Jays. Both teams made 11 free throws.

In 42 minutes on the court, Russell added five rebounds, three assists and a blocked shot. He was the lone Bluejay to reach double digits in scoring.

Others: Ethan Hiller 7P, 9R, 4A; Cyrett Long 6P, 1R, 1A; Wyatt Hager 8P, 6R, 2A, 1 steal; Owen Honstad 3P, 3R, 2S; Brody Dufault 6P, 4R, 2S; Daries Powell 6P, 1R; Owen Rupe 4R.

Ethan Martin scored 33 points



for Belle Plaine, Logan Anderson 22.

Russell score 44 in an 86-71 loss last Friday in Waseca.

Full Waseca individual stats: Russell 44P, 7R, 1A, 1S; Hiller 6P, 8R, 1A, 1S; Long 11 P, 4A, 2S; Hager 2P, 7R, 2A, 1S; Honstad 2P; Amin Shariff 3P, 2R; Rupe 3P, 1R, 2A.

"New Ulm is a really good team and very young," said Anderson. "We still have some work to do."

After a Tuesday game against St. Peter, the Bluejays play Friday at LCWM. Their Dec. 13 against Minnesota Valley Lutheran was rescheduled for Jan. 17. The Jays play Dec. 16 at Tri-City United, Dec. 19 at Marshall and home Dec. 23 against NRHEG at 7:15.

Still battling

Belle Plaine wears down Lady Jays

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

A shorthanded Waseca High School girls' basketball team put in a scrappy effort against Belle Plaine last Tuesday.

But the Bluejays eventually were worn down and took a 60-21 loss. The Tigers were ahead 29-9 at the halftime break.

"We came out with great defensive energy," said Bluejays head coach Brian Rupe. "I'm very happy with the girls' grit and effort in the first 14 minutes of the game."

The Bluejays, playing with mostly six players due to an injury sustained by starter Aidrianna Willingham, were down 18-9 when Belle Plaine took over, going on a 10-0 run heading into the intermission.

"We were hoping Audrianna would be available to go, but just couldn't," said Rupe. "The girls ran out of gas at the end of the first half."

Playing a few more girls in the second half, Rupe was hoping the girls could gain some momentum, but they just couldn't seem to slow down Belle Plaine.

"I felt we did a better job rebounding the ball than we did in game one, but we shot really poorly," said Rupe. "I went into the game telling the girls the only thing we can control is our effort and they gave 100 percent. Shots just didn't want to fall tonight."

For the game, the Bluejays made



DEFENSE — Waseca’s Belle Miller, left, and Maren Schimming go for a steal during last week’s home game against Belle Plaine. Photo by Jim Lutgens

14 percent of their shots, Belle Plaine 43 percent.

Individually for the Bluejays: Ava Miller 8 points, 4 rebounds, two assists; Belle Miller 1R; Reese Rodriguez 4P, 7R, 1 steal; Maren Schimming 5R, 3S; Libby Miller 2P, Hannah Teague 3P, 1R; Hanna Sommers 2P, 6R, 5S; Alexa Welander 2P, 1R, 1S; Tyler Stagman 2R; Shakiyah Powell 1R.

Willingham was back in the lineup Friday at New Ulm, but it didn't make much difference as the Eagles defeated the Bluejays 101-58.

Rupe said he know New Ulm was going to be a very good team that was hungry coming off a big loss to Marshall.

"They are very athletic and like to

press and speed up the game," said Rupe.

The Jays struggled early, but once they calmed down, were able to break the press and get a lot of good looks and easy baskets.

"We started to pass the ball better and do a better job of taking care of the ball," said Rupe. "New Ulm has some great actions and movements on offense along with some really good individual players which makes them tough to defend. It was a good night for us on the offensive end putting up 58 points, and the girls worked hard defensively, but between some of the things they do along with their press getting them some easy points, we just couldn't keep up."

Ava Miller again led the Bluejays in scoring, with 15 points, two rebounds and a steal. Willingham had 13 points, one rebound, one assist and three steals.

Others: Sommers 10P, 4R, 5S; Belle Miller 3P, 3A, 1R; Rodriguez 5P, 4R, 1S, 2A, 1 blocked shot; Schimming 4P, 2R, 2S; Libby Miller 3A; Teague 4P, 3R; Welander 2P, 1R, 1B, 2A; Powell 2P. Stagman also saw some playing time.

The Bluejays, 0-3, play Friday at home at 6 p.m. in the first game of a girl-boy doubleheader, the boys playing at 7:15. The girls host Tri-City United Dec. 16 at 7:30 and Cleveland Dec. 18 at 7:15.

Gymnasts open 2025-26 season at Worthington

The Waseca High School gymnastics team lost 138.55-128.875 in its 2025-26 season opener at Worthington last Friday.

Layla Keith led the Bluejays, taking third in all-around with a score of 33.9. Hannah Parks finished fourth at 31.65, Katelyn Weber fifth with a 31.5, Avery Carda fifth with a 31.5, Katelyn Weber sixth at 31.5, Carda, sixth, 31.325, Ellie Clark, seventh, 31.025.

Waseca varsity results:

Vault - Keith, second, 9.9; Clark, seventh, 8.7; Weber, eighth, 8.5; Carda, ninth, 8.4; Parks, ninth, 8.4

Uneven parallel bars - Keith, third, 8.2; Carda, sixth, 7.5; Parks, seventh, 7.475; Weber, eighth, 7.3; Clark, ninth, 7.275.

Balance beam - Keith, third, 8.3; Parks, seventh, 7.575; Weber, eighth, 7.45; Carda, ninth, 7.1; Clark, 10th, 6.65.

Floor exercise - Keith, fifth, 8.4; Clark, fifth, 8.4; Carda, sixth, 8.325; Weber, seventh, 8.25; Parks eighth, 8.2.

All-around - Keith, third, 33.9; Parks, fourth, 31.65; Weber, fifth, 31.5; Carda, sixth, 31.325; Clark, seventh, 31.025

The junior varsity lost 130.45-95.150.

Waseca JV results:

Vault - Nora Flatness, second, 8.5; Sydney Hayes, eighth, 7.8; Adelynn Kruger, ninth, 7.7; Aubrey Peterson, 10th, 7.3.

Uneven parallel bars - Miley Anderson, eighth, 4.3; Hayes, ninth, 3.85; Kruger, 11th, 2.05.

Balance beam - Flatness, eighth, 6.7; Anderson, ninth, 6.4; Lydia Bjortomt, 10th, 6.2; Kruger, 11th, 5.35; Hayes, 12th, 5.15; Lindy Bergdale, 13th, 3.9; Audrey Peterson, 14th, 3.45.

Floor exercise - Hayes, eighth, 7.0; Kruger, ninth, 6.8; Anderson, 10th, 6.0; Bergdale, 11th, 5.65; Bjortomt, 12th, 5.5.

All-around - Hayes, fifth, 23.8; Kruger, sixth, 21.9; Anderson, eighth, 16.7; Flatness, 11th, 15.2; Bergdale, 12th, 13.1; Bjortomt, 13th, 11.25; Peterson, 14th, 10.75.

The Bluejays host Marshall this Friday at 6 p.m. They're at home again Dec. 18 against Byron.

WHS wrestlers 5th at Blue Earth

The Waseca High School wrestling team traveled to Blue Earth last Saturday for the Dick Maher Invitational.

Slade Barnett finished first at 170 pounds, pinning his finals opponent in 3:15.

Deven Parpart was third, at 139, scoring a fall in the third-place match.

Also placing for the Bluejays: Jacob Knutson, fourth, 145; Ton Bethke, fourth, 189; Lucas Selthun, fourth, 215; Braxton Nelson, fifth, 152; and Sam Selthun, sixth, 160.

Maple River finished first with 145 points, followed by Goodhue at 138.5, Tri-City United 117, Martin County Red Bulls 102, Waseca 97, WEM-JWP 93.5, Blue Earth Area 83, Worthington 75.5 and LaCrescent-Hokah 68.

The Bluejays opened the season with a triangular at Worthington last Thursday, defeating Fairmont/Martin County West 40-34 and falling to Worthington 35-26. No individual results were reported.

The Bluejays have a 5 p.m. triangular at JWP this Thursday. They travel to the Jackson County Central Invitational Saturday starting at 9:45 a.m. They're at Pine Island for a 5 p.m. triangular Dec. 16 and at Lake City Dec. 19 for a quadrangular starting at 5 p.m.

Flyers fall three times

The South Central girls' hockey team, comprised of Waseca and Faribault, fell three times last week, remaining winless on the season.

The girls lost 10-1 at Austin Dec. 2. Maddy Benson scored the Flyers' goal, unassisted. It was 1-1 after one period, but it was all Packers after that.

The Flyers were outshot 22-17. Goalie Lila Pavlic made seven saves.

The Flyers fell 13-2 to Fairmont at Faribault last Thursday.

Scoring were Kelsey Lawson and Sadie Wagner, both unassisted.

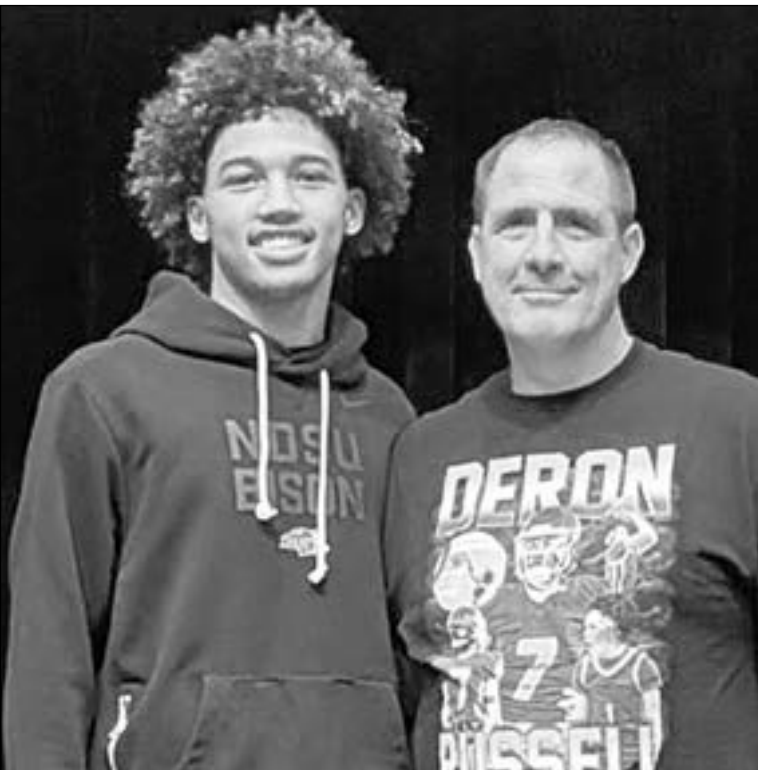
Pavlic, an eighth-grader, had 28 saves.

The Bluejays lost 13-0 to Marshall Saturday at Waseca Community Arena.

Marshall Saturday at Waseca

The Flyers face Worthington Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. at Waseca and play Dec. 13 at 12 noon at Luverne.

Signing day



Waseca High School senior Deron Russell, left, made it official last Wednesday, signing a National Letter of Intent to attend North Dakota State University on a football scholarship. He's pictured with WHS head football coach Brad Wendland.



ON THE OFFENSIVE — At left, the Bluejays’ Otto Schoenrock (10) takes a shot on goal during Waseca’s 7-1 victory over Westonka. At right, Henry Huttemier (5) battles for the puck behind the Westonka goal. Photos by Jim Lutgens

WHS icemen top Westonka, Marshall to improve to 3-1

The Waseca High School boys' hockey team improved its record to 3-1 overall and 2-0 in the Big South Conference with a pair of wins this past week.

It started with a 7-1 triumph over Westonka at Waseca Community Arena last Tuesday in a game where Waseca led 3-0 after one period and 5-1 at the end of two.

Cash Lynch found the net first for the Bluejays, scoring a power-play

goal at 5:14 of the first period. Beckett Srp assisted. Avery Selvik scored at 7:52 on assists from Srp and Griffin Storey, who scored the third goal at 8:48 with assists from Jude Gehring and Jayden Hervey.

Gehring and Henry Huttemier scored in the second stanza. Huttemier's goal was assisted by Jackson Dahl.

Lynch scored his second goal of the night at 43 seconds of the third

period. Storey scored his second at 8:37.

The Bluejays outshot Westonka 43-15, including 14-3 in the third period.

Josiah Schmidtke made 15 saves for Waseca, which was penalized just twice for four minutes while Westonka had six infractions for 28 minutes. Most of Westonka's penalty minutes were incurred in the final period, including two 10-minute

misconducts and an unsportsman-like conduct.

Westonka's record fell to 2-1.

The Bluejays hosted Marshall on Saturday and dominated a 6-1 decision.

Storey had a great game with two goals and an assist. Huttemier, Lynch and Ayden Kath added a goal apiece. Schoenrock registered two assists, with one each going to Lynch, Selvik and Huttemier.

Marshall scored late in the game. Waseca held a 49-21 advantage in shots on goal.

Schmidtke totaled 20 saves. Penalties were four for two minutes for the Tigers and 12 for six minutes for the Jays.

Marshall fell to 0-2 in the conference and 1-4 overall.

After a Tuesday game against Minnesota River, the Bluejays hit the ice Thursday, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m.

at Worthington. They play Saturday, Dec. 13 at 3:30 at Luverne.

BIG SOUTH STANDINGS			
	WLT	PTS	OV.
Luverne	3-0-0	6	5-0-0
Waseca	2-0-0	4	3-1-0
New Ulm	2-1-0	4	3-1-0
Windom	1-1-0	2	1-1-0
Fairmont	0-0-0	0	1-0-0
MN River	0-1-0	0	1-2-0
RW Valley	0-1-0	0	1-2-0
Marshall	0-2-0	0	1-4-0
Worth.	0-2-0	0	0-4-0

Grizzlies handle Westfield, take 6th in BEA Invitational

Masso finishes first at 127, three others reach finals

The WEM/JWP wrestling team got the 2025-26 season off to a strong start, defeating Westfield 47-24 at Blooming Prairie last Thursday. Westfield is a combination of Blooming Prairie and Hayfield.

Winners for the Grizzlies were Otto Root, 114 pounds; Branden Masso, 127; Trey Richards, 133; Brady Murphy, 145; Parker James, 152; Ben Root, 160; Charles Adams, 172; Trenton Huber, 189; and Kavin Sheehy, 215. Winning by fall were Otto Root, Murphy, Ben Root, Adams, Huber and Sheehy.

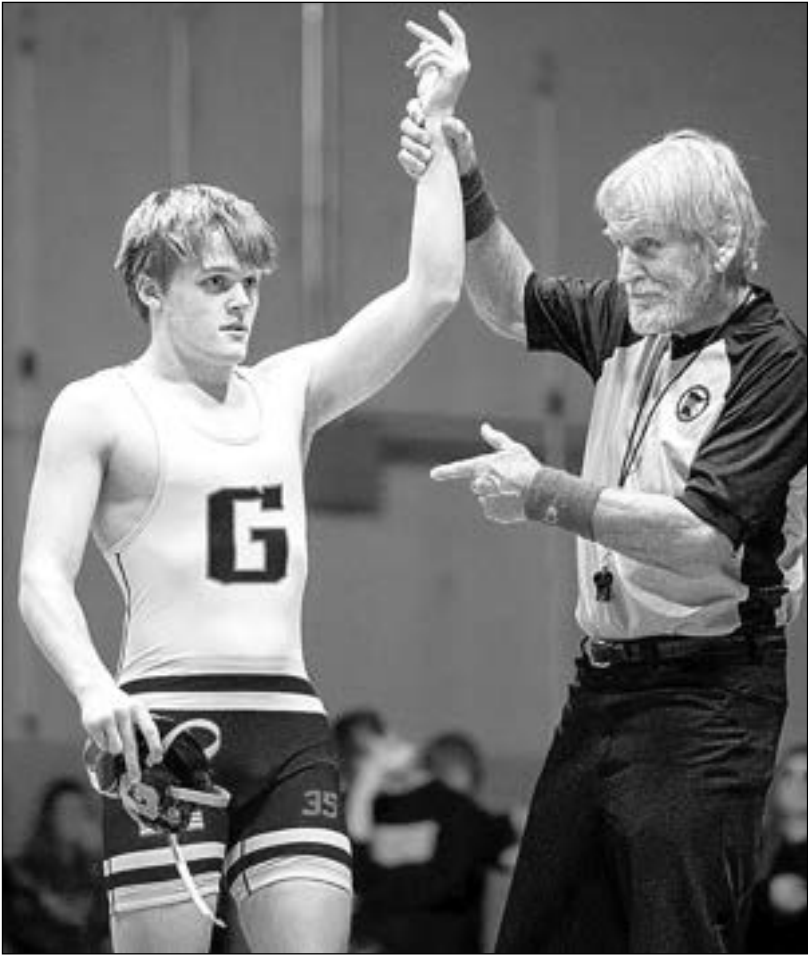
Also wrestling for the Grizzlies: Jackson Knish, 107; Finn Root, 121; Aiden Gruber, 139; and Quinn Anderson, 185.

The Grizzlies finished sixth overall on Saturday with 93.5 points in a strong 10-team field at the Dick Maher Invitational in Blue Earth. The team earned five podium finishes, highlighted by a champion at 127 pounds, three runners-up, and one fifth-place medalist.

“We made a strong showing in the middle weights, led by Masso, Richards and Murphy.”
— WEM/JWP coach Adam Roesler

Maple River finished first with 145 points, followed by Goodhue at 138.5, Tri-City United 117, Martin County Red Bulls 102, Waseca 97, WEM-JWP 93.5, Blue Earth Area 83, Worthington 75.5 and LaCrescent-Hokah 68.

Masso won the championship at 127, going 4-0 for the day. Masso dominated the bracket, earning two pins and a 6-3 semifinal decision before pinning Goodhue’s Jay Ryan



GRIZZLY POWER — At left, the Grizzlies’ Ben Root is declared the winner last Thursday against Westfield at Blooming Prairie. The official is former Albert Lea coach Neal Skaar. At right, Trent Huber applies a half Nelson.

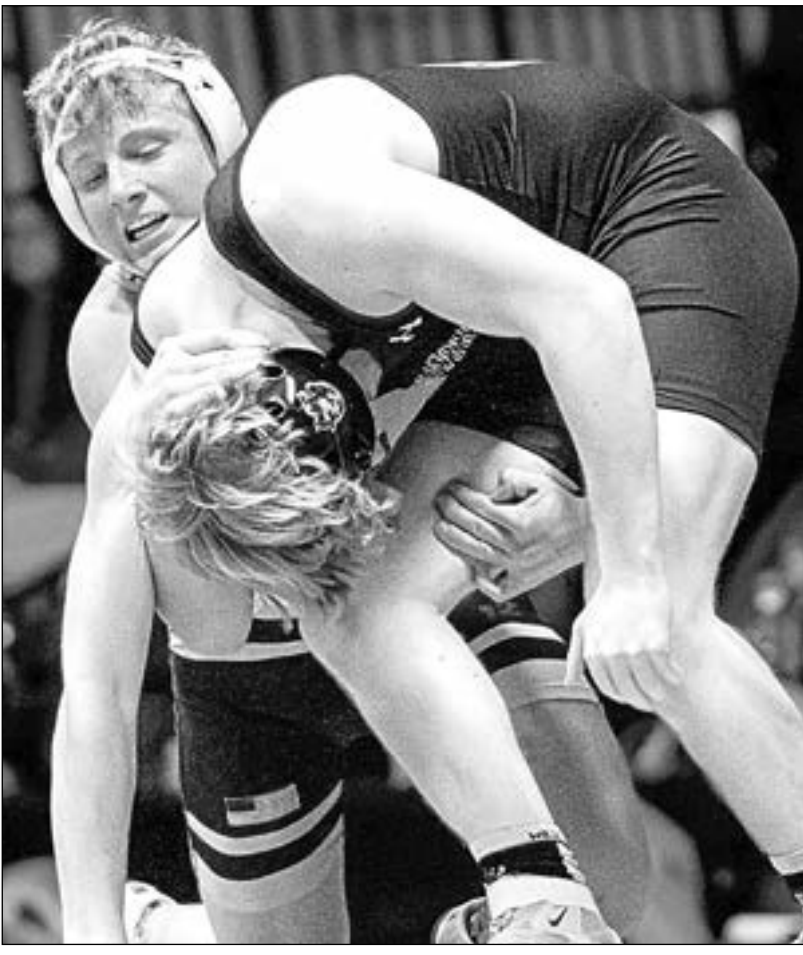
in 1:31 in the finals.

Finishing second were Richards, 133; Murphy, 145; and Huber, 189. Huber earned a fall and a 10-5 semifinal win. He pushed Triton’s Wylie Deml in a tight 11-9 finals match.

Sheehy finished fifth at 215, earning two pins in the consolation rounds.

Knish placed sixth at 107, earning a 29-second fall in the consolation semifinals.

Also wrestling for WEM/JWP:



Bre’ Ana Masso (114), James (152), Reed Sammon (152), Ben Root (160), Zachary Quast (160), and Adams (172).

“We made a strong showing in the middle weights, led by Masso, Richards, and Murphy,” said

Bulldogs coach Adam Roesler.

The Grizzlies host a 5 p.m. triangular Thursday, Dec. 11. The WEM-JWP girls wrestle Saturday in the Hopkins Invitational at 8 a.m. and the boys go to the Byron Invitational at 9:30 a.m.

Lady Panthers overwhelm WEM, top Blooming Prairie

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School girls' basketball team started the season 0-2.

It didn't take the Panthers long to reach the .500 mark.

The Panthers won twice last week, overwhelming WEM 78-49 on Tuesday and defeating Blooming Prairie 61-46 two nights later.

The girls started fast in their Gopher Conference opener against WEM and never let up, leading 59-18 at halftime.

"The team played a great game tonight," said NRHEG head coach Onika Peterson. "We came out strong and had an exceptionally solid first half, capitalizing on transition baskets. The girls battled through adversity and stayed composed after a teammate went down in the first half. As we look ahead to Blooming Prairie on Thursday, we'll need to make a few tweaks and adjustments to our game plan."

Camryn VanMaldeghem was the stand-out, scoring 27 points to go along with 10 rebounds, six steals, four assists and one blocked shot. Her twin sister, Quinn, totaled

20 points, 13 rebounds, two steals and six assists. Clara Buendorf scored a season-high 16 points, adding six rebounds, seven steals, one assist and one block.

Others: Gabby Schlaak 3P, 4A; Ezra Boerner 7P, 1R, 1S, 1A; Savannah Farr 2P, 3R, 1A; Chloe Stork 3R, 2S, 5A; Julieann Wobbrock 1S; Emilia Stadheim 1S; Alayna Groskreutz 1P, 3R.

Against Blooming Prairie, the Panthers assumed a 32-19 halftime advantage while capturing another conference victory.

"Tonight was a great team win," said Coach Peterson. "Despite injuries and foul

trouble, a couple of girls stepped into new roles — some earlier than they ever anticipated — and rose to the challenge. This team's fight, resilience, and commitment to each other continue to show each game."

Individually: Boerner 6P, 2R 3A; Q.VanMaldeghem 18P, 12R, 11S, 3A; Buendorf 6P, 1R, 1A, 1S; C.VanMaldeghem 23P, 8R, 6S, 3A, 1B; Farr 2P, 4R; Farr 2P, 4R; Stork 3P, 3R, 1A, 1S; Stadheim 3P, 1S.

The Panthers were without senior Gabby Schlaak and 6-foot-2 center Kylie Olson, who is lost for the season with a torn ACL that will require surgery.

"We have dealt with quite a few injuries these first few weeks," said Peterson. "We're hoping that is over and we are smooth sailing the rest of the way out."

Next week brings a busy stretch for the Panthers: at Maple River, home against Faribault BA on Friday, and back to Maple River on Saturday for a showcase matchup with Jackson County Central. The Panthers host Lanesboro Dec. 16.

Lady Bulldogs unbeaten after four games

Last week was a rather light one for the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School girls' basketball team. Except for a long road trip to Randolph.

The Bulldogs defeated United South Central 62-43 Monday after a sluggish start, and rallied to win 66-51 Friday at Randolph.

"We didn't start exactly how we needed to," said JWP head coach Brandon Goebel of the USC game.

The Bulldogs picked up the pace toward the end of the first half and built a solid 34-19 lead going into halftime, with defense providing the impetus.

"The girls played tough all night and fought through adversity, which was great to see from them," said Goebel. "The second half we let them back into it a bit, but found ways to get stops when we needed to along with making some big time shots down the stretch."

Nevach Weimert led the Bulldogs in scoring with 19 points to go along with six rebounds and five assists. Katie Olson scored 16 points and added nine rebounds and five steals. Ashlynn Wolff had 12 points and eight rebounds, Mikayla Wheelock 11 points, nine rebounds and two assists, and Ray Blasing two points,

"The girls played tough all night and fought through adversity, which was great to see from them."

— JWP coach Brandon Goebel

two rebounds and three assists."

According to Goebel, the Bulldogs did not start as fast as they needed to at Randolph, trailing 28-24 at halftime.

"We struggled against Randolph's 3-2 defense with turning the ball over too much in the first half," said

Goebel. "We came out a little better in the second half and found ways to get stops. We made some really big shots towards the end of the game and started to pull away late."

The JWP girls also made free throws down the stretch to seal the deal.

Individual leaders for the Bulldogs: Olson 13P, 5R, 5A; Weimert 16P, 3R; Wheelock 16P, 6R; Wolff 15P, 8R, 3A.

The Bulldogs improved to 4-0 overall and 2-0 in the Gopher Conference.

After a Tuesday game at LCWM, the Bulldogs face Glencoe-Silver Lake Friday at 4:30 at Maple River and Saturday against Jordan at 3:15 at Maple River.

The Bulldogs host WEM Dec. 16 and play Dec. 19 at home against NRHEG.

Voss named Mr. Football

Roman Voss, a quarterback/defensive back from Jackson County Central, was named Mr. Football for 2025 by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association (MFCA).

First presented in 2004, the Mr. Football Award is an annual award recognizing Minnesota's best senior high school football player. The Mr. Football Award is co-sponsored by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association and the Minnesota Vikings.

Voss is the 22nd player to receive the Mr. Football Award and the first from Jackson County Central. He is the sixth player from greater Minnesota and the first from Class 2A to win the Mr. Football Award.

His head coach was Tom Schuller. Here are Schuller's comments about Voss:

"It's difficult to put into words just how valuable Roman has been to our program. Not only as a player but as a leader and a great member of our community. Roman is not only an outstanding player, but an outstanding young man as well. I could not be prouder to call myself Roman's coach. He embodies everything we strive for our kids to be, both on and off the field."

Here are some highlights from Voss's outstanding 2025 season and his high school football career:

- Honors:
- Four-time State Football Tournament participant (2022, 2023, 2024 AA Champion, 2025 AA Champion)
 - Member of two Class AA State Championship teams (2024, 2025)
 - 2025 Minnesota High School Football All-Star Game selection (South All-Stars)
 - 5-Year starter for Jackson County Central
 - 4-time All-District selection
 - 2-time District Player of the Year
 - 2024 Associated Press Minnesota Second Team All-State selection
 - 2025 Strib Varsity All-Minnesota Team selection
 - 2025 Minnesota Vikings All-State Team selection
 - 2025 MaxPreps Minnesota High School Football Player of the Year
 - Consensus 4-Star Recruit
 - Committed to play college football at the University of Minnesota

- 2025 statistics:
- 95 of 160 passing for 1,902 yards
 - 21 touchdown passes with only 4 interceptions
 - 186 rushing attempts for 1,893 yards
 - 10.2 yards per carry
 - 30 rushing touchdowns
 - 11 2-point conversions scored
 - Career statistics:
 - 299 of 577 passing for 5,661 yards
 - 58 touchdown passes
 - 17 receptions for 383 yards
 - 10 touchdowns receiving
 - 499 carries for 4,686 yds (9.4 yards per carry)
 - 65 rushing touchdowns
 - 134 overall touchdowns
 - 486 points scored

Set Jackson County Central school records for:

- Career passing yards
- Career touchdown passes
- Career rushing yards
- Career rushing touchdowns

The other nine finalists for the 2025 Mr. Football Award in alphabetical order were:

Micah Bush, Hills-Beaver Creek

James Engle, Maple Grove
Caleb Francois, Minnetonka
Carson Heimer, Byron
Howie Johnson, Forest Lake
Izaak Johnson, Cretin-Derham Hall
Logan Lachermeier, Minneapolis North
Owen Linder, Chanhassen
Deron Russell, Waseca
Congratulations to all of the 2025 Mr. Football finalists.

Scrappy NRHEG boys play tough against LSH

Panthers fall to Blooming Prairie

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The season opener for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School boys' basketball team was a tall order. Literally.

LeSueur-Henderson, led by 6-foot-10 Hunter Vinkemeier, claimed a 77-59 decision despite a scrappy effort by the Panthers.

"We did battle," said NRHEG head coach Dan Schmidt. "We just couldn't overcome a 6-10 kid that can play anywhere."

The Panthers were particularly strong in the first half, trailing by just six points, 33-27 at halftime.

Vinkemeier, meanwhile, displayed his skills throughout the night, bringing the ball up court, shooting three-pointers and dominating the boards while scoring a game-high 34 points.

"It was good to finally get our first game in," said Schmidt. "We knew we were going to be in for a tough battle with Vinkemeier, who is an extremely dynamic player. We just didn't have anyone that could physically match up with him. We had a hard fought first half."

The Giants went into a zone defense toward the end of the first half, and stayed with it in the second.

They used Vinkemeier's presence to push the Panthers into rushing some shots as they pulled away in the second half.

Schmidt, though, had praise for his squad.

"The boys played so hard, and it was still a really fun atmosphere in the gym tonight," said Schmidt.

The Panthers had some very balanced scoring, led by A.J. Deen with 13 points and six rebounds. Calvin Nissen came off the bench to score 11 points. Dom Olson, Brooks Gilliland, and Brock Holland each scored eight. Holland led NRHEG with nine rebounds. Mack Gilliland and Sean Lassahn each scored four, and Zander Hanna kicked in another two.

"I was extremely happy with the effort tonight from all 10 guys that

"We did battle. We just couldn't overcome a 6-10 kid that can play anywhere."

— NRHEG coach Dan Schmidt

played," said Schmidt. "This group gels already, and when you consider the fact that we only brought back two players with extensive varsity experience, we're a young team. It's going to be a lot of fun to see the progression with this group."

Individual totals for the Panthers: Deen 13P, 6R, 2A, 1S; Nissen 11P, 1R, 3A; B.Gilliland 8P, 2A, 2S; Fynn Baumann 3R; Brendan Schmidt 4R, 3S; M.Gilliland 4P, 2R, 3A, 2S; Lassahn 4P, 1A, 1S; Hanna 2P, 2R, 1A.

On Friday, the Panthers hosted Blooming Prairie and dropped an 81-53 decision.

"Once again the boys played hard," said Coach Schmidt.

It was a back-and-forth battle through the better part of the first half, but Blooming went on a run to go to the locker room up 45-33.

The Panthers came out in the second half and struggled to take good shots, or convert when they did get to the rim

"Our 3-point shooting was nonexistent tonight, which didn't help," said Schmidt.

The Blossoms' Gabe Staloch played a tremendous game, leading all scorers with 38 points.

The Panthers were led by Holland, a freshman, with 14 points and seven rebounds. Brendan Schmidt chipped in 10 points. Nissen added eight and Lassahn six. Brooks Gilliland, Hanna, and Baumann added four each, and Mack Gilliland rounded out the scoring with three.

Individual NRHEG statistics:



TAKING IT TO THE HOOP — Above, the Panthers' Zander Hanna (25) goes to the basket against LeSueur-Henderson's Will Adams (33) Below, Calvin Nissen drives against Hunter Vinkemeier.

Photos by Jim Lutgens

Deen 4R, 1A, 3S; Nissen 8P, 1A, 2S; B.Gilliland 4P, 2R, 6A, 2S; Baumann 4P, 2R, 1S; B.Schmidt 10P, 2R, 2A, 3S; M.Gilliland 3P, 1R, 1A, 1S; Holland 14P, 7R, 1A, 3S; Lassahn 6P, 2R, 5A; Hanna 4P, 7R, 1B.

"We'll look to hit practice hard on Monday to clean up some things before we take on Maple River at home on Tuesday," said Coach Schmidt.

The Panthers play Friday, Dec. 12 at Bethlehem Academy and Tuesday, Dec. 16 at Medford. Tip-off for both games is 7 p.m.



JWP boys' basketball team starts season strong

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton boys' basketball team got off to a strong start for the 2025-26 campaign, notching wins over Minnesota Valley Lutheran, LCWM and Randolph.

The week started with a 78-48 victory at MVL on Monday. The Bulldogs held a commanding 47-26 lead at the intermission.

Gavin Bauer had a stellar night with 28 points, seven rebounds, four steals and three blocked shots. His brother Daulton totaled 22 points,

"We played a very good team in LCWM."

— JWP coach Nick James

five rebounds and three steals. Caleb Quast had 12 points and three steals, Gavin Weedman 11 points and three steals.

The next night, the Bulldogs defeated LCWM 51-44 at Janesville after trailing 27-24 at halftime.

"We played a very good team in

LCWM," said JWP head coach Nick James. "We struggled offensively tonight. They did a real nice job of controlling the tempo. We made enough plays down the stretch and finally felt like we wore them down."

The Bulldogs were down 37-27 with about seven minutes to go and

finished the game on a 24-7 run, hitting five big free throws down the stretch.

Individual leaders: D.Bauer 21P, 4R, 5A, 3S; G.Bauer 13P, 12R, 4S, 3B; Quast 12P, 5R, 2S; Weedman 3P, 4S.

The Bulldogs put on a scoring display Friday at home against Randolph, topping the century mark with a 104-69 victory. JWP led 58-37 at halftime.

"It was not our best defensive effort of the season," said Coach

James. "But we played well enough offensively."

The Bulldogs made 15 three-pointers, with four players reaching double figures in scoring.

Individual leaders: G.Bauer 27P, 9R, 5A, 3S; D.Bauer 26P, 6R, 4S; Weedman 18P; Wolff 13P, 3R, 5A.

The Bulldogs, 3-0 overall and 1-0 in the Gopher Conference, return to action Friday, Dec. 12 at Kenyon. They play Dec. 16 at WEM, Dec. 18 at NRHEG and host St. Clair Dec. 22.

Get your sports in the Pioneer • e-mail sportswriter 79@yahoo.com

WASECA
CITY COUNCIL

Waseca
council
examines
levy, budget

By ELI LUTGENS
Editor/Publisher

Finance Director Alicia Fischer provided a breakdown of the 2026 Levy/Budget at the beginning of Tuesday's meeting.

The final 2025 levy came in at \$5.8 million with a tax capacity of 74.1%.

This year comes in at \$6 million with a 72.8% capacity.

Compared with 10 similarly sized cities, determined by the city's auditors, Waseca's budget of \$6 million comes in about \$2 million below the average, or third from the lowest. Some of these cities included New Prague and Fairmont, for reference. The average preliminary levy increase for those 10 cities came in at about 10%.

It was stated that the average assessed property values went up 9.2% in Waseca County for 2026.

On a property valued at \$172,000, property owners will see their taxes increase about \$8.99 per month or \$107 annually from the city's proposed levy increase.

Where does the city get its funds?

37.8% from the levy
36.8 from the local government aid.
8.6% - Utility transfers
4.3% Government grants, reimbursements, funding from county and school district, etc.
4.3 - Charges, fees, fines and misc.
2.8 - license and permits
1.9 - Transfers
1.7 - Franchise fees
1.4 - Water park revenues

It was noted that the city could charge for more city services to reduce the cost of the budget.

Where taxes dollars go per \$100

General levy - \$61.41
Capital levy - \$26.41
Debt. services - \$6.66
Tax abatement levy - \$3.74
Water park debt - \$1.79

General fund taxes - \$61.41

Police - \$22.56
Administration - \$10.88 (includes a lot, law, all admin, etc.)
Rec. and Culture - \$8.55
Street and main - \$6.90
Eng. - \$4.66
Fire - \$4.41
Comm. Dev. - \$2.31
Other - \$1.13

2026 budget increases

Reasons behind the increased budget include: 3% cost of living increase; 2% market adjustment; health insurance rates/adjustments; MN paid leave (The city's premium. Waseca is doing a private plan with a lower rate, than the state plan); Capital improvement program funding; Equipment/replacement plan funding; Annexation and growth funding; Funding for aerial fire truck 2026 purchase; Street operator position (vacant since 2020 - now considered necessary/needed); fund balance adjustment (the auditors said the balance has been dropping down and the city needs to maintain a higher balance); Utilization of state aid maintenance of general fund street maintenance costs.

Story
idea?

507-837-6767

Salvation Army Bell Ringers



FOR A GOOD CAUSE - The Waseca fire department brought a large team to the bellringing challenge at Walmart on Dec. 6. The Waseca police department, county sheriff's office and fire department each spent two hours raising money for the Waseca County chapter of the Salvation Army on Saturday. The Sheriff's department raised the most: \$2,316.17, and will keep the travelling trophy for another year. A total of \$4,056.48 was raised over the six hours, almost \$600 more than in 2024. The local Salvation Army expresses its thanks to the three agencies, and to the community for all their support.



FRIENDS - The musical group "Just Friends" provided a concert of Christmas and gospel tunes at First Lutheran Church in Waldorf the evening of Dec. 3. Pictured here are (front, from left) Dale Krueger, Doug Riskedahl, Dean Buendorf, Paul Hanson, Vern Wilker, (back, from left) Brian Vairma, Randy Lewer, Larry Crabtree, Dennis Maurer, Brad Stencl and accompanist Gratia Johnson.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

Just Friends provides
Christmas concert in Waldorf

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

The vocal harmony group "Just Friends" presented a 90-minute concert with a combination of Christmas and gospel music to an audience of about 50 people at First Lutheran Church in Waldorf the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 4.

Just Friends consists of 10 singers supported by an accompanist and sound technician. As reported at other times by the Star Eagle, the singers get together, practice and perform for the simple joy of producing music they enjoy and enjoy sharing. The group has been active for more than 20 years.

The concert served as the start for First Lutheran's Wednesday evening Advent services. All were welcome to attend not only the performance but a one-hour social gathering which offered treats and refreshments before the singing began.

Just Friends members are Dean Buendorf, Larry Crabtree, Paul Hanson, Dale Krueger, Randy Lewer, Dennis Maurer, Doug Riskedahl, Brad Stencl, Brian Vairma and Vern Wilker.

Among the numbers performed were "When He Comes," "Do You Hear What I Hear?" "The Virgin Mother Had a Baby Boy," and "Christmas Presence."

In his introduction to "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming," spokesperson Randy Lewer told the audience the song has 23 verses, but went on to assure everyone the group would be singing only two of them.

Lewer also mentioned the complicated harmonies of "Can He, Could He, Would He?" were considered "mission impossible" when the group was first learning them more than a decade ago, but practice apparently does make "proficient," since the group managed the echoes and tongue twisters without any apparent effort.

Also performed were "Angels Among Us," "Calypso Lullabye," "Oh Holy Night," and a version of "Amazing Grace" which did not use the traditional words or tune.

Lights
from Page 1

hospitality Waseca is known for. We believe that when our community looks its best, families come out, businesses thrive, and visitors feel welcomed into something special."

Rostislavovich explained that the new lights represent "phase one" of a three-part initiative to enhance downtown Waseca,

Midco
from Page 5

being that we have a nice steel cap," Ziemke said.

In related news, the council approved the sewer rate increase of \$2.50 from \$13 to \$15.50 which would be effective in 2026. Arnoldt inquired why the base rate was the focus instead of the usage and Ziemke said it would be less of a shock.

In other matters Rogers shared good news about the insurance rates from the Minnesota League Insurance Trust which reported that property and casualty rates will decrease in 2026.

"Workers' compensation is going to look at a significant reduction as well," Rogers added. "Basically, I put the numbers we had budgeted for 2025 into the 2026 budget. We actually did see quite a huge

with future phases including lights outlining building edges and upgrades at Trowbridge Park.

At 6:30 p.m., Rostislavovich, Miller, and Zimmerman joined hands on an outdoor switch beneath one of the streetlights, and crisp white snowflakes illuminated both sides of downtown State Street. The decorations will remain operational through December and into February for the Sleigh and Cutter events.

savings with our insurance."

Rogers shared he hadn't yet heard about automobile premiums, but promised an update as soon as information is available.

Maas said if decreased workers compensation premiums had come about because of an especially strong safety record on the part of city employees, that should be mentioned.

"Statewide clams are down," Rogers said. "A couple years ago the insurance trust significantly increased workers comp, especially with public safety positions. But now they're falling back on those a little bit."

In other news, the council approved the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) liability cover waiver and waiver boiler coverage.

The council approved the Prairie Ridge Golf Course draft budget for 2026.

WCHS Announces New
Exhibit: "Sleigh & Cutter -
History and Highlights"

The Waseca County Historical Society (WCHS) is pleased to announce the opening of its winter exhibit, "Sleigh & Cutter: History and Highlights," on December 17 at the Waseca County History Center.

This exhibit celebrates one of Waseca's most cherished traditions—the annual Sleigh & Cutter Festival. Through historic photographs, artifacts, and interactive displays, visitors will explore the roots of the festival, just how folks kept warm long ago during winter travel, the legacy of Sleigh & Cutter Royalty, and more.

Exhibit features include:

- A bright red sleigh photo op for kids, couples, and winter adventurers
- Historic artifacts, cozy blankets, foot warmers, and other reminders of how Minnesotans kept warm in generations past
- Stories, memorabilia, and artifacts celebrating Miss Sleigh Bell and beloved festival traditions
- Sleigh & Cutter history showcased through historic scrapbooks and community keepsakes
- Learning areas that teach visitors how to tell the difference

between sleighs and cutters The exhibit will be open during regular museum hours, Tues-Fri 9-5, throughout the festival season. Admission is free.

For more information, visit wasecacountyhistorycenter.org/events or follow WCHS on Facebook for exhibit updates.

About the Waseca County Historical Society:

As guardians of Waseca County's history, WCHS is proud to collect, preserve, and share the stories of our past—sparking curiosity and connection for generations to come.



LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage:

Mortgagor: Dan Seidl, a married man
Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Quicken Loans Inc., its successors and assigns
Dated: March 29, 2019
Recorded: April 8, 2019
Waseca County Recorder

Document No. 317570

Assigned To: Rocket Mortgage, LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans, LLC
Dated: September 11, 2025
Recorded: September 15, 2025
Waseca County Recorder Document No. A341302

Transaction Agent: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc.
Transaction Agent Mortgage Identification Number: 100039034199912330
Lender or Broker: Quicken Loans Inc.
Residential Mortgage Servicer: Rocket Mortgage, LLC
Mortgage Originator: Quicken Loans Inc.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot Seven (7), Block One (1), Hodgkins Addition to Waldorf, Minnesota according to the Plat thereof on file and of record in the Office of the County

Recorder in and for Waseca County, Minnesota

This is Abstract Property.

TAX PARCEL NO.: 163260060

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 224 3rd Ave N
Waldorf, MN 56091

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Waseca

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$95,959.00

AMOUNT DUE AND CLAIMED TO BE DUE AS OF DATE OF NOTICE: \$99,659.17

That prior to the commencement of this mortgage foreclosure proceeding Mortgagee/Assignee of Mortgagee complied with all notice requirements as required by statute; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt then remaining secured by

such mortgage, or any part thereof, or, if the action or proceeding has been instituted, that the same has been discontinued, or that an execution upon the judgment rendered therein has been returned unsatisfied, in whole or in part;

PURSUANT to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE: February 5, 2026, 10:00 AM

PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff’s Main Office, 122 3rd Avenue NW, Waseca, MN

to pay the debt then secured by said Mortgage, and taxes, if any, on said premises, and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys’ fees allowed by law subject to redemption within 6 Months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns.

DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: The date on or before which the mortgagor must vacate the property if the mortgage is not reinstated under Minnesota Statutes section 580.30 or the property redeemed under Minnesota Statutes section 580.23 is August 5, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: NONE

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR’S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE

NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: November 19, 2025

Rocket Mortgage, LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans, LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans Inc., Assignee of Mortgagee

By: HALLIDAY, WATKINS & MANN, P.C.
Attorneys for: Rocket Mortgage, LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans Inc., Assignee of Mortgagee
1333 Northland Drive, Suite 205
Mendota Heights, MN 55120
801-355-2886
651-228-1753 (fax)

THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

MN25157.
Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on Dec. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025 and Jan. 1 and Jan. 8, 2026.

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage:

Mortgagor: Zachery Twa, a single person
Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Prosperity Home Mortgage, LLC, its successors and assigns
Dated: June 28, 2024
Recorded: June 28, 2024
Waseca County Recorder Document No. A337309

Assigned To: U.S. Bank National Association
Dated: April 14, 2025
Recorded: April 15, 2025

Waseca County Recorder Document No. A339882

Transaction Agent: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc.
Transaction Agent Mortgage Identification Number: 100083010027684924
Lender or Broker: Prosperity Home Mortgage, LLC, a Limited Liability Company
Residential Mortgage Servicer: U.S. Bank National Association
Mortgage Originator: Prosperity Home Mortgage, LLC, a Limited Liability Company

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot Six (6), except the West 40 feet thereof, and Lot Seven (7), except the East 2 feet thereof, all in Block Nine (9), Original Plat of the City of Janesville, Waseca County, Minnesota

This is Abstract Property.

TAX PARCEL NO.: 141001140

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 202 1st Street E
Janesville, MN 56048

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Waseca

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$186,240.00

AMOUNT DUE AND CLAIMED TO BE DUE AS OF DATE OF NOTICE: \$205,260.50

That prior to the commencement of this mortgage foreclosure proceeding Mortgagee/Assignee of Mortgagee complied with all notice requirements as required by statute; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt then remaining secured by such mortgage, or any part thereof, or, if the action or proceeding has been discontinued, or that an execution upon the judgment rendered therein has been returned unsatisfied, in whole or in part;

PURSUANT to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE:

February 5, 2026, 10:00 AM

PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff’s Main Office, 122 3rd Avenue NW, Waseca, MN

to pay the debt then secured by said Mortgage, and taxes, if any, on said premises, and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys’ fees allowed by law subject to redemption within 6 Months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns.

DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: The date on or before which the mortgagor must vacate the property if the mortgage is not reinstated under Minnesota Statutes section 580.30 or the property redeemed under Minnesota Statutes section 580.23 is August 5, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: NONE

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR’S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: December 2, 2025

U.S. Bank National Association, Assignee of Mortgagee

By: HALLIDAY, WATKINS & MANN, P.C.
Attorneys for:

U.S. Bank National Association, Assignee of Mortgagee
1333 Northland Drive, Suite 205
Mendota Heights, MN 55120
801-355-2886
651-228-1753 (fax)

THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

MN24473.
Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on Dec. 11, 18, 25, 2025 and Jan. 1, 8 and 15, 2026

TOWNSHIP OFFICER FILING NOTICE

Any eligible resident of Freedom Township wishing to file for Township office for the March 10th,2026, election may file an affidavit of candidacy with the clerk.

Offices open will be one Three-year term for the office of Supervisor and one Two-year term of office for Treasurer.

Filing begins at 9:00am on December 30, 2025, and closes at 5:00pm on January 13, 2026.

The filing fee is \$2.00. Affidavits will be accepted at the Clerk’s residence listed below.

Peg Sikel, 2360 264th Ave, Waldorf, MN.

SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 <i>Burger night</i> 5-7pm	3 6pm BAR BINGO	4 7pm HALL BINGO	5 <i>MEAT RAFFLE</i> 5:30pm <i>HORSE races</i> 6:30pm	6 VFW DISTRICT ONE MEETING 9AM
7 PEARL HARBOR DAY	8 7pm Post & AUX & Meeting	9 <i>Burger night</i> 5-7pm	10 6pm BAR BINGO	11 7pm HALL BINGO	12 <i>MEAT RAFFLE</i> 5:30pm <i>HORSE races</i> 6:30pm	13
14 VFW BREAKFAST CHEER LEADERS 8am to NOON Your	15	16 <i>Burger night</i> 5-7pm	17 6pm BAR BINGO	18 7pm HALL BINGO	19 WALLEYE OR SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 TO 7pm	20 TOM & JERRY NIGHT 4PM TO 7PM
21	22	23 <i>Burger night</i> 5-7pm	24 CLOSED	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS CLOSED	26 <i>MEAT RAFFLE</i> 5:30pm <i>HORSE races</i> 6:30pm	27
28	29	30 <i>Burger night</i> 5-7pm	31 6pm BAR BINGO			

HOURS OF OPERATION
SUN.-MON. CLOSED
TUE.-SAT.-1pm to 11 pm Tue. is Lady’s night 2 for one-Men Busch light \$2.50 4 to 6pm
POST & AUX. MEETING 7pm club open 6pm MEMBERS only. Mn. Gambling license 00385

PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Waseca will be operating an aeration system on the north shore of Loon Lake immediately south of Loon Lake Park as soon as December 17th, 2025, or as soon as ice conditions permit.

Extreme caution should be used when the system is in operation

Thin ice and open water will be created on the lake, especially in the vicinity of the area posted with “THIN ICE” signs. If there are any questions concerning this aeration system, please contact the City of Waseca Engineering Department at 507-835-9730.

Loon Lake is located within the City limits of Waseca, in Waseca County.

Holiday Cookie Dazzle



DAZZLING TREATS - Left, Jen Williamson and Melissa Longager were just two of the many volunteers at the Holiday Cookie Dazzle held by the Waseca organization Achieving Dreams for Disabilities (A.D.D.) at the Waseca Senior Center on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025. To the right, Stacy Brinkman, Kari Haslip, Nancy Tollefson, Chas Haslip, Sue and Ben Sather volunteered at the A.D.D. Holiday Cookie Dazzle. Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann

Downtown Lights Debut



LIGHT UP WITH MUSIC - About 40 people attended a reception at the Waseca Art Center the evening of Dec. 4 prior to the debut of Waseca's new holiday streetlight decorations. The Waseca High School Sextets and a group of high school instrumentalists provided melodious entertainment. Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

■ Forum

from Page 4

of Baker, Frentz and Draheim; the discussion was moderated by Executive Vice President of Greater Mankato Growth, Andy Wilke, who also took questions through text during the panel. Wilke asked Frentz, “The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce released its 2026 business benchmarks report. Minnesota ranks 44 in overall tax competitiveness, and we have the second highest corporate tax rate. How do you balance the revenue needs to create a more competitive business environment?” Frentz responded, “Some states have a better regulatory environment. Not everyone on my side of the aisle agrees with that. There are families who

are really fighting to make ends meet. It’s a tax competitiveness standpoint; we can do some things to make it more competitive but one of the hardest things setting tax policy is your budget must balance.” Draheim elaborated, “What I’m hearing from the business community when I’m out touring is a lot of people are choosing to go across the border. They can get the permitting process done in a tenth of the time, not two or three years. That’s something that we can do that doesn’t cost money, we can work on permit process reform and cutting the red tape.” Baker’s response was, “All these places that have their headquarters here in Minnesota, they’re telling us they don’t want to move out of the state, but their research and development is moving out, and their expansions are moving out. We have one of the smallest job growth rates in the nation when just five years ago we were in the middle of the pack.

These businesses are just going to slowly and quietly walk away.” Wilke presented a question regarding the paid family leave plan for Minnesota which is set to go into effect Jan. 1, 2025. Frentz responded, “My concern about this paid family medical leave, that my party pushed through, is that it did not have the support of the small business owners.” Wilke asked, “Sen. Frentz, Minnesota is facing a housing shortage which is driving up costs and eliminating the ability to attract new residents. What policies do you support to expand housing in places like Wilmar and Mankato?” Frentz replied, “We do not need to put restrictions on developers that cause them to build less housing. I’m from North Mankato; I love St. Paul but the rent control they tried up there was a disaster. One thing government can do is get out of the way.” Draheim observed, “We have a basic numbers

problem, we don’t have enough houses. How you accumulate wealth is to buy a home, support your family, buy your house. I push hard for less regulation for housing; we’re chasing perfection on housing. Every building code change costs builders tens of thousands of dollars. The cost savings on energy over a ten-year period is less than \$200. We need to ask ourselves, are we okay with a \$2000 building code. We have way too many apartments, we need more single-family homes. The rents are going up and we’re not doing any young families any good putting them in an apartment.” Baker’s response was, “If we don’t look at the reality of building differently in greater Minnesota versus metro, we have plenty of demand for single family homes. We have plenty of builders but there’s no incentive for them to build. There’s no way they can make it work, hiring workers and making a profit, so back to

all the other things we’re doing, it’s all about mandates, all about the rules, the permitting. Why are the cities telling them what they can and can’t do? If we don’t look at our rules and regulations it’s not going to happen, to me it’s the philosophy of growth, expansions. Builders are there, they’ll find the employees and they will build if it’s priced right.” In another section of the evening, FFA President Addington said, “Minnesota has close to 16,000 members of the FFA and there are countless success stories. I know people raising and showing livestock who get involved in an FFA contest, and then I watch as they enter college aimed at getting a de-

gree in animal science. I have close friends who have written and delivered national level speeches on agricultural issues in front of huge audiences placing them highly on the national level. Each year FFA hosts events like the Washington Leadership Conference which helps students make nationwide connections and grow as servant leaders. We offer 24 competitive events exposing students to different careers in agriculture, food and national resources. FFA is priming students for futures as agronomists, equipment techs, sales reps, farmers, educators and countless other careers represented here today.”

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

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



■ Mill

from Page 1

Aria and Ali, to the sleigh with a snowy backdrop set up to snap some photos, “We got hot chocolate and some cookies. They just met Santa and told him what they wanted for Christmas. Now I need some cute pictures of the girls and we can call it a day.” Amy Kelm of Kelms BBQ was serving hungry guests, she said, “It’s only three and I’ve already given out a hundred hot dogs today.” Katelyn

Weber and Belle Miller were dressed like the famous women from the Disney Pixar movie “Frozen,” Weber was Anna and Miller was Elsa, “We have taken so many pictures with kids today it’s crazy.” Christmas Time at the Mill is organized and sponsored by Matthew R. Petsinger Agency, LLC with donations from area businesses and individuals. Petsinger says he wishes to extend special thanks to the Waseca Area Foundation, Kelms BBQ for the free hot dogs, the Mill, KOWZ 100.9, Morgan’s Meat Market, HyVee for the free hot chocolate and Christmas cookies and the Waseca Sleigh and Cutter organization.



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- Septic Services
- Snow Plowing

Death Anniversary
40 Years – December 3rd
In Loving Memory of Mark Jon Hildebrandt

Your kindness, wisdom and love continue to inspire us every day. You are dearly missed and always in our hearts. Your legacy will live forever in the hearts of those who knew and loved you.

Merlin Hildebrandt Family