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LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY  
 No. 13 Vol. II \$2 Office at 103 South State Street Waseca Friday, March 31, 2023

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Sports



Team Academy representatives (including Director Jill Courtney, middle) provided parents with information about the school while giving kids Play-Doh. Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

# Early start

By MICHAEL ROY  
Editor

The Waseca Intermediate School played host to the 41st Annual Waseca Early Childhood Fair on Friday, March 24 from 5 to 8 p.m. Some 23 organizations from Waseca and the Waseca area participated in the event, coordinated by the Waseca Family Education Center.

The purpose of the fair is to provide families with the tools to help their children succeed while encouraging them to participate in their child's education.

There were plenty of opportunities for the students to have fun. Some of the highlights included Waseca County Dairy Princess Maia Bartelt making an appearance with a calf for children and adults alike to pet. Kim and Steve



Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas with Nate at the 41st Annual Waseca Early Childhood Fair Friday, March 24.

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## WASECA CITY COUNCIL

# Vista Villa due for Facelift

By MICHAEL ROY  
Editor

Under a plan approved by the Waseca City Council during its March 21 meeting, Vista Villa Park will receive a significant facelift.

Brakemeier Properties, owner of the modular home park, requested council approval for a rezoning plan which would allow numerous changes, including making lots within the property larger. City zoning and planning coordinator Bill Green explained that Vista Villa was originally zoned in the 1960s when mobile homes tended to be much smaller. The smaller lots have meant that variances would have to be requested for many of the newer structures likely to use the facility.

Green explained that Brake-meier (located in Vista Villa Court west of Loon Lake) is planning a spring cleanup, removing junk vehicles, and bringing newer models of mobile homes onto the properties.

Green offered five recommendations, which included a new survey in place by June 15, easements required by the city be recorded by July 31, a maintenance-free six foot privacy fence 312 feet in length be installed on the east side of the property by July 31, that Brakemeier obtain all necessary permits prior to construction (after approval of their survey), and that all costs shall be paid by the property owner.

When the public hearing opened at 7:33 p.m., Brenda

Council continued on 4

**A word from The Word**

*Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

Romans 12:19

## Drug program improves lives

### Participants given their 'last' second chance

By ELI LUTGENS  
Publisher

The National Institutes of Health have found that inmates who leave jail or prison are not only likely to begin using drugs again upon release, they are more at risk for death by overdose than other addicts. Even if they may have been forced to "get clean" during incarceration, returning to their former social circles and circumstances often encourages them to pick up old habits.

The Waseca/Steele County "Drug Court" program focuses on helping people whose lives have included drug use to change their habits while also building resources to help them resist the temptations they will inevitably encounter.

Offenders who have been brought into the court system because of drug-related crimes—everything from drug possession or sale, DWI, or even crimes such as burglary which were motivated by a desire to get money to buy drugs—may be referred for consideration for this research-based program.

Once candidates are assessed and consent to take part, they undergo a rigorous program which is meant to help them change their outlooks and their habits.

Waseca County Attorney Rachel Cornelius and Steele-Waseca Drug Court Coordinator Nicole Grams are two members of the team which identifies likely candidates for the drug court program. The two recently shared the philosophy and facts of their service at a meeting of the Waseca Rotary Club.

"If you put people in jail, they don't get any help for their substance use disorder. What is going to happen is that those people are going to continue to do anything they can to get more money for drugs. Whereas, if we are working on the chemical dependency, and working on their criminal mindset, it is a better method to approach long-term sobriety," explained Cornelius.

The Waseca County program serves roughly 15 participants at a time. It has so far graduated just shy of 100 people, and boasts a 75- to 80-percent success rate; that is, about that many participants are never again brought into the court system. Some numbers indicate that incarceration without



Waseca/Steele County Drug Court Coordinator Nicole Grams and Waseca County Attorney Rachel Cornelius spoke at a recent Waseca Rotary Club meeting.

treatment can lead to recidivism rates as high as 80 percent.

Participants in the drug court program are not placed in jail, but are instead remanded to a treatment system likely to last 18 months to 2 years. Under its terms, they are subject to random testing about 3 times a week. They are required to meet the expectations of any probation program they are following while also attending as many as three treatment meetings a week. They must often comply with curfew requirements, and are checked on by everyone from law enforcement and probation officers to mental health therapists.

According to Grams, the program begins by assuring participants receive mental health evaluations and have "safe, sober housing."

The next step is to help them enter the workforce. They are expected to set short-term goals which can eventually translate into long-term progress meant to help them reenter society on stable footing. These include learning the job skills

needed to stay employed, then developing a budget plan which will support reliable housing and food stability.

The process is often complicated because participants did not finish school. "It doesn't happen overnight," observed Grams. "Some of these folks quit school in the seventh or eighth grade." For them, working toward their GED also becomes a goal.

Progress is rewarded with various "incentives." On the other hand, if participants violate the terms of drug court, "disincentives" can be imposed. "Flash jail" is one such consequence—a one- to five-day incarceration meant to remind anyone who strays to stay on track.

As their lives stabilize, participants are expected to find ways to meet financial obligations such as restitution to victims and paying any drug court

Court continued on 2

## WASECA CITY COUNCIL

# Gaiter Lake controversy continues

By MICHAEL ROY  
Editor

A hot button issue in Waseca for the past few years has been the Gaiter Lake development project. The controversy surrounds a 62-acre property owned by the city and slated for development, including possible installation of a storm-water retention pond, water and sewer lines, and more at city expense, then offering the lots for sale.

The city has made more than one attempt to entice developers to take charge of the project, but has received very limited response, with only one proposal coming from Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership. After area residents made their opinions heard during a March 21 meeting, the city council approved seeking additional "requests for proposal."

Deb Dobberstein was the first member of the public to share her concerns. According to her, residents of the neighborhood near Gaiter Lake have spoken up several times about the planned development of the city-owned property currently known as the "Lewer Farm."

"We thought our concerns and logic were considered, but we're starting all over again," Dobberstein said, pointing out that, when requests for proposals (RFPs) have been published regarding past development plans, responses were limited or nonexistent. When a later RFP was sent out, the only response came from the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership. Even with the difficulties and controversies, she stated, the council tabled plans for a 2023 project at the lake.

Dobberstein claimed she wants to prevent another situation like Pondview, a recent development project north of Gaiter Lake. "There are lots at Pondview that have sat empty for several years," she said. "If the [Gaiter Lake] field is developed, who is to say that those empty lots won't stay empty?"

Gary Dobberstein stated that his personal calculations determined the land cost and infrastructure to develop around 60 lots on the Gaiter Lake development would be about \$63,000 per lot. "That's a far cry from the \$55,000 we were told," he said. "Also, if residential development is such a big deal, why aren't developers coming to us instead of

Lake continued on 4



A dozen members and volunteers of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #16 helped out at their event at the Mill last Saturday. Serena Frazier (middle row, 3rd in) is the president. Local volunteers include Rachel Cornelius (second row, 1st from the left) and officer Sheila Jewison-Appel (second row, outside right). Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

## Police organization holds celebration

By MICHAEL ROY  
Editor

What can be better than delicious barbecue, discounts on drinks, bean bag tournaments, horse races, live music, and auctions of signed Justin Jefferson and Kirill Kaprizov jerseys?

The Minnesota Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #16 had all of that and more at The Mill in Waseca Saturday, March 25.

Starting at 10:30 a.m., the lodge hosted a bean bag tournament. It took a little longer than anticipated to decide the winners, but in the end, the duo of Cody Hyatt and Nick Sill-

man took first prize, while Whitney Reim and Bradley Casper placed second and Nolan Wetzel and Gabe Androli settled for third.

Universal Sports Auctions collaborated with the Fraternal Order of Police to hold a silent auction. The main items for sale were sports memorabilia ranging from signed football and hockey jerseys (including a custom Waseca Bluejays jersey) to portraits of legendary athletes.

There were food trucks available

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## Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika

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# True meaning behind Easter

Easter is just around the corner and the Easter Bunny is busy filling baskets full of eggs and candy preparing his annual visit to all of the young children. Moms and dads, grandpas and grandmas are busy shopping for groceries and getting ready for the big family Easter meal.

I have so many great memories of Easter's past. Our son Marc was 5 years old and we decided it was time for him to participate in the annual Clear Lake Park Easter Egg hunt. It was a cold day and he was dressed for winter. We arrived at the park with family and Grandpa John and Grandma Jean. John lined up with Marc and his basket surrounded by hundreds of egg hunters of all ages. The whistle blew, loosing a stampede of kids running to the eggs. When the dust cleared, Marc and Grandpa were standing with three plastic eggs in the basket. The newspaper took a picture of Marc standing with a forlorn look on his face, in his cute little winter outfit.

Easter with our children, Marc and Katie, was pretty low key. Church, Katie dressed in her Easter outfit, baskets for each full of goodies, and

a big ham dinner with grandparents was the norm.

After Lisa and myself retired with grandchildren, all boys, we really stepped up the game. Our Easter egg hunt became a real production. Our first year we set out over 100 plastic eggs everywhere in the yard and in trees. The eggs were all filled with goodies and the grandies were sent on a scavenger hunt, reading clues to find the big prize egg. On the first hunt, we discovered the two older boys filled their baskets with many more eggs than the younger two. Problem solved: the next year, we put names on the eggs and even color coded them.

Our four grandbabies are now grown up boys and don't have much interest in an egg hunt. We now fill plastic buckets with goodies and plastic eggs containing \$2, \$5, or \$10 bills. The egg bake has become the traditional Easter Lunch. One thing that never changes in our traditional Easter celebration is its true meaning: Easter is the true celebration of the resurrection of our savior Jesus Christ.

# Impact one can leave

In September the Waseca Exchange Club requested 84 applications for "student of the year" honors. From those applications, 12 finalists were selected and asked to write essays. The winning essay for the 2022-23 Waseca High School year was penned by Christian Rodriguez. Alexander Honstad took second. Both winners received scholarships and Rodriguez's essay is entered in the district wide competition with a chance to advance to the national level.

Rodriguez's essay about the impact of coach Brad Wendland follows here: Honstad's article about Ted Hammond will appear in next week's edition of the Pioneer.

### The Impact That One Can Leave

I am the first to admit that I was always unsure of what I wanted to do with my life. I felt like at a young age I was just following what the majority was doing by going to school, participating in activities, and simply getting by. For me, it wasn't until high school when one person made me realize that I could be so much more than just someone "getting by". He inspired me to challenge myself physically and mentally to be the greatest possible student, athlete, and leader that I could possibly be, as well as finding a new found devotion in helping those in need. The mentor that really opened up my eyes was my varsity football coach, and very good friend, Mr. Wendland. There are many different incredible stories that I could write about for hours, but I have narrowed it down to two incredibly impactful events about him that have changed my life and need to be shared because of how great they really are.

First, it's important to understand that when I had reached high school I was a much quieter kid than the social person that people know today. I've always enjoyed some peace and quiet for myself and there was nothing wrong with that, but the issue that came from this was that I lacked the confidence to push myself forward to the next step in the classroom and in my activities. Sure, I was above average at the things I did but I lacked the direction to make myself go from above average to great. It wasn't until the Fall of 2019 when I had really sat down and talked with Mr. Wendland about stepping things up for myself. When we spoke he saw so much potential in me the same way he sees potential in everyone that he talks to and when we were finished speaking I was highly motivated. When he recommended that I come to the school's weight room at 6:15 A.M. three days a week for self improvement I instantly knew that it would be a huge challenge for myself, but the way he raised me up by speaking to me made me realize that I could be so much more than what I was settling for and in order to get to that next level in my life I'd have to work hard to get what I wanted for



Winners of the Waseca Exchange Club "student of the year program" were, first place, (middle left) Christian Rodriguez and, second, Zander Honstad. Also pictured are Brad Wendland (left) and Ted Hammond (far right). Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

once. Once I had made that commitment to train I instantly felt the positive effects of working out during those mornings with him because I was much more driven, determined, and confident at school and when I'd play sports. To this day I still give all of the credit to Mr. Wendland and the weight room for when I went to state in wrestling as a freshmen. Without the intense workouts I undoubtedly would not have been able to do as well as I did with the seniors and juniors I was wrestling with at that time. It was at fifteen years old when I saw my life change from someone who didn't have a single clue what they wanted to do or if they'd be good at anything to someone who was excelling in the classroom and truly taking the next step as an athlete. I felt the effects of self improvement and I knew that I couldn't keep it all to myself which made me want to help others the same way that Mr. Wendland has helped others. That step I took in my life is the reason why I'm going to Gustavus Adolphus College to pursue a Computer Science degree while also playing football. I want to help the special people in my life to feel as good as I was made to feel and I hope that one day I can improve the world, even if it's only something small.

Now, the second story that I need to share comes from the Fall of 2021. In week one of the football season Mr. Wendland went down on the field and suffered a cardiac arrest in the 4th quarter of a close game. However, instead of focusing on the tragedy that came from that night I want to focus on the aftermath that came from his successful recovery. I remember the feeling that everyone had felt upon seeing him when he initially returned from the hospital to greet the football team at a pre-game meal. It was something that seems almost unexplainable, almost as if there was a different kind of energy in that room that day. It was a feeling of something greater than joy seeing him come back from something very serious and rising back up. His recovery inspires me quite often when stop and think about him. I felt so inspired by this that I decided to speak in front of a crowd of Waseca Locals at an FCA event for Mr. Wendland. I spoke about how his



Coach Wendland and senior Christian Rodriguez embrace after the Waseca Football team's season-ending loss to Fairmont. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

ability to recover from something like that is something that only happens to special people and how the unrelenting support that he received from the community while recovering is something that you won't be able to find everywhere you go. It wasn't until I had got into my back into my vehicle that night when I realized just how much he had changed me as a person. I didn't even flinch at the opportunity to 'speak in front of a large crowd when it came to speaking about him, which was something that I wouldn't have dreamt of before.

Ever since I was able to really process those encounters with Mr. Wendland I've attempted to take a big step in devoting, myself to helping people more than ever before. If anyone ever needs something I try to be the first one to help because I know that's the same way that he is. I won't argue that I'm nowhere near perfect because I'm only human, but if I can help with just one thing everyday I consider it a success, for I know that he would be proud of me.



Smokin' Barrel Barbecue of Albert Lea provided food during the Fraternal Order of Police's event. Shane Chapek (right) is the food truck's owner. Photo by Michael Roy

## Police

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all day long, starting with Lucia's Cocina of Waseca from 10 a.m. to noon, a Breakfast Menu food truck, and Smokin' Barrel BBQ of Albert Lea later in the day.

Other activities included horse races, a gun raffle, and "Sure Shot Tactical," a firearms simulator. The main event was IV Play, who performed from 8:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Minnesota Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #16 is an organization that covers a 12-county area including Waseca, Mankato, Albert Lea, and as far north as Eagan. Their main mission is to provide members an opportunity to support and interact with fellow law enforcement agencies as well as give back to their local communities. "It's made of different types of law enforcement, whether they're police or sheriff's offices," lodge president and Waseca County Sheriff member Serena Frazier explained. "We get together like a legion or VFW."

While some of the lodge members were at the event, many more locals from Waseca, Janesville, and other surrounding areas volunteered.

The lodge raises money for itself and its several communities. For

example, it sponsors activities like "Shop with a Cop" and "Badges and Bobbers."

"We're just trying to give back to the community as well as ourselves when we need help," Frazier added.

One such example of helping out fellow officers was when Waseca officer Arik Matson was shot in early 2020; the order helped out the Matson family and, to this day, there is a link on their website to a Caring Bridge blog with updates on Matson's recovery.

The event the order put on at the Mill last Saturday was "six months in the making," according to Frazier. "We had to book the venue and the band back in August of last year, because everything gets booked up quick," she elaborated. "There were thirteen sponsors that helped us pay for the band and different items going on throughout the day."

Proceeds from the event at The Mill will benefit the lodge and the local communities. "All the money we make from the gun raffles and all that will go back to the community for helping anyone that needs it," Frazier said. "They can always reach out to us to donate or if they are looking for something, and we can help them, we will."

"We want to make sure the public knows that we're good people," she concluded. "We are willing to help and give back."

# Conway steps down after 11 seasons as Lady Jays' coach

By DAVE ZIKA

A tribute to Joan Conway After 11 seasons, 203 career wins, three conference titles and three state tournaments, head coach of the Waseca Lady Bluejays' basketball team, Joan Conway, has made the difficult decision to step down.

When a school hires a teacher or coach they look for a dynamic person with many qualifications. The teacher must relate and connect with all of their students, be patient with those who struggle, and challenge those with the highest potential. They must know their content, have a sense of humor, and keep their students engaged. A good coach has the same attributes in the classroom and on the court. A good coach also has to be a good role model, know their X's and O's, and win some games. In a nutshell, this is Conway. Joan is stepping down after coaching the Waseca Lady Jays varsity basketball team for 11 years.

Joan graduated from Waseca High School and played basketball for Ted Hammond. She received her math degree from St. Ben's where she also participated in basketball. Her first

"I had to pull the kids off the bus as the administration came down with the news. I'm not sure I'll ever get over not getting to play that game."

— Joan Conway

teaching/coaching job was in Onamia, MN where she coached JV girls' basketball. She applied, and was hired, back in her hometown of Waseca.

I've had the privilege to work with Joan during my coaching years. To Joan, life is all about her students and athletes. I remember fall football and getting players conditioned for the season in August. Joan would be coming off the practice field after working with the Marching Jays drum line, we'd pass and have a lively conversation. Joan coached 9th-grade and B-squad girls' basketball for years and was always loyal and helpful to her head coaches. On our many, many long bus rides Joan would spend time in the back of the

bus helping girls with their math assignments. She put in many good years before she was hired as the head girls' coach.

In Conway's 11 seasons as head girls' basketball coach, her teams averaged 18.5 wins a season. She coached six teams to conference championship games, winning three. In three trips to the state tournament, Conway's team lost two games, won one, and received medals and a state tournament trophy in 2020. Arguably the best team, that 2020 squad was sent home when Covid canceled their run after a win over undefeated Pelican Rapids in the state semifinals.

"I had to pull the kids off the bus, as the administration came down



Joan Conway with senior Kloe Wadd after she scored her 1,000th career point in a 51-35 win over Belle Plaine Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023. Photo by Eli Lutgens

with the news," Conway recalled. "I'm not sure I'll ever get over not getting a chance to play that [next] game."

The team received medals and a state tournament trophy.

Teaching and coaching has become ever so much more demanding in today's world. Joan has decided to step down and put all of her energy into teaching math students. Thank you Joan for making a difference for so many girls' basketball players and giving them memories they will live with forever. Happy trails to you as you take your dogs Bennie and Duke for a walk. Put your feet up and cuddle with them: after another long, rewarding day of teaching. But know you will be missed on the hardwood!

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OBITUARIES

Thomas Ewing

Thomas "Tom" Ewing, age 83, of Waseca passed away on Sunday, March 26, 2023 at Lakeshore Rehabilitation Center in Waseca.

Tom was born on August 28, 1939, to Thomas and Stella (Strand) Ewing, in Minneapolis. He graduated from Central High School, in Minneapolis. He furthered his education at the University of Minnesota and University of Mary in Bismarck, ND. He proudly served in the MN Army National Guard. On December 16, 1961, he was joined in marriage to Harriet Kimberly at the United Methodist Church in Anoka. Together, they raised their three children, Jeanne, Mike, and Jenn.

Tom spent his career as an accountant and later worked in customer service. In his free time, Tom spent much of his time volunteering. He was a proud blood and plasma donor with over 39 gallons donated throughout his lifetime. He was an Eagle Scout and was active with the North Star Boy Scout Council. Tom was a dedicated member to the Masons, where he received the Hiram Award for outstanding service to Freemasonry. His family brought much joy to his life and was very proud of his children, grandchildren and would spend his time attending and helping at their activities. He will be dearly missed.



Thomas Ewing

Tom is survived by his wife of 61 years, Harriet Ewing of Waseca; children, Jeanne (Thomas) Sexton of Waseca, Michael (Kristin) Ewing of Saint Cloud, Jenn (Nick) Johnson of Shoreview; seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas and Stella Ewing; and brother, William Ewing.

A celebration of life will take place at a later date. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service are handling arrangements. In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to the Waseca Masonic Scholarship Fund and/or give blood to any local blood bank. Dennisfuneralhomes.com

Soccer night at Pizza Ranch



The Waseca Soccer Association held a fundraiser at Pizza Ranch Monday, March 27 from 5 to 8 p.m. Eight volunteers — who were mostly kids involved in the Waseca soccer programs — worked at the event. Michelle Feeley (pictured right) stated that proceeds would go to purchasing new equipment for all the Waseca soccer programs, from the summer 10U teams to the high schoolers in the fall.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

# Cameras to be allowed inside courtrooms

By MARK ANFINSON  
MNA attorney

The Minnesota Supreme Court has announced a major change in the rules governing the use of cameras in state criminal cases. Beginning in January of 2024, a newly-filed court order mandates that cameras and other audio-visual devices can be used to record proceedings during many criminal trials.

The Court's order eliminates the long-standing prohibition on cameras in criminal trials unless all parties and the judge consented — something that virtually never happened. Under the new rules, cameras will be permitted at the discretion of the presiding judge.

While this change won't automatically enable camera coverage of all criminal trials, the experience we've accumulated over the past few years since the high court gave trial court judges discretion to allow cameras in the courtroom during criminal sentencing hearings strongly suggests that many judges will accept cameras during the trial phase of a criminal case, because many have permitted them during sentencing hearings. And there's reason to believe that as the trial courts in Minnesota become more familiar with the presence of cameras, allowing them will become increasingly common.

The Supreme Court did adopt certain "guardrails," as it calls them, limiting the use of cameras in some situations. Those include

jury selection, testimony of victims without their consent, coverage of minor witnesses and defendants, and pretrial proceedings. In other words, the new rules aren't a complete victory for audio-visual access. But the Court's recent order represents what is by far the biggest move forward in state history on this issue. And again, as experience with cameras accumulates, and the judicial system acquires further evidence that camera access not only provides substantial benefits for the general public but for the court system as well, it's plausible that many of the remaining restrictions on camera access will be removed.

The Minnesota Newspaper Association took the lead in the effort to persuade the Court that it should expand camera access in criminal cases, partnering with the Minnesota Broadcasters Association by submitting a detailed memorandum to the Court describing the reasons for supporting that access. MNA and MBA also appeared at the hearing conducted by the Court last September, represented by attorney Mark Anfinson.

If you would like to review a copy of the Supreme Court's Order itself along with the specific amendments to the Rules of Criminal Procedure adopted by the Court, you can find them on the state court website at: <https://bit.ly/3ZQnZVh>.

■ Council

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Byron informed the council that she felt the recommendations for the fence were agreeable to the nearby neighborhood. Chris Weber's only concern was the setbacks and distance between the lots. "If a fire breaks out, you could have multiple structure fires," he said. "Just make sure [any code changes] consider the life and safety of people residing in those areas."

Green assured Weber that the planning, zoning and building inspector would inspect for fire safety before issuing any building permits.

Steve Neusbaum, a representative of Brakemeier, shared further details about the owners' plans for the park. "We'll assist people in financing their updates to their home projects," he said. "We're looking to speed up the process."

Council member John Mansfield responded positively to the proposed improvement process, saying that rezoning of the whole area would be faster than creating individual paperwork for each lot. After closing the public hearing at 7:39 p.m., the council approved Green's recommendations and the rezoning request.

In other business, the council approved M.W. Blacktopping's bid of \$84,844.76 for the rehabilitation of the city hall parking lot. One of six bids opened by city engineer Nate Willey and other staff, M.W. Blacktopping's proposal came in at a little over half of the original estimate for the project of \$161,000. Council members Mansfield and James Ebertowski opposed.

"I'm not voting no because Nate did a bad job," Ebertowski clarified. "I just don't feel comfortable giving ourselves a facelift," Mansfield concurred.

The bid of \$49,981.83 for the Trunk Highway 13 trail connector project presented by D.M. Construction was approved unanimously. This

bid came in lower than expected as well. "It's \$22,802 below the estimate," Willey said. "We were pleasantly surprised."

Council member Jeremy Conrath was happy with the bid and called the contract the "final piece of the puzzle to make sure kids get to school safe."

In addition to those discussions, they awarded contracts for the city parking lot rehabilitation and the Highway 13 Trail Connector Project. The council also had a lively discussion about the Gaiter Lake project with residents who attended the meeting. The council approved seeking additional "requests for proposal," with a timeline for development by 2026.

Planning and zoning coordinator Bill Green said that the request for vacating the easements between the three lots on the south side of 22nd Avenue NW was for the properties to "give themselves more green space."

"With the split lots, a new easement will be added," he said. Reports and Announcements

According to Mayor Zimmerman, the Waseca Economic Development Authority planned on updating projects concerning the election site forum in April. There will also be a retail trade and lodging analysis presented to the EDA next month.

In announcements, council member Daren Arndt shared that he was named the chair of the city's planning commission. Fellow council member Mark Christiansen shared that the Waseca band is making a trip to Florida in the next week.

Council member Stacey Schroeder said that a "young member of the community" brought up planting trees with the city's parks department. "She was wondering if they would be fruit bearing trees," she said, which Zimmerman thought would be a good idea.

Zimmerman brought up his time at the Farm and City Luncheon. He also took time to state his appreciation for the city staff. "It's been a fun process being mayor so far," he said.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

■ Lake

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us coming to them? It doesn't make sense."

Another resident, who was a bit more emotional about the project, said that her family moved to Waseca in 2019 because of the view from the field. "Like the neighbors, we like to watch the wildlife," she said. "I think it's unfair to have these developments with businesses leaving and shops closing. I think it's time to focus on something to help the city."

One more speaker said that if they were going to move on with this project regardless of concerns, they want to see the city "do it right, not fast."

"This RFP makes it look like something would be slapped together as quickly as possible," she said.

During discussion about possibly moving forward with a proposed

RFP, council member Jeremy Conrath echoed the last resident's concerns. "I agree with the public comments; I want to do this right," he said. "If it takes longer to do it... as far as I'm concerned, if it goes to 2027, that's fine by me."

Mayor Randy Zimmerman agreed. "Any progress should emphasize thoroughness over speed."

He also mentioned concerns about the type of housing proposed. "I'm more interested in seeing single family houses in that area," he said.

However, Zimmerman also stated he would like to see the timeframe of the development kept brisk. "I know it's been dragged out, and here we are moving forward," he said. "I think we can still get it right and expedite the timeframe."

When council member Stacey Schroeder asked city engineer Nate Willey what it would take for the city to move forward, he answered: "It would be a special project that the city staff would have to devote a lot of time to. The ideal situation would be to sell the property or the lots as

quickly as possible to a developer to get it off our tax roll and onto someone else's."

The council approved allowing Willey and city staff to put out an RFP on the project with a timeline of buildable lots by 2026. Council member Mark Christiansen put forward an additional motion to go with the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership's offer if the council doesn't get any other bids with the RFP. Council member James Ebertowski entertained the motion.

"My wife and I work out of town, and we pay into Waseca," he told everyone. "I try to buy everything here. I work with people in Mankato that can't find a \$250,000 house there. We have that here; in Mankato, you have to have \$350,000 to buy a house."

"I drive to make more [money] out of town," he admitted. "Living here, I have made \$50,000 in savings in ten years just on the mileage and having a house in Waseca. I'm not even including interest saved compared to that \$350,000 house in

Mankato. "We have a piece of property available and ready to go. We've been sitting on this since 2016. We could be making great money in the next 50 to 100 years."

On concerns about not expanding in other ways in the city, Christiansen pointed out, "We have an expansion of a local pizzeria, among other expansions. We have great schools. I understand the cost concerns of land development. But people have to make money."

He named housing as a much bigger issue at the moment. "We have eight houses for sale within the city limits today. That's it. If we really look at the numbers, it's far more effective and cheaper to develop this land than anywhere else around Waseca."

His proposal to take on Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership's proposal if no other developers were interested fell through. The submittal deadline for the RFP will be April 28.

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Charles N. Luther standing outside the First National Bank building where he had his barber shop in the basement beginning early in the twentieth century.

## 'The barber shop'

By PATRICIA L. DUNN  
Submitted story

In the early days, barber shops were called "Tonsorial Shops." The dictionary says that "tonso-rial" means "of a barber and his work." Usually used humorously!

In the year 1915, Charles N. Luther rented the basement area from Waseca's First National Bank to be used as his "Barber Shop." (Frank Sankovitz was the president of the bank at that time.)

To enter the shop, one needed to walk down the steps on the outside of the south side of the building. A door and long windows were installed. The steps have since been removed and the wall and step area have been closed up.

In the barber shop, there were three barber chairs with counters and mirrors behind them. The floors were covered in linoleum. Chairs for waiting customers were on both sides of the entry door. There was also a deacon's bench.

At the front (west) end of the space there was another room used at one time by Marie Eustice (Mrs. Joe) as a beauty shop. She gave permanents and cut and styled ladies' hair. To the immediate right of that room was one with a bathtub (claw foot of course), a chair and railing for a towel and a small mirror to see one's face. The charge for using the tub, water, and, of course, soap was 25¢ or 50¢. The bath was used mostly on Saturday evenings by men preparing for Sunday church services—or whatever.

The east end of the building's basement housed the furnace and utilities. The building custodian, George Krenke, had his shop, workbench and supplies there as well. George made the wooden valances for the front window of

the Waverly Hotel building. Since ceasing to be a hotel, the building had been turned into apartments and offices. At work in one of the Waverly building's front offices were Don and Jerry Welna, a pair of brothers who were both dentists. The building was owned by Frank Conway, owner of the "Savings and Loan" business next door.

Dr. Ben Gallagher, M.D. had his office in the far east end of the bank building. The stairs are still there and are still used today.

Harvey Larson was a longstanding co-worker to Barber Charlie. Harvey intended to take over the shop when Charlie retired, but that never happened as Harvey died of a heart attack while ice fishing on Clear Lake one winter.

Charles brought his barber chair and mirror home when he retired and made a special place in his basement to continue cutting hair for friends and family. Some of his many grandchildren still live in Waseca. Among them are Dave Dunn, who is on the Waseca School Board, his wife Melissa Dunn who writes for this paper and teaches at NRHEG, Barbara Buker, who owns and operates Personalized Printing and Apparel with her husband Mark in the old Didra building on the southwest intersection of Elm Avenue and State Street, and his granddaughter Jane Dunn, who owns and operates Healing Hands with Linda Grant in the Eye Doctor Siegfried Oeljen, M.D. brick house on the opposite corner from the Waseca County Courthouse.

Charlie subbed a few years for a barber in Owatonna. And he also helped out Bob McCarthy quite a bit. Otherwise you could find him fishing on Clear Lake!

## Lions Pancake Breakfast

Volunteering at the Waseca Lions pancake breakfast Saturday, were, to the right, from left: Jim Ferch, Ryan Ludwig, Jared Dufault, Lucille Youngberg, Jenny Klivers, LION, Diane Beckmann, Tiffany Lynch, Neil Fruechte, Steve Graff, Bob Hunter, Larry Johnson.

Below, from left, volunteers Mary Cornelius and Diane Beckmann dishing up pancakes and pancake flipper Jim Ferch.

Photos by the Lions and Tristan Jensen



## Breakfast open for first time in 4 years

By TRISTAN JENSEN  
Staff Writer

The Waseca Lions Club returned to the tradition of its annual pancake breakfast fundraiser on Sunday, March 26. The organization first formed in 1927, and pancake breakfasts were among its first fundraising endeavors, making this a long-held tradition in the city. This year's was the first in four years, after the COVID-19 pandemic required a pause. Attendance was down somewhat from previous numbers, but that didn't carry over to the Lions working the breakfast. All members

of the Lions Club help with the breakfast, with tasks ranging from setup, cooking and serving food, or cleanup. They also get assistance from Waseca's scouts, who handle table service. Thirteen scouts of all ages volunteered at the 2023 breakfast. "It takes the community to get this going," said Diane Beckmann, one of the primary organizers. "And if it takes a year..." added Lucille Youngberg, another member, with a shrug.

The proceeds from the annual pancake breakfast go to several causes. The Lions Club is the chartered or-

ganization for Waseca's male and female BSA Scout troops and the cub pack, and those groups receive part of the proceeds. The breakfast also supports the Lions Club scholarships, which amount to about \$3,000 given to graduating seniors, dictionaries provided by the Lions for all local third-graders, and eye services to needy kids. The Lions Eye Bank is also listed as a beneficiary of the breakfast, though the main work for the eye bank comes from donated glasses. Old pairs of glasses can be donated at Minnwest Bank, Thrivent Financial, Munson Eye Care, Dr.

Akre and Clarke Optometrics, the Dennis-Steffel Funeral Home, Grace Lutheran Church, and the Waseca Senior Citizens Center. The glasses collected are cleaned and measured for strength, then provided to people in need in third-world countries.

In addition to the community members who attend and the scouts who volunteer, the Lions Club gives thanks to Kwik Trip, which donated orange juice, milk and eggs, and Owatonna's HyVee, which donated the sausages, pancake mix, and syrup, for the success of the fundraiser.

## Dream Catcher



Sleigh and Cutter royalty and committee members gathered to raise money for the Children's Dream Catcher program with their annual bingo event. Pioneer photo by Tristan Jensen

## Sacred Heart to offer pillow cleaning

The Catholic Daughters of America, Court Sacred Heart #1424 invites everyone to Carlson's Pillow Cleaning Service, which will be operating in front of the Sacred Heart Parish Center from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday April 15. A mobile unit will deodorize, sanitize, fluff and re-tick the pillows. Pillows will be ready and returned on the same day. Custom made NEW pillows and comforters are for sale. Proceeds go to support Sacred Heart School, Habitat for Humanity and other local charities.

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**Crafty**



The Mill in Waseca hosted a spring craft show Saturday March 25. Pioneer photos by Tristan Jensen



Tawnia and Darius Garten representing Willow Creek Essentials, an Elysian-based minimal ingredient soap line.



Dan and Teagan Collier from Dan's Rustic Creations and Teagan's Tasty Treats of Waseca with one of Dan's handmade coolers.



Charlie and Danielle Androlli of C and A Designs, which has a newly opened storefront in Waseca.

# Waldorf Veterans Memorial?

## Barnes presents his plan for park

By ELI LUTGENS  
Publisher

In early March, the city of Waldorf received a grant for \$3,000 from Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council for completion of a 50-foot-long mural. The location is the old "Eisen" building across the street from the community center. Part of the grant application included an announcement of another project, the "Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park."

The project, at this point, is still foggy and may not actually happen. But it will if Waldorf resident Charlie Barnes has anything to say about it.

"I've got all this in my head and I think we can do it," Barnes said during a public presentation at the Waldorf City Council meeting on March 13.

"I really shouldn't put a number on it, but I think this project is going to be around \$80,000," Barnes said. "Although I want to see this through, I don't expect this to get done this summer. This project is for the veterans, for the community... I want to hear music. We'll get the barn boys out there."

Barnes and mayor Rob Wilkening hint that the project may already have one large backer and point to numerous local groups who could support the park, including the Waseca Area Foundation, area veteran organizations, and the Waseca Memorial Park Committee which Barnes is a member of.

The purpose of the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park (WVMP) is "to provide a commemorative place to celebrate the historical community of Waldorf, Minnesota, and the memory of all American Veterans who served our country to protect and provide us our freedom and peaceful way of life."

"It'll really beautify the downtown area," Wilkening said during the meeting.

Everyone in attendance, including Barnes, agreed the city would not participate financially in this project.

So how would it work?

Once the city of Waldorf gives the okay for Barnes to proceed, he will donate the land across from the community center to the city. The size of the space is about 50 feet by 70 feet long.

Next, a design, currently in development, would be discussed and then approved by the city council.

The design would include the following

1. Three flag poles to be used for the American flag, the State of Minnesota flag, and a POW flag. These poles must include appropriate foundation and lighting.
2. A large memorial rock or stone that will display a memorial plaque to be provided by the American Legion.
3. A large 20° gazebo designed in a tasteful



The Waldorf City Council approved for a mural to be painted on the white wall shown above. It is hoped that the area in front will be Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park.

"I've got all this in my head and I think we can do it." — Charlie Barnes

manner with appropriate foundation, lighting, and power connections.

4. Park benches that will surround the gazebo for public enjoyment.

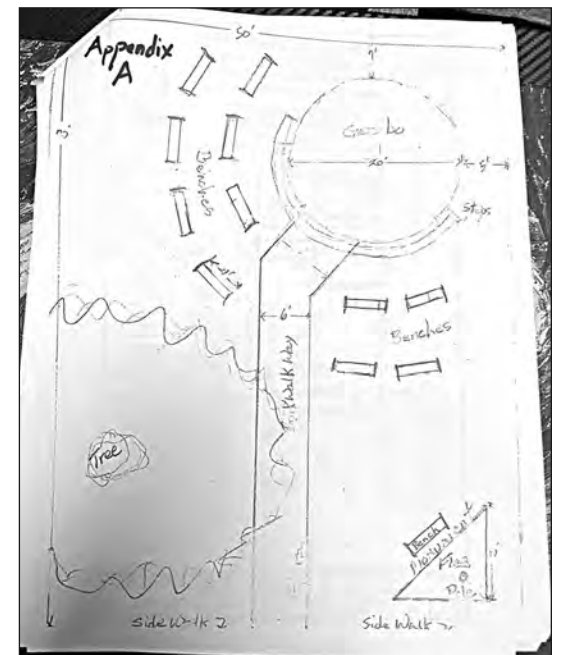
5. Lighting for evening enjoyment of the park and mural.

6. A cobblestone walkway from the street sidewalk to the gazebo.

Barnes provided a rough design for what the project could look like.

He also provided the council with a list of "stipulations":

1. The City of Waldorf will recognize this plot of land as the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park.
  2. The City of Waldorf may not modify the use of, or sell this plot of land for a period of 50 consecutive years.
  3. The City of Waldorf must manage the cost of maintenance, upkeep, and repairs to the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park.
  4. The City of Waldorf will maintain appropriate insurance for public use of the park, and coverage for any damage to the park or the mural.
  5. The City of Waldorf will recognize and include the Waldorf American Legion Post #587 in regard to any changes, mediation, upkeep, or issues pertaining to the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park.
- Barnes assured everyone the town of Waldorf will not be asked to provide any "primary funding" for the initial development and building of the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park.
- "Funding for the park should be raised through grants and voluntary donations from patrons, organizations, and businesses who wish to be involved in our endeavor," a handout provided to residents read.
- Barnes outlined the steps the city should take if they decide to move forward:



A rough sketch of what Waldorf's Veteran's Memorial Park could look like.

1. Assign a director to manage and document fundraising and the use of money raised for the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park.
  2. Open a bank checking account to be used solely for the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park.
  3. Approve the use of the City of Waldorf tax exemption status for park fundraising.
- Barnes cited several cost considerations the city should take into account before proceeding: maintenance (short and long term), insurance, electrical, water/sewer, taxes and supplies.
- In order to move forward the city council will need to proceed with a public hearing and then take action on the project. No action was taken during the March meeting and the topic will be discussed in great detail in April.
- "Everybody feels encouraged about this?" Mayor Wilkening asked.
- He was met with a collective "head nod" from all those in attendance.
- "Thank you kindly," Barnes concluded.

### ■ Start from Page 1

Scheffert brought piglets and a baby goat.

If a mini petting-zoo wasn't quite what the kids were looking for, there were many other activities including a giant Connect Four game, a fishing

pond, and Play-Doh tables. Even the Waseca Fire and Police Departments and the County Sheriff made an appearance and provided fun activities which also gave information about safety.

While the children had fun, organizations from all over the local area provided the parents with information they could find useful. Some of the agencies are located in town, including TEAM Academy School,

Jays' Nest, and Waseca Head Start. Other agencies outside of Waseca County were the Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota (based out of Mankato) and Families First of Minnesota.

Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota provide support to families that may be struggling with nurturing their children due to financial strains or housing problems. Families First is an agency that has a Head Start

program for preschools. The evening provided many opportunities for both the soon-to-be students and their parents to learn more about the options available to them. It especially gave the parents a chance to get educated themselves on how they can get more involved in their child's education while receiving support along the way.

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9 EASTER NATIONAL FORMER POW DAY	10 7 pm Post & AUX. Meeting	11 Burger nite 5-7pm	12 6pm BAR Bingo	13 HALL 7pm BINGO	14 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 7:PM AIR FORCE RESERVE BIRTHDAY	15 GUN BINGO DEER HUNTERS
16	17	18 Burger nite 5-7pm	19 6pm BAR Bingo	20 HALL 7pm BINGO	21 WALLEYE or SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 to 7pm or sold out YOUR HOST HONOR GUARD AND AUX. MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 7:PM	22
23 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am - Noon Your Host Waseca High School Football	24	25 Burger nite 5-7pm	26 6pm BAR Bingo	27 HALL 7pm BINGO	28 STEAK FRY 5:30 TO 7:PM or sold out YOUR HOST HONOR GUARD AND AUX. MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 7:PM	29
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**OPENING DAY** — Boys' and girls' track teams from around the region faced off during a tournament at MSU's field house last Thursday. From left: Kya Hoof handing the baton to Ella Dufault in the 4x400 relay; Center photo: Evie O'Brien runs in the relay; Far right: Colton Schroeder and Tristan Godwin. Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

## WHS track & field teams open season indoors

Ahlschlager, Russell, Sampson win events as boys edged by a point at Minnesota State-Mankato

By **MICHAEL ROY**  
Staff Writer

Two points were the difference between Mankato East, Waseca, and Jordan's boys at the Waseca High School track and field season opener Thursday, March 23 at Myers Field House, Minnesota State University-Mankato.

Waseca had tough competition at the indoor meet.

Mankato East took the gold from Waseca with 62 points. Waseca scored 61, Jordan 60. Maple River totaled 41 points.

The Lady Jays took third with 35 points, getting bested by Mankato East, who ran away with it with 145

points, and Jordan with 37. Maple River scored 19.

### Girls' results

The girls found success in the 60 hurdles, where senior Camille Ring took the gold. She clocked 9.89. Vivian Mader placed 4th.

The Lady Jays finished first in the 4x800 relay in 11:02.82, second in the sprint medley relay and third in the 4x200.

The Lady Jays' best finish in the 60-meter dash was by Camila Marquez, who placed 9th out of 36 athletes.

Brooklyn Flatau had more luck in the 200, placing 6th with a time of

30.5. Maren Schimming took 5th in the 800 in 2:51. Sophomore Callie Dufault performed best out of all the girls' runners with a 3rd-place finish.

The jumpers had a bit of a tougher day. High jumper Haydn Lynch cleared 4-4 for sixth, tying Gabby Lopez. Ring had more success with a 3rd-place finish in the long jump.

Rounding out the girls' performance at MSU was sophomore Kalea Sartori and senior Sam Azure on the shot put. Sartori placed 3rd while Azure took 4th.

### Boys' results

The boys' portion of the meet was neck-and-neck. Senior Kyle Ahl-

schlager took 1st in the 60-meter dash in 7.0 seconds, while Kaeden Johnson took 3rd and Micah Allen-Haas placed 5th. Damarius Russell bested Mankato East's Aaron Stewart for 1st place in the 200, while Johnson took 3rd.

In the 800, Tristan Godwin placed 10th and Colten Schroeder 11th.

Isaac Feldkamp gave the boys a boost with a 4th-place finish in the 1600. Cole Schultz placed 9th in the 60 hurdles.

The relays were where Waseca found the most success. The boys' A team took 1st in the 4x200 while the B team took 3rd. The boys took the top spot in the 4x400 with the B team

taking 6th. The 4x800 A team took 3rd.

Pole vaulter Addison Sampson took the top spot, while Ahlschlager took the top spot in the long jump. Carson Ohnstad's 3rd-place finish in the triple jump was an added bonus.

The boys' shot put ended the Waseca meet with Eddie Herman taking the top spot with Ethan Stenzel in 3rd.

Waseca had another meet at MSU



Ahlschlager



Russell



Sampson

on Tuesday, March 28 against Mankato Loyola, Minnesota Valley Lutheran, St. Clair-Immanuel Lutheran, and St. James Area.

## NRHEG track teams 2nd in indoor meet

Tuttle, VanMaldeghem pace Panthers

By **JIM LUTGENS**  
Sports Editor

The NRHEG track and field teams opened the season with the USC/AC Indoor Invitational at Minnesota State-Mankato Monday, March 27.

The Panther boys and girls turned in a strong performance, both finishing second to JWP.

JWP won the boys' meet with 148 points, followed by NRHEG with 120, GFW 88, WWG/RRC 63 and USC/AC 9.

Will Tuttle was the high point man for the Panthers, winning three events. He took the 55-meter high hurdles in 7.83 seconds, the 55 intermediate hurdles in 8.18 and the triple jump at 37-1.5. Notably the triple jump was Tuttle's first experience in the event. Coming into the meet he was not expected to compete in the triple jump.

"For someone who's never competed in the triple jump, that was a really, really good performance," NRHEG Coach Duey Ferber said.

The rest of NRHEG firsts were by Sawyer Prigge, 55 dash, 6.82; Devin Nelson, 1600, 5:38.97; and Jaylin Raab, long jump, 19-6.

Other places: Raab, second, 55, 6.84; Prigge, second, high jump, 5-

"It felt good to be out competing again."

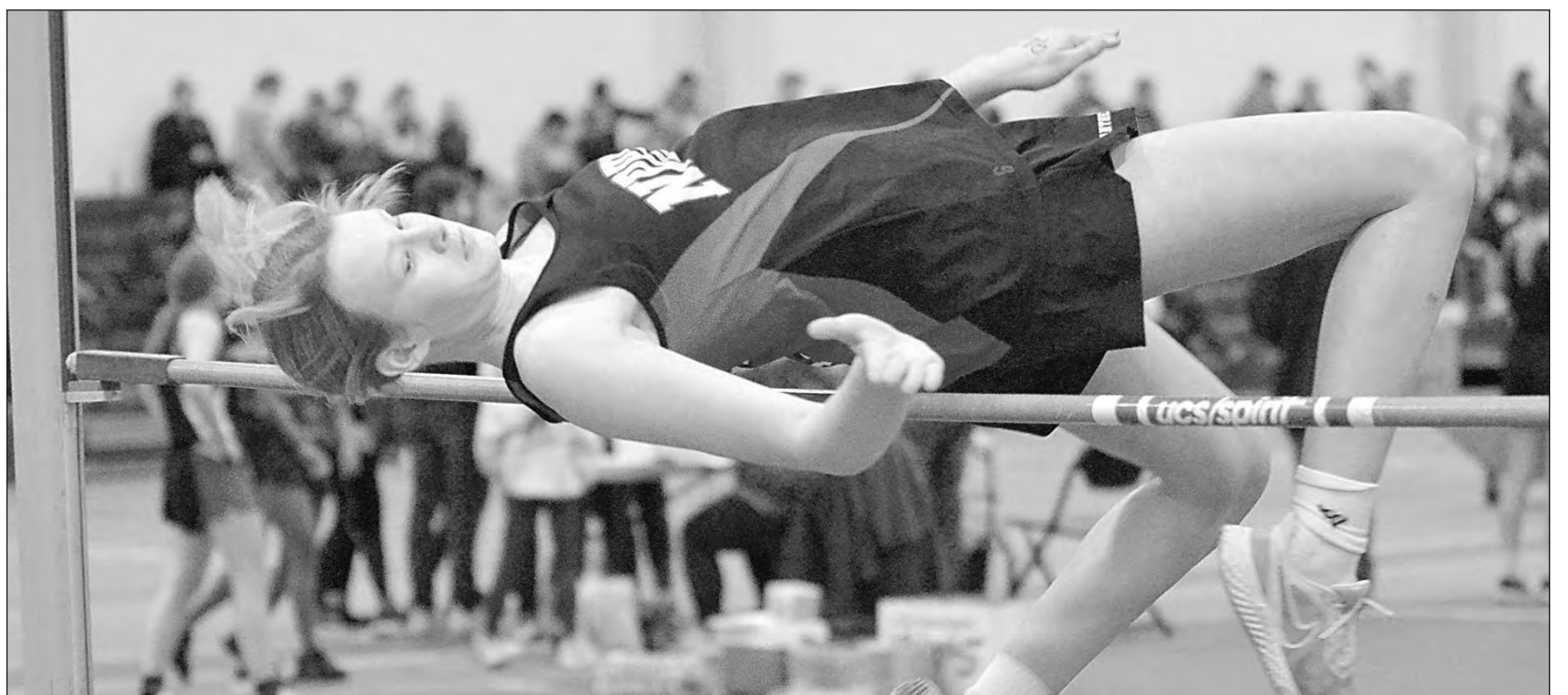
— NRHEG coach Duey Ferber

10; Conner Nelson, second, 800, 2:26.26; Lucas Hanna, second, shot put, 38-11.25; Aidan Deyle, third, 200, 25.75; 4x200 relay, third, 1:52.86 (Parker Bunn, Levin Kitzer, Logan Scheill, Gavin Sletten; Kitzer, fourth, 55 high hurdles, 9.47 and fourth, 55 intermediate hurdles, 9.29; Bunn, fifth, 55 highs, 9.60 and fifth, 55 intermediates, 9.36; Sletten, fifth, 800, 2:33.57; Nelson, fifth, pole vault, 8-6.

"We saw some nice performances tonight," said Ferber. "It felt good to be out competing again. Six first places and two second-place finishes is a good way to start the season."

JWP ran away with the girls' title with 189 points. Following were NRHEG with 89, USC/AC 65, GFW 65 and WWG/RRC 50.

Taking first for NRHEG were



**FIRST-PLACE FINISHES** — Above, the Panthers' Anika Ladlie clears the high-jump bar on her way to placing first at 5-0. Will Tuttle, below, hurdled and jumped his way to three victories Monday night in Mankato. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens

Quinn VanMaldeghem, 1600, 5:51.6; Anika Ladlie, high jump, 5-0; and the 4x400 relay, 4:54.18 (Kiera Lenort, Sierra Misgen, VanMaldeghem, Clara Buendorf).

Malonna Wilson was second in the triple jump at 29-7 and Josie Strom second in the shot put at 29-3.5.

Others: Misgen, third, 400, 1:10.8 fourth, long jump, 12-6 and sixth, 55 dash, 8.24; Paige Johnson, third, 200, 31.69 and third, long jump, 13-9; 4x200 relay, third, 2:17.32 (Kyra

Spies, Winter Pederson, Orianna Degen, Anika Ladlie); Makenzie Mueller, fourth, shot put, 26-10; Lenort, fourth, high jump, 4-4 and fifth, 400, 1:11.67; Buendorf, fifth, 400, 1:12.28 and fifth, long jump, 12-0.75.

"We had some nice performances by the girls tonight," said Ferber. "We were a little shorthanded because of the band/choir trip. It's nice to have an indoor meet while there's still snow on the ground."



## JWP track squads bring home the gold from Mankato

By **MICHAEL ROY**

While conditions aren't quite favorable yet to be outside on the track, that's not stopping the JWP track and field teams.

Both the boys and the girls took first in the Gopher Conference Indoor Meet at Minnesota State University-Mankato on Saturday, March 25.

"It sure was a beautiful day to be a track athlete," coach Samuel Schruin said. "We had an incredible start to the 2023 track season."

"Very strong" may be an understatement concerning how big of leads they took for first place.

The girls took the gold with 125 points, with Kenyon-Wanamingo-Goodhue a distant 2nd with 79. Hayfield scored 59, Triton 53, Medford 52 and Blooming Prairie 46.

The boys compiled 167 points. Taking 2nd

with 78 less points was Blooming Prairie. Medford totaled 48, Triton 44, Hayfield 39, Kenyon-Wanamingo-Goodhue 14.

Zach Groll, Alex James, Derek Gustafson, Shane Witts, Charles Adams, and Noah Brock-Oxner debuted for the boys while Nevaeh Weimert and Chloe Kaiser debuted for the girls.

Junior Kaden Baker took 1st in the 55-meter hurdles. Ava Appel took 2nd for the girls in the 55 hurdles.

Sophomore Isaac Gahlon took 2nd in the 55 dash, with Dylan McWaters taking 4th. McWaters took 5th in the 200. Ryan Kronbach took 2nd in the 200 and 3rd in the 400. Kronbach was only bested in the 200 by Daulton Bauer, who took the gold while placing behind Kronbach in the 400 with 4th. Memphis James rounded up the short runs with a 5th-place finish in the 400.

In the boys' 1600, three JWP runners took the top spots. Alexander Kleve took 1st place, with Derek Gustafson taking 3rd after leading most of the race. Sophomore Luke Cahill, who was tripped up near the final lap, sprinted as hard as he could after falling behind and finished in 2nd.

The girls did well in the sprints and runs, too. Madeline Hoehn had the best day in this category, placing 2nd in the 800. Sophomore Lilly Strauss also had a 2nd-place finish in the 200 while taking 3rd in the 400. Freshmen Nevaeh Weimert and Katelyn Olson took 4th and 5th in the 200, respectively. Brielle Bure took 5th in the 55 dash, and Ashlin Keyes took 5th in the 400.

Relays: Usually the strongest part of the girls' team in years' past, their performance on Saturday was business as usual. The 4x200 team of Presley James, Raquel

Fischer, Brielle Bure, and Katelyn Olson took 1st place, with the 4x400 team of Kwynn Krause, Faith Olson, Lauren White, and MaKenzie Westphal taking second in the 4x400. Another 4x400 team made of James, Bure, Madeline Hoehn, and Madison Kunst took 3rd.

The boys' 4x200 also took home the gold with the team of Isaac Gahlon, Nick Johnson, Jack Cahill, and McWaters. The team of Luke Cahill, Derek Gustafson, Alex Kleve, and Memphis James took 2nd in the 4x400.

Jumps and Pole Vault: While Kronbach had a great day running, he was at his best in the high jump and long jump, where he took the gold in both categories. James also took a top spot for the Bulldogs with the triple jump, while Isaac Gahlon placed first in the pole vault.

Other finishers for the boys in this category

were McWaters in 4th in the long jump, Michael VanRavenhorst 3rd in the triple jump, and Alex James 5th in the long jump.

Strauss placed 4th in the long jump while Ashlin Keyes took 2nd in the high jump. Presley James and Claire Walz took 4th and 5th in the triple jump, respectively.

Shot Put: Senior Raquel Fischer took 2nd while senior Michael VanRavenhorst took 4th for the boys. Aubrey Weedman took 4th while Caitlin Kleve took 5th.

The boys and girls' track team traveled to MSU again to face GFW, NRHEG, United South Central, and Westbrook-Walnut Grove Monday, March 27. They had another go at MSU the following Thursday against Blue Earth Area, Hutchinson, and Mankato East.







The Pastor's Column

Feet are touchy subject for some

By PASTOR KEN ANDRS Feet can be a touchy subject for a lot of people. Over this past week my feet and ankles have caused me a lot of pain, mainly from past injuries. For others their feet are overly ticklish and cause much mirth and laughter. Feet are not something that get touched by others a whole lot unless you need help to care for your feet.

In the cold and snow, we tend to wear socks and shoes all the time. Perhaps during summer we will wear flipflops, or just run around barefoot. Generally though, our feet are more protected as we walk from place to place. This protection is a necessity in our area for the weather and comfort.

In the Middle East though, sock and shoes are not the norm. To take it a step further, pardon the pun, during Jesus' time you wore the same leather shoes or sandals all the time if you had them at all. Now imagine walking the streets, you put on your new sandals and step outside into the street and are immediately stepping into the dust and grime of the street.

In no time your shoes are covered with dust, not to mention whatever the animals left behind. You would walk to the streets and attempt to dodge the messes, but you would get to your destination covered with the dust and grime that stuck to the sweat on your feet. You may have left your house nice and clean, but then arrived caked in things you don't want to think about.

What would you do walking into someone's house, you don't want your mess all over their floors. The home owner didn't want your mess in their house either, so they would provide a service to those who came to visit. They would have a servant wash your feet and clean your shoes. Foot washing was a humble job, you touched their feet and whatever the person stepped in.

At the last supper the disciples rushed to the upper room, they picked their seats and settled in

without stopping to clean their feet. Jesus had a plan. He planned to teach them how to serve one another. In John 13:1-5 we see His actions.

1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. 2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Jesus took the humble job at just the right time to reveal His plans and purposes. Jesus demonstrated love to His disciples through washing their feet. He showed them how to serve one another by doing those things that no one wanted to do.

How can we follow Jesus' example and demonstrate love to one another? How can we serve one another? How can we set aside our personal preferences and demonstrate love to those that seem unlovable? This is the challenge Jesus gives us in washing the disciple's feet. He shows us how to love one another, even at inconvenient times.

You may not wash another person's feet, but maybe you can do something else? What is that thing you could do? It will be revealed at just the right time and it may be something that will stretch your preferences, but it is within your ability. God may be calling you to set aside your preferences and serve others as a demonstration of God's love. Be watching for ways you can show God's love to others.

Owing it all to God



The Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge Choir performed and gave testimonies for the Waseca Assembly congregation Sunday, March 26. Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

Challenge Choir at Christian Assembly

By MICHAEL ROY Editor

The Christian Assembly in Waseca played host to the Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge Choir Sunday, March 26.

Based out of Rochester, the choir has 42 members, all of whom were Christian men with troubled pasts. The purpose of the choir is not only to give them an outlet while fighting against addictions or working to become better people, but to help them find their faith in God.

Sara Friezen, who works within the Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge organization, shared that over 100,000 people in the United States died from alcohol-related issues in 2022, while in 2021, 107,000 people passed from chemical use.

"We're seeing the trends rising in large numbers every year since 2020," she said. "That's why we do

what we do and have the ministry that we have. We're in the business of saving lives. The Lord is doing amazing things through this program."

After further explaining the organization's mission, the challenge choir performed for the congregation, starting with "Amazing Grace." Throughout the performances, various members performed individual verses as solos. In between numbers, members shared testimonies of how they faced their addictions and troubles with the help of faith.

Christopher, the first to share a testimony, said that he was raised in a loving, Christian home. But when he turned 13, his family split and the stability he knew turned into everyone around him using alcohol and violence to cope with the problems. "We had left the church," Christopher said. "I found my comfort in

other teens with similar dysfunctions."

As an adult, he strived to better himself, and in 2015, when he first graduated from the Teen and Adult Challenge program, he built a better life and got married. He now has his family and church community "fighting for him."

"There's a battle for my life," he said. "What gets me sober is the Lord."

Another testimony came from Joelle, a 28-year-old who was born in Haiti but grew up in Wisconsin. He also struggled with addiction as a teen and found God. "It's amazing how backwards following God is, because the rest of the world tells you to put yourself first," he said.

Andrew Bruno, another 28-year-old from St. Paul, didn't know his parents for a while. "My mom wasn't ready for me," he said. "I grew up

with my grandparents. There was a lot of love, but not a lot of discipline."

He talked about the times he went to prison, bringing up how his father, who also went to prison, became a born-again Christian. It inspired him to find God himself and begin a relationship with his mother, who is going through a journey to his. "I'm proud of her; she is currently an assistant manager at Wendy's," he said.

After the testimonies and the choir's performance, Pastor Brad Wickersheim invited the congregation and the choir to make a semicircle, place a hand on each other's shoulders, and pray for each other. The congregation and the choir then enjoyed a potluck dinner after the service.

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Fear of attack

By SANTIAGO RAMIREZ OCAMPO

Brennan Manning, writer and preacher known particularly for declaring that: "the Lord loves you as you are, not as you should be because no one is as they should be." I discovered him precisely because of that statement, in the middle of a song by a Spanish singer, Alex Sampedro. The song is called Gracia. Even if you listen to it in Spanish, you will be able to understand Brennan's statement as it is in his voice in English. The thing is that this statement caught my attention, and soon, I discovered a couple of his books and preaching.

In one of his books—The signature of Jesus, 2004—Brennan is severe regarding the carrying and use of weapons here in the United States and even declares that if we would teach and apply one of the beatitudes that says: blessed are the peacemakers because they will be called children of God, maybe society would be different. I must confess that after four years of living in the United States and loving this country, I still cannot combine Christianity with carrying guns. In the beginning, even with many questions in between, I chose to respect the cultural difference and leave the issue there, that maybe I did not understand it because I come from another culture. The passing of the years has allowed me, I believe, to overcome that cultural barrier in many other aspects, so much so that I am still convinced, and with even more arguments than before, that I do not understand any justification for carrying weapons, no matter if it is legal or illegal.

This column, and I want to be emphatic in this, is from the lens of a Christian speaking to Christians. These words do not apply, nor are they directed to a person who does not believe that Jesus lives and does not recognize Him as the Savior and Lord of his life.

Why do we live in such fear of being attacked? I do not understand this persecution complex that we so-called contemporary Christians have. We believe that the whole world is against us, that they want to see us ruined, that the Aliens, Russia, China, or the communists are going to come and destroy us just because we dress nice, we have comforts, we go to church well groomed, immaculate, we tithe, and we are against homosexuality, abortion, sex outside of marriage, drug use and that kind of things that above all show moral hypocrisy. It amazes me time after time to see in the Bible how the apostles did not defend themselves from persecution but instead felt honored to be persecuted just as their Master was persecuted for preaching the Kingdom of Heaven! It's absolute madness wherever you look at it. Even Paul, a persecutor, is converted and suffers the aggravation, and if that were not enough, he goes around teaching to suffer annoyance too! I don't understand anything, as I do almost every time I read the Bible.

In the New Testament, the first followers of Jesus saw overcoming evil with sound as the call that Jesus gave them; they did not defend themselves when they were judged and singled out for living the life their Lord commanded them to live. And we, two thousand years later, are not able to sleep without having a gun in the house, or worse, on the night table because we feel unprotected, not that they come to mistreat us for being servants of Christ (which, if it were the case, the same son of God, Jesus, our Lord, in theory, told us: Blessed are you when they persecute you for my name, outrage you), but because they will take away all the comforts and technological world offers us.

I don't know, but something in all this is out of place. And we have yet to talk about wars.

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