



■ **Inside:**

- 3 - DECA meet
- 3 - Vice-President Lynch
- 4 - Teacher of the year
- 5 - I love to read
- 5 - School Board
- 6 - EOY Banquet
- 7 - Classifieds
- 8 - Exchange club
- 10-12 - Sports



Keegan Kuball, a sophomore wrestling at 285 pounds for WEM-JWP, defeated Cameron Scholten of Jackson County Central to become the 4th Grizzly individual state champion
Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Champions!!

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher

Waseca County schools sent nine wrestlers to the Minnesota State High School League tournament last weekend. Two of them found gold: Keegan Kuball of WEM-JWP and Annabelle Petsinger of NRHEG returned home state champions.

Kuball, a sophomore wrestling at 285 pounds, defeated Cameron Scholten of Jackson County Central to become the 4th Grizzly individual state champion. The two schools, WEM-JWP, co-opted in 2008. Will Storch was the last Grizzly to win gold at state at 220 pounds in 2018.

Petsinger, a junior wrestling 120 pounds in the girls' division, defeated Stillwater's Audrey Rogotzke to become NRHEG's first female state champion, and the school's 7th individual champion; the first since Krey Cory in 2007.

Going home with a bronze medal at 285 pounds was Makota Misgen of NRHEG. Misgen was a runner-up in the Class A state tournament in 2022 and lost to Kuball in this year's semifinals match.

Grizzly freshman Brady Murphy lost in heartbreaking fashion, coming home in fourth with both of his losses coming to Elijah Greenwaldt of Stapes Motley. Senior Jack Cahill, also a Grizzly, went 1-2 and was eliminated in the quarterfinals of the consolation bracket.

Waseca sent seniors Payton Garza, Christian Rodriguez and freshman Matthew Veroeven to the dance. Garza, wrestling at 195 pounds, was the lone Bluejay to log a victory, defeating Section 7 champion Jack Hanson by an 8-1 decision. Garza was then pinned by eventual state

State continued on 4



Annabelle Petsinger, a junior wrestling 120 pounds in the girls' division, defeated Stillwater's Audrey Rogotzke to become NRHEG's first female state champion, and only the school's 7th individual champion since the district's consolidation in the 1990s.
Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Chief Deputy Doug Gerdts

Gerdts adjusting to new role

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

In the middle of January, Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas announced Doug Gerdts as his chief deputy. Gerdts officially took the position January 28.

After more than two decades with the sheriff department, he is more than equipped to take on the role. At the same time, however, he admitted it is quite a transition for him.

"I worked the late-night 'power shift' the last 15 years," he said. "I was used to the evening calls and the dark when our office was closed for business. It was a big transition going from that shift to this. I was out and about dealing with what the usual deputy deals with. Now, I seldom leave the office since there's a lot to do here."

Originally from Freedom Township, Gerdts reminisced about growing up in the Waldorf-Pemberton school district with a Janesville phone number and a Waseca address.

After graduating from Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton in 1996, he earned his bachelor's degree in law enforcement in 2000. From there, he went straight to the Waseca County Sheriff's Department, where he started out as a jailer for two

Gerdts continued on 3

A word from
The Word

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Seven miles of memory

‘Ruck of hope’
By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

According to a report released by the United State Department of Veterans Affairs in November of 2022, an average of 121 veterans per day committed suicide in 2020. The number is 30 more a day than in 2001, but about 7 fewer than in 2018.

This frightening circumstance is hardly talked about in politics or anywhere else outside of a few veterans' circles. It is taking many lives, especially among veterans aged 18-34.

In response, veteran Jeremiah Miller, who served during the war in Afghanistan and is now an owner of Waseca's 4-Season Apparel and More, helped start "Ruck of Hope," an event that brings attention to the issue of veteran suicide to Waseca. A "ruck" is a walk or march taken while carrying a weight, often a rucksack.

"We started this event in 2015," he explained. "We wanted to spread awareness about people who served their country and later took their lives because they thought they were alone."

Sponsored by the Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Association, the "Ruck of Hope", held this year on March 4, brings people together — veterans, current military members, their families, and others who wanted to join — to take a seven-mile walk starting at Club 57, through downtown Waseca, around Clear Lake, and back to Club 57. This year, a group of fourteen people and three vehicles acting as escorts took part in the ruck.

Along with bearing a US flag and flags of their various organizations, members of the ruck are encouraged



Fourteen people joined in the Waseca Ruck of Hope on Saturday, March 4. In the front holding the sign is Kirk Mansfield of "Operation: 23 to 0." Third from the left in the second row is Jeremiah Miller, who helped start the event in Waseca.
Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

"We wanted to spread awareness about people who served their country and later took their lives because they thought they were alone."
— Jeremiah Miller

to wear a chain of pictures with them on the journey. The photos are of the local veterans and military members who have committed suicide during the past few years.

Throughout the walk, the service members and their families shared stories and exchanged contact information to potentially organize more events and create networks of resources for their fellow veterans.

This year, along with many others, Miller has collaborated with the organization "Operation: 23 to 0" for the event. The Minnesota branch of the organization is based out of Stillwater; its mission is to curb the rates of military suicide and provide resources and networks of support.

"We often find that it's never one thing that makes military members

commit suicide," Kirk Mansfield, a member of "Operation: 23 to 0" explained. "Oftentimes, it's a mix of things. Maybe they're going through a bad divorce and they're struggling to pay the bills. We're here to help them realize they are not alone. We want to help them out."

Outside of the seven-mile walk around the city, the groups usually have two rucks meet in Morristown; one starts in Waseca, and the other in Faribault, both walking toward the centrally located town.

"We haven't done that because Covid was an issue," Miller said. "The other problem is we haven't had many people participate."

Either way, the message will live on. As the ruck of fourteen gathered for lunch after their seven-mile walk



Jeremiah Miller and his dog Hope lead the group out of the Club 57 parking lot to start the 7-mile walk around Waseca.

at Club 57, their sign still showed their message to struggling veterans: "If you are looking for a sign to not kill yourself today, this is it. You are loved. You do belong. You are worthy."

Annual luncheon March 16

Charlie Priebe, Mark Bernard, Harguths celebrated

By TRISTAN JENSEN
Editorial Assistant

The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce will host its annual Farm and City Luncheon, March 16, at The Mill. An annual event since 2011, the focus of the gathering is to recognize farmers and connect them with business owners.. "It's an opportunity for businesses to see all the awesome things our farmers are doing," said Ann Fitch, Chamber executive director, "and to award leaders in agriculture in the county, the region and the state."

"Farmers do much more than farm the land," Fitch continued, explaining that historically Waseca County's farmers have done a lot to propel Minnesota agriculture to the forefront and that the Farm and City Luncheon is a time to recognize that. "It's amazing hearing all the stories," she added.

Doors will open at 11:45 and lunch is to be served at noon. The food is catered by the Pheas-

Luncheon continued on 8



The Roekers were recognized as the 2022 Waseca County Farm Family of the year during last year's Farm and City Luncheon. The Roeker family, Nash, Casey, Natalie, Hadley, and Preslie, are shown above just prior to receiving their award.
Photo by Eli Lutgens

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

County looks at health services

By TRISTAN JENSEN
Staff Writer

The Waseca County Commissioners gave a warm welcome to Carl Sonnenberg, the new city manager for the City of Waseca, at their regular meeting Tuesday, March 7. He expressed his thanks to the board for their support for the city, and closed his comments by adding he hoped they could "work on building bridges, and leave that tug-of-war behind us."

Sarah Berry, county public health director, presented the board with a grant plan to expand the county's services through Healthy Smiles, a program offering dental cleanings, fluoride varnish, and sealants to eligible residents. Leah Cameron, business manager for county public health, successfully applied for a \$10,000 grant through Delta Dental. Under the plan approved by the board, the money will be used to reimburse Healthy Smiles for services provided to uninsured or underinsured individuals. This will expand the eligibility for the Healthy Smiles program in Waseca County, as previously only those with medical assistance or state-provided insurance could take advantage of the program.

A public hearing is set for the March 21 board meeting regarding fee changes for county public health which were not included in the original list of changes for 2023 due to a miscommunication. The purpose of the fee changes will be to bring fees in line with state insurance reimbursements to maximize revenue while avoiding large write-offs of costs not covered by insurance. The proposed fee changes are as follows: Education for Lactation consultations increased from \$50.29 to \$120, Quadrivalent and high-dose flu vaccines increased from \$60 to \$69.94, single-dose flu vaccine decreased from \$60 to \$21.52, and home nurse visits increased from \$123 to \$200. Also, "other injectable administrations" will be changed to "public health nurse clinic" to better match bil-

Waseca continued on 4



Compostings

by Al Batt

copyright © 2022 by Al Batt

Miss Batt is #1

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

My pen can write underwater. That's impressive. That's nothing. It can write other words too.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Deep thoughts occur as I drive past his drive. Charles Dickens wrote, "It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade." Charlie must live in my neighborhood.

The road can get bumpy whether it's real or metaphorical. The night had provided a certain yuckiness. The fog was bad enough that I felt my way home. I met a couple of cars with headlights so bright they could have peeled the skin from an elephant. I should have been wearing a welding helmet. I'm glad the drivers could see well in the dark and far into the next dimension, but they're blinding the world one driver at a time. When this happens, I'm told I should blink more often.

Safely at home, an orange cat named Velfero sat on my lap and purred loudly. She got her moniker because of her determination to remain on my lap when I need her to leave. She sticks to her spot. Her name is subject to change as the naming rights are available for purchase.

ASK AL

"What did you want to be when you grew up?" On vacation.

"What was the original name of your hometown?" Ithinkwearlost.

"I need a password that contains at least eight characters and one capital. Any suggestions?" Mickey Minnie Pluto Huey Louie Dewey Donald Goofy Topeka.

"What's the funniest thing about golf?" That people play it voluntarily. "What is the best way to eat lute-fisk?" With bitter resentment.

"You've done book signings. What question do you get the most often?" Where are the restrooms?

I'VE LEARNED

The best way to know what the weather will be tomorrow is to wait until tomorrow.

A sign on a cafe reading "No TV" would be inviting.

BAD JOKE DEPARTMENT

What do you call two guys with shovels standing by a hole?" Doug and Phil.

What do you call a singing pod of killer whales? An orcappella.

Why couldn't Cyclops spell "Ha-

waii"?? Because it takes two i's.

THE KINDNESS OF KIDS

My granddaughter Joey is a college basketball player. She is a junior, first-team all-conference, the conference's defensive player of the year, all-academic team member, captain, on the all-tourney squad, leads her team in scoring and assists, led the conference in steals, and is student teaching. Her team is 25-4. After a loss, she entered her classroom to find a basketball signed by all her students and a huge poster reading, "Miss Batt You are still #1 to us."

NATURE NOTES

In the wild kingdom of my yard, not to be confused with "Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom," I watched the comings and goings of the birds at my feeders. The weather had been variable, but I could depend on the squirrels. I'm glad to have them in my world. A friend bemoaned the price of nyjer seed. I advised him to do what I've done and put out a tip jar by the feeder.

My birthday is in March. When I was a sapling, March was our snowiest month and I could count on a storm during the state high school tournaments and when my birthday party was supposed to be. Now, depending on who you consult and where you live in the state, March falls behind December, January and February in snowfall.

White-tailed deer bucks shed antlers in December to mid-March. Stress caused by deep snow, severe cold or hunger could rush the process. Edges of fields where the deer feed, along well-traveled trails and the southern exposures of bedding areas are good places to look for dropped antlers. The whitetail rut or breeding season runs from early October to late December. May is the month when most fawns are born.

A large flock of red-winged blackbirds hit my yard on March 1, the first day of meteorological spring. Migrant adult males stop here on their way to their territories farther north and don't exhibit territorial behavior. Backyard music isn't far away as the next wave consists of adult male redwings returning to the previous year's territories, which they defend vigorously and sing "Look at me" with gusto from perches. Next to arrive are the females on their way north and immature males. The resident adult females hear the weather report and show up later.

MEETING ADJOURNED

If you can't see kindness from your windows or on your digital screens, see it in your mirror.

Congratulations to area wrestlers

I would like to start this column congratulating a special sophomore on becoming a state champion: Kegan Kuball.

Watching him wrestle is always entertaining. My favorite matches are when he faces Makota Misgen, who wrestles for conference rival NRHEG. Every single match I've seen the two wrestle, Kuball's beaten Misgen. I think there was one time when he got a pin over Misgen, which is a rarity. You can't take down Makota.

You could just tell when Kuball stepped on the court that he had a special talent. He could wrestle in the 220 or 285 weight bracket. He took down a lot of opponents easily this season, from Mason Degrood of Medford to Vincent Hernandez of Westfield, two very good wrestlers in the conference.

I want to congratulate Makota as well: he placed third in the state tournament. He's great to watch whenever I am not covering WEM-JWP. He gives every one of his opponents a hard time. It might not always be pretty, but oftentimes he will find a way to win in the end, even if it just takes one escape. I also cannot forget to mention that Misgen took second



Music to my Ears

by Michael Roy

copyright © 2022 by Michael Roy

place last season.

Thank you, Makota, for always giving Kuball a run for his money, especially this year.

I want to also congratulate Matthew Veroeven, Payton Garza, and Christian Rodriguez of Waseca for the seasons they have had individually. It's crazy the talent of some of these wrestlers. Veroeven won his section match at 220 as a freshman!

It's also sad to see Payton and Christian end their season despite making the state tournament. At least Garza can say he was able to win a match, and Rodriguez can brag that he made it to state twice.

I think this was the first year I really grasped some of the terms for wrestling. I know the difference between a near fall and a technical fall. For someone who watched a limited amount of wrestling (and a lot of that

was from the WWE), you can't blame me for not knowing the difference. When I looked at it, I thought, "What's the difference? Is it the length that the wrestler holds their opponent on the ground?"

Now I know that a tech fall is when the wrestler didn't make the person fall, but took down their opponent so many times that they accumulated 15 or more points. It's a bit of mercy to their opponent. And a near fall is when you sit on top of someone and you almost get both shoulders on the mat for a good amount of time.

I also now understand the difference between a decision and a major decision. A decision is when someone wins the match, and a major decision is when they win a match by 8-14 points.

Next season, I will understand

what constitutes a caution and a penalty. I get the gist of it, but when is a caution or a warning considered a penalty. When can you reward to a wrestler with a point?

As the winter season closes, we look forward to warmer temperatures and all the sports happening outside. I have a feeling it will be one fun spring season.

This week in music

Never mind what happened this very week in 1979. We're celebrating a champion, and by golly I'm going to share facts about one of the greatest champion anthems of all time.

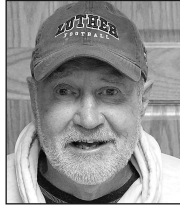
"We Are the Champions" is one of Queen's most recognizable hits. An anthem all its own, it follows "We Will Rock You," another sports anthem played the world over.

"We are the Champions" hit number 4 on the US chart and 2 on the UK chart in 1977. After the death of Freddie Mercury, it hit number 52 on the US chart in the early 1990s. Since then, it has popped up on various charts. It received platinum status in the UK and US while the digital version has reached quadruple platinum status in the US.

Everyone deserves good conversation

As I move on in my golden (or is that rusty?) years, depending on how you look at it, the three most important things to me are family, friends, and good health.

Everyone needs good friends for conversation and good mental health. People associate with different friends by attending clubs. It may be a weekly get-together for a cup of coffee and conversation; the coffee club, or a monthly get-together with card games, conversation, and good food; the card club. On a beautiful summer day you will find a group of friends playing a round of golf at an area country club. There are entertaining movies you can watch on



Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika

copyright © 2022 by Dave Zika

your TV like The Breakfast Club. I'd like to tell you about the best club I've ever observed, one my wife Lisa is a member of, the book club.

Book club members are Lisa Zika, Steph Rollenhagen, Carolyn Gilbertson, Karen Buum, Lori Veldboom who drives from Menomonie, WI,

and Sandy Connolly who drives from Edina. Barb Wirtz and Ruth Ann Hager have passed away but are still honored and celebrated by the group members.

The book club began over 25 years ago because Oprah Winfrey was doing one. The idea inspired the

ladies to start their own club. Lisa, the self-appointed president, made up a one-year schedule for the second Thursday of each month. The hostess of the month makes a meal, drinks, and has a book for everyone. They get used books to keep the price down. Many emails take place trying to find a book that everyone hasn't read. That can be tricky since Steph is a voracious reader. The books are passed out by the hostess, to be read by the next meeting for discussion.

Once a year in January, they have

Zika continued on 3

Old Spanish ladies give the best hype



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

copyright © 2022 by Amelia Roessler

then Teresa chimed in agreeing. It literally made my day. They are so charming.

I love having conversations with my host mom now. We typically talk for about an hour every night at dinner and it's usually so wholesome. We have bonded over music. I showed her three songs from the musical In The Heights and she patiently listened to all three because there's a little Spanish in them - it was so cute. Last night she showed me some of her favorite Spanish songs that she will listen to when she's cooking. They were mostly by the singer Isabel Pantoja; Now I have a number of her songs in my music

library.

Teresa has been happily married to her husband Daniel for many years now, but she said at this point they mostly just co-exist. She loves to go out with friends and she still absolutely loves dancing, which is cool considering she is around 75. Daniel, on the other hand, doesn't talk much and loves to sit on the couch and watch sports. Teresa doesn't like sports, and Daniel doesn't like going out and being social, so they just are. Freedom, Teresa says, is super important in a relationship. Daniel doesn't question when Teresa goes out with her friends and vice versa. She has advised me that if a man in

my life ever becomes controlling, I should drop him - I need my freedom and independence. Daily life advice from Teresa.

As I mentioned before, this week's adventure will be visiting Valencia, Spain as a class. I'm super excited. Teresa says that I should really listen to the music of Valencia, because it's some of her favorite. She also says that a cold swim in the ocean would be good. I guess it's a tradition similar to the polar plunge. Although a dive into freezing water is probably not among my plans, I will say I am thrilled to be going to the beach and, when we go to Mallorca later on, on an island. I am expecting a fantastic week, touring Spain and making more memories. I will let you all know how it goes!

My Determination: "All men are at least 30% attracted to me. My mother cried the day I was born because she knew she would never be better than me." - Gina Linetti, 'Brooklyn Nine-Nine'

Time can go by in the blink of an eye

As I sit here and blink, another hour goes by. Such is the life of a writer and reporter.

My week of "newsing" was action packed. Two state champions, two basketball seasons concluding, and the careers of too many seniors to list coming to a close.

Last thursday night the Bluejays played and lost to the Panthers in the second round of the sub-section playoffs. Final games, moments, careers, are full of emotion. For the Panthers, their season, and the careers of assistant coach John Schultz, father of senior Sidney Schultz, continued. For the Jays, careers of five seniors, four of whom were starters, came to an end.

I spoke with all of them, (well Kloe Wadd representing the Jays' seniors) as well as the head coaches.

I waited awhile and let folks take photos, as I also did. It didn't help.



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

copyright © 2022 by Eli Lutgens

Coach Conway was crying. Kloe was crying. And I felt something similar. I remember playing my final game and I remember how it felt.

Talking with those kind folks is a part of my job that I love. It's real, it's raw, and it motivates me. I want to do a good job for them, all of them—their friends, families, parents, and teammates. I work really hard to produce a story and photos that can make those people smile. It really makes me happy.

So that was Thursday.

Friday started with a long drive up

to the state capital to watch two days of state tournament wrestling.

I arrived late, and needed about a half hour to figure out what was going on; thus I did not get there in time to get photos of Christian and Matthew. That sucked. A lot.

I did, however, watch several dozen wrestling matches, and "photographize" about 7,000 stills.

Two state championships, an unexpected hotel stay (due to exhaustion and my unwillingness to drive home after spending 10 hours at the Xcel Energy Center) and a half

dozen interviews later, my Friday and Saturday were complete.

I started work Friday morning and didn't stop, (except for sleep and basic functions) until I arrived home just before midnight on Saturday.

And now, Sunday. NRHEG threw a welcome home party for their wrestlers and I, well I haven't stopped writing since I woke up today.

I just finished my basketball wrap up for the Waseca girls' season, and well, I blinked, and oh, I blinked again (writing this column) and a total of two hours passed.

Here's to hoping I get everything done.

"The time in your life can go by in the blink of an eye, so look for what lasts a lifetime."

— J.R. Rim, Better to be Able to Love Than to be Loveable



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

PHONE: 507-837-6767

email: news@wasecacountypioneer.com

Address: 103 S. State Street

Mail: PO Box 578, Waseca MN 56093

DEADLINES: Pioneer: Noon Tuesday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

ELI LUTGENS
MICHAEL ROY
REED WALLER
DEB BENTLY
JIM LUTGENS
TRISTAN JENSEN
RACHEL LOVERINK
MELISSA DUNN
JESSICA LUTGENS
AMELIA ROESSLER
MELANIE PILTINGSRUD

Publisher
Editor
Production Manager
News Editor
Sports Editor/Dad
Editorial Assistant
Staff Writer
Staff Writer
Staff Writer
Staff Writer

Contributing writers/photographers: Chris Schlaak, Santiago Ramirez, Al Batt, Dave Zika, Ken Andris, Santiago Ramirez, Joan Mooney, Robert Tackett

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

Waseca County Pioneer (USPS permit #25304) is published weekly on Friday, by Pioneer Publications Inc., 103 S. State St., Waseca, MN, 56093. Periodicals Postage at New Richland, MN. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Waseca County Pioneer, P.O. Box 578, Waseca, MN, 56093.

Lynch named a vice president at Keen Bank

Sara Lynch has been promoted and named a Vice President of Keen Bank. Lynch will continue her role in mortgage lending and provides more than 22 years of banking experience—originating with mortgage loans for primary residence, second homes, seasonal homes, recreational land and investment family homes, home equity loans and lines of credit.

“I am proud and honored to name Sara Lynch as a Vice President of Keen Bank,” said Bernie Gaytko, President and CEO of Keen Bank. “Sara has excelled in every position she has held with our bank. Her customer service skills, dedication to excellence and knowledge of residential home mortgages has been a critical driver of the growth and success we have had as a community bank. I am excited to watch her continued growth and feel privileged to be able to work alongside the wonderful talent and dedication of Sara and the bank’s team of mortgage professionals.”



Lynch



Chief Deputy Doug Gerdts with Sheriff Jay Dulas who appointed him to his new position.

■ Gerdts

from Page 1

years. He was promoted to a patrol deputy and remained in the position for some time prior to being selected as the chief deputy.

“It’s the only law enforcement job I’ve worked,” he said.

Gerdts explained his new role as chief deputy as “a lot of office management.” Some of the things he needs to take care of in his position include managing the fleet of vehicles in the sheriff’s department, taking charge of evidence collected, handling forfeited vehicles, and scheduling training for employees.

“Along with Dulas, we’re currently the people that the staff go to since we currently don’t have a sergeant,” Gerdts explained.

In his new position, he has learned some procedures that he’s never had to handle before. “I’ve learned how to deal with forfeited vehicles, outfitting new squad cars with new equipment to replace old cars, and learning the back end of managing evidence,” Gerdts said. “The evidence handling is similar to what you see in cop TV shows. There’s a back area and everything.”

What’s changed the most, however, is the shift of responsibility. “Before, I was mostly responsible for myself,” he elaborated. “I was mostly making sure I was complying with policies. Now, part of my job is ensuring all employees are doing what they’re supposed to do. I am now the one they go to for questions and guidance.”

As a 23-year member of the sheriff’s department, he said that there are still some things he is learning on the job. “It doesn’t matter how long you’ve been in law enforcement. You deal with an emergency with your instincts. But sometimes, you have to step back and look at the big picture. Maybe you have to look into past case law or make a call to an expert to manage the situation and finish out the incident.”

Gerdts takes great pride in the quality of service that Waseca has provided to the public. His biggest goal as chief deputy is to continue maintaining that. “I’ve been fortunate enough to work with administrators who support the partnerships we have with the residents of the county,” he added.

While Gerdts has not seen much unrest in Waseca County, he was interviewed by the Star Tribune two years ago for a story headlined, “In rural Minnesota, where

cops and community are familiar, Derek Chauvin trial looks different.” The article explored how the Derek Chauvin trial affected rural communities. Gerdts was quoted in the article saying, “Anonymity breeds mistrust. In small towns, recognition breeds mutual respect.”

He was a witness to that firsthand during a protest in Owatonna in the thick of the riots following the death of George Floyd. The Waseca County Sheriff’s Department was called in to help barricade and protect the law enforcement service center located in the city.

“We weren’t supposed to let anyone around the barricades,” he explained. “A woman who was African American walked into the barricade area. I told her, ‘Sorry, but I can’t let you go through.’ She insisted she had to do something for us.”

Gerdts wasn’t sure what he expected. What she did, though, was hug every single officer protecting the barricade.

“We were getting yelled at and had pop and water bottles thrown at us,” Gerdts said. “But to have somebody who was very well aware of the racial tension that was taking place nationwide give us all a hug...it recharged the battery for us. It reminded us we are here for everybody, and not everybody hates us. It made dealing with the protests easier, because you knew people still supported us.”

At the same time, it seems like all over the nation, retirements and resignations of police officers are at an all-time high. “We’re feeling it everywhere,” Gerdts said. “We’re being told that there aren’t enough students in law enforcement programs in colleges to fill our current vacancies.”

The average retirement age throughout Minnesota for officers in law enforcement is currently 55. “I can retire in ten years, but we might not have enough officers at that time,” he admitted.

Whatever comes Gerdts’ way during his time as chief deputy, what he’s experienced out on patrol and in his first month in his new position will have him ready to take on just about anything. And if he doesn’t know the answer, he’ll know where to get it.

“I love what I’m doing,” he concluded. “Waseca County has been my home all my life. I want to become an expert at my job and continue helping our employees to be better at what they do and be confident in their abilities. I want to encourage them to be leaders in our community. That is a main goal of mine as chief deputy.”



The “Music in Our Schools” concert presented Friday March 3 by the Waseca High School Choir featured “all the singable parts” of the musical Hamilton.

Pioneer photo by Tristan Jensen

Concert features variety of styles

By TRISTAN JENSEN
Staff Writer

The Waseca High School vocal music department presented their 2023 “Music in Our Schools” concert on Friday, March 3, featuring the eighth through twelfth grade choirs. All choirs were directed by Tim Delnay, with Melissa Schulz serving as accompanist. The concert got its name because March is Music in Our Schools Month, a month to celebrate and support school music programs set aside by the National Association for Music Education for more than thirty years.

The Eighth Grade Ensemble, Waseca’s youngest show choir group, opened the show with two numbers. First they performed Taylor Swift’s “Me!,” written by Swift, Little, and Urie and arranged by Snyder. This was followed by “Try Everything,” arranged by Billingsley and popularly known from the movie “Zootopia.”

The Male and Female Sextets performed next, with Tracy Kopetzki serving as accompanist for their numbers. Each performed their Solo/Ensemble Contest piece, which both groups will take to the state contest. The gentlemen performed “Across the Western Ocean,” a sea ballad arranged by Jerry Estes. The ladies performed “Music, When Soft Voices Die,” by Victor C. Johnson.

The full eighth grade choir performed next, with a set centered around early America and the struggles faced in that era. The set began with “The Power of Unity,” by Jonathan Shippey, which Delnay said was intended to encourage overcoming divisions. This was followed by an African American spiritual, “Follow the Drinking Gourd,” arranged by John Horman and a traditional American work song, “This Old Hammer,” arranged by Neil Ginsberg.

At this point in the show, Delnay made a request. Three times, he called “Can we get a little more help out here, please?” As the Concert and Select Choirs gradually joined the eighth grade choir onstage. Together, the combined choirs performed the Beatles song “Help,” written by Lennon and McCartney.

The Concert Choir performed next, with three songs. First was “Festival Cantate,” a Latin song with translation, by Victor C. Johnson. Next, they performed “Melt the Winter into Spring,” by Joseph M. Martin, which Delnay remarked had begun to happen the day of the concert. The concert choir finished with a traditional American folk song, “Simple Gifts,” arranged by Andy Beck.

Select Choir also performed a three-song set, beginning with “Cantate Domino,” by Mark Hayes, which Delnay informed the audience was about half-Latin and half-English. This was followed by “Sure on this Shining Night,” by Morten Lauridsen, and “Sogno di Volare” by Christopher Tin. Tin’s piece translates to “Song of Flight,” and was written to be the main theme for the video game Sid Meyer’s Civilization 6 based on writings by Leonardo Da Vinci. Nathanael Andrs, Will King, and Ava Norland first read the audience a translation of the text, before the choir performed the entirely Latin piece. This is a piece which Delnay said he was especially excited to be able to program after having it on his radar for some time. “It’s such a dynamic piece but needs a good sized choir to pull off well,” he explained.

To close the evening’s performances, the full combined choirs performed together again, with the number “Hamilton Highlights,” written by Lin Manuel Miranda and arranged by Lisa DeSpain. Delnay explained the piece was essentially “all the singable parts” of Hamilton: An American Musical, leaving out the rap pieces which are much more difficult for a large group. Numerous soloists were featured during the final number, from all choirs. They were Adrian Arreguin, Hailey Dewttmer, Addie Epper, Cece Hutmier, Eryn Harrison, Aubree Hansen, Elliot Galle, Aiden Harrison, Aidan Androli, Ava Norland, and Will King.

State DECA Competition



Waseca students who competed at the State DECA Competition March 5-7 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Minneapolis were, from left: Katelynn Hodgkins, Lauren Grant, Remy Murphy, Sophie Chawra, Charlotte Steglich, Ella Sexton, McKyla Hasselquist, Riley Ruedy and Jakub Eull.

■ Zika

from Page 1

a slumber party at Karen Boom’s house. Club members arrive—and later go home— in their jammies. Sometimes movies are watched that correspond to a book they have read. Karen has a third floor with enough beds for all; comfy and cozy.

The club’s annual retreat takes place in September at the North Shore. They leave on Thursday and return on Monday. It’s a real hoort

watching them load the van and cars with coolers and bags. They have enough luggage and supplies to stay for a month. Meals are assigned by the president and many new recipes are exchanged. Lazy days ensure reading, napping, watching the waves, and playing cards. Bonfires and programs are led by Carolyn who makes them a highlight for each trip. Sometimes they travel to Grand Marais to do some shopping. They look forward to this trip every year.

The husband’s job for the meetings is an easy one. Help clean the house for the ladies, do some shopping for groceries, help with some of the

cooking, make sure sidewalks are cleaned in the winter, and be a pleasant greeter. After all of the ladies have arrived, the men retreat (read as “get lost”) to another room, where they typically watch TV for five hours and listen with envy to the laughter and good times the club members have together. When the last lady has left, it’s time to reflect with clean-up and the dishwasher.

Over the years, the book club has grown into something much bigger than reading books, serving good food, and sharing true friendship. The group has grown into a family—a family of six sisters. They are al-

ways there for each other during good times and bad. They love each other for the people they are, finding beauty in their quirks and imperfections. They always offer a shoulder to cry on, listen to problems, and celebrate when things are going well. The book club members check on each other frequently with phone calls and emails; they are forever loyal to each other.

On a good health note: I recently received my second shingles shot. The shot is totally covered by Medicare.

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

Waseca
507-835-5240
888-835-5245

Janesville
507-234-5106
888-835-5245

Owatonna
507-451-9000
866-451-9010

Faribault
507-332-7425

www.phblawoffice.com

GUARDIAN ENERGY

Collaboration. Scale. Excellence.

Marianna Mayo
Associate Merchandiser

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

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

DRS. AKRE & CLARK
FAMILY EYE CARE
FORMALLY WASECA OPTOMETRIC CENTER

Now serving Waseca:

Drs. Kora Amunrud and John Gutfleisch

Our health care team is committed to providing our patients with unsurpassed comprehensive eyecare.

1715 S. Broadway
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-354-8531

623 W. Rock St
Springfield, MN 56087
507-723-2020

1111 2nd St. NE
Waseca, MN 56093
507-835-2020

Donation



Marian Keller and Janet Welch, both representatives of the Hope Chapter #34 Order of the Eastern Star presented checks to the Waseca Area Food Shelf Tuesday, Mar. 7. The two checks totaled \$1,000 in donations, which were raised at the Waseca Masonic Lodge breakfast in December. Garry Huckfeldt, who helps run the Waseca Food Shelf, accepted the checks. Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

■ Waseca from Page 1

ling language, and will increase from \$5 to \$50.

Dr. Daniel Berg has agreed to provide medical consultant services to Waseca County Public Health, a service he's already providing in Le Sueur County; the contract was approved by the board. Statutes require the public health department to have a licensed physician as a contracted medical consultant to provide direction and protocols for immunization programs and other resources. This is a service Dr. Berg provides to the communities he serves at no cost.

The board approved a cooperative construction agreement with the City of Janesville for rehabilitation of County State Access Highway 43 (Teal Street). The costs are to be split 78% paid by the county and 22% by the city. The engineer's estimate for the project is \$176,030.50, which leaves the county to pay \$137,098.75 while the City of Janesville pays \$38,931.75. Waseca County will be able to use county state aid municipal funds, which are set aside for expenditures on county state-aid highways within cities with a population under 5,000.

Only one bid was received for the county's annual pavement marking project, which this year aims to re-stripe 67 miles of county roads with reflective paint. The bid, from Sir Lines-A-Lot, LLC, is for \$105,508.13, which is about 33% over the county engineer's estimate for the project. After consideration, the board decided to accept the bid, as adequate road

markings are an important safety issue, and to keep a close eye on costs as they approach the \$70,000 allotted in the 2023 budget for restriping. The board will review the mileage covered and decide whether to defer some roads to next year or allow the project to go over-budget based on the amount left to complete. The board's other options were to reject the bid and ask for rebidding, which would be unlikely to have favorable results given only one bid was received, or to immediately defer some roads to next year to reduce the amount of re-striping to be contracted.

Two resolutions were passed for the drainage authority. Resolution 2023-08 makes changes to an agreement between Waseca County and Waseca County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for inspections required by the 2017 Buffer Law of public waterways and drainage systems. In 2017, county staff did not have the resources to perform required inspections and contracted with SWCD to maintain compliance. Now, with the creation of the Land and Water Resources Department in the county, that department will take on responsibility for inspecting drainage systems, while SWCD continues to handle public waters. The resolution also covers a change in how costs to SWCD are covered from a stipend to a billing system. Resolution 2023-09 states that 65% of wages in the Land and Water Resources Department, the amount determined by a study of time spent on public drainage systems, are to be covered by assessments to beneficiary landowners. This is not an extra assessment, but part of the regular yearly assessments. Minnesota Statutes require the costs of services to public drainage systems to be covered by assessments in this manner.

Musicianship



A group of four students from the Waseca Band Program finished 1st in the Ensemble portion of the MAYSO Young Artists Competition. Group members, from left, Elias Nevalainen, Mason Jes, Noah Dahle and Ethan Stenzel were each awarded a \$500 prize for their incredible musicianship and high level of professionalism.

■ State from Page 1

champion Joey Novak of New Prague, who pinned his way to the title to finish with a 51-2 record. Rodriguez was decisioned 11-2

in the opening round by Rock Ridge junior Damian Tapio, the Section 7 champion who dropped a 3-2 decision in the quarterfinals before going on to take fourth place and finish 48-7.

Veroeven was pinned by Maxx Olson of FMCW, a senior who did not place and compiled a 38-8 record. Veroeven finished 29-10.

Delacruz Pro-Start teacher of the year

By DEB BENTLY Staff Writer

Kelly Delacruz admits she didn't see it coming.

During a statewide event on Feb. 28 in the Twin Cities, it was announced that she had been selected as the statewide winner of the program's "teacher of the year" award. As the details of the winner's career were being itemized and becoming more and more familiar, she suddenly realized it was her—and struck her neighbor, NRHEG principal David Bunn, in the knee.

"That's when I realized why he had come," she admits.

Pro-Start is a high-school based career and technical education (CTE) program sponsored by the National Restaurant Association. As the name implies, students who choose to take part get a start on professional preparation in the hospitality and culinary industries.

Delacruz had brought two five-student teams to this year's state competition, whose rules required each group to prepare an appetizer, an entree and a side dish from scratch—within 60 minutes and without electricity—while meeting all food safety and serving standards. Having prepared and trained the two NRHEG teams, she was not allowed to interact with them during the competition. "I could only take pictures and watch from a distance," she recalls. "It was very hard not to say anything."

It was during the mid-day banquet that her award was announced.

Although she jokes she has no idea how she was selected, Delacruz admits she might have caught on a bit

sooner.

"For one thing, my program is growing rather quickly," she observes. The NRHEG Pro-Start program brought one team to last year's statewide events, two to this year's. Learner interest in the in-school training and certification has taken Delacruz from 14 students at last year's beginning to nearly 30 registered for next year. Participants can decide to stay in the program for two years, and can complete the requirements for a food-handling certification that is a doorway directly into industry.

"This is a workforce that hasn't been available before," she observes. "Businesses in the community have reached out to me because we can provide exactly what they need."

"We're saving local nursing homes and restaurants money because they don't have to pay these workers while they're acquiring the needed qualifications."

Another factor, Delacruz suggests, are a range of accomplishments within the five years she has been on NRHEG's staff.

Hired in spring of 2018, Delacruz began teaching in September. That year the district learned there was community support for a funding referendum which expanded and broadened the CTE programs at the school.

During her second year with the district, Delacruz joined the school's science teachers and fellow CTE instructors Dan Sorum and Brad Root as they explored options for expansion and put together plans for the various facilities.

Using other programs and profes-



MN Pro-Start teacher of the year, NRHEG's Kelly Delacruz. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

sional experience as a foundation, Delacruz designed an expanded FACS classroom which provides space both for traditional deskwork and for "lab" stations with industrial grade work surfaces and equipment.

That space is now in its third year of use. Courses taught in it range from middle-school and high-school "life skills," to the upper-level Pro-Start classes. "Life skills will always be important," observes Delacruz. "Some of those fundamental abilities are important for home life, of course, but will also be helpful to students in industry. They can be applied at home, but also enhance a student's employability."

One important example is teamwork. "I expect my students to work together to accomplish the many individual elements of the larger tasks," says Delacruz. "If they complain about who they're assigned as partners, I point out to them that no future employer is going to ask who

they would rather be working with." Observations of that type, as well as the industrial-grade surroundings, not only encourage learners to acquire skills they can use every day, Delacruz comments, they may also open students' minds to the possibility of a someday-job in the hospital-ity field.

A final indicator Delacruz says she might have taken note of is that the NRHEG district's strong support of the FACS program makes it possible for her to do excellent work. "I'm really grateful to the school for trusting me," she says. "Following my recommendations for the design of my classroom, allowing participation in these specialized programs, listening to and giving genuine consideration to some of my plans."

"It's a great environment for growth—and apparently for excellence."

Water line break on 1st St. discussed

By JESSICA LUTGENS Staff Writer

During its Feb. 27 meeting, the New Richland City Council discussed issues with water valves that were discovered following a recent water line break on First St. SW. When the break occurred, the valves were not able to shut off the water, resulting in concern from Maintenance Supervisor Eric Hendrickson.

"We have to take a serious look at [the valves] when redoing the roads," Hendrickson said.

It was noted that an engineer from Bolton & Menk will be visiting the city due to the water issues; that visit will allow time for further discussions on the issue. One important question is whether the issue is solely with the valves or with the water and sewer infrastructure itself. Mayor Chad Neitzel noted that three water main breaks in the last few years all occurred within the same city block; administrator Tony Martens said that

First St. SW in particular is an issue.

The possibility of replacing the valves during street work this summer was discussed. The matter will be revisited by the council following the meeting with Bolton & Menk.

Also discussed in the water and streets report were the purchase of a new lawn mower and the possibility of having city fire hydrants sand-blasted and repainted. The purchase of a new lawn mower was tabled to the next meeting; a list of fire hydrants in need of repair will be made and a quote obtained for the next council meeting. A purchase request for new shop grates at a cost of \$990 was approved, along with the report.

Shell Johnson presented the PeopleService report, stating that there have been issues with floats in the preliminary building that are supposed to set off an alarm when there is an excessive amount of water in the building. Last month's mercury sam-

NEW RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL

ples were up from previous years, which is "something we will have to look at" according to Johnson. The report was approved.

Bob Johannsen presented the Care Center report, stating that the census at the time of the meeting was 37 out of 45 beds filled, or 82%. The average first quarter census was at 81%.

"Financials look very positive for the month of January," Johannsen said, attributing this to a rate increase during the month, an improvement in Medicare numbers, payroll deduction and an employee effort to reduce waste. The reduced staffing hours saved the center thousands, and the center continues to work with staffing agencies to fill gaps in schedules while also working on a recruitment plan to reduce agency use, which is costly.

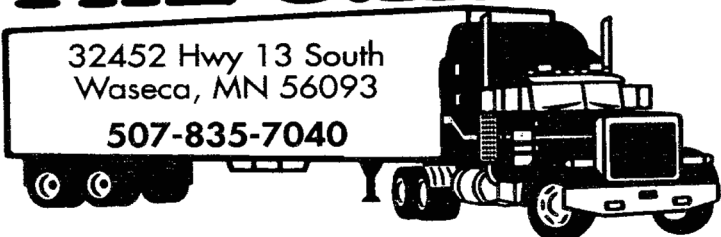
Johannsen noted that the facility continues to have trouble finding nurse aid, though the center is able to employ non-certified staff through June as long as the staff are willing to take a class and get certified within 60 days of employment. The report was approved.

In unfinished business, Martens noted that a head lifeguard has been secured for this year's swimming lesson program. Sessions and schedules will be communicated as more information becomes available. The emergency warning siren for the bowling alley in town was discussed, and, due to a price increase expected in March, the purchase and installation of the siren at a cost of up to \$28,756 was approved pending a second quote. It was noted that the siren cost will be paid initially by the city, with reimbursement via a grant to follow.

The administrator's report was approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

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

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

THE S.H.O.P.
32452 Hwy 13 South
Waseca, MN 56093
507-835-7040

BRIAN HARGUTH KEITH JOHNSON

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

AND
RESIDENTIAL
SNOW REMOVAL
Call Today!
Zach Battenfeld
521-0226
Battenfeld Lawn Care

**WASECA FLORAL**
810 N. State Street
507-835-3790 or 800-469-3790
www.wasecafloral.com
Hours: 8-6 M-F, 9-5 Sat
Rick Morris Master Florist

Brilliant Bluejays



Hartley Bluejays meet once per month for a Bluejay Way Assembly. During their March gathering these “Brilliant Bluejays” were recognized for going above and beyond in the R4 area of respecting learning. They were Kindergarten, Messer Schultz; 1st grade, Landyn Albrecht; 2nd grade, Abigail Sommers; 3rd grade, Reese Roemhildt; Specialists, Daniel Monson and staff, Ms. Gabby.

Senator Jasinski capital update

Friends and neighbors – This week, we learned that the state of Minnesota once again has a \$17.5 billion surplus. It is a number so large it can be difficult to wrap your head around. At the capitol, discussions are focusing on what to do with this money.

My position is clear: This is not the government's money - it's your money. You worked hard for it, and you deserve to get it back.

That's why my Senate Republican colleagues and I rolled out our Give it Back plan, which would give back the surplus to you, the taxpayers. Our plan is tax relief for today and tomorrow through a combination of \$12 billion worth of tax cuts and rebate checks.

We would cut income taxes for every Minnesotan, fully eliminate taxes on Social Security benefits, provide a child tax credit to help young families, provide property tax relief for homeowners, and send rebate checks directly to Minnesotans.

This plan would boost our economy, create jobs, and help people who are feeling the stress of inflation and the high costs of everyday life. It would also prevent wasteful spending and government growth that would lead to future deficits.

Unfortunately, Governor Walz and Democrats want to spend more of your money on their pet projects and special interests. Not only do they want to spend the surplus, but they also want to raise your taxes on top of it. It's bad for our economy, bad for Minnesotans, and bad for our competitiveness.

Minnesota deserves better than this reckless approach. We deserve a government that respects our taxpayers and lives within its means.

■ Hinton

from Page 8

and barbecued meats through Spanky's Double B BBQ, and was famous for his pulled pork at archery events.

The Celebration of Life consisted of a Vegas 450 shoot, open to all ages, a bow raffle, and a silent auction. Rugroden organized it together with his wife, Sharon Becker. Becker knew George through archery, and Rachel through her daycare which she said all the grandchildren attended. HyVee, where George's mother worked for many years, donated a cake which was served with lemonade and bars. The bow for the raffle, a 2023 Bowtech Reckoning Gen 2 39, was donated by Dennis Weber, Lyle Eidon, and Oak Ridge Archery. Tanya Slack was the winner. “I asked a couple of people about silent auction items, I thought it would be good if we got about ten things,” Rugroden said

about the silent auction. Donations poured in without being requested, even the day of the event; in the end, over 30 items were available on the silent auction.

“We didn't really advertise much,” Rugroden said about the event with over 100 attendees. It was announced on Facebook, and at local archery events. Rugroden says there was an archery competition not far from Waseca the day before their event and he knew several archers found hotel rooms that night to attend rather than go home. More than 35 people participated in the shoot, and a similarly sized group took numbers for the silent auction. “It's a huge turnout – just like we expected from the archery community. We rally when we need to,” Rachel also identified several of her daycare families among the crowd. Rugroden added that the attendance numbers showed how known and loved George was. “Some of these people hadn't seen George in years,” he said, and yet they came to support the Hintons and share memories with all those who knew him.

Tesch Service Center

EXPERT CAR CARE

Tires

Batteries

Lockout Service

Major Repairs

Automatic Car Wash

Computerized Alignment

Certified Towing and Recovery

Firestone

BRIDGESTONE

MAPN

AUTOCARE CENTER

7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Sat.

(507)-835-4610

321 W. Elm Ave. • Waseca

Board members tour area schools

By MELISSA DUNN
Staff Writer

Elementary school site visits made by the facilities committee members of the school board over the last few months were the topic of the second March workshop. “One of the things we’ve been working hard on for the last several years is identifying some of the physical limitations at our elementary school, particularly some of the repairs that are coming to a head and some things we have to think about for the future facility needs,” Superintendent Eric Hudspith said to the board. “One of the things we haven’t spent much time thinking about is the teaching and learning aspect and the student experience at our elementary school and what we would like our buildings to eventually look like in some way, shape, or form.” The facilities committee

visited four different elementary schools in February, interviewing principals and teachers about the designs and taking hundreds of photos.

Hudspith said the committee took away some themes from the experience; grade-level communities, specialists located opposite instructional areas, a central media center, flexible instructional spaces/multi-purpose areas, common areas for collaboration and support, natural light, and strategic, secure entry and exit points. “We feel pretty comfortable these themes are important to the teaching and learning experience of the kids.” The board was guided through a photo presentation of the elementary schools in Lakeville, Maplewood, Hugo, and Northfield which is also available to the public on the school website. Hudspith’s final

WASECA SCHOOL BOARD

slides outlined the considerations the committee members discussed with the elementary principals, including the placement of restrooms and sinks, storage, and inside and outside traffic patterns.

“None of them had a single drop-off or entry point for all kids. They all had various locations to keep congestion down. Specialist areas were separate from academic areas to lower hallway congestion. Classrooms don’t get disrupted by the transitions that are happening there.” Hudspith ended his presentation to the board by summarizing the facility committee’s next steps: “Whatever choices we make going forward, we want to incorporate these things into the plan. We know there are things going on in the

community that don’t positively influence what we need to do economically. We also know there are some needs we have to address as well.”

Hudspith also presented a legislative update to the board. “The legislature is really busy right now. There’s a lot going on.” He highlighted two items important to both the community and the board; a possible increase of the local optional revenue (what the board can approve for the levy without needing to go out for a vote), and a potential increase of equalization aid for smaller districts. Other issues of concern in the legislature are bills for additions to the required courses for high schools in Minnesota. “I wonder if we’re going to need a fifth year of high school to get these all in,” Hudspith said.

I love to read month



“I love to read month” concluded at Hartley Elementary last week. To celebrate achieving the shared goal of 300 combined books read, two students from each class were chosen to douse Principal O'Brien with chocolate syrup, whipped cream, sprinkles, and even a cherry on top. Principal O'Brien likes to say, “We do what's best for kids.” This apparently includes getting slathered with ice cream sundae toppings. After the festivities, students enjoyed their own sundaes. However, Principal O'Brien decided he had had enough and chose not to have any.

Readers rewarded

TEAM students top 1,000 minutes

By TRISTAN JENSEN
Staff Writer

“I Love to Read Month” concluded at TEAM Academy with two events – Family Night held the evening of March 2, and a “wrap-up” assembly held during the school day March 3.

At Family Night, students, former students, family members, and other visitors were welcomed to the school for an evening of fun and community. TEAM Academy's band and choir, led by music teacher Taylor Jones, performed for those gathered and pizza was served. The band, open to grades 5 and 6, performed two songs, “Candy Hearts” and “Chocolate, Chocolate, and More Chocolate.” The choir, open to grades four through six, performed “We've Got Heart” by Teresa and Paul Jennings, “Scoo Be Doo Song” by Susie Davies-Splinter and Phil Splinter, “Bye Bye Blackbird” arranged by W. Jack with music by Ray Henderson, and “Jiggles” by Susie Davies. All musical numbers were chosen to coincide with Valentine's Day themes – sweets for the band, and jazz for the choir.

Activities centered around reading and “Monsters University,” the school's theme for I Love to Read Month, were available throughout the school. Several crafts were set out; kids could win books in a “book walk,” where they walked to music between numbered stepping stones; when the music stopped a random number would be drawn to determine a winner. “Monsters University Bingo” was played in the library, with characters and quotes from the movie taking the place of numbers on the bingo boards. Reading by flashlight in a darkened room was another popular activity, as were math stories – picture books telling riddles and tales about numbers and operations. Upwards of 125



TEAM Academy's top readers during I Love to Read Month, from left to right, were Alanis Sanchez, Keira Holmgren, Sawyer Collins, RJ Attenburger, Jax Olsen, Hugh Courtney, Greighton Auen, Keeva Rosenau, and Lucas Negrete. Georgia Courtney not pictured. Photos by Tristan Jensen

people attended the evening event.

The big finish came the next morning, when the awards for the top readers were announced. For kindergarten through second grade, the measurement used was minutes spent reading. Top individual readers in this category were Greighton Auen, with 1220 minutes; Hugh Courtney, with 1095 minutes; Georgia Courtney, with 1071 minutes; Jax Olsen, with 870 minutes; and Keeva Rosenau, with 825 minutes. For grades three through six, the students were ranked by the percentage of their personal Accelerated Reading goal each student achieved. Keira Holmgren achieved 446% of her goal, RJ Attenberger achieved 409% of hers, Alanis Sanchez achieved 366%, Lucas Negrete achieved 344%, and Sawyer Collins achieved 305%. All ten students received a certificate of their achievement. Holmgren, Attenberger, Auen, and Hugh Courtney also earned a \$10 gift certificate to use at the school book fair, along with the chance to compete against staff in an obstacle course race during the morning's event. The staff gave the students a real run for their money, but it was the students who came out victorious. Awards



Wyatt Partain and his father Jon Partain playing "Monsters University Bingo" during TEAM Academy's family night. Below: TEAM Academy kindergarten teacher Elizabeth Wellman poses with her monstrous hand-puppet "Frank."

were also given to the top two classes in each category. The first place classes, who will receive ice cream treats, were second and fourth grade. Next up were first and fifth grade, who have each earned extra recess time.

Members of TEAM Academy staff wanted it known how proud they were of all the enthusiasm their students showed for reading during the month of February.



End of year banquet



7th grade gymnasts: Maddie Root, Addie Zimmerman, Avery Carda, Miley Anderson



Last week Waseca gymnasts wrapped up their season with a banquet, celebrating a record of 5-2 dual and 4-1 Conference record.



Most Valuable Gymnast: Layla Keith



2023-2024 Captains- Layla Keith, Haydn Lynch, Lindy Caldwell



Best attendance award: Norah Schimming, Layla Keith, Lindy Caldwell, Kara Doyle



Freshman gymnasts: Nora Flatness, Layla Keith



All conference gymnasts Layla Keith, Lindy Caldwell



Most beam sticks: Lindy Caldwell (1), Haydn Lynch, Kara Doyle, Kat Kofstad and Layla Keith (2)



Juniors: Macy Anderson, Lindy Caldwell, Haydn Lynch, Norah Schimming



Junior varisty MVPs Beam: Macy Anderson, Katelyn Weber



Most Improved junior varsity: Macy Anderson, Ines Sanchez



Junior varsity MVPs Vault Maddie Root, Avery Carda



Seniors: Kara Doyle, Kat Kofstad



Triple A Award winners: Macy Anderson, Haydn Lynch, Lindy Caldwell , Katelyn Weber, Avery Carda



Junior varsity MVPs AA: Angelica Lopez, Avery Carda



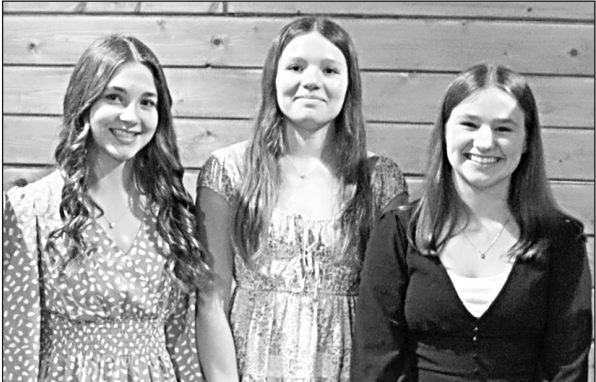
Sparkle Award: Layla Keith, Ines Sanchez



Spirit Award: Kara Doyle, Elli Hoban



Most Improved (V)- Katelyn Weber, Lindy Caldwell, Kat Kofstad



8th grade gymnasts: Elli Hoban, Angelica Lopez, Katelyn Weber



Varsity MVPs Beam: Haydn Lynch, Layla Keith



Junior varsity MVPs Floor: Angelica Lopez, Norah Schimming

WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

P.O BOX 578 • Waseca, MN 56093

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

NEW

☐

\$55

(Waseca Countyt)

NEW

☐

\$65

(Minnesota resident)

NEW

☐

\$75

(outside MN)

Subscription For:

Address

City

State

Zip

Assist Sell

Buyers & Sellers Best Choice

Locally Owned!

NEW LISTINGS!



912 N State St
Waseca
\$125,000
2+bd/1-3/4bath Dbl Gar 1604sqft

Call Traci Today!

"Full Service Savings!"
The smart way to sell your home



608 Northwood Place
Janesville
\$279,900
2bdr/1 bath Dbl Htd Gar Many Upgrades
Lawncare included Association Fee

Traci
351-6039

MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE
MLS

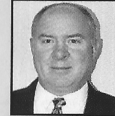
Low Listing Fee of 4%!

Waseca Realty

We'll lead you Home
215 N State St, Waseca MN 56093
507-835-8116
info@waseca-realty.com
www.waseca-realty.com
"Like" Us on Facebook



Kelli Rosander-Monday
Executive Associate



Chuck Huest
Broker



Joe Glyn
Broker



Samantha Brunson



NEW LISTING - 1005 9th St SE, Waseca - \$285,000
Enjoy this 2 bedroom, 2 bath, 3 car garage home on a corner lot. Front porch & main floor laundry. The partial basement has a family room that is extra deep with high ceilings and a workshop.

Johnson APARTMENTS

507-456-9514
OPERATING IN
WASECA, STEELE,
FREEBORN
COUNTIES
johnsonrents.com



Rick's Appliance

Sales & Service!

Rick Maas
Owner

108 2nd Ave. NW
Waseca, MN 56093
507-461-9615
ricksappliance108@gmail.com

Got news?

507-837-6767

IMMEDIATE OPENINGS

SUMMIT ON SECOND APARTMENTS

FOR RENTAL INFO CALL
507-201-3474
Under new ownership

We are accepting applications for 1 bedroom apartments in Waseca, a community you can get attached to. Rent based on income. Now professionally managed by

BRUTGER
EQUITIES, INC.
Income guidelines apply.

IOSCO TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Iosco Township, County of Waseca, and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Township Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 14, 2023. In case of inclement weather, the meeting and election may be postponed until the third Tuesday of March.

One Supervisor - 3 years
One Treasurer - 2 years

The Board of Canvass will meet March 13th, 2018 after the polls close to certify the official election results.

Jason Androli
Iosco Town Clerk

WOODVILLE TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given to to Woodville Township residents that the annual meeting will be March 14, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. in the Woodville Town Hall located at 200 3rd Ave SW, Waseca, MN.

Topics to be discussed will be:
Financial condition of the Township, Financial statements of the cemetery, Township and Waseca rural fire district, Road reports, Annexation report, Tax levies, Donation to Waseca Community Ed Program and any other issues the residents wish to discuss in regards to Township business.

Andrew Miller, Clerk
Woodville Township

Waseca Music COMPANY

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

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

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

AGE 55+ WORKERS NEEDED

Part-time custodial work
At Straight River Rest Areas on I-35

CONTACT: Green View
651-639-1913

SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642

March 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6pm BAR Bingo	2 7pm BINGO	3 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm Navy Reserve Birthday	4 HUG A GI DAY
5 SEABEE Birthday	6	7 Burger nite 5-7pm	8 6pm BAR Bingo	9 7pm BINGO	10 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	11
12 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am - Noon Your Host Waseca Youth Baseball	13 7pm Post & AUX. Meeting K-9 Veterans day	14 Burger nite 5-7pm	15 6pm BAR Bingo American Legion Birthday	16 7pm BINGO	17 WALLEYE or SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 to 7pm St. Patrick's Day	18 ST. PATRICK'S BINGO 7PM
19	20	21 Burger nite 5-7pm Rosie the Riveter Day	22 6pm BAR Bingo	23 7pm BINGO	24 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	25 Medal of Honor Day
26 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am - Noon Your Host Neighborhood Service Center	27	28 Burger nite 5-7pm	29 6pm BAR Bingo National Vietnam War Veterans Day	30 7pm BINGO	31 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	

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

YOU DESERVE THE VERY BEST

American Family is proud to be named one of **America's Best Insurance Companies of 2022** by Forbes. Plus, when you bundle your home and auto insurance with us, you may save up to 23% on both policies together!*

Contact me today to learn more about our customizable insurance options.

*Customers who bundle auto and homeowners insurance policies with American Family Insurance may save up to 23% on both policies together (as of October 2021).



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



American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. & its Operating Companies,
6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783 ©2021 20504 - 12/21 - 16554773



Have the WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

Waseca County's NEW source for news and events
COME TO YOUR MAILBOX EVERY WEEK!



The WASECA COUNTY PIONEER is gathering fans and praise all over the Waseca County Area with its comprehensive coverage of local sports, news, commentary, events, and people! Don't miss a week!

IF YOU LIVE IN WASECA COUNTY, YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE to the PIONEER for just \$55 a YEAR!

STAY INFORMED! and enjoy a whole year of local news, events, profiles, and the BEST PHOTO COVERAGE EVER!

WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

P.O BOX 578 • Waseca, MN 56093

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

NEW ☐ \$55 (Waseca County)
NEW ☐ \$65 (Minnesota resident)
NEW ☐ \$75 (outside MN)

Subscription For: _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

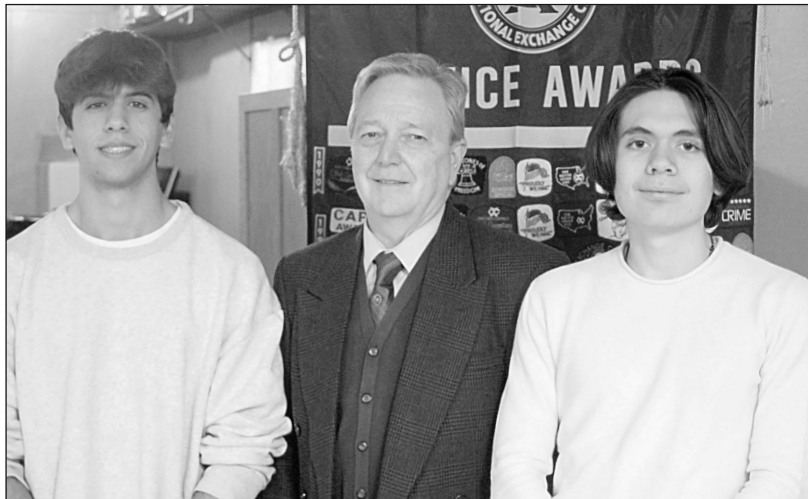
Exchange Club



Right, guests of the Exchange Club Michele Menghini, Mikhail Rostislavovich, and Jan Schon. Menghini and Schon are exchange students from Italy and Germany, respectively, and are hosted by Rostislavovich and his family while they attend school in Waseca.

Top, Sally Takala Boyce, exchange club president; Perry Berg, director; Ken Borgmann; Caryn Wendt, secretary-treasurer; and past president Mark Butterfield

Photo by Tristan Jensen



■ Luncheon

from Page 1

ant Cafe, and is traditionally hearty fare. "It's hard to keep everybody awake after the big lunch. Everyone is very well fed at the farm and city luncheon," Fitch laughed. Members of the Future Farmers of America will serve the meal, with a program scheduled to begin at 12:20. FFA stu-

dents will give a short presentation, and awards will be announced followed by speeches from the award winners. The remaining time is set aside for reconnecting and forging new connections between those present. The event ends at 1:30.

Awards given at this event are "Senior Active Farmer," "Active Farmer," "Young Farmer of the Year," and "Farm Family of the Year." The last is awarded through the University of Minnesota Extension Office. The 2023 winners are

Senior Active Farmer, Charlie Priebe; Active Farmer, Mark Bernard; and Young Farmer of the Year, Adam and Anne Harguth. Receiving the extension office's Farm Family of the Year title is Cedar Crate Farms. This year, a posthumous award is also to be given to Alfred Trahms.

Tickets to the Farm and City Luncheon are \$16. Anyone wishing to attend should contact the Chamber office in advance at (507) 835-3260 for registration information.



Kimberly, Rachel, Cody, Austin, and Kenny Hinton, George Hinton's family, stand together at the celebration of life held by Waseca Archery Club. Pioneer photo by Tristan Jensen

Hinton honored

By TRISTAN JENSEN
Staff Writer

The Waseca Archery Club held a Celebration of Life for George Hinton, raising support and funds for the Hinton family at the club's location on the county fairgrounds Sunday, March 6. George Hinton, 49, was hospitalized on Christmas Eve, 2022 and quickly transferred to Rochester. He was discharged on New Year's Day, having been diagnosed with a rare, aggressive cancer which affects only about 1,000 children and even fewer adults each year; it had already spread throughout his body. He was given a terminal diagnosis on January 6; he contacted his friend and fellow archery club member Rick Rugroden to tell him. Within a day, George's wife Rachel recalled, Rugroden was putting together the event for the weekend before George's 50th birthday. It was originally planned as a birthday party, but Hinton's cancer was aggressive and he died January 27, 2023. Rachel says she told Rugroden the celebration wasn't necessary upon



Rick Rugroden, Rachel Hinton, and Sharon Becker. Rugroden and Becker organized the celebration of life for George Hinton and his family. Photo by Tristan Jensen

George's passing, to which she remembers him adamantly responding that it very much was. "It's all very appreciated," said Rachel, looking around at a room full of people who remembered George.

Rachel and George Hinton raised four children together, Austin, Cody, Kimberly, and Kenny Hinton. The older two were Rachel's before she met George, but she says he was just as much a father to them as for his biological children. An "avid archer," George was a

member of the Waseca Archery Club, Minnesota State Archery Association, the Minnesota Archers Association, and the National Field Archery Association. George also loved to barbecue. "We have three pull-behind smokers in our backyard," Rachel elaborated. "If you smelled smoke in the summer it was probably coming from our house." George catered his smoked

Hinton continued on 5



The Pastor's Column

Ready for what is to happen

By PASTOR KEN ANDRS

"Remember that one time? You know the one where we did the thing?" Conversations at our house will often start with questions or statements like this. It is almost as if one of us is overwhelmed with excitement at the prospect of sharing something cool or meaningful.

Slowing down and sharing the excitement of life and living is something that takes effort and time. We need to remember what has gone before, how God has led us to the present, and trust that He will do the same in the future. In remembering we those times, it is not just for us, but to share those stories of God's faithfulness with others as well.

As Moses was transferring the authority and leadership to Joshua, he shared with the people of Israel what God expected of them. He spoke of where they had been, where they were going and what God's promises were to them. He reminded them that they were to trust God and follow Him all the days of their lives.

In Deuteronomy 4:9-10 Moses shares:

9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. 10 Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me

as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children."

In his last words Moses points the people to remember what God had done while they were in the wilderness. For many of the people of Israel they had spent more time in the desert than living anywhere else. They had come to rely upon God and His provision, they knew to follow Him everyday and soon they would follow Him into the promised land.

They were not to forget God's provision as He would continue to move as they entered the promised land. There would come a time when the people would need to remember what God had done, so that they would have the faith to trust Him to move on their behalf again. We come to that point as well in our daily lives.

There comes a point where we need to remember what God has led us through so that we are ready for what is about to come. This point is where we cannot act on our own and have things succeed, but rather we rely fully upon God to move. We trust that He will do what is best for us and His mission.

Now we get excited, we get to be a part of God's movement in the world. It may be something simple, or it may be complex, but it is God's movement and we get the benefit of watching God move and pointing people to Him. Remember where God has moved in the past, hold onto it, and share that with the next generation.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH
2200 4th St NE, Waseca
507-835-2235
Service times 9:30 a.m.
* * *

4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH
605 4th St NE, Waseca
507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker)
Worship Sundays 10 a.m.
* * *

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
801 4th Ave NE, Waseca
507-835-3167
Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m.
* * *

CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH
309 6th St NE, Waseca
507-835-9176
Worship Sundays 9 a.m., 10:15 a.m.
Sunday School/Fellowship
* * *

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca
507-833-1703
Sundays 9:00 a.m.
* * *

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
314 4th Ave NE, Waseca
507-835-2647
Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m.
* * *

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca
507-835-4548 (office email: 1cwaseca@hickorytech.net)
Worship Sunday 10 a.m.
* * *

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
300 E Elm Ave, Waseca
507-835-1709
Worship Sunday 9 a.m.
* * *

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH
111 4th St NW, Waseca
507-835-1222
Worship Saturday 5:15 p.m., Sundays 8:00 and 10:00 a.m., weekdays 8:30 a.m.
Tues., Wed. and Fri., 7:00 a.m. Thurs.
* * *

REAL LIFE CHURCH
620 W Elm Ave, Waseca
507-607-8245
Sundays 9 and 10:30 a.m.

* * *
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS
1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca
507-835-4640
Sacrament meeting 10:00 a.m.
* * *

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
1221 8th St SE, Waseca
507-835-2213
Sunday worship 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
* * *

CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY
900 14th Ave SE, Waseca
507-833-1082
Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m.
* * *

ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School, Choir and Choir; 10:30 a.m. Worship
Monday - 1 p.m. Quilters
Wednesday - 7 p.m. Worship
* * *

ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Otisco, Minnesota
Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor
Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study
Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship
* * *

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Mary Iverson
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee
Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting
Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting
* * *

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Pamela Jensen
Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship
* * *

LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Dan Kordahl
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting
* * *

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
* * *

VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Dan Kordahl
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
* * *

VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Brian Schanil Pastor
Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship; 9 a.m. Sunday School
Tuesdays: The Shepherd's Robe Ministry, 1-3 p.m.; 6-8 p.m.; Bonfires and Yard Games, 6 p.m. until dark
* * *

ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Father Brian Mulligan
Saturday - 5 p.m. Mass
* * *

FIRST LUTHERAN
Missouri Synod
Waldorf, Minnesota
Rev. Michael Mathews, pastor
Sundays: Sunday School 9 a.m., Bible Study 9:20 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m.
* * *

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Freedom Township
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship
* * *

ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Pastor Ava Adams-Morris
Waldorf, Minnesota
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship
* * *

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC
Waldorf, Minnesota
Father Brian Mulligan
Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship
* * *

TRINITY LUTHERAN
Wilton Township
Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
* * *

THE CHURCH of JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
Brad Donner, Branch President
Waseca, Minnesota
www.lds.org
Sunday - 10 a.m. Sacrament Mtg.; 11:20 a.m. Sunday School
Wednesday - 7 p.m. Youth Activities, ages 12-18
* * *

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
412 N. Main Street, Janesville
Interim Pastor
Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship
Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:00 a.m. Worship
* * *

JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
401 N. West St., Janesville
Pastor Kathy King
Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship
* * *

BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
43089 180th St., Morristown
Pastor Kathy King
Sunday - 10:45 a.m. Worship
* * *

ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH
307 W. 2nd St., Janesville
Father Brian Mulligan
10 a.m. - Mass
* * *

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
300 Owen St., Janesville
Pastor Sarah Krolak
* * *

ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH
Alma City, Minnesota
Vacancy
Sunday = 1 p.m. Worship
* * *

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Smiths Mill, Minnesota
Vacancy
Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship
Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship
* * *

NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA
404 30 120th St. Waseca
Pastor Sarah Krolak
507-234-6463
Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship; Second Sunday - "Young at heart"
Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. confirmation
* * *

NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.

PERSONALIZED PRINTING & APPAREL

Barb & Mark Buker

100 South State Street • Waseca
507.835.7565 • pprint@mchsi.com

Waseca Floral & Gift

810 N. State Street • 507-835-3790 or 800-469-3790
www.wasecafloral.com
Hours: Sat. 9-5 Sun. 11-3

We Deliver in Waseca, Janesville, & Waterville

INSURE CAREFULLY, DREAM FEARLESSLY.

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

AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE

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

American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I.
American Family Insurance Company,
6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783
006441 - Rev. 11/15 ©2015 - 10793941



UPSET IN FINALS — In 1998, the Hayfield girls' basketball team went on a cinderella run in the East Subsection 2AA after only winning five games in the regular season. They became the champions after upsetting Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton.

A newspaper worth walking ten miles for

1923

-Edward Marx, the gentlemanly and suave assistant postmaster, stimulated by the new order of things and the ever-increasing tendency under this administration to improve conditions took things into his own hands and acting under the suggestions of the new P.M., proceeded to put things to order. His first shot out of the box was to smooth down the exterior of the metal furniture enclosing the post office boxes. The results is that the surface of the metal shines like alabaster. Nothing but the deft touch of a skillful manipulator could have even approached the beauty of that finish.

-Mrs. James Joyce went to Winona last week to attend the graduation exercises in dramatic elocution, her daughter, Miss Irene, being one of the graduates. Miss Joyce distinguished herself during her school days in dramatic readings which have been very highly commended by critics of the art. There is no doubt that she will be equally popular and successful in the future. Her friends who know of her talent and ability predict a brilliant career for her in the future.

-Mr. Alois Schraml, who resides near Eagle Lake, walked to Janesville on Thursday, arriving here very early in the day. He came down principally to renew for his Argus. A stunt he has performed and repeated regularly every year for over thirty years. This speaks well for his intelligent conception of an up-to-date paper and, accordingly, he is entitled to credit although he modestly disclaims any desire of newspaper notoriety.

1948

-The Morristown Comets conquered the Janesville Golden Bears in the finals played at Faribault by a score of 38-29. Just another of those times when the Bears had an "off" night with their basket shooting. Morristown took Wanamingo to the cleaners last evening by trimming that gang by a score of 30-29.

-Three farm people were involved in a farm accident when the care of Lynn Herbst of New Richland, and Mrs. Chris Adams of Waldorf, collided. Mr. Herbst was hospitalized in the hospital in Waseca. Mrs. Adams was quite badly shaken up and bruised, and her son Mark, who was riding with her, was cut and bruised. Mrs. Adams was unable to do her regular farm duties for several days, and at this writing, MR. Herbst is still in the hospital. Ardis Burmeister, daughter of Harry Burmeister, Waldorf, broke her ankle while sliding. Ardis is a member of the Waldorf Peppy Peppers 4-H Club.

-After months of careful preparation, Minnesota's new Youth Conservation Commission completed plans this week for the opening of four reception centers for the study of youthful offenders and announced the centers are ready to receive the first boys and girls to be handles through a new Youth Conservation program authorized by the last legislature, placing chief emphasis on rehabilitation.

1973

-Janesville's Larry Kroeger was the second high rebounder and averaged 9.6 points per game for Golden Valley Lutheran College this past season. The Royals won four of their final five games and finished with an 11-11 record. They were 6-6 in conference play.

-Minnesota Natural Gas Company will continued its College Scholarship Program for 1972. Janesville High School is cooperating in the program. 1973 June graduates of public and private high schools in the 80 Minnesota communities M.N.G. serves will be eligible for each of the four \$250.00 scholarships offered.

-Dave Dimmel of Janesville High School recently completed the 1972-73 wrestling season for the University of Minnesota Technical College at Waseca with an overall record of 13 wins and 6 losses. His record in the Minnesota Junior College conference was 8 wins and 1 loss. In addition to wrestling Minnesota junior colleges, the Rams also wrestled Carleton, St. Olaf and Gustavus Adolphus Colleges.

1998

-Trinity Lutheran School, Janesville, boys' and girls' basketball team will compete in the seven annual Lutheran Grade School Basketball Tournament at Concordia University, St. Paul. Sixteen boys' and girls' teams from Lutheran Schools across Minnesota will compete in the three-day, double-elimination tournament. The Lutheran Grade School Basketball Tournament for students in grades seven and eight is the culminating activity of the National Lutheran Schools Week celebration in Minnesota, which runs March 1-8. This is the fifth year that Concordia St. Paul has hosted the tournament.

-For anyone that didn't know it, the Gopher Conference and South Central Conference are strong wrestling conferences. That point was emphasized at the State Wrestling Tournament when 10 of 15 area wrestlers from the two conferences placed in state competition. Gopher Conference champion and state runner-up Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton led the way with four placewinners, including three state champs and a runner-up in Class A competition. New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva had one second-place finisher among its four placewinners. Waseca's two entrants in the Class AA competition both brought hone fifth-place status.

-So much for seeding teams at tournament time. The Hayfield Vikings, the lowest seeded team in East Section 2AA, continued their remarkable journey through the East Section by defeating the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton girls' cagers in Monday's title game. The Vikings, who had just five wins entering the tourney, defeated the number eight, one, five, and two seeds to capture the sub-section crown. Keeping the upstart Hayfield five from the state tournament will be a Friday date against 24-1 St. James, the top-ranked team in the state.

Central High boys to state

Waseca Journal, 1923

-Wm. Hanson of this city and Thos. W. Cahill, of Ambrose, N. D., closed a deal yesterday for the purchase of the J. J. Coleman furniture and undertaking store. They will take possession July 1st. The new purchasers are reliable, enterprising young men who will make a valuable addition to Waseca's business circles. Mr. Hanson has been employed with Mr. Coleman for over 20 years and thoroughly understands the business. Mr. Cahill is the brother of Dr. J. F. Cahill of this city and a former resident of this community.

-Playing in their usual form and fighting from the sound of the whistle, the Waseca High School basketball team won a clean cut victory rom the Wells High School team at the State Farm Gym, last Friday evening. The score was 23-10. The game was close and exciting during the first half, but with the odds always in favor of the home team, and when when the half ended the score was 11 to 8 in Waseca's favor. Burgan, the star center for Wells, was put out on personals in the first half and his loss seriously handicapped the team. They were only able to score two points in the second half while Waseca rolled up 12.

-The Essay Program held in the assembly room at the Sacred Heart High School last Thursday evening proved a very enjoyable entertainment and the young people proved themselves most capable writers, elocutionists and musicians, for the program far surpassed the expectation of the judges, who found it very difficult in making their decisions.

-The Veterans of Foreign Wars of this city have secured the wonderful film production, "Powder River" for presentation at the Palace Theatre March 14-15. Actual motion pictures taken on the battle front at the cost of

the lives of 11 members of the U.S. Signal Cops will be shown. This is the first and only authentic picture ever released by the U.S. government. It is a powerful drama of army life, showing our soldiers as they worked, fought and played in the greatest war of all time.

Waseca Herald, 1948

-There is a long stretch of time between this year and 1918 when a Central basketball team fought through a state tournament at Northfield to take the championship. With G. L. McQueen as coach they defeated New Ulm 46-12 and followed with a victory over Detroit Lakes 35-12. In the semifinals they won over Albert Lea 18-14 and then finished off the last obstacle of the tournament, Duluth High School, 29-10.

-The directors of the Southern Minnesota Baseball League laid final plans for the 1948 season when they met at Mankato Sunday afternoon. Don Herbst represented Waseca at the meeting. The biggest decision was the adoption of a 28-game schedule which the board approved. The new schedule calls for 18 Sunday afternoon games and 12 Wednesday night games with the night schedule starting on Wednesday, June 2.

-Mrs. C. W. Spaulding of Waseca was named as one of two delegates from the First Congressional district to attend the National Republican convention which will be held in Philadelphia later this year. She won the honor at Rochester last Saturday when the district convention was held after a sharp campaign with other candidates in the field.

-The Central Basketball team went up to the state high school tournament at the University Field House Wednesday as the result of defeating Kenyon, winner of the Region One "B" tournament, Saturday evening at



In March 15, 1948, the Central High School basketball team had several stories on the front page of the Waseca Herald when they qualified for the state tournament. Front row: Pinky Yes, Don Miller, and Chuck Dunn. Middle Row: Leonard Sroboda, Lawrence Krause, Virgil Gehring, and Dick Borkenhagen. Back row: George Quicksail, Chuck Wahlberg, and David Noel.

Rochester. The win over Kenyon gave Central the Region One Championship and the right to represent it against the other seven seven winners in regional tournament throughout the state.

Waseca County News, 1998

-“It’s a quiet group in here, which is kind of scary,” said Waseca County Commissioner Chair Alvin Grams during a 4-0 passage of the county’s new feedlot ordinance. Grams’ comment summed up the less than one-hour discussion of the draft ordinance that centered mostly on city setbacks, reverse setbacks and additional review of the ordinance. Commissioner Wendell Armstrong was unable to attend the meeting. “Maybe the zoning board will have to set aside time to take a look at it,” Grams said. “This is a draft and a starting point.”

-A proposed three-stage graduated driver’s licensing system is gaining momentum in the state Legislature, in local schools and in the law enforcement community. The bill is a three-stage process designed to ease young, inexperienced drivers onto the road. The legislation includes a

new 12-month provisional license stage for 16 or 17-year-old drivers with restricted operation hours.

-After eight months in Waseca, Director of Engineering Kevin Bitner is moving on to the private sector. Bittner and his family live in Austin and had recently sold their house to relocate to Waseca, when he was recruited from Bolton & Menk Inc, an engineering and consulting firm in Mankato. The firm had an opportunity for a project engineer. Bittner will be working with various municipalities, such as Le Sueur and Le Center, assisting with city engineering plans.

-The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva boys’ basketball team split a pair of games at the end of its schedule. The Panthers pulled a mild upset at home Feb. 1y, upending fifth-place Blooming Prairie 59-56. South Central Conference foe United South Central blasted the Panthers at Wells Feb. 23, 76-47. The split leaves NRHEG at 7-14 for the season.

Donovan buys CFS

100 Years Ago – 1923

- Eighteen boys have now qualified as “Tender-foot” Scouts and are entitled to wear the uniform. The test included knowledge of the oath, law, motto, sign, salute, and the significance of the badge, and of the composition and history of the national flag, the forms of respect due to it, and the pledge of allegiance; and in addition proof of ability to tie nine knots. The highest possible mark is 150. One boy was awarded 145, while the lowest was 133. At the last meeting the Scoutmaster appointed Russel Anderson and William Lange as Patrol Leaders, with John Stensrud and mark Virnig as assistant; Lloyd Volling as Scribe, and Arthur Steele as Flagbearer. A drummer and bugler will be appointed later. Most of these will be permitted to wear special insignia. A number of the Scouts under the direction of the patrol leader hiked to Hartland Saturday. The storm caught them, but like good Scouts they “carried on.”

- The pupils of the grades of the New Richland public school are giving a play and operetta at the Faust Theatre this evening, Friday. The operetta to be given is entitled “Uncle Sam’s Visit” and is presented by a cast of eleven pupils. The operetta will include patriotic talks, songs and drills the talent for which will be representatives of the eight grades of the school.

75 Years Ago – 1946

- Plans were completed Thursday for the third annual businessmen’s basketball tournament to be sponsored by the American Legion to raise funds for its athletic activities. First games to be played will be when the Land O’ Lakes team will meet the Minneapolis Knitting Works aggregation. Following at hour intervals after that will see Kreuzers Men’s Store battling Borchard’s Service followed by Stiehli’s Studio’s five pitted against O. S. Martinson’s team. The night cap will find Clark’s Cafe battling the Standard Lumber Co. entrant.

- Land O’ Lakes Hatchery has converted the building just west of the hatchery building into a modern brooder house iun which to brood chicks for short periods of time. Thermostatically controlled heat and fresh air ventilating provisions makes the building ideal for the purpose to which it is to be used. Originally built by the late J. W. Romine for the purpose to which it is now being put, war conditions made its use as a storage facility for feed a necessity.

- The New Richland FFA Chapter team took honors in the district elimination contest by outscoring the next high team by a 185 point margin. Members of the New Riuchland team were Darryl Stonberg, who was high placing individual in the contest, Christopher Hagen, Jr., who placed fourth



In 1973, Jim Bushlack, manager of Central Farm Service, handed the key to the plant north of New Richland to Tom Donovan, manager of Richland Coop. In addition to buying the CFS plant, the coop purchased the Arco plant in Matawan.

and Dean Yahnke. The contest consisted of identifying weed plants, weed seeds, farm crops and farm crop seeds as well as judging nine classes of farm grains. Since the team is a district winner, it will compete at the state contest to be held at University Farm in May.

50 Years Ago – 1973

- The purchase of Custom Farm Service facilities and the Arco plant at Matawan were announced this week by Richland Coop Service Manager, Tom Donovan and the Coop’s board of directors. The cooperative bought the CFS facilities because of the demand for more equipment and space. The purchase of CFS will about double the number of spreaders, toolbars, nurse tanks and trucks the cooperative had prior to the sale. They will also have sprayer service avilable either with their own machine or through David Swenson or Eugene Warke.

- In the 22nd annual Minnesota Future Farmers of America Cow Clipping contest held Tuesday, February 27 in the dairy barn at the St. Paul Campus, Brian Demmer, 17 of the New Richland FFA chapter placed third. His chapter advisor is Lee Mendenhall. The eight finalists had won earlier local, district and regional contests in which over 600 Future Farmers from 90 Minnesota chapters competed. The judges for the state finals were Dr. Curtis Norenbert, grogram coordinator, Office of Special Programs, University of Minnesota; Jerry Murphy, graduate student in animal science at the University and Dr. Ralph Grant, professor, animal science, University of Minnesota.

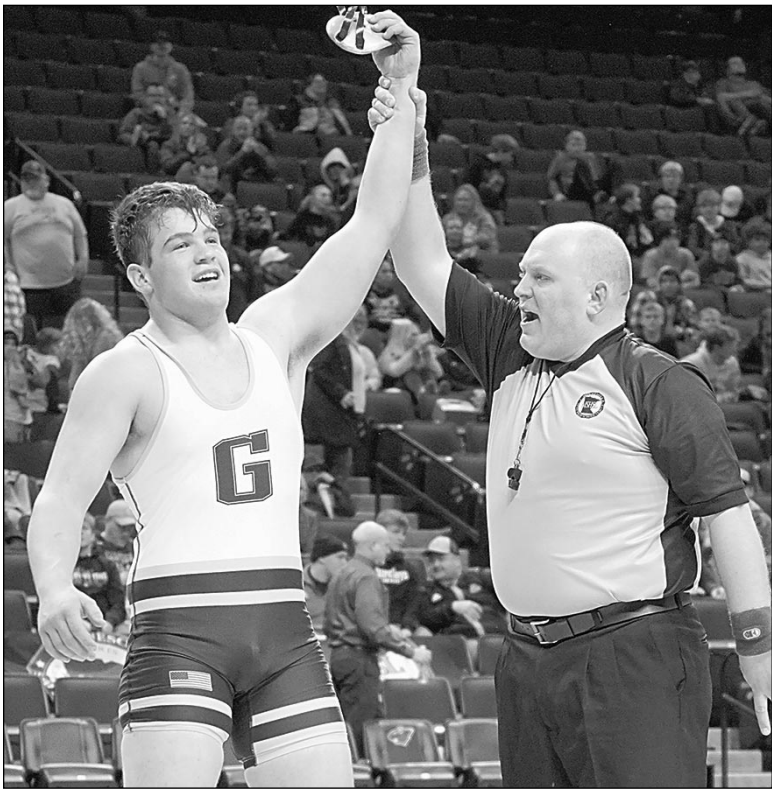
- David Demmer and sons received this year’s Premier Dairyman award and trophy at the annual meeting of the Freeborn county DHIA. The award is based on high herd average over the last three years. The Demmers’ 28 cow herd averaged 17,935 lb. of milk and 662 pounds of butterfat, returning \$785 per cow above feed cost last year.

25 Years Ago – 1998

- The Red Cross Bloodmobile was sponsored by the New Richland Ambulance Serviced in New Richland on Thursday, February 24. A goal set at 45 was surpassed by 19 for a total of 64. Of 73 individuals offering to donate blood, six were deferred and three were incomplete. A dozen of the total were first time donors. Coordinator for the visit of the Bloodmobile in New Richland was Pat Luna, assistant ambulance crew chief. Luna said, “Over-all everything went very well. The flow of donors went smooth.” He added, “We were very satisfied with the turn-out and are looking forward to holding our next collection.”

- Rabid skunks in Waseca County have been discovered recently. Two incidents have been confirmed this year. Last year there were eight confirmed cases in Waseca County, the most in Minnesota. In a typical year, there are one or two cases in the county. Dr. James Rundquist of the Waseca Animal Clinic said both of the rabid skunks were found in horse barns. The horses have been placed under quarantine for 90 days for observation.

- Members of the New Richland Girl Scout Troop 211, Beth Hubbell and Ashley Malakowsky and Scout leaders, Mary Kay Malakowsky and Carla Stern, attended a Harlem Globetrotters game at the Target Center in February. They had the opportunity to attend a talk with three of the Globetrotter players. The players stressed to the kids how important school and college is. Globetrotters have been either recruited from a college or university. Emphasis was also made on staying drug free and that when playing in any sports to make it fun and clean. They noted that they have never spit on a referee or kicked a cameraman. The players discussed their families and how they felt about being a Globetrotter.



SCENES FROM STATE — At left, WEM-JWP's Keegan Kuball is declared the winner after securing the Class A state wrestling champion at 285 pounds Saturday, March 4 at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul. In the middle is the Grizzlies' Jack Cahill. At right is WEM-JWP's Brady Murphy scoring back points.
Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens

Kuball conquers all at state tournament

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

After going 2-2 and not placing a year ago at the state tournament, WEM-JWP wrestler Keegan Kuball returned home a state champion.

Kuball, a sophomore wrestling at 285 pounds, defeated Cameron Scholten of Jackson County Central in the final match of the state tournament Saturday, March 4 at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul. He finished the season with a win-loss record of 31-4.

"It's amazing," Kuball said after the championship match. "I won't believe it for a few days yet. This is crazy."

"After last year... not placing, I knew I had to be mentally prepared," Kuball continued. "This year I was used to the lights, used to the crowd. I was ready for it. This year I knew I could take it. Knew I could take this bracket."

Joining Kuball at the capital were Grizzlies freshman Brady Murphy and senior Jack Cahill.

Murphy lost in heartbreaking fashion, coming in fourth, with both of his losses coming to Elijah Greenwaldt of Staples

Motley. Cahill went 1-2 and was eliminated in the quarterfinals of the consolation bracket.

Kuball sailed to wins in his first two rounds, winning by fall against Grant Ness of Caledonia-Houston, and an 8-0 victory over Braden Shamp of Bertha-Hewitt-Verndale-Parkers Prairie. His first real test came in the semifinals against last year's state runner-up, senior Makota Misgen of New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva.

In their third bout in as many weeks, Kuball outlasted Misgen, earning an escape in the second period to take the early advantage. Misgen answered with an escape of his own in the third period. In overtime, Kuball rode to victory. Misgen was in the down position to start, but was unable to score and in the third, and final overtime, Kuball was able to score on an escape, sending him to the title match.

Facing off with Scholten, Kuball butted heads for a scoreless first period. Kuball scored first on a reversal, but was nearly pinned as Scholten earned a reversal and near fall to go up 4-3 after two periods.

"I think maybe after that roll, I had some people kind of nervous, but I knew I could

"It's amazing. I won't believe it for a few days yet. This is crazy."

— State wrestling champion Keegan Kuball

pull away with it in the end, if I got on top," Kuball said of the near-pin. "I knew that I was gonna have to really dig in the third period. Then he chose down. I knew I could turn him, so I got him over in the half, just stayed there the whole period and was able to finish with the win."

Kuball earned two near falls and a state title with a 9-4 decision.

"All throughout this, even going through sections, going through state today I had a lot of gutsy matches, and I had a lot of close wins," Kuball said. "The first thing I'm gonna do now is walk up there, see my family, have a lot of hugs and pictures. It's gonna be a lot of fun... And then I'll drive home tonight, and sleep in for a long time tomorrow."

Murphy pinned his way to an opening-match, opening-period win over Roman

Roberg from Paynesville Area before running into his first and only roadblock of the tournament, Greenwaldt. Murphy scored first, but Greenwaldt got the last laugh, winning by fall in the third period.

After a dominant first two periods, Murphy won easily pinning Connor Carlson from Kimball Area in the first round of the consolation bracket. Murphy jumped out to a 5-0 lead in a dominant second "blood" round, defeating Cash Osterman of Frazee by an 11-6 decision.

After nearly pinning his opponent, Miles Wildman of Minnewaska Area, in the consolation semifinals, Murphy almost lost. With a 5-0 lead after the first period, Wildman came roaring back, scoring an escape and two takedowns. Two escapes from Murphy helped him emerge with a 7-5 decision.

And in the rematch of Murphy's second-

round match from Friday, it was Greenwaldt who again played spoiler.

Greenwaldt jumped out to a lead with a takedown, but a takedown and near fall by Murphy put him ahead 4-2. The final minute of the third period is where things fell apart. After another takedown, Greenwaldt wiggled out, earned a reversal, nearly won by fall, and ultimately sent Murphy home in fourth place with an 8-6 decision.

Wrestling as a Grizzly for the final time was Cahill, a senior who lost 7-0 in the opening round to fourth-place finisher Bryce Holm of Royalton-Upsala.

An exciting, come-from-behind win in the consolation bracket earned Cahill his only victory, 4-2, over Colton Long of Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted. Cahill fell behind 2-0 on a first-period takedown, but came roaring back in the third, scoring first on an escape, followed by penalty points and a match-clinching takedown.

Cahill's season and career came to an end against sixth-place finisher Tyler Mix of Dover-Eyota. After scoring first on a takedown, Mix got the better of Cahill in the second period, winning by fall at 2:18.

Top-seeded LCWM too strong for NRHEG girls

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The NRHEG girls' basketball underdog story came to an end Monday night in Mankato's Taylor Center.

Top-seeded Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial was just too tough.

LCWM, rated No. 3 in the state and riding a 20-game winning streak, ended the Panthers' season 68-33.

"LCWM has so many weapons in their arsenal, we had a tough time matching up against them," NRHEG coach Onika Peterson said. "It seems like they couldn't miss a basket and we struggled. We put ourselves in a hole and we couldn't climb out of it. I wish the LCWM team the best of luck on Friday. I hope they can punch their ticket to the state tournament. They are a great team."

After breezing past Maple River in the opening round of the sub-section tournament, the Panthers proceeded to upset second-seeded Waseca 44-38. The ride came to an abrupt end in the sub-section cham-

"Thank you to John Schultz. He has been a wonderful coach, mentor and friend." — NRHEG coach Onika Peterson

pionship round, where the Panthers lost to the Knights for the second year in a row.

For the Panthers, they simply struggled to make shots. The girls fell behind early, trailing by double digits eight minutes into the contest. A buzzer-beater from the Knights sent the Panthers into intermission trailing 41-18.

Playing their final games Monday night were seniors Sidney Schultz and Erin Jacobson. The Panthers also graduate Trinity-Smith-Vulcan, whose season was cut short due to injury.

"To our seniors, Trinity, Erin, and Sidney: Thank you," coach Peterson said. "Thank you for all of your hard work, time, effort, and dedication that you have given to NRHEG basketball. Your dedication to our program was crucial to our continued success."

Coaching for the final time was assistant John Schultz. The pair, Schultz and Peterson, have shared a sideline for nearly a decade. Schultz has been a fixture, and coach at NRHEG since 1982.

"Thank you to John Schultz," Coach Peterson continued. "He has been a wonderful coach, mentor, and friend. He has put in a lot of hard work and dedication to NRHEG sports. It has been an absolute privilege to have coached with him for the years that I did."

The Panthers ended their season with a record of 21-6, 12-2 in conference.

Seniors Jacobson and Schultz led the Panthers in scoring with 11 points, and 8 points, respectively. Also scoring for the Panthers were Hallie Schultz 6; Faith Nielsen 4; Quinn VanMaldeghe 3; and Gabrielle Schlaak 1 point.



KEEPING WATCH — NRHEG girls' basketball coaches Onika Peterson and John Schultz survey the action during Monday night's sub-section game against LCWM at Minnesota State-Mankato. It was the final game on the sidelines for Schultz.
Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Season ends for JWP girls

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

Since head coach Cory Jans' first year as a head coach for the JWP girls' basketball team, the squad has improved its performance and winning record over time.

It is sad that their best season under him had to end so abruptly against Sleepy Eye, who defeated the Bulldogs 64-27 in the Sub-section 2A south quarterfinals Tuesday, Feb. 28.

The loss marks two years in a row that the town of Sleepy Eye has ended the Bulldogs' season, with Sleepy Eye St. Mary's ending their season last year with an 80-37 loss.

The Indians, seeded No. 2, played hard and fast against JWP's girls. Before the Bulldogs knew it, the half ended with them only scoring seven points to Sleepy Eye's 34.

The Indians did a great job limiting JWP's top scorers all game. Katie Olson had six points, while Presley James contributed five. Nevaeh Weimert, who led the team, had seven. Meanwhile, Sleepy Eye's Kadence Hesse scored 30 points.

"They were the better team," ory Jans admitted.

The resulting loss kicked JWP out of the playoffs. The team's final record for the season is 13-15, their best record since the 2014-15 season.

"This doesn't take away from the great season we had," Jans said. "We did some great things this season and we're continually improving as a team."

Senior Faith Olson will sadly be leaving the team due to graduation. As the lone senior of this year's team, she was a reliable three-point shooter and was known for her work ethic in practice.

Hot streak continues for JWP boys' basketball

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

It was another great week of offensive production for the JWP High School boys' basketball team when it defeated Madelia on the road 88-55 Monday, Feb. 27 to even its record to 13-13 to end the regular season. As the No. 6 seed in Sub-section 2A south, they faced 11th-seeded Cleveland, who they beat 105-41 less than two weeks prior to their section face-off and coasted to an 86-32 victory.

Bulldogs 88, Madelia 55

It wasn't much of a contest after a few minutes of JWP finding the basket. It was 57-27 at halftime. The non-starters getting a few points

was the icing on the cake.

"Daulton Bauer had his best game in his varsity career," Head coach Nick James said. "Madelia couldn't find a way to stop him."

The freshman, who can always be relied upon as either a leading scorer or a second option for the Bulldogs on any given night, shot the lights out with 36 points. Out of 15 successful field goals, six of them were three-pointers.

Junior Memphis James contributed 20, with junior Cole Schlueter scoring 11. Other contributors were junior Ryan Kronbach with 8, Ethan Born 4, Dylan McWaters 3, and Carter Miller, Connor Welvaert, and Steven Denn

with two each.

Bulldogs 86, Cleveland 32

When asked what his thoughts were on the rematch against Cleveland in the first round of the playoffs, Coach James said, "You have to make sure the boys come ready to play. When playoff time comes, you cannot assume what happened the first time will happen again."

JWP's boys came prepared, alright. They scored 27 points before Cleveland could even reply with a free throw. A 40-6 lead with a few minutes lefts on the clock turned into 60-15 by halftime.

"We have definitely been shooting well the last few games," James said. In a near-perfect

game however, there was one issue with the JWP boys' team: fouling. They accumulated over 20 fouls on the night. "We had too many of them," James admitted, "but we do play a little more aggressive. So that happens from time to time."

The boys moved on to the second round of subsections and traveled to third-seed Mountain Lake Tuesday, March 7.

Playing their team on their court is always a tough thing to do," James said. "We will have to be perfect on both ends, continuing to shoot and execute well on the offensive end. We'll also have to slow them down and make sure we are boxing them out on the defensive end."

Gold for Petsinger, bronze for Misgen

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

Junior Annabelle Petsinger became NRHEG's first-ever girls' state wrestling champion at the Minnesota State High School League tournament Saturday, March 4. Accompanying her at the capital were third-place finisher Makota Misgen and first-time state qualifier Reese Routh.

Petsinger entered the tournament with a record of 14-1, and pinned her way to the championship bout. She needed only 36 seconds in her first match over Shelby McFetridge from Mahtomedi. In the semifinals she needed a little longer. Her opponent, Lanna Walter from Sauk Centre-Melrose, lasted until the second round when Petsinger pinned her too.

The title bout saw a rematch of last year's section title match between Petsinger and Stillwater's Audrey Rogotzke.

Petsinger fell behind via takedown in the first period and further behind after a reversal in the second. But Petsinger went to work. She earned a reversal to cut the score to 4-2 going into the final period. A reversal and two three-point near falls secured the come-from-behind win.

"I've wanted to win state since I was little," Petsinger said after her victory. Telling about having watched the tournament as a 3-year-old, she admits, back then "I didn't think it was gonna happen."

"It's really nice. It's... I guess you could say I had a dream."

"It's fantastic," coach Shawn Larson said. "It's school history, but state history too. Where girls' wrestling has come in the last two years is phenomenal. And girls like Annabelle did that because they began wrestling before it was sanctioned. You know, fighting the boys for years and years. So it's a great thing to see it building like this and keep coming."

"I hope the community gets behind her. I hope we draw some more girls into wrestling, because we've got a champ in there."

The state title for Petsinger was the first of Larson's head coaching career.

"The whole team's behind her on this," coach Larson continued. "Even when the team's season was over and we only had a couple people going on, everybody was still in the room. Kids were coming down to warm up with Annabelle, kind of make sure she was taken care of. It's a team effort to get one person to the title, to the top of the podium."

Petsinger finished her 2022-23 season with a record of 17-1 in the girls' division.

Misgen

After coming within inches of a state title a year ago, Misgen entered the tournament with eyes set on a championship in his senior campaign.

Those aspirations continued throughout the first day of competition Friday. After an initial scare in the opening round versus Xander Kohler from Frazee, Misgen was nearly pinned, but turned around a 4-0 deficit and earned a fall.

The battle continued in the quarterfinals versus Brandon Mugg of Royalton-Upsala. A lone escape in the second period catapulted Misgen into the semifinals with the 1-0 victory.

And, for the third time in as many weeks, Misgen was unable to upset the eventual state champion, sophomore Keegan Kuball of WEM-JWP.

"I wish that Makota could have won this title, but we are proud of his accomplishments," Larson said. "He has had a fantastic career."

Kuball earned an early point on an escape in the second period, which Misgen answered with an escape of his own in the third, forcing overtime. A tired Misgen drew a fortunate draw with the bottom position of overtime number one, but was unable to get away. Kuball scored the winning point on an escape in the third and final overtime, winning 2-1.

"There's two things that I wanna tell you that I've been impressed with over the last couple of weeks, which tell you what kind of a person Makota is," Larson shared publicly during a welcome home celebration. "Last week at the section tournament, he lost on what basically everybody, except for one team in the section says, was a bad call. And he stood there like a man and took it. Never complained, never threw his head gear or acted like a fool. He walked off the mat like a grown human being, and represented our school very well in that situation."

Larson continued: "Losing in the semifinals, it hurt. It hurt a lot. All of us were hurt when Makota lost in the semifinals. And, you know, it's one of those things where some people in that situation will fall off and they'll lose two more matches and go off in sixth place. Not Makota. He gutted it out. He put away what happened to him in the semifinals, and he turned it on and put away two more opponents to take third place. And that tells you what kind of person he is, because a lot of people settle for sixth and quit in that situation. And he fought through it, and then did what he needed to do to get the job done. We're very proud of him."

"After that semifinal match, I was just feeling so down and not really wanting to be there," Misgen admits. "Talking to people and having them say to me, 'just get the next best thing,' which was third."

"So I kind of threw that behind me and finished out," Misgen continued.

In the consolation semifinals, the "blood round," Misgen made quick

work of Spencer Eisenbraun from Paynesville Area, winning by fall in the second period.

In the match for bronze, Misgen scored first on a stalling penalty by Cameron Wieneke of Adrian Area. A reversal and takedown put Misgen ahead for good, securing a medal with the 5-1 major decision.

"I wanted to make sure I went out with a win," Misgen concluded.

Misgen said his biggest supporters are his parents and coaches. Asked what it means to be a Panther wrestler, to come home to celebration Sunday, he answered. "Just being able to go out there and show off, show off our school, being able to have a community that's proud of you. Coming back to something like this here at home. I think that's awesome. Just having the support behind me."

Misgen, who has wrestled since kindergarten, will continue his education, and wrestling career at Rochester Community Technical College. He plans to go into Law Enforcement.

Misgen finished his 2022-'23 season with a record of 45-6 and final career record of 120-78.

Routh

In newcomer Routh's only match, he was defeated 20-9 by Isaiah Rodriguez of Jackson County Central, who finished in sixth place.

Routh had not wrestled since fifth grade and surprised a lot of people with his appearance at the state tournament.

"I was happy to just be wrestling varsity," Routh said. "I surprised myself."

Routh surprised Coach Larson when he and fellow wrestler Parker Bunn approached him shortly after football season.

"I thought what are these two juniors doing in my sixth-grade classroom right now with smirks on their faces," Larson recalled. "And they said, 'You know what? We're gonna come out for wrestling again.'"

Routh won his first varsity match via pin and went from there. Bouncing back from varsity and JV, Routh was the guy who wrestled wherever he was needed, at whatever weight was needed.

And then, "He started putting on a show," Larson shared. "Get to the state tournament and he wrestled a fairly tough opponent. The kid was really, really good and Reese stayed with him. It's one of those things where a little bit more mat time might have made the difference. If Reese continues to work like this, hopefully we can put him in that position next year and he can win a match like this."

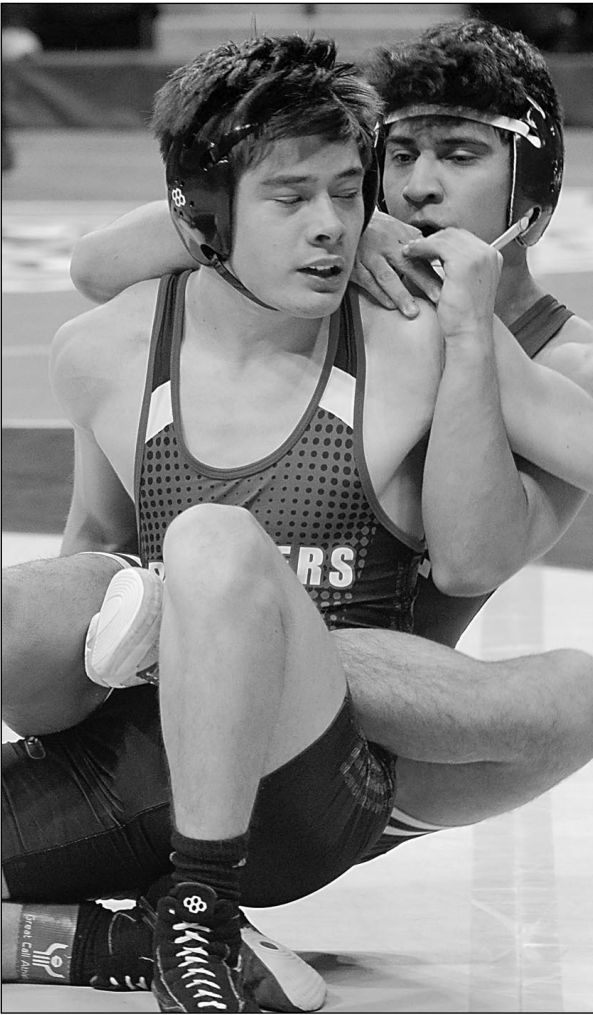
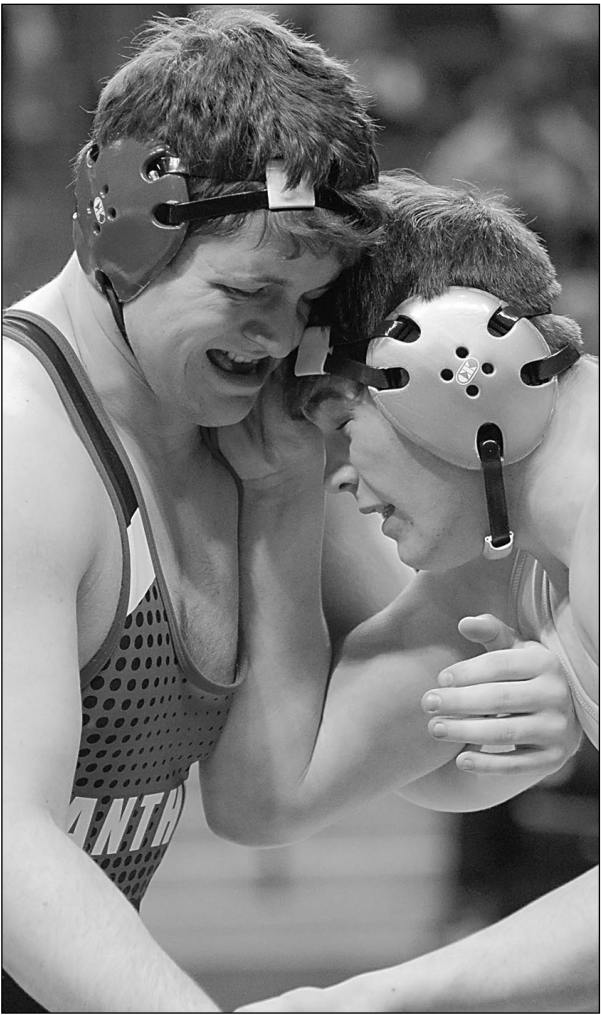
Routh finished his 2022-23 campaign with a record of 10-13.

Welcome home

On Sunday the wrestlers were welcomed home with a celebration at NRHEG High School where

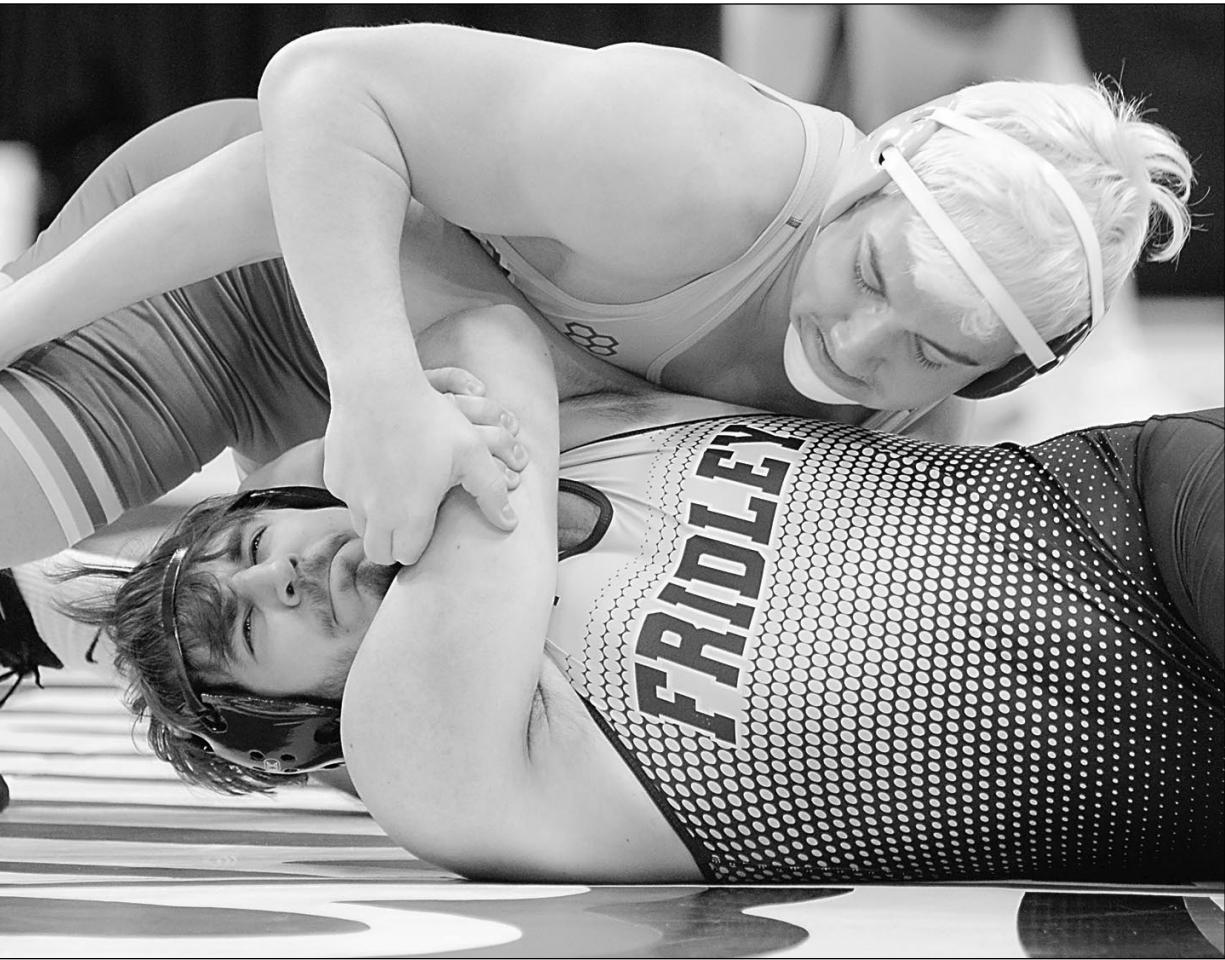


UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT — NRHEG's Annabelle Petsinger, above, takes on Audrey Rogotzke of Stillwater in the finals of the 2023 state wrestling tournament at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul. Below left, the Panthers' Makota Misgen battles Keegan Kuball. Below right, NRHEG's Reese Routh.



coach Larson and the three state participants visited with a crowd of about 100 family, friends, students, coaches, and teachers.

"Thank you to those who came here to support these three wrestlers and our team," Larson told the group. "It means a lot to see your faces there. It means a lot to hear you yelling from the stands. It means a lot to talk to you in the hallways and all those sorts of things. You know, the reason that they're working so hard is to represent you really well. And it was very nice to see all of you there and appreciate that. The next thing is, thanks for coming out to this, because [...] need to be celebrated. And all three of them, because they did a fantastic job."



PILING UP POINTS — Waseca's Payton Garza, top, scores back points against Jack Hanson of Fridley during the 2023 state wrestling tournament at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

WHS matmen celebrate the state tournament experience

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Getting three wrestlers to the state tournament is quite a feat.

But the accomplishment is sometimes lost when individuals are eliminated early.

That's what happened for Waseca's entrants in last week's state tournament at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

It did not, however, lessen the experience.

"The state tournament is an amazing experience," said Bluejays coach Jake Janike. "All three athletes were very excited to go wrestle on the big stage. We prepared all week last week, getting them physically ready and mentally ready."

Payton Garza, a senior wrestling at 195 pounds, was the lone Bluejay to log a victory, defeating Section 7 champion Jack Hanson of Fridley by an 8-1 decision. Garza was then pinned by eventual state champion Joey Novak of New Prague, who pinned his way to the title to finish with a 51-2 record. Garza was pinned in the wrestlebacks by Logan Bender of North Branch, a sophomore who went on to take sixth and finish 28-9.

Waseca senior Christian Rodriguez was decisioned 11-2 in the opening round by Rock Ridge junior Damian Tapio, the Section 7 champion who dropped a 3-2 decision in the quarterfinals before going on to take fourth place and finish 48-7.

Rodriguez ended the season 26-7, making his first

state appearance since his freshman year.

Matthew Veroeven, a freshman, was pinned by Maxx Olson of FMCW, a senior who did not place and compiled a 38-8 record. Veroeven finished 29-10.

"When we got there, looking at the brackets, we knew that both Matthew and Christian we're going to have a tough first match," said Janike. "We were really hoping and trying to be optimistic that those matches would go our way so we could continue to wrestle. Payton wrestled perfectly in the first round."

Garza's wrestleback match was a close one.

"We knew that (his opponent) was very tall and very good in the top position," said Janike. "At the end of the first period it was tied 0-0. The only choice we had was to go in the down position with the hopes to get an escape and score first. Payton wrestled really well moving around, trying to put moves together to get out, which he almost did twice!"

Only 15 seconds remained in the second period though Garza got turned and pinned.

"Overall, we have coaching staff could not be more proud of these young individuals," said Janike. "They gave us everything they had all season long and at the state tournament. Sure, we would have loved to come home with a medal, however, qualifying three athletes to the state tournament is always an amazing accomplishment itself. These young men wrestled their hearts out! Congratulations to all three of them!"

Sluggish start

WHS boys overcome early struggles in sub-section tournament opener

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

They say teams play the game for a reason. Tuesday night the Waseca High School boys' basketball team struggled through the first half against Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, a team the Bluejays beat by more than 50 points earlier this season.

Eventually, after beginning the game having shot 4-for-18 from the floor, the third-seeded Bluejays managed to pull it together enough to win convincingly over No. 6 seed WEM 57-38 in a sub-section tournament game in Waseca.

"WEM made a couple shots right away, and I thought they came out and took away some things that we normally do pretty well and made us uncomfortable while they were on defense and when we were on offense," Waseca coach Seth Anderson said. "I thought WEM

played really well, and that probably had a lot to do with making us uncomfortable and making us play ugly for a lot of the first half."

The Buccaneers were hot from the field to start, opening up a seven-point lead, shooting more than 60% from the floor over the first 10 minutes of play.

But then the Jays decided to play defense, and only allowed four points the rest of the half and went into halftime with a 26-19 lead.

The Jays were sluggish to start the second half, too, letting the Buccaneers cut it to three, seven minutes out of intermission.

But the Bluejays answered with a 12-3 run to push the lead to double digits. The Jays, finally, sailed from there.

"I just want us to play our best basketball at the end of the year here," Coach Anderson said. "And whatever that means as far as exe-



A WIN'S A WIN — Taking the ball to the hoop against WEM Tuesday, March 7, are, from left, Deron Russell (0), Damarius Russell (3) and Zach Hulscher (14).

cuting well on offense, having a good shooting night. Our Achilles heel all year has been being able to rebound the basketball. We had stretches where we really looked terrible rebounding the ball again tonight. We have guys that I think are playing hard, but we're not com-

ing away with quite enough loose balls to get to that next level, to end some runs, or, give us a couple buckets just to help spur a run for us."

Damarius Russell led the Jays in scoring with 22, followed by Carson Ohnstad 14, Laird Keeton 12, Deron

Russell 6, and Zach Hulscher 3.

With the win, the Jays moved onto play in the second round of the tournament against LCWM at Mankato East Thursday.

The second-seeded Knights, who have been ranked as a top-five team the majority of the season, enter

Thursday's contest with a record of 26-1.

"They're very athletic," Anderson answered. "They've got a lot of firepower."

The winner Thursday plays Monday at Minnesota State University-Mankato.

Kuball strikes gold

WEM-JWP wrestler wins Class A state title at 285

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

According to WEM-JWP wrestling coach Skyler Petry, the state tournament is the most exciting part of the season and of the whole year for wrestling fans.

This year was even better for the Grizzlies.

Keegan Kuball, a sophomore, came home with the Class A state championship at 285 pounds. He's the fourth Grizzly to win a state title since WEM and JWP combined for wrestling in 2008, joining Brady Ayers in 2013, Petry in 2014 and Will Storch in 2018.

Petry said the state tournament experience is like none other.

"The amount of wrestling talent and excitement all packed into one arena can't be matched by much else," he said. "It's the time of year where you get to see hours, days, and years of training and effort all come together to hopefully get the results the guys have been running towards."

Petry felt Kuball is a great example of a tough wrestler who had the goods to win the tournament last year, but came up short in some matches that stayed on his mind and the coaches' minds for this whole year.

"It stings more when you know you're so close to winning a title in terms of ability, but just miss the podium," said Petry. "That sticks with you in your mind for a long time. I didn't coach Keegan last year, but have known him from

"Being able to coach him this year was awesome as there was a whole village behind him."

— Grizzlies coach Skyler Petry

growing up with my younger brother, Carson Petry, since they were little, young scrappers and have watched him many times before as he grew older and could see that he was going to be really tough one of these days."

Coaching Kuball has been a pleasure for Petry.

"Being able to help coach him this year was awesome as there was a whole village behind him in supporting his endeavors," said Petry.

Kuball's parents, Nate and Shannon, are very involved in wrestling events.

"They have done a terrific job of raising Keegan into a hard-working, respectful, and competitive young man," said Petry. "It was even better this year to get former Grizzly wrestlers Brady Ayers and Colin Ayers to help Keegan get as ready as possible for the state tournament. Throughout the season, you wouldn't have to worry about Keegan pushing himself every day in the wrestling room. You never wanted to miss him battling it out with teammate Jack Cahill or some of his coaches. His positive attitude and effort rub off on the rest of the team and have made him not only a great wrestler, but a great leader as

well."

Petry was especially impressed with how Kuball bounced back from last year's disappointing showing at the Xcel Energy Center.

"We know how hard it can feel to go to the state tournament with hopes of winning the whole tournament and come home with heart-break instead," said Petry. "Seeing him use that as fuel for this season was that much more satisfying when he finally got his hand raised on the biggest stage in the state. Even this season he had some results that didn't sit well with him, but his supportive family, teammates, and coaches still believed in him that he can bring it all together when it matters most, and you could see it in Keegan that he believed he could do it too. Keegan isn't the biggest hugger in the world, but after his comeback victory in the finals, not a single person could hug and congratulate him quick enough."

Petry said Kuball is an outstanding example of what the coaches want WEM-JWP wrestlers to be.

"He excels in all elements that we emphasize for our wrestlers to take away from the sport: leadership, integrity, family, and effort.



END OF THE RAINBOW — Keegan Kuball, right, mixes it up with Makota Misgen of NRHEG on his way to winning the Class A 285-pound wrestling championship Saturday, March 4 at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

He is a leader by example in the way he holds himself on the mat and in the classroom. He shows integrity in the way he supports his teammates and the way he wins and loses matches with respect without making excuses or complaints for why things didn't go well. He loves

to compete and win, but still does a great job being humble in his victories as well. He has a big supporting family as well as his wrestling family that he supports right back. He fights and works hard to represent his families in the best light possible. Lastly, his effort in the

aspects of life he pursues is just what you want to see in a great wrestler and person in life. I get the luxury of being his teacher and coach and seeing that his effort doesn't happen only in the wrestling room."

Season comes to an end for WHS girls' basketball

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The Waseca High School girls' basketball team, seeded second in the sub-section playoffs, had its season come to an end Thursday March 2, in Mankato, falling to No. 3 seed NRHEG 45-38.

"We played really hard," 11th-year head coach Joan Conway said after the game. "That's what we do... We just fell short tonight."

Thursday's game, a see-saw battle, saw 10 lead changes, no converted free throws from Waseca and more than 20 Bluejay turnovers.

Senior Sam Azure broke the ice with a three-pointer two minutes into play as the Jays jumped out to an early 9-4 lead with additional baskets from seniors Avery Madsen and Kloe Wadd. The Panthers, as they did all night, quickly responded with a three-pointer from senior Sidney Schultz, who led all scorers with 23 points.

The teams battled all the way

through to intermission with a Wadd basket at the minute mark evening the teams at 21-21. Combining for all of Waseca's first-half points were Azure, Wadd, and Madsen.

Senior Megan Kanewischer scored the first points of the second half.

A turning point came when Azure registered her fourth foul with 12 minutes remaining and was forced to sit. Without her, the girls looked outmatched, aside from Wadd, who gave the Jays their final leads of the night. Baskets from Wadd put the Jays ahead with 11 minutes to play and again, 31-30 with 8 minutes to play.

However, it was too much to handle. Back-to-back-three pointers by Quinn VanMaldeghe and Schultz put the Panthers ahead, ultimately for good.

When Azure reentered, the girls scrapped back to a 39-38 deficit on her three-pointer with four minutes remaining. It was the final points of

the night for the Jays, and for Azure's career. The Panthers made the free throws, putting the game on ice as the Jays couldn't find the net bottom of the net.

Wadd led all Bluejays in scoring with 16, followed by Azure 11; Madsen 5, Kanewischer 4, and Addison Wieseler 2.

"This group has done a lot of great things," Coach Conway expressed. "Hopefully, they'll look back and feel really good about it overall after they get through this thing."

Playing their final games were seniors Azure, Kanewischer, Ella Dufault, Madsen and Wadd.

"It means a lot (to be a Bluejay)," Wadd said after the game. "I've played with amazing players. I've played with amazing teammates. I've had amazing coaches, and I've had an amazing experience. Bluejays are about community. And our community showed up tonight and has always shown up for us.



END OF THE LINE — A 45-38 loss to NRHEG in the sub-section meant the end of the season for the Waseca High School girls' basketball team. At left, the Bluejays' Megan Kanewischer splits the defense. At right, Kloe Wadd blocks a shot.

And I'll miss that.

"These final moments were unbelievable," Wadd choked through the tears. "I didn't wanna realize it at first, but when I did, I look back on all the memories that I had, and I don't regret anything that we did,

and I'm really thankful for everything that we got to do."

Coach Conway was asked what she said to the long-tenured, core group of seniors which included four starters. "I told them I loved them," Conway said, also smiling

through tears.

The Bluejays finished the year with a 16-10 record. Conway was assisted by coaches Matt Potter, Aaron Kanewischer and Taylor Phelps. Student managers were Sophie Chawra, Sarah Robbins, and