



Compostings

by Al Batt

What goes up must come down

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

How do you spell Armageddon?

I don't know. Oh, well, never mind. It's not the end of the world.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I went to Bruce's birthday party. He got a lot of chocolate, but he'll never get as much as he deserves.

I had breakfast for dinner. A treat, whether it's deserved or not. I was leading a tour far from home. It might have been in another galaxy, I'm not sure. I stayed in the dead guy's cabin. That's what they called it—the dead guy's cabin. I didn't know it was called that until I'd spent a night in it. It was a pleasant cabin, but it had a dangerously low ceiling, especially over the bed. I'm vertically enhanced. I figured the dead guy had been tall, too, and the cruel ceiling had cracked his skull.

I was in a hotel in Missouri. It wasn't a five-star hotel; it was a hotel that fit into my wallet. It had a motley collection of mismatched furniture. Every piece was a genuine Motley. I heard coughing emanating from the rooms on both sides of mine and from the parking lot. I checked the news to see if there was a whooping cough outbreak in the area. The only outbreak was one of thin walls in a cheap hotel.

I'VE LEARNED

Americans legally bet \$166.94 billion on sports in 2025. When tribal sportsbooks, illegal offshore bookies, and political and event prediction markets are included, analysts estimate the total amount wagered annually is close to \$300 billion.

According to Forbes magazine, the worst-selling mass-produced cars of all time in one production year are Ford Edsel 2,848 cars sold in 1960, Lincoln Blackwood 3,300 in 2002, Yugo GV 4,000 in 1991, Pontiac Aztek 5020 in 2005, and Cadillac Catera 9,764 sold in 2001.

LOCAL NEWS

Isaac Peterson was a standout quarterback at Rochester Mayo High School, surpassed 1,000 career points in basketball, and plans to play basketball at UW-Eau Claire. His father is Scott Peterson, and his grandparents are Kathy and the late Jim Peterson of New Richland.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

If you hold the sole of your foot to your ear, you can hear your hip dislocating.

I thought I'd blacked out. It turned out I'd put my hoodie on backwards.

I asked my wife what she liked best about me, "Is it my trim, athletic body? Or is it my astounding intellect?" She replied, "No, it's your sense of humor, dear."

NATURE NOTES

I heard from Mark Domeier of Ellendale, who said that his father had told him that 90 days after a fog lifts, we will get precipitation, because what goes up must come down. Mark and his wife Michelle tested this and found it largely correct.

It was hot enough to melt rocks. The corn was sweating profusely. Thunder rumbled in the distance. It wasn't roaring. I learned that when thunder roars, go indoors.

A cardinal sang with gusto, a definite showboat. I'm lucky to be thrilled by the sight of a cardinal. Minnesota's first record of a cardinal was in Minneapolis in the fall of 1875. The first confirmed nesting was in Steele County in 1925 when a cardinal's nest with eggs was discovered. The first record of a cardinal in Iowa was one that was captured in Iowa City in 1882.

Crickets and katydids rub their forewings together to make sounds, while grasshoppers rub their wings against their hind legs to create the sounds. This process is called stridulation. Some grasshoppers also use crepitation, snapping their wings together in flight to make crackling sounds.

If it looks like a tall dandelion with leaves resembling those of a thistle, but the spines lack sharpness; it's a sowthistle, a perennial, that blooms July-October and grows up to 4 feet high. Prickly lettuce is an annual or biennial herb that blooms from July to September and can grow up to 6.5 feet tall. Prickly lettuce leaves have prickly edges that can be sharp, and a prickly midrib on the underside, while sowthistle leaves lack the prickly midrib. Both plants exude a milky sap when cut or wounded.

White oaks produce leaves that have rounded lobes, whereas red oaks exhibit pointed lobes with a tiny bristle on their tips. The cap of the red oak acorn is scaly, while the white oak acorn has a knobby cap. The acorns of white oaks have a broader, shorter appearance and mature in a single year. Their caps are deeper, covering half the nut, and they're more appealing as a preferred food source for many wildlife species. The acorns of red oaks are more elongated or ovoid and mature in two years. Their caps are shallow, covering the top quarter or third of the nut.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"Kind words, kind looks, kind acts, and warm handshakes—these are means of grace when men in trouble are fighting their unseen battles."—John Hall.

An entire column about 'fame'

Someone called me "famous" the other day. It was meant as a compliment and I was grateful for the generous assessment, although I was so taken by surprise I stuttered somewhat as I expressed my thanks.

The exchange got me thinking, though. What are the criteria for "fame," anyway?

Online artificial intelligence surveyed probably dozens of internet dictionary sites and came up with the summary "Fame means the state of being known, seen, or talked about by many people. It comes from having great skills, doing important work, or being a public star."

Well, that's not so bad. If that were the whole message the word sends, I guess I'd be comfortable with being "famous."

There are numerous catching points, though.

An important beginning question is, how many is "many"?

As someone who takes often hundreds of pictures at public events, I frequently take my camera and step out where "everyone" probably notices me. Just this past weekend at Waldorf Days I may have caused my family members some embarrassment as I walked out into the street, sometimes coming within a few feet of the parade units.

At graduations and well-attended



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

school concerts, the number of people who notice me is likely in the high hundreds, but probably not into the thousands.

Then, of course, there is the cumulative effect. If we total up all the places and times I and my camera have made ourselves conspicuous over the course of the five years the Pioneer has been publishing, it certainly is in the thousands, probably even tens of thousands.

But also probably not as many as might attend—in a single night—a professional sporting event or concert by a nationally known artist.

Okay, criteria one, "seen by many people." Maybe yes, maybe no.

You may have noticed I skipped over the "known" and "talked about" elements of fame. That's because I believe "seen" is by far my strongest option.

As far as "talked about," it's a significant element of being a news re-

porter that we are supposed to be as invisible as possible in our work. That is, readers' attention should be on the people, information and circumstances we are reporting about. Writers are supposed to be simply conduits for the facts, delivering them in an organized way using as few words as possible. Except in opinion pieces—a category that includes this column and items like Ben's movie reviews—news writers do not overtly express their opinions or use the word "I" to refer to themselves.

Okay, now to the second part of the definition, the idea that fame is a result of having great skill, doing important work, or being a public star.

As for having "great" skill, I recognize that I am quite good with words, and that I have no fear of summarizing or explaining complex situations or circumstances. I excel, that is, I'm "great" in comparison to

the many people who wouldn't even attempt to write a news article. But there is also a group of writers among whom I don't stand out so far.

Still, I do usually rank in at least one or two categories of the annual "Better Newspaper Contest" sponsored by the Minnesota Newspaper Association, of which the Pioneer and Star Eagle are members. And I am a large part of the high rankings we have earned in "general reporting" and "general excellence" categories.

Second criteria, great skill. Yes, probably, some of the time anyway.

Additional expectation: doing important work. Here, it is the Pioneer and the Star Eagle which excel, and I along with them.

You see, most importantly I am grateful for my skill as a writer because I can use it toward positive ends. I can inform people about goings-on. I can find words which do justice to the stories and experiences of the quietly remarkable people who make up Waseca County. I can call attention to accomplishments and milestones. In short, I can make other people "famous," and that, my friends, is "important work" in every way. It's my favorite part of being "known, seen or talked about by many people."



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

Good food, great wine, and gorgeous memories

Buongiorno from Italy.

As mentioned previously, our travels prove to be endless. Not that I'm complaining. On Wednesday last week, we boarded a plane and spent the next ten hours trying to sleep. We arrived in Munich, Germany, on Thursday morning and then flew to Venice, eventually arriving at our hotel in the afternoon.

I had always pictured Venice like the postcards: a cute, quaint little Italian town with narrow streets, old architecture, and picturesque gondolas floating around. I forgot that since it is right on the coast, it is very much a coastal city with boats, warehouses, and the whole industry built by the water.

Don't get me wrong, it also is the quaint European city I envisioned, but our hotel was nearer the industrial side of the city, and it was interesting to see all the boats and docks.

We enjoyed Venice greatly, except for the rain that poured on us most of the one full day we were there. We did manage to tour the Venetian Arsenal museum where we learned about the history of the Venice navy. While walking near the port, we got to see a lot of old and cool boats—before it started raining.

We then found a cafe and wandered around the best we could without getting entirely soaked (which we did). We even showed up for our gondola ride because we hadn't heard anything otherwise, and there they told us to come back two hours later and try again.

We had already paid for the tickets, so we decided to stick around instead of walking the hour back to the hotel and calling it quits. It was raining so hard that we were the only idiots walking in the street while everyone else had found awnings, doorsteps, and alleyways to hide for the time being. Utterly drenched, we eventually gave up and went to a coffee shop where we waited out the two hours.

Thankfully, the rain had stopped and the sun had even come out to say hello for the first time that day when we climbed into a gondola at 5 p.m. It was cool to glide through the water and quiet little alleys for half an hour. We even got to witness a proposal! We were passing another gondola when I noticed the guy was on his knees holding the woman's hands and talking to her. Then lo and be-



Amelia and Jack, on vacation in Italy.

hold, he pulls out a ring box! She said yes and all of us in other gondolas nearby clapped. So that was sweet.

We then took the high-speed train to Florence, where we stayed for two days. I had visited Florence for spring break while I was studying abroad so I took Jack around to some of my favorite places and we explored new ones together.

He even booked us a pasta making class for one of the nights we were there, and we had a blast making tiramisu, ravioli, and tagliatelle while getting full use out of the unlimited wine that was advertised. What's funny is, we even sat at a table with two other Americans, a mother and daughter, who were from Minnesota! I swear, it's always a small world, no matter where you are in it.

Needless to say, the trip so far has been filled with good food, great



wine, and gorgeous memories. Now, off to Rome!

My Determination: "Time stays long enough for anyone who will use it." — Leonardo da Vinci

How many times my brother tried to kill me

I'm grateful for my siblings.

I bought my brother a "smoker," aka a type of grill for a gift this past week. It was a combination birthday/Christmas gift. But really I just want someone to make a good brisket that I can enjoy. After much discussion on my best friend Jake's couch, we reached the conclusion the best way to get a good brisket is for my brother to make it. He is an excellent cook.

I messaged him and he found a used smoker on Facebook. The agreement was I buy the smoker, he the pellets and meats. My brother has used it every day this week, making ribs, steak, chicken, pork and more.

Monday evening we enjoyed smoked pork shoulder that spent 11 hours cooking. It was the best pork I have ever had. It cost my brother \$11 and fed four people.

This is not the only thing I enjoy about my siblings. I enjoy how real I can be. Namely, I can say whatever I want, in whatever tone of voice and what I say will never be taken the wrong way. At least not from Nathan. I love that about him. He has been a very good older brother, there when I need him and there to try and offer "brotherly advice" when he can. Every single day he is sending me updates on his life, what he is



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

doing, working on, etc. I'm really grateful he does. I look forward to those updates. Nathan is down about 50lbs this year and about 2-3 times a week he is sending me photos of the scale. I am proud of him. He owns his own home, works very hard and has good, quality friends around him.

My brother had tourettes and ADHD as a kid. We shared a room together until I was 12. I used to get so excited to tattle about his swearing to my mom, not knowing that his yelling over and over like that was the tourettes. He grew out of one, but not the other. Nathan, when he is focused on something, really, really focuses on it. The new smoker, being an excellent example. I'm grateful for another opportunity to bond with him.

Growing up, Nathan only tried to kill me a couple times.

The first when he may or may not have put Legos in my water cup,

which I choked on. Dad saved me when I ran down the stairs. Nathan had to write many "sentences" that night.

"I will not put Lego's in Eli's water."

Other examples include:

"I will not throw things at Eli while he is trying to sleep."

"I will not yell at Eli while he is trying to sleep."

"I will not fart so badly and laugh so loudly....."

Nathan used to eat bad food, beans, etc. and brag about how he would make the room smell that night when it was bedtime.

Dad likes to tell the story of the two of us arguing over whether planes drop cars out of them.

Other times we would argue through our evening prayers. Praying for the other to stop interrupting. I always quit interrupting first.

As children I would resort to brib-

ing my brother to make airplanes out of Legos for me. He had a special talent.

Nathan was just a little too old for me to hang out with him and his friends. But that didn't always stop me. (Nathan is five years older than I. He is 34 this year; I turn 29 in November.)

The other times Nathan tried to kill me included the time he almost shot me with an arrow, the times he put us in the ditch in his truck, both intentionally and unintentionally and finally when I was four years old and he put a lit firecracker down my butt crack. I spent that fourth of July laying on my tummy with burn cream on my butt.

It's moments like this that give me a lifetime pass not to watch my attitude when speaking to my brother. (Not that I do have an attitude. But it's nice to have someone I can unload about life to, who will only respond with, "Do you want some pork butt?")

Thank you for the pork butt, Nathan.

In cribbage this week, Dad got the best of me, winning 22-20, skunking me 4 times to my 3. Totals will be updated next week reflecting our scores this year.

WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

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AMELIA ROESSLER Editor
JIM LUTGENS Sports Editor/Dad
BEN REVERMANN Staff Writer

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Rock’n Car Roll-In at Boxcar Bar Sept. 17

The Rock’n Car Roll-In will take place at Boxcar Bar from 4 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 17. Classic cars, motorcycles, food trucks, music and 50/50 raffle.

Sacred Heart Fall Festival September 18, 19, and 20

Sacred Heart Catholic Church will be holding its Fall Festival over the weekend of Sept. 18, 19, and 20. Events include a white elephant sale, Country Store, silent auction, Friday live auction and concession stand just to name a few.

All You Can Eat Dad’s Belgian Waffles All Saints Sept. 27

All Saints Church of New Richland will hold their All You Can Eat Dad’s Belgian Waffles from 9-12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 27. There will be a raffle and country store, cost is \$10.

Waseca Senior Center Lot Sale Friday and Saturday, Oct. 2 and 3

The Waseca Senior Center will hold a lot sale from 8 a.m. thru 3 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 2 and 3. They are also looking for donations, any item as long as it is in good condition and clean, drop off at the Senior Center Tuesday-Friday from 8 a.m. thru 4 p.m. Call Vada Danhart at 507-202-1137 with questions.

Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Meeting October 8

The SWCD will be holding its monthly board meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 8. The meetings will be held in the SWCD offices located at 300 North State Street - Door 4.

Toners Lake Karting no points race Saturday, Oct. 17

Toners Lake Karting will hold a no points race at noon on Saturday, Oct. 17, with a banquet to follow. Located at 8747 415th Ave. Janesville. Races are weather dependent, check for times.

Great Fall Get Together 2026 at Waseca Art Center October 24

The Great Fall Get Together 2026 will take place at the Waseca Art Center from 6-9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24. Mingling, appetizers and full bar with music from Bump & Hustle to Hoehn Brothers DJ Entertainment. Tickets \$40 at Waseca Art Center or from a board member.

Briefs continued on 7

Got news?
507-837-6767

November ballot to include funding question

By MELISSA DUNN
Staff Writer

During the August 20 meeting, members of the Waseca school board heard from Superintendent Eric Hudspith regarding the permanent school trust fund amendment that will be on the ballot in November. Hudspith emphasized that the public is being asked to vote whether the permanent school fund, which has existed since 1858, should be amended to update how the fund distributes money to schools. He stated firmly it would in no way raise individual or property taxes for the community.

The question on the November general election ballot will be: “Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to increase the funding to all school districts from the permanent school fund, which is a fund that supports school districts without raising individual income or property taxes, effective July 1, 2027?”

In Minnesota, passing a constitutional amendment requires a yes vote from a majority of all voters casting ballots in that election. If a voter completes other elements of a ballot but skips the constitutional question, it has the same effect as

2026 ELECTION INFORMATION

PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT



A FUND THAT SUPPORTS SCHOOLS— WITHOUT RAISING INCOME OR PROPERTY TAXES

This question will appear on the November 3, 2026 ballot.

**Official Ballot Question:**
“Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to increase the funding going to all school districts from the permanent school fund, which is a fund that supports school districts without raising individual income or property taxes, effective July 1, 2027?”

**WHAT IS THE PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND?**
Established at statehood, the fund is supported by trust land assets and revenue from land sales, timber, mining, leases, and other resources. Today, it includes about 2.5 million acres of school trust land and 1 million acres of severed mineral rights.

**WHAT WOULD THIS AMENDMENT DO?**
If approved by voters, state law provides for an annual distribution equal to 4.5% of the fund’s average net asset value over the previous three fiscal years, beginning July 1, 2027.

**IMPORTANT VOTING INFORMATION**
Under Minnesota law, constitutional amendments must receive approval from a majority of all voters participating in the election.

The fund has grown from approximately \$675 million in 2010 to approximately \$2.3 billion in 2025.

The amendment also establishes constitutional principles to manage the fund as a perpetual financial resource for Minnesota schools and to preserve its purchasing power over time.

Leaving the constitutional amendment question blank has the same effect as voting “No.”
Voters may vote “Yes” or “No” on the question.

This information is being shared for informational purposes to help our community understand the question appearing on the 2026 ballot.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND:

Short Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phLS0Eg5n0k&t=10s>

Website:
<https://www.mnpsfamendment.org/>

Information Sheet:
<https://bit.ly/3G4qAl>

voting against it. The question will be on the back side of the ballot, so voters must turn the sheet over to notice it..

During the action items, the board approved the 2026-27 student handbooks and a lease with Grace Lutheran Church for the upcoming childcare program. Also approved was Hudspith’s 2025-26 superintendent evaluation. Board chair Dave Dunn said Hudspith received “effective” and “highly ef-

fective” ratings in all areas; evaluators noted strengths of the superintendent are strategic planning and dealing with the public. The board also reported positively on the “vision card” approach and his leadership within the district. Hudspith said he appreciated all the feedback. “If you’re not always getting better, then you’re probably in the wrong profession,” he said. “I’m looking forward to another year in Waseca.”

Event celebrates personality, character of Don Eustice

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

According to family members, the Don Eustice Memorial Event set to take place at the county fairgrounds on Saturday, Sept. 5, is designed to emphasize community and community connections because those were a priority for Sheriff Don Eustice, who was killed in the line of duty on Sept. 4, 1976.

Eustice’s daughter Barb Hertzog, who was 10 years old at the time, is a member of the committee planning the event. Given that 2026 marks the fiftieth year since Eustice’s sudden death, Hertzog said family members wanted to memorialize the sheriff in a way that parallels who he was and how he approached his service to the community.

Remembering the popularity of “Teen Canteen” dances that Eustice organized, and especially remembering that their purpose was to find positive, safe settings and environments for county teenagers to enjoy each others’ company, the committee

decided on a day-long “canteen” that would be inviting to families and that ends—how else?—with a dance.

Along with being a celebration of Eustice’s service, the Sept. 5 event includes a number of fundraisers. Money taken in for tournament registration, dance admission, and for various activities will be added to the funds which support the Don Eustice Memorial Scholarship. Selected students need to be graduates of a high school within Waseca County and must be entering law enforcement as their career field.

Hertzog says funding for the scholarship remains strong, but the fiftieth anniversary year was too much of a milestone to let pass by unmarked. She says she does not expect there ever to be another fundraiser that supports the scholarship, nor does she expect that one will be needed.

The earliest event of the day is a

Eustice continued on 9



DONALD D. EUSTICE
Address: Waseca, Minnesota.
Entered Service: July 12, 1946.
Branch of Service: Navy.
Trained at San Diego, California (Cook and Baker School).
Served aboard U.S.S. Antietam CV - 36.
Embarkation: March 31, 1947.
Theatre of Operations: Pacific.
Awarded: Victory Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Theatre Ribbon.
Returned to States: October 12, 1947.
Discharged: San Francisco, California; July 12, 1948.
Rating: Seaman First Class.
Time Served: 24 months.
Present Occupation: Farming.
Served in Pearl Harbor; Manila; Sidney, Australia; Guam; Saipan; Tokyo, Japan; China; Truk.



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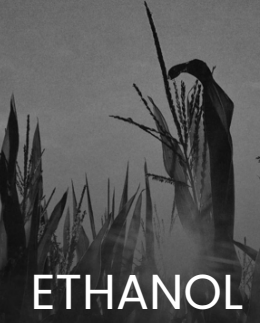
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OBITUARIES

Virginia Wobschall

VIRGINIA “VIRGIE” LOUISE WOBSCHELL, age 83 of Waseca, died on the morning of Tuesday, August 18, 2026 at the New Richland Care Center.

Virginia was born in Montgomery on October 11, 1942, to parents August and Agnes Malecha. She attended school in Montgomery. Following her high school graduation, she was united in marriage to Lowell Wobschall on September 22, 1962, in Waseca. Over the years she worked at the E.F. Johnson Company, Herter’s, Quality Print, and finally at Clear Lake Press until her retirement. Virginia enjoyed working with horses, playing cards, working crossword puzzles, reading mystery novels, and following the Minnesota Vikings, but more than anything she loved spending time with her grandchildren. She was a member of Trinity-Wilton Lutheran Church for most of her life.

Virginia is survived by two children, Nicolas (Rachel) Wobschall of Waseca, and Heather Marrero of Waseca; five grandchildren, Dylan Wobschall, Derek (Autumn) Wobschall, Megan Wobschall all of Waseca, Maria Marrero of Ellendale, and Michael Marrero of Owatonna; and one sister, Yvonne Gehring of Texas. She was preceded in death by both of her par-



Virginia Wobschall

ents; her husband; and five siblings, Charlotte Pleiss, Jacqueline Malecha, Lallie Dahl, Roman Malecha, and August Malecha.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 29, 2026 at the State Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Services in Waseca, with Rev. Michael Grannis officiating. Visitation will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will continue until the time of the service at the funeral home. Interment will follow at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca. dsfuneral.com

Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt
Funeral and Cremation Services
Waseca ~ Janesville ~ Waterville

James Mitchell

James Fay Mitchell (age 93), after a long battle with Alzheimer’s, finished his race August 21, 2026.

He was born May 6, 1933, was adopted from St. Cloud Hospital in St. Cloud, Minnesota, at six weeks of age by Clarence and Clara Mitchell of rural Akeley, Minnesota. He graduated from Akeley High School and later attended Trinity Bible College and the University of Minnesota.

At 17 years old, Jim attended a Bible conference at Medicine Lake, Minnesota, that changed the course of his life. There, he met his Lord and Savior and dedicated his life to serving Him. When Jim returned home and shared that he had become a born-again Christian, his mother gently warned him not to go overboard and suggested he would get over it in a couple of weeks. Instead, the transformation in his life was so genuine and dramatic that his family could not deny the reality of his faith. Through Jim’s testimony, his parents also came to accept Christ as their Savior and soon helped plant a new Evangelical Free Church in Grand Marais, Minnesota. This was only the beginning of a lifetime devoted to serving the Lord and impacting countless lives through his faith.

While attending Trinity Bible College in Chicago, Illinois, Jim became a member of the school quartet, touring throughout the western United States. He returned from one of those tours just in time to marry the love of his life, Lillian Gustafson, on August 8, 1953.

Drafted into the U.S. Army in 1954, Jim served 17 months in Korea. Following his active-duty service, he continued serving in the Army Reserve and later spent seven years in the Navy Reserve as a corpsman.

Jim’s passion for serving the Lord was the foundation of his life. His career as a postal worker for 17 years and later as the owner of Mitchell Furniture store in Waseca, Minnesota, provided the flexibility to pursue ministry and church leadership. He helped establish Grace Evangelical Free Church in Fridley, Minnesota, and later served as a church-planting pastor at Faith Church in Austin, Minnesota.

Jim was deeply involved in the North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church. He was often found visiting district churches, carrying out leadership responsibilities, and sharing his musical gifts through singing and playing the saxophone. He also served as Chairman of the Board for Camp Shamaineau in Motley, Minnesota.

Jim was blessed with many talents. He possessed an exceptional tenor voice, played the saxophone beautifully, and was a skilled carpenter who enjoyed solving all kinds of challenging projects. Many of his creative endeavors were inspired by his artistic designer daughter, the late Jody Mitchell Nelson.

Jim was also an avid bicyclist. Over 45 years, he logged more



James Mitchell

than 140,000 miles on his bicycle, and yes, he kept track! Many thousands of those miles were spent pulling his beloved little Bichon, “Mikey,” in a bicycle cart, creating memories and drawing smiles wherever they traveled.

In 1999, Jim and Lillian moved to their home overlooking Table Rock Lake in the Branson area. It did not take long for Jim to discover that retirement in Branson often meant finding new ways to stay busy. He soon found himself ushering at The Promise and later at Sight & Sound Theatre. He thoroughly enjoyed those opportunities and the many friendships he made along the way. Jim was also active in Bob Mabe’s Kitchen Band, where he played the saxophone and sang. It was a season filled with music, fun, and cherished friendships.

Jim was preceded in death by his daughter, Joan “Jody” Nelson; his parents, Clarence and Clara Mitchell; his sister, Mildred Mitchell Jackson, his parents-in-law, Lilly and E. J. Gustafson; brothers-in-law Dwight, John, Donald, and Gordon Gustafson; and sisters-in-law Mary Barker and Dagmar Merrick.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 73 years, Lillian Mitchell; his daughter, Jaymie Mitchell; his son, Dr. Cameron Mitchell (DiAnna); and his son-in-law, Blain Nelson.

He also leaves behind five grandchildren: Lyric (Jon) Butler, Brock (Karissa) Nelson, Bayli (Michael) Baker, Lindsay (Victor) Hilsinger, and Addison (Sam) Seeger.

Jim was further blessed with ten great-grandchildren: River Punab-Mitchell, Braxton Nelson, Brayden Butler, Dean Mitchell-Hilsinger, Kinsley Nelson, Easton Baker, Brooks Butler, Brolin Nelson, Payton Baker, and Lofton Baker.

Memorial Service:
Friendly Baptist Church, 2751 Kirkland Drive, Branson, Missouri 65616.

Visitation: 10:00 a.m.
Celebration of Life Service: 11:00 a.m.

A Missouri Veterans Cemetery interment service in Springfield, Missouri, will follow. Time to be announced.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Branson Bible Church Building Fund or Camp Shamaineau, Motley, Minnesota 56466.



Keith Allen, State Representative for District 19A, which within Waseca County includes Alton, Blooming Grove, Iosco and Janesville townships, visited with members of the Waseca County Board during their meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 18. Allen, standing to the immediate right of the flag, is pictured here with commissioners (from left) Brian Harguth, Doug Christopherson, De Malterer, Brad Krause and Brad Milbrath.

Photo by Deb Bently

County gives levy a sharp look

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

For the past few months commissioner “work sessions,” which are typically scheduled as needed on Tuesday mornings prior to the 9:30 board meeting, have centered around arriving at a preliminary tax levy amount to be collected during 2027.

Commissioners have heard from department heads who have summarized their intended budgets for next year, and have asked questions about pertinent details.

Under Minnesota state law, all entities which benefit from property taxes must announce a preliminary levy amount by Sept. 15. The county receives the preliminary numbers and compiles them on a summary which is sent to all property owners in mid-November letting them know what their property taxes are likely to be in the following year. The number includes levies from towns, townships, school boards, and the county, whichever are applicable.

Taxpayers then have the opportunity to attend “Truth in Taxation” meetings which each entity is required to hold either late in November or in the first few weeks of December. At those meetings, questions can be asked about the proposed budget amounts.

Once the September preliminary levy amount is released, the entity cannot raise the number, but it can reduce it: final levy numbers are required by Dec. 29.

With the Sept. 15 deadline approaching, county administrator Michael Johnson informed board members during their Aug. 18 meeting that they will “have something on their calendars” for the next few Tuesdays, even those which are not the first or third Tuesday of the month, the usual time slot for county board meetings.

For 2026, the county’s operating budget was \$39.5 million. The levy, that is, the amount paid by property owners, was \$19.2 million.

Commissioners were visited by District 19A State Representative Keith Allen, whose district includes Alton, Blooming Grove, Iosco, and Janesville townships.

Allen began by sharing information about a proposed constitutional amendment which will be on ballots this November. Taxpayers are being asked to approve a change in the formula used to distribute funds to school districts. Allen explained the change would not increase taxes, but will allow an increased amount of money to be given out from a specific, very suc-

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

cessful fund that was arranged for in the state constitution in 1858.

Namely, payments accrued from mining rights, lumber sales, and other opportunities on millions of designated acres managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have always been set aside to support schools. In November, voters will be asked “Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to increase the funding going to all school districts from the permanent school fund, which is a fund that supports school districts without raising individual income or property taxes, effective July 1, 2027?”

Allen mentioned that the rules regarding constitutional amendments is that, to pass, they must be approved by the majority of all people casting a ballot. Thus, failing to vote on the question is the same as voting against it.

Allen cautioned that the question will be appearing on the back side of the printed ballots. “So you have to turn the sheet over to see it,” he said.

When asked about the status of the permanent school fund, Allen

said the proposed increase is “exceptionally conservative,” but would provide a significant increase to school districts, which he described as “flipping over every couch cushion to find every penny they can to continue their vital work.”

Allen also summarized some actions taken during the 2026 legislative session which he regarded as positive. These included funds to update important software used for recording and communicating important human services information; a one-year decrease in car licensing fees; and a “bonding bill” which allots more money than has typically been the case to outstate improvement projects, especially those helping to improve water quality.

County board members approved allotting \$40,000 to act as a local funds match for a \$60,000 grant from the state’s “safe and secure courthouses” program.

It was shared during the meeting that groundbreaking for the planned judicial center to be constructed next to the historic courthouse is delayed from this fall to the spring of 2027. Board members made reference to some “due diligence” needs that caused the delay.

■ Council

from Page 3

date of all 2028. Through savings and planning since 2021, there is seven million saved to start this project already saved. A million through Minnesota Prairie, and Amy Klobuchar assured Waseca three million. Christopherson said, “We’re 90 percent sure we’ll get that money, but it has to go through Washington first.” There will be savings that come from running the building itself. Christopherson also brought up the fact, “No one likes a new tax” then made reference to a local sales tax as an option for funding. “Then the whole burden doesn’t come just from Waseca residents.” He means that people from outside Waseca county come here to enjoy our lakes and town, “They are bringing money and

shopping here, that helps our people pay for this center.” The new center would be built just north of where the current center is now, continued Christopherson, “Where the center currently sits would become the new parking lot.”

Kelsey Groskreutz of Abdo CPAs, Accounting and Consulting Services was present to discuss the city’s audit report. She said there were no instances of non-compliance. “Over all this was a very positive audit, the city staff was cooperative, and we appreciate the opportunity to work with you.”

The fire department report included one mutual aid fire call and two medical calls. This month’s training was preparing for Farm and City Days.

The New Richland Police Department responded to 92 calls for service for the month of July. There were 20 traffic stops, four ordinance violations, one animal complaint, three

suspicious circumstances, 16 directed patrols/lock checks, 19 assists of other agencies. Other call types included civil, criminal damage to property, threats/assaults, and motor vehicle accidents. ANCOM updated the old backup radios successfully. The annual use of force and firearms training will take place in August. Posse security for the street dance was \$740. The first day of school for NRHEG will be Sept. 1.

According to its report, recruitment at the New Richland Care Center is improving. The Center now has only a few full-time openings in the nursing department, which also means hiring of agency workers is down significantly. The residents have been on bus trips to get ice cream, they also helped with the decoration of the float in the Farm and

City Days parade. Care Center staff expressed gratitude to the volunteers who helped with the float and the parade. The facility held an outdoor barbecue for its residents; thanks to good weather, everyone was fortunate enough to eat outdoors and listen to some music. The facility also wants to treat residents to in-season sweet corn; staff members have been in contact with a couple different farms and are looking for more.

Tyler Lendt, city administrator, asked for \$135 to attend a Clerk’s Academy overnight event in St. Paul being conducted by the Minnesota League of Cities.

The next Regular City Council meeting will be held on Monday, September 14.

OBITUARIES

Kenneth Jacobson

Kenneth Alrik Jacobson passed away peacefully on August 22, 2026, at his home surrounded by his loving family.

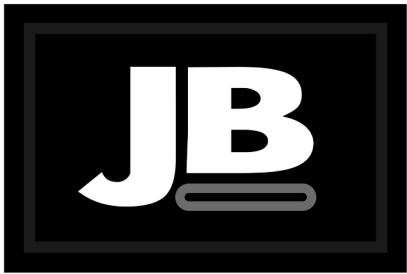
Kenneth was a kind and giving person and this will continue after his death. Kenneth has donated his body to science in the

hope that they might learn something that will help others.

Kenneth leaves behind three children, four grandchildren, seven great grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren.

A very special thank you to Amanda, Mary, and Sheila – you kept him going.

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A ribbon-cutting ceremony the evening of Thursday, Aug. 20, celebrated the installation of new all-accessible play equipment in the Waldorf city park near the baseball field. Above left: City leaders (from left) Mayor Rob Wilkening, park board members Wanda Hendricks, Renee and Inara Cordes, and councilwoman Missy Sorbo and Jamie Beckstrand take part in the ceremony. At right, city residents enjoy the newly installed equipment.



Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann

Waldorf celebrates opening of All-accessible playground

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

After months of planning and collecting donations, the new playground on the east side of town Waldorf near the city baseball field is complete; the town celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony the evening of Thursday, Aug. 20.

Waldorf local and playground regular Caitlin Schule brought her son Krew, 4, to the big event. She commented, “He grew up playing at the old park in the blue swing. He’s gotten bigger since then and now, he’s got a new park to grow up in.” Krew certainly didn’t run out of kids to play with, he was surrounded.

Equipment for their fun includes a new springy fire truck, a merry-go-round, five new slides, obstacle courses, teeter totters, a big fiberglass log to climb through, a jungle gym, an oversized tic-tac-toe game, ropes to swing on and just about anything else a child could think of.

Missy Sorbo, councilwoman and member of the park board which organized the new equipment, said, “We finished Monday morning, Aug. 17. We brought in 161 cubic yards of engineered wood chips.” She looked up at gathering rainclouds and predicted, “Even with the rain I think we’ll get our ribbon cut today and the kids can play.” She was right, after a sprinkle or two the sun came out and

dried everything off in time. Jamie Beckstrand, another council person who attended said, “T and T Tiling removed the old equipment, Ron Fischer had a hand in that.” Beckstrand was also responsible for the giant scissors used to cut the ribbon.

Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas was also present, attempting to hand a sticker to councilman Cody Schnepf’s daughter, who couldn’t get her face out of her father’s back long enough to take the sticker, so shy was she.

Sorbo has walked a long road to bring the park to this milestone. She has worked with community members to organize fundraising events for the past year while also

keeping the council informed of the proceedings. She and other committee members selected the playground equipment to be installed. She noted, however, that the work continues: “So far we’ve raised \$69,014 out of \$123,000 needed to pay this off.” The committee continues to watch for grants available from government and private agencies to cover all-accessible upgrades. During Waldorf Days there will be plenty of places to give free will donations as well.

Mayor Rob Wilkening was present during the ribbon cutting and said, “I think this is just the start of getting more families into this town. Waldorf is growing right now at a rate of 21 percent since 2020 and I, for one,



want to see that continue. If we keep on with initiatives like this, I see conditions here only improving.” When those in attendance asked about the degrading condition of the ballfield, he replied, “We just can’t find the funding to fix that up right now, I would love to, but we can’t.” When asked, he estimated it had been nearly two decades since the Waldorf Wood Ducks had been able to play on their home field.



Kimber Zimmer was relaxing before her race at Toners Lake Karting on Sunday, Aug. 16, 2026.



Gavin Underdahl was one of the go-kart racers at Toners Lake Karting on Sunday, Aug. 16, 2026.



Ragen Madsen was gearing up for her big race at Toners Lake Karting on Sunday, Aug.16, 2026.



In front of 5B was Bristol Greenfield, and 4L was Lucas Greenfield during the latest go-kart races at Toners Lake Karting on Sunday, Aug. 16, 2026.

Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann



A place to talk, race or watch go-kart races

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Bordering Toners Lake about half-way between Janesville and Waterville is Toners Lake Karting (TLK), a place for people to race go-karts, or watch go-kart races, whichever they were in the mood for, and there were lots of them on Sunday, Aug. 16.

TLK is open from May through October, and usually hosts 10 to 12 big races per year. There are four adult classes and eight kid classes, the youngest allowed to race is five years old. Those 16 years and up are considered adults. There’s not a lot of money in the races, occasionally there will be a special cash race, but the main “prizes” are a trophy and bragging rights. The karts have horsepower ratings between 12 and 15, and can reach speeds a little over 52 mph.

As the Pioneer crossed the circular racetrack to the center to take photos, little go-karts were spilling onto the track, owner Mark Wolff warned, “Careful around these little guys,

they’re only five years old.” As he said this, six children zoomed past in mini go-karts and Wolff continued, “Being this young, you can only expect so much.” The little kids looked like pros, with around ten laps to complete there was only one spin-out, which left one young driver facing the wrong way. As Mark was watching, it became clear the engine of the spun vehicle had died. While Mark hightailed it over to him, another small driver bumped into the kart that stalled. Mark slid the second kart out of the way and pulled on the ignition cord to start the stalled one; off the vehicle went, with the other not far behind. A single circle of the track constitutes one tenth of a mile; the driving space is 35 feet wide.

Marissa Tourville, a daughter to one of the owners, said to the sound of go-karts speeding around, “We’ve been busy this year with a lot of karts because of the mid-central series. It extends from a lot of tracks around southern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, northern Iowa and we’re one

of them, and proud to be. I believe we had 65 entries today, something like that. The most go-kart racers we’ve had out here at one time was 75. Spectators, we’ve had 200 or so: It gets pretty busy.” She looked up at the sky, the sun was shining, for a while now, with all the rain lately the tracks had gotten too wet to race on. One of the photos on the Toners Lake Karting website was a picture of the owners on tubes floating on the track a few weeks ago, just to show how wet everything was. Continued Marissa, “A lot of the racers here today are from the races yesterday in Cedar Lake, Wisconsin.” She wasn’t sure where they were headed next.

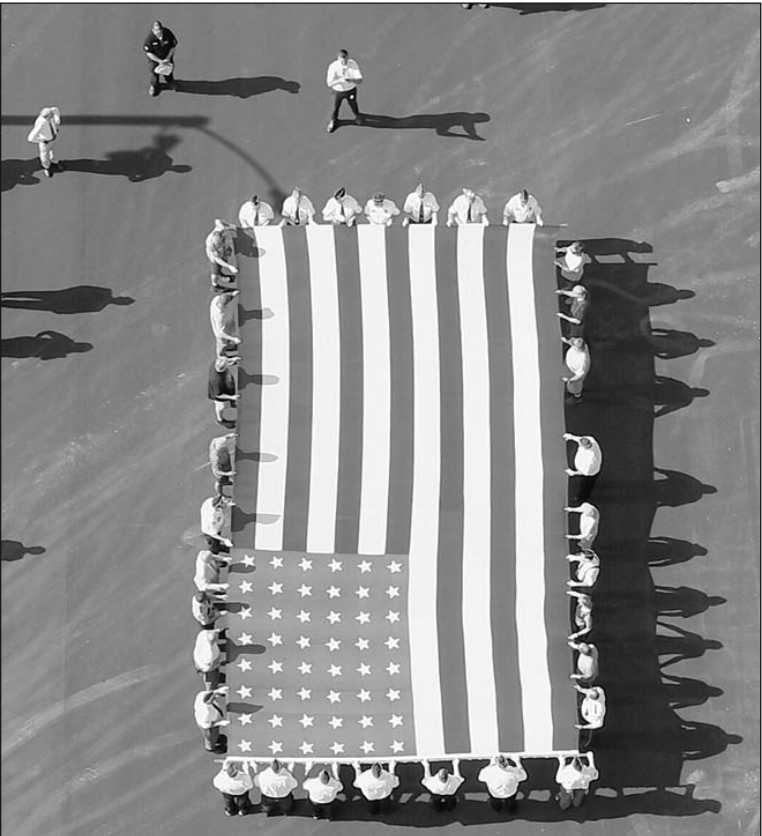
Jan Wolff, married to Mark and co-owner of the track, drove up on her green golf cart and said, “We usually have 10 races per season, unless something happens. During Covid we could only race like twice that year. I retired from Walmart last year and stepped down from helping a lot during the races. I bring coolers of bottled water for the racers when

they’re thirsty. Otherwise, I try to say hi to everyone when I can.” Her blond-headed grandson ran up with a red bottle of Gatorade, behind him was his mother Marissa who was holding a big glass of lemonade from the vendor Bizzy Blends and she said, “They have a drink named after us called TLK lemonade.” She took a drink and said, “It tastes different than lemonade, but I can’t put my finger on what it is.” While she contemplated her drink, the racetrack flagger waved his green starting flag and another race got started.

Marissa said everyone working at TLK were volunteers who give their time because they love the sport. She added, “We are always looking for volunteers to come out and help us. We’re all volunteering and there’s not a lot of tracks around who can say that!” For those wishing to see one of these races, anyone can attend at 8747 415th Avenue in Janesville southeast of Reeds Lake. Or find Toners Lake Karting on their Facebook page.



Jan Wolff and her grandson Weldyn Tourville were enjoying the go-kart races at Toners Lake Karting on Sunday, Aug. 16, 2026.



Above: A photo taken by the Waseca County Sheriff's Office drone shows the giant 48-star flag discovered among the Waseca County Historical Society's possessions during a ceremony and photo session held this past summer. About 35 people encircle it to keep it stretched tight. Below, a group of veterans unrolled the oversized flag which saw daylight for the first time in decades in June.



A piece of history

'48 Stars: Then and Now'

By BEN REVERMANN and Elizabeth Anselmo

A piece of Waseca County history that spent decades out of the public eye is now the centerpiece of the Waseca County Historical Society's newest presentation, "48 Stars: Then and Now." This exhibit pairs historic black-and-white photographs of the 36-foot by 19-foot 48-star flag recently discovered in storage at the Waseca County Fairgrounds with recently taken color photographs taken in 2026. The museum display also includes dresses and military uniforms from the 1940s, adding context to the period in which the flag was used.

Open through Sept. 30, the display is an extension of the Society's popular pop-up exhibit featured at the Waseca County Free Fair in July. It tells the story of an oversized 48-star American flag dating from the 1940s and offers visitors a glimpse into the community and the nation during that era. The flag was discovered in June 2025 at Hodgson Hall on the Waseca County Fairgrounds. Features regarding the flag appeared first in the Waseca County Pioneer, followed by the Mankato Free Press, then KEYC prepared a news segment that ran locally; finally the flag was featured by CNN. Its discovery brought to

light a remarkable piece of local history, including photographs showing the flag being carried in Waseca area parades during the 1940s.

The 48-star flag was the official flag of the United States from 1912 until 1959, when Alaska and Hawaii joined the Union, updating the needed number of stars to 50. Today, any surviving 48-star flags provide a tangible connection to an important period in American history.

A special event related to the exhibit will occur Saturday, Sept. 19, when the flag will return to public display as part of the 39th Annual Waseca Marching Classic parade. This will be the first time the flag has been on public display in more than 60 years.

The Historical Society is excited to share this important artifact with the community once again. Following the parade, the flag will be carefully placed in the Society's climate-controlled museum archives for future generations.

"48 Stars: Then and Now" is open through Sept. 30 at the Waseca County Historical Society. Admission is always free. The museum is open Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call the Waseca County Historical Society at 507-835-7700.

Health insurance rates expected to climb in 2027

By MPR

Health insurance premiums for thousands of Minnesotans are expected to increase in 2027.

The proposed rate hikes are primarily driven by rising healthcare costs, inflation, and the expiration of enhanced Affordable Care Act tax credits that previously made coverage more accessible for many consumers.

Premium increases would affect Minnesotans who purchase either individual or small group health insurance directly from insurers or through MNSure, Minnesota's health insurance marketplace.

Insurers in the ACA marketplace are requesting a median rate increase of about 15 percent across all 50 states in 2027. This marks the second consecutive year of double-digit premium hikes, according to an analysis by KFF, a nonprofit health policy research, polling, and news organization.

Preliminary rate filings from the Minnesota Department of Commerce indicate that the state's insurers are seeking average premium increases ranging from 10 percent to 13 percent for 2027 plans on the individual market, and between 7 percent and 21 percent on the small group market.

"We had some unprecedentedly high rate increases last year. But these are still on the higher end; they're over 10 percent, and that's significant for a lot of Minnesotans," Minnesota's temporary commissioner of commerce Julia Dreier said.

Rate increases would affect hundreds of thousands

About 200,000 Minnesotans get health insurance through the small group market, which includes businesses with two to 50 full-time employees. Additionally, around 190,000 state residents are covered by the individual health insurance market, available to those who do not qualify for employer-sponsored plans or public programs like Medicare or Medicaid.

One of the state's carriers, Medica, has proposed the highest increase in the individual market at 13 percent, while others, including Blue Plus, HealthPartners and Quartz, are requesting adjustments between 10 percent and 12 percent.

Health insurance costs can vary based on where a person lives in the state and their family's specific needs.

"We have rating regions," Dreier said. "So, if you live in Duluth, you might pay a different rate for the same plan than what you would pay in the Twin Cities metro area."

She also mentioned that insurance

companies can adjust prices based on age, within certain restrictions, and may charge higher premiums to older individuals.

Expiring tax credits add pressure

The proposed rate increases follow President Donald Trump's extensive tax and spending package that cut nearly \$1 trillion from Medicaid last year, a move that is expected to have widespread consequences, resulting in nearly 12 million Americans becoming uninsured over the next decade.

At the end of 2025, Congress chose not to extend the federal ACA enhanced premium tax credits.

Congress created the enhanced subsidies in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. They increased the value of existing ACA tax credits and eliminated the previous income cap, allowing more people to qualify for financial assistance through marketplaces such as MNSure.

The expiration of these tax credits led to a decrease in enrollment in 2026, according to KFF. Healthier enrollees were more likely to drop their coverage as a result. Consequently, MNSure health insurance enrollment fell by over 17,000 in May 2026 compared to May 2025. Insurers in the individual market expect further deterioration in 2027 due to the expiration of these enhanced tax credits.

Data from the Minnesota Health Access Survey show that the percentage of Minnesotans who went without health insurance increased from 3.8 percent in 2023 to 5.8 percent in 2025. This represents approximately 116,000 additional individuals without insurance, indicating that the state's uninsured rate has climbed from an all-time low to the highest level in six years.

The trend has raised concerns that rising premiums and reduced financial assistance could lead to further losses in coverage.

Final rates expected in October

The proposed rates are not yet final. The Minnesota Department of Commerce is reviewing insurers' filings to determine whether the requested increases are supported by the companies' underlying data and projected costs.

Dreier said insurers can adjust their proposed rates during the summer as the review continues.

The state is expected to release final 2027 health insurance rates by Oct. 1. The new rates will apply to coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2027.

Minnesotans can submit public comments as part of the rate review process by emailing HealthInsurance.DivisionRequests@state.mn.us.

Honor

from Page 1

South Korea had begun in 1950; a ceasefire agreement was reached in 1953. Although U.S. forces were still stationed in the country, Kenny remembers recognizing that he was part of a drawdown process.

"They called me an MP [Military Policeman]," he remembers of his job in Korea. "But I was just a guard."

He and his platoon, he explained, would be stationed two at a time on trains. They weren't assigned to protect the entire train, but only the boxcars which happened to be carrying goods or equipment belonging to U.S. forces. One guard—the one with the higher rank—would get the more comfortable seat in the engine.

As a private, Kenny was always stationed at the end of the train, usually in a boxcar. Temperature control consisted of deciding whether to have the car doors open or closed. Seating was either on some of the materials being transported or the floor.

"The job was pretty boring, really, with no one to talk to.

"I would sit and watch the grass go by."

As for guarding military property, he recalls never being called upon to prevent any theft or incursion. A vivid memory for him, though, is the sympathy he felt for the Korean citizens whom he would see working in the rice paddies. Poorly clothed and thin, their appearance showed what a hardship the war had been.

"The trains didn't move all that fast, and they would stop at stations or even just out on the tracks somewhere," Kenny recalls. He and his platoon members shared stories of small interactions. One was a comment on the quality of the "ready to eat" meals supplied by the military.

"We had this canned hamburger," he describes. "Sometimes we would throw some to the people in the fields, and they would throw it right back," he says with a chuckle.

Other elements of the job were no laughing matter. The trains often included open-topped cars piled high with coal. "When people would steal the coal," he remembers of some of the cargo on the train, "I would just

sit there and watch."

In fact, he sympathized. "They didn't have anything else to keep warm, or maybe to cook their food," he remembers thinking as people would take risks climbing up on top of the mounds of coal and tossing it down for others to collect. "I was glad it wasn't my job to stop them."

While in Korea, Kenny received the news a second child was on the way. Marla still has a shoebox-sized tote filled with the letters she sent Kenny during his time in the service, all mailed with 3-cent stamps.

Kenny admits he wrote only occasionally. "It would have been telling about the same things over and over," he justifies. "And what was there to say?"

In his free time, Kenny sometimes visited and helped at Korean orphanages. "There were a lot of them," he remembers—meaning both the facilities and the orphans they housed. Despite the language barrier, Kenny says he played with and tried to entertain the children for a few hours during his visits, which he enjoyed.

"I figured if I couldn't be with my own children, at least I could help some other ones," he recalls.

By the time he received "just a square little postcard" notifying him he had a second son, Kenny's platoon had moved to Japan, where he fulfilled the second year of his deployment.

His new assignment was very different from the nearly sleepy feel of his time in Korea.

In terms of his everyday duties in Japan, Kenny comments, "I got lucky." Not long after his arrival, he was approached by "a young kid" who asked only "Do you know how to type?"

When Kenny's answer was yes, he was informed, "You've got the job!" Turns out, the "kid" was finishing his tour of duty and had apparently been told to find his own replacement, the only named qualification for which was the ability to properly place one's fingers on the home row of a typewriter and then hit the correct keys. Kenny says he was an adequate typist, but was not asked to prove that in any way before being taken on as a clerk.

The job made it possible for him to be among the first in line at the mess hall, and it meant he spent his working time indoors, in an office, rather than out in the field performing physical tasks—except during training exercises.

"These guys, they were about as gung-ho as you could get," he observes. "They went on a lot of drills." A particularly vivid recollection for him was being part of a training exercise during which the navy, air force and army cooperated in an amphibious takeover of a small island.

He remembers being somewhat awed by the size and number of the machines and people involved. However, his most vivid memory is feeling as if he might drown as water washed over the sides and began filling his open-topped amphibious troop transport vehicle. "It was a lot of water," he says, shaking his head.

Then one blessed day his tour of duty ended and it was time to go home. Kenny can't help laughing as he remembers packing a duffel bag full of his uniforms, then being told by someone in charge of the flight, "You can't take all that."

"So I dumped it out," he says lightly. "I never wanted all that stuff anyway."

He returned home using a series of different transports, none of which were particularly efficient. In one case, a train car he and some fellow veterans were riding in was simply left parked in a train yard overnight. But eventually, his father picked him up from a bus station in the Twin Cities and brought him home to Waterville. Kenny remembers walking toward Marla and his two sons, one of whom he was seeing for the first time and the other of whom was a much different boy from the baby he had said goodbye to. Though he knew who they were, he also felt as if he didn't know them.

The feeling was mutual. Marla had been showing the babies pictures of their father and telling them he would return, but still he was something of a stranger to them as he arrived.

Kenny acknowledges that, however tough it had been for him in the army, it had been at least as challenging at home for Marla, who was taking care of two young children on her own. "Sometimes, you're surprised at what you can do," says Marla, remembering that time. Both acknowledge it was made bearable mostly because of assistance and support from Kenny's parents, whose house was next door.

The two went on to raise their family in Waterville, gradually adding on to the small house Marla had lived in while Kenny was away. Marla was a stay at home mom. Kenny worked at a few jobs before getting one at Brown Printing that lasted for decades until his retire-

"I figured if I couldn't be with my own children, at least I could help some other ones."

— Kenny Rohl

ment. Except for an occasional family trip, neither did much traveling.

Now, at 93, Kenny is scheduled to take part in a Sept. 16 "Freedom Honor Flight," a whirlwind tour of the memorials and monuments in Washington, D.C. offered to qualifying veterans at no cost.

Honor flights are a nationwide non-profit initiative to give aging and terminally ill veterans the opportunity to visit the memorials erected in our nation's capital to commemorate the conflicts they served in and the sacrifices they made. Kenny's trip is through the North Star Hub of the organization, which serves 15 southern Minnesota counties. Priority for the trips is given to veterans who served during World War II or the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam; most are in their 80s or 90s.

The one-day trip includes an early morning departure from the Rochester International Airport and coach bus transportation taking them to many memorials and to Arlington National Cemetery. Elements of honor and acknowledgement take place throughout the day, sometimes including a special greeting at the D.C. airport or even a police escort to ensure the buses can meet their tight schedule in busy traffic.

Each veteran on the flights is accompanied by a "guardian," a family member or assigned volunteer who provides support and generally looks out for his or her welfare. There is no cost to the veteran; guardians pay for their flights.

Kenny says he is looking forward to the trip, and expresses gratitude his daughter, Sherry Volkmann, is able to join him.

Never having been to Washington, D.C., Kenny expects it will be quite a learning experience for him. Having once set foot on Iwo Jima island, the site of an intense battle near the close of World War II, he looks forward to seeing that particular memorial, but expects to appreciate them all.

As for being honored for his service, he says yes, 1954 and '55 imposed hardships on him, more in the form of being away from his wife and children than in terms of risks to his safety or health. The difficulties he faced abroad and those Marla overcame back home helped them feel grateful for the everyday, midwestern lifestyle they went on to develop together. He looks forward to the stories he will have to share when he returns.

"It should be quite a trip," he predicts.



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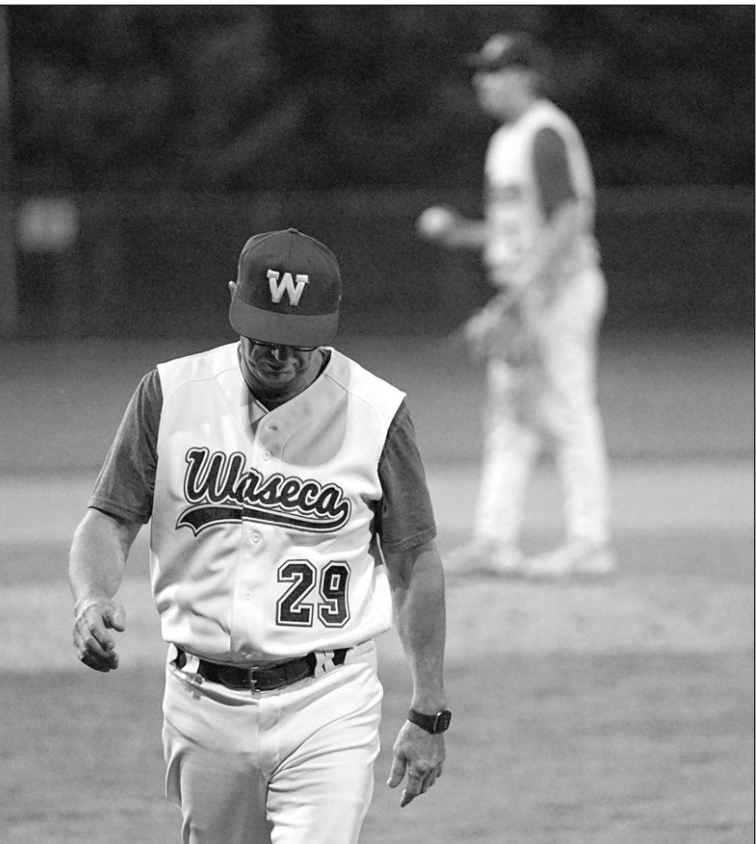


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LAST WALK - Braves manager Blake Nelson walks from the mound after talking to pitcher Tyson Reger.

Braves season ends at state

By JIM LUTGENS
Staff Writer

The season ended for the Waseca Braves amateur baseball team with a 4-2 loss to Brownnton in the opening round of the Class C state tournament at the Mini-Met in Jordan.

"It was a tough loss," said Braves coach Tink Larson. "I was confident going into the game, and when we went up 2-0 after two innings, and with Tyson Reger on the mound, I felt even better about our chances."

But Brownnton rallied, scoring four unanswered runs.

"Our offense went dead after the second inning, as we had only

three baserunners the rest of the game," said Larson.

An oddity in the scoring was Brownnton scoring three of its four runs on sacrifice flies.

After losing the first three games of the season, the Braves went 14-6 the rest of the way. They finished the season with a 14-9 win-loss record.

"We had a lot of young players in the lineup this year, and we hope they continue to improve," said Larson, who added, "Obviously, it was a disappointment to lose, but we had a great year with winning the region tournament and getting to the state tournament for the first time in 10 years."

Briefs

from Page 3

Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Meeting November 12

The SWCD will be holding its monthly board meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 12. The meetings will be held in the SWCD offices located at 300 North State Street - Door 4.

CredibleMind offers free mental health resources

All area residents are eligible to use free online access to mental health resources available at MNPrairie's "CredibleMind" website.

The site offers interactive, evidence-based ways to explore local

and national mental well-being resources. Free and anonymous at www.mnprairie.crediblemind.com

Waldorf Veterans Memorial Fund Drive

Donations are requested to support the construction of the Waldorf Veterans Memorial. Checks written to WVMP Fund Drive can be mailed to WVMP Fund Drive; Judy Joecks, treasurer; P.O. Box 55; Waldorf, MN 56091. Questions can be directed to Charlie Barnes at (763) 286-2246.

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The Shepherd's Robe free store offers clothing, supplies, and much more for free to all interested parties. The store is located at Vista Covenant Church, 14679 275th Avenue, New Richland.

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Trust for Civic Life awards \$400,000

OWATONNA, Minn., August 5, 2026 - The Trust for Civic Life has awarded \$7.6 million to 20 new Civic Hub grantees, local groups across rural America working to rebuild trust and connection outside of politics, including \$400,000 to Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). It's the Trust's third round of grants as a philanthropic collaborative that brings together national funders of various backgrounds and ideologies to invest in locally led civic efforts as a strategy for addressing the country's deep divides.

"Local ownership is the bedrock of civic life," shared Benya Kraus, SMIF president and CEO. "Having an equity stake in the future of your downtown, your school system or your local river fosters both individual responsibility and a mutual reliance on your neighbor. We need the financial, knowledge and social capital to flow towards this truth."

Trust funding will advance three priorities: expanding local ownership of community assets, strengthening regional collaboration and investing in the next generation of civic leaders. SMIF will help communities explore new financing tools, access resources and build the

relationships that support long-term community participation.

Since the Trust launched in 2024, it has invested nearly \$27 million into rural regions, which receive just 3 percent of national philanthropic funding. The new funding follows the Trust's latest survey of more than 1,000 rural community members, which found that trust in national institutions is eroding but trust, agency and belonging all remain strong locally, and are closely tied to neighbors taking action together.

"Americans are telling us that national politics are leaving them frustrated and without agency, but they still feel connected to their own communities and believe they can effect change where they live and work," said Charlie Brown, executive director of the Trust for Civic Life. "That's a powerful insight, and we see it reflected in the work of each of our new Civic Hub grantees. Our goal is to get more funding into the hands of those who have already built trust locally and know what inspires their neighbors to participate in their communities."

Each year, the Trust directs its funding to Civic Hubs, embedded local groups that respond to com-

munity needs and turn bystanders into participants, building the conditions to sustain civic life over the long term. These three-year grants are a rare source of flexible funding in rural regions, and this year's grants ranged from \$300,000 to \$425,000 per organization.

All 20 of the new grantees report operating amid community division or polarization, and a third say it regularly disrupts daily life. They are responding by drawing people into community life through many entry points: disaster relief, cultural celebration, shared physical spaces, entrepreneurship, intergenerational connection and youth engagement.

The work looks different in every community. In Arkansas, a grantee brings businesses, nonprofits, government and residents together at a repurposed school to collaborate in ways they never have before. In the Southwest borderlands, youth restore the landscapes and watersheds around them. In western North Carolina, a tribal cultural museum provides free programming on Native art, history and language and creates space for community members to reclaim and practice their traditions.

Eighty-five percent of grantees plan to use the funding for civic op-

portunities that help community members build relationships and solve local problems together; others will direct it toward operations, third spaces and community lending. Nearly a quarter of grantees already have co-funding committed from regional funders, showing the catalytic effect of Trust grants and advancing the Trust's goal of coordinating greater support for locally led civic work.

From the border communities of Arizona to small towns in Maine, the new grantees reach across 16 states, with 70 percent serving red states and 30 percent serving blue states. More than half of the Trust's funding goes to four priority regions: Central Appalachia, the Black Belt, the Southwest Border and Tribal Lands, with the rest supporting rural communities in transition, including those navigating the loss of a major employer or other significant economic or demographic change.

Since launching in 2024, the Trust has supported more than 250 groups and programs, including 66 Civic Hubs. It expects to award an additional \$2 million in small grants in partnership with its Civic Hub network by the end of 2026.



Charlie Barnes, who donated the land where the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park is located, opened the dedication ceremony for the First Responders Memorial the morning of Saturday, Aug. 22.

Barnes unveils First Responders Memorial

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

It was a beautiful and sunny day during a special dedication at the Veterans Memorial during Waldorf Days on Saturday, Aug. 22. The city unveiled a brand-new structure in the Veterans Memorial Garden under the flag poles, the First Responders memorial statue.

Veteran Charlie Barnes opened the dedication ceremony. Barnes not only donated the land where the Veterans Memorial Garden and gazebo are located, but also spearheaded the effort to get the memorial erected. His tireless work, including attending city council meetings and doing much of the work on the gazebo himself, brought the park to its present state of progress. It has taken years to get to this point but as Barnes reminded everyone, "We're not done with it yet; there will still be a walk of honor leading from the sidewalk to the gazebo. We're hoping to have that installed and finished next year."

He gave an opening speech before the memorial was displayed to a good-sized crowd of around a hundred people.

In the Memorial Garden, behind three flagpoles displaying the POW/MIA flag, the Minnesota State Flag and the American flag, sat the statue, an eagle coming in for a landing. On the front of the structure, facing the veterans memorial is a plaque that Barnes read aloud: "The First Responders Memorial: In honor of those who served. In tribute to those who perished. In gratitude of those now serving. Courage, Strength, Service, Thank You!" These words had among them the symbols of the Police, Sheriff, Fire Department and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). There was a round of applause as participants gently removed the covering to reveal the statue. Barnes introduced the day's speaker, "Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas."

Dulas observed, "This is such an

honor to be with everyone today." He recognized Charlie Barnes and his vision that made these memorials possible. "A memorial like this does more than mark a place, it tells a story and reminds future generations of the courage, commitment and sacrifice of the people who answer the call when our community needs them most. Charlie's vision helped create a lasting tribute here in Waldorf that will continue to honor first responders for many years to come."

"Charlie, thank you for seeing the importance of this memorial and helping turn that vision into something meaningful for our entire community and all of Waseca County." He went on to say that first responders aren't just flashing lights and emergency rooms. Behind every badge, uniform and every call for help is a person who has made a commitment to be there when someone else is having the most difficult moment of their lives. They respond to difficult and often dangerous situations yet protect our families. Like firefighters who answer the call during all times of the day, and night. When officers are running away from danger, firefighters are seen running towards it. He also reminded everyone of the families of first responders, "How sending their loved ones into the mouth of danger has an effect on the families as well."

As Dulas spoke, the sounds of children playing tag a block over accompanied his solemn words. The tink/tink sound of the flags dingling the flag poles as they blew in the wind could be heard as he spoke. Those spectators who attended the dedication listened quietly, until Sheriff Dulas concluded, "To every police officer, deputy, EMT, firefighter, dispatcher, doctor, paramedic, nurses and all emergency professionals here today, Thank You for answering that call."

There was a warm round of applause as the Waldorf Days festivities resumed.

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						1 QUEEN OF HEARTS DRAWING 5pm
2	3	4 COAST GUARD DAY	5 6pm Bar Bingo	6 7pm BINGO	7 Purple Heart Day Meat Raffle 5:30	8 QUEEN OF HEARTS DRAWING 5pm
9	10 7 pm Post & AUX. Meeting	11	12 6pm Bar Bingo	13 7pm BINGO	14 Navajo Code Talkers Day MEAT Raffle 5:30	15 QUEEN OF HEARTS DRAWING 5pm
16	17	18	19 6pm Bar Bingo	20 7pm BINGO	21 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	22 QUEEN OF HEARTS DRAWING 5pm
23	24	25	26 6pm Bar Bingo	27 7pm BINGO	28 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	29 QUEEN OF HEARTS DRAWING 5pm
30	31					

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This large display was managed by Great American Kites and Events and arranged for by the Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Festival. Dozens of people at a time came and went during the four-hour presentation which featured kites up to 40 feet long.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

Kites

from Page 1

sionally drift downward and begin to flatten before being lifted again by another kite tied higher up on the same rope.

Sculptures were rotated as the four-hour display continued; in the air about halfway through the show were colorful “mantas” 30 or more feet long, a brightly cheerful death’s head mask with many long, slender tails trailing behind it, a gorilla, a colorful penguin, a 10-foot long frog, and the zebra.

Also present for the display were some hobby “kiters” from the Twin Cities. Dalton Byers explains he and some friends decided to come to town when they saw ad-

vance publicity for the display on Facebook. The small group had numerous kites in the air in the northeast area of the grounds; most people present probably believed them to be associated with Great American Kites, but that was not the case.

Among the sculptures brought by Byers and his friends were an orca, a sturgeon-like fish, a pair of eyeballs each about four feet in diameter, a trilobite and a sculpture reminiscent of a stone head from Easter Island.

Byers said that as a hobby kiter, he owns about 30 of the fabric sculptures, including a model of Cleopatra which is about 100 feet long and 30 feet wide. He said he had not brought that kite along because “it takes a really big space to get her up in the air.”

Eustice

from Page 3

cornhole tournament due to begin at 10 a.m. There will be two divisions: professional and social. Teams can either sign up just prior to the tournament, or pre-register using the link <https://forms.gle/2YF9XpCFletB3hXG6>.

Activities suitable for children and families begin at 11 a.m. They include face painting, bounce houses, wagon rides, caricature drawings, bingo games, a display

of first responder vehicles, and food trucks.

Luminaries will be sold for \$10 throughout the day and will be lit at dusk in memory of loved ones.

A 2 p.m. ceremony will include a memorial folding of the flag and moments of silence, and playing of taps for fallen officers. Guest speaker will be Renee Worke.

Three authors will be on hand selling and signing books relevant to the day. Gary Eustice, one of Don’s sons, will have his book *Playing Cops and Other Stories I Tell Fairly Well*. Lisa Lovering will have *We Will Remember*. Andy Mario will offer his book *The Klinefelter Legacy: A Story of Faith, Family and Forgiveness*.

The band Lead Penny will perform from 2 to 5 p.m.; Zendix from 5 to 7:30 p.m.; and Three Hour Download from 8 to 11:30 p.m.

Many details and links are available by searching for the event on Facebook or at doneustice.org. Financial support for planning and operating the Sept. 5 celebration was provided by the Waseca Area Foundation and by the Waseca Sleigh and Cutter organization.

Waseca

25 Years Ago

Matz to be ordained Sunday, August 26, at Carlos, MN: Former Waseca resident, Curtis Vinton Matz, will be ordained into the pastoral of ministry and installed as pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Carlos, Minnesota, on Sunday, Aug. 26, at 4 p.m. Matz is the son of Vinton and Myrtle Matz and the late Doris Matz of Waseca. He and his wife, Darlene, are the parents of two children, David and Daniel. Matz is a former member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Janesville.

Ryan Hoffman one of six captains at UNO: Waseca’s Ryan Hoffman has been selected one of six captains for the University of Nebraska-Omaha Maverick football team for the 2001 season. Hoffman is a senior linebacker for the Mavs. Coach Pat Behrms, who is starting his eighth season, announced he was comfortable with that many captains because it indicated good leadership and all six are “good guys.” Joining Hoffman are cornerback Tyree Kellogg, defensive end Buck Rasmussen, safety Chad Geiger, quarterback Seth Turman and offensive guard Conor Riley. All are seniors except Riley. Hoffman, a second team All-NCC selection last year, was one of the Maverick tackle leaders. UNO is coming off an 11-2 season, and was the first team in 10 years to go unbeaten in the North Central Conference. The Mavericks return 19 of 22 starters from a year ago, and are rated number three in the nation in Division II, according to Street & Smith’s College Football. Hoffman competed in football, basketball and track at Waseca. He is the son of Bob and Judy Hoffman of Waseca.

50 Years Ago

Police stumped by more plant thefts: Waseca’s plant thief is continuing to stalk the residential areas, according to police reports which indicate four more plants along with pots and stands have disappeared from porches, steps and patios. The cache taken from Waseca neighborhoods yesterday includes one antique ceramic pot with a three-legged brass stand, a glazed earthenware pot from Mexico with a wrought iron stand and a hanging planter. Plants taken include a shefflera (umbrella plant), a fern, geraniums, fuchsia (flowering plant) and artificial plants. Investigations into the thefts is still underway according to Sergeant Bruce Stauffer, who said police are continuing to “smellout” leads, including one from the Faribault Police Department who report similar thefts taking place in their city. Wasecans concerned about their prize plants and planters being taken should either move them indoors for the time being or keep a closer watch on their porches, steps or patios, according to Sergeant Stauffer, who anticipates there may be more thefts.

75 Years Ago

Meyers, Possums Return From Trip: Mr. and Mrs. George W. Myers and Mr. and Mrs. Birger Fossum returned to Waseca Saturday evening after a vacation trip to the Western state. They went by way of Glacier National park. The Fossums stayed with his brother, Ester Fossum and family at Taconia, Washington while the Myers went on to Portland, Oregon to visit Myers’ father for a few days. They then took the road along the coast to Los Angeles, and across the southern states to Austin, Texas, then up to St. Louis, Missouri, where they stopped to see Mr. and Mrs. R.D. Boyer and other relatives. Mrs. Myers reports the temperature was 112 degrees when they were in Blythe, California and that Austin, Texas had not had rain for a year.

Wallschlaeger Among 400 to Graduate: Approximately 400 University of Minnesota students will receive diplomas in August commencement exercises at 8 p.m. today, Thursday, in Northrup Memorial auditorium on the campus. Among candidates for diplomas is Joseph F. Wallschlaeger Jr. for a Bachelor of Arts degree in the college of science literature and the arts.

Nephew of Local Woman Prizewinner: John L. (Jack) Mellinger, nephew of Mrs. Ed Papke and a former Wasecan is retail advertising manager of the Eureka Newspapers, Inc. of Eureka, California. Recently Mellinger and his staff won a first place award and three honorable mentions in the retail advertising competitions of the Advertising Associations of the West. The competition was among 11 western states in their circulation class. In the California state contest, including California’s largest metropolitan dailies, the papers won one second place and two third place awards for advertising excellence.

100 Years Ago

Birthday Party: Mrs. Henry Reick celebrated her 70th birthday at her home on East Wood street Friday, August 13th, with a company of 33 relatives and friends. Cards were played during the evening and a delicious lunch was served.

Return From Lake Tetonka: The following young ladies returned Monday morning from Lake Tetonka, near Waterville where they had been camping and enjoying an outing of a few days: Misses Myrtle Lorenz, Esther Lawin, Louise Mahler, Iver Manthey and Mrs. Eric Mann.

Ketchum-Kuchera: The many friends of Miss Lydia Ketchum, of this city, will be interested to learn of her marriage to James J. Kuchera, of St. Paul, which took place at the Methodist parsonage Saturday noon with Rev. Chas. Miller officiating. Following the ceremony they left for the twin cities.

New Richland

25 years ago



- Kristin Jessen turned the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Junior Miss title over to Kathleen Byron, Friday night at the reviews at the Albert Lea Theatre. Kathleen placed in four categories at the program, including: poise, interview, scholastic and talent. She earned several scholarships and a sitting at Bonebrake’s Photography., Michelle Dobberstein was first runner up.

- Fifty years ago, in the summer of 1951, two churches, Bethel and Immanuel, joined congregations and buildings to become Blooming Grove United Methodist Church. To celebrate this anniversary, Blooming Grove United Methodist will hold its 8th Annual "Summer Night of Music" at 7:00 p.m., Saturday, August 25th.

- Amy Chicos, daughter of James and Renee Chicos of New Richland, and Amy Sack, daughter of Mary and Al Sack of New Richland, have been awarded \$7,500 Presidents Scholars by the College of Saint Benedict / Saint John’s University for the 2001-2002 academic year. Chicos and Sack are first-year students at CSB.

50 Years Back



- The grand champion Beef Steer in 4-H Competition at the Weseca County Fair was shown by Dana Dane, pictured here with his animal. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dane of Pemberton. He also received the Grand Champion Senior Showman award. Reserve champion in the Embroidery division was Carla Blashack, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Balshack of Waldorf.

- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sullivan of Rochester announce the engagement of their daughter, Renee Irenee Sullivan, to James Michael Chicos, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Chicos of New Richland.

75 Years Back

- Eugene Casselman, director of the Gustavus Adolphus college choir personnel for the coming year. Virginia Swenson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Swanson of New Richland has been chosen a member of the choir.

- Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Hagen of Owatonna became th eparents of their first son, Jerry Leslie, born Saturday, September 15. The Hagens have a daughter, Ione, aged four.

- Mrs. H. O. Schwenke, announces the engagement of her daughter, Elaine to Gottfried Reman son of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Reiman of Ree Heights, S. D. A spring wedding is planned.

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Preparing for pre-Labor Day start

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

“I can’t wait to see them talking to each other at lunchtime,” enthused school board member Terry Engel during the Aug. 17 meeting of the NRHEG school board.

Engel was responding to Secondary School Principal Grant Berg’s explanation of the cell phone policy for the coming school year: “They will be asked not to bring their cell phones into the school,” said Berg. “But since we know that’s not going to happen, the rule is no cell phone use during the day, unless necessary for a class.

“And we’re going to be the ones who determine what’s necessary.” In response to Engel’s question, Berg had said yes, “during the school day” included over lunch in the cafeteria.

Cell phone expectations in grades 6 to 8, he summarized, remain what they have been the past couple of years: no cell phone use in school. Berg commented that reports of negative postings on social media had reduced dramatically when the middle school “no use” policy was implemented.

At the high school level, social media postings were not an issue, but student distraction and intercom-



munication, with a chance of cheating as well were persistent problems.

Berg admitted adjustments will likely be needed if students use their phones to control a medical device, or if a family situation calls for the student to be easily accessible. His intent is to be thorough in enforcing the rule while leaving room for some flexibility.

Enforcement will be simplified, he noted, by the school-wide camera system, and by the redesigned “commons” area where the majority of high school lockers are located. Formerly situated in rows near the center of the space, lockers now line the walls, allowing for a much more open view across the area.

Now carpeted, the center area under a large skylight is peppered with tables and chairs along with a few easy chairs for small gatherings and conversation.

Berg commented on how appealing the space now appears. The public will have a chance to wander through and have a look during an

open house scheduled on Aug. 27 from 2 to 8 p.m. Modeled after last year’s similar event, the open house is set up to allow parents to attend with their children. Berg said the open house will offer “a hot dog meal” as well as the chance to tour the building, meet teachers, locate lockers and drop off school supplies, and complete paperwork. Special meetings will inform parents regarding upcoming events or circumstances particular to their child, for example members of the senior class or participants in band.

Elementary principal Dr. Kimberly Meyer also summarized some of the upcoming activities at the elementary site. “Day 1” has been in use there for some time, with parents encouraged to accompany their children to school, meet teachers, and find out about upcoming events.

Meyer also stated families will be asked to donate toward a revamped “healthy snacks” program, which provides food for students to munch on during the school day. School board member Kelly DeLacruz offered the idea that, in addition to asking families for support, the site might approach the Parent Teacher Organization or other groups which might take an interest.

In action items for the evening,



A WHOLE NEW LOOK - A group of children taking part in a daycare program at the NRHEG Secondary Site take their ease in the recently remodeled student commons area. Lockers which once stood in rows have been moved against the walls of the space; the area under the skylight is now carpeted and offers inviting areas for sitting or working at tables.

school board members approved the handbooks covering expectations at the elementary and secondary sites,

for students taking part in activities, and regarding cell phone use. New teacher orientation took place

Aug. 17 and 18. The start of the year teacher work days were from Aug. 25 to 27.

The Pastor’s Column
Discipleship

By Fr. Glenn Frerichs

As August comes to a close and Labor Day approaches, many families will be transitioning to a new schedule. Once again, life will center on the discipline of catching the school bus, attending extracurricular activities, and completing homework. Students who have kept their minds engaged with reading and other mental activities during the summer months may find the transition easy. For others, re-establishing mental habits and recalling what was learned last year will require a few weeks of adjustment. The annual rhythm of the school year and the relaxation of the summer months recall the words of Ecclesiastes, that there is an appointed time for every affair under the heavens: to plant and uproot the plant, tear down and build, mourn and dance, be silent and to speak (Ecc1 3: 1-8).

Unlike school, Christian discipleship is a year-round commitment. Historically, a disciple of art, science, or another craft did not stop by the master’s house for a few hours each day merely to learn a new skill. Disciples lived and slept under the master’s oversight, learning every aspect of the livelihood that made the master so good at what he did. As an apprentice, the disciple of any trade would serve his teacher so that he could learn within the context of everyday life.

The disciples of Jesus followed him year-round, continuously, and wherever he went. They were not there to study theology, but to live it. This lived experience helped them receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and bring the Good News to all four corners of the earth.

Is our discipleship any different? Discipleship cannot be mere knowing about him; to be a disciple is to grow in knowledge of the Lord by living with him. We come to know who Jesus is by journeying with him and encountering him in our victories and weaknesses. Through our daily encounters with him, we acquire what Saint Paul calls “the mind of Christ.” Possessing the mind of Christ gives us the insight to judge and embrace all things as Christ does. How do we live out the demands of Christian discipleship? Some tangible means include prayer, a strong moral life, and fulfilling the obligations set before us. Beyond these, Saint Luke offers

three interior dispositions indispensable for discipleship.

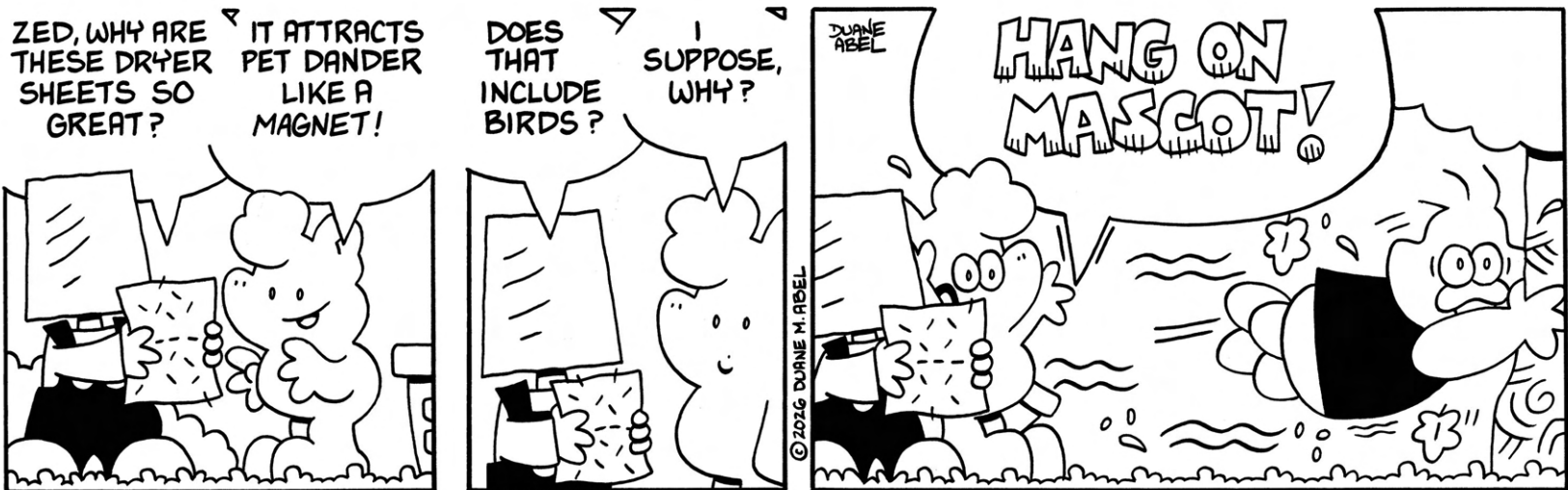
The first is to prefer Jesus above family and even one’s own life. The first commandment in the Decalogue requires that we place nothing above God in this life or the next. Jesus says: “If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). Jesus’ use of the word hate was an idiom meant to place these things second to the highest good, God. We love family, community, nation, and all that is good, but the disciple loves them in and through Christ, who deserves our ultimate loyalty. To love him with our heart, mind, soul, and strength is the greatest commandment.

Disciples of Jesus also have a deep affinity for the cross and for its meaning in Jesus’ life and in our own. Jesus said to the crowd: “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27). We all have burdens to bear. The question is how well we will bear them. Jesus prayed to his Father that the Father’s will, not his own, be done. Disciples of Jesus learn to set aside their own desires and needs through daily sacrifice so that God will be glorified. In doing so, we participate in the life of Christ, and the mind of Christ becomes our own.

Lastly, disciples of Jesus live in the world but not of it. When Satan offered Jesus the world and asked him to worship him, Jesus did not say it wasn’t his to give. He responded that we are to worship God alone. Discipleship demands detachment from material goods. This does not mean we are to live in poverty; rather, it requires an inner freedom that does not let “stuff” define our existence. Recall the man who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. After truthfully saying that he had been fulfilling the commandments, Jesus offered him the greatest opportunity ever, to sell what he had for the poor and then follow him (Luke 18:18-23).

Wherever we may be in life, whether returning to school, preparing to bring in the harvest, preparing for a vacation, or settled in a health care facility, schooling never ends, and our discipleship is with the Lord.

ZED by Duane M. Abel



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Waldorf Days August 21, 22 and 23, 2026



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