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Sports

Natalie McGuire and Heidi Jeub at Waseca Art Center through Feb. 13

Artist Natalie McGuire and Heidi Jeub will be presented through Feb. 13 at the Waseca Art Center. McGuire does photozaics, and Jeub does abstract expressionism.

Shrimp or Rib Eye Steak dinner at Sweet-Sommers VFW Jan. 24

There will be a shrimp or rib eye steak dinner at the VFW from 5:30-7 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 24. Rib eye's \$25, shrimp is \$15, dinner comes with baked potato, bun and salad bar.

Sacred Heart School Open House Jan. 25

All members of the public are invited to an open house at Sacred Heart School, 308 W. Elm Avenue in Waseca from 11 a.m. until noon on Sunday, Jan. 25. Coffee and donuts will be served. Information regarding registration for the 2026-27 school year will be available.

VFW breakfast for St. Paul Lutheran Mission trip Sunday, Jan. 25

There will be a pancake breakfast at Sweet-Sommers VFW on behalf of St. Paul's Lutheran Church Mission Trip Team from 7 a.m. till noon on Sunday, Jan. 25. Adults \$12, kids 6-13 \$7, kids 5 and under free. Proceeds go towards St. Paul Mission trips.

Old MacDonald Had a Farm Party at Janesville Public Library Jan. 26

Oink! Moo! and Cock-a-Doodle Doo! Enjoy farm-themed activities, from a farm relay to a horse roundup at the Janesville Library at 4 p.m. Monday, Jan. 26. Ages 3-6.

Homemade Valentine's Cards at Janesville Public Library Jan. 27

Create Valentine's Day cards for the people who you care about at the Janesville Library at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 27. Geared for ages 7-12.

Frosted Luminaries at Janesville Public Library Jan. 27

Light up the darkest days by creating beautiful luminaries at the Janesville Public Library at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27. Place along a walkway or in a dark corner in your home to create a little winter magic.

Sleigh and Cutter Ice Carving Jan. 28 and 29

The annual ice carving event sponsored as part of the Sleigh and Cutter festival will be Wednesday and Thursday, Jan. 28 and 29 near the Veterans Memorial on the county courthouse lawn. Carving begins at 11 a.m. on Wednesday and noon on Thursday.

A word from
The Word

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

Psalm 139:1-2

Raise a Toast celebrates women in agriculture

By **DEB BENTLY**
News Editor

About 60 women from around the region attended Farmamerica's Raise a Toast celebration the evening of Jan. 16. Farmamerica staff members explain the event's focus is honoring the essential role women play in agriculture.

Alongside the evening's conversation, dinner, and featured speaker were door prizes, gifts, and a three-dimensional photo and video experience that included receiving a personalized photo magnet from Waseca's Magnetic North, owned by Meghan Larson.

The meal, catered by Kendra Hoehn's Infinity Catering, featured locally sourced foods. A featured "make-your-own-cake" Treat Trolley operated by Amanda Riehm of The Tattooed Baker, offered the chance to choose frosting and toppings for small treats.

Speaker for the evening was Becky Harhaj who, with her husband Mike, operates Rebel Rooster Farm near Good Thunder.

Becky described a rather sudden



ELEGANT GRACE - Dressed elegantly for the evening, a group of ladies raised a toast to women's contributions to agriculture.

move their four-member family made in 2015 to leave the Twin Cities area where they had lived their entire lives and take up residence on a 33-acre farmsite near Good Thunder. At the time, Becky had spent most of two decades in the beauty industry, and had even become an instructor at a beauty college. Mike, she mentioned, is an engineer who continues to operate his business taking advantage of modern electronic information sharing.

"We moved in on a Friday," Becky

recalled. "The animals were delivered on Saturday." She commented on her own naivete at the time, when she had thought to herself "all they need is food and water."

"Somewhere in there I realized I had jumped in with both feet without testing the water first."

The decision to move, she went on to tell, was for the sake of their two sons, both of whom were younger than 10 at the time. "We wanted to give them a quality life. We wanted them to know where their food came from."

Toast continued on 16

Trophies, tiara of Jolene Hawkins

By **DEB BENTLY**
News Editor

The trophies and tiara Jolene Hawkins received when she became "Miss Sleigh Bell" in 1970 are part of a special Sleigh and Cutter display at the Waseca County Historical Society, but the most important awards from her year as a community representative are still part of her, and go with her everywhere.

She still remembers with a chuckle the day it was announced over the Waldorf-Pemberton High School intercom that she had been selected from among eight candidates for the title. "Then, all day," she recalls, "people were referring to me as 'your highness' and 'your majesty.'"

Hawkins, however, still saw herself mostly as one of four daughters to Leo and Vivodale Hawkins, a farm girl who drove tractor, plowed fields and carried heavy buckets on a regular basis.

Even more than five decades later, she sounds somewhat surprised to have been the winner. She recalls that the competition was held on a Sunday evening at the Central School auditorium. She had only entered, she remembers, because a friend had done so and urged her to come as well. Madsen's Super Valu grocery store hoped to sponsor a contestant, and was grateful for Hawkins' decision.

The part of the contest she liked least, she mentions, is that all participants took part in a swimsuit competition. She still laughs when she says her talent contest entry was to play the baritone, a brass instrument she played in her high school band. "It was one step down from a tuba," she jokes. "It looked like I should barely be able to lift it, and here I was playing it in a beauty contest." She recalls one of her competitors twirled a baton; another sang.

At the end of the evening, she received trophies for "Miss Congeniality" and "Talent," and had the winner's tiara placed on her head.

The enduring part of the title, she says, was the year-long range of experiences and acquaintances the position brought her.

She remembers riding in many parades, the first of which was Waseca's Sleigh and Cutter. Referred to most often as "Miss Waseca," she waved at crowds during Hay Daze, Festtag, and even the Minneapolis Aquatennial torchlight parade.

At the time, she mentions, driving in the Twin Cities was out of the question

Jolene continued on 4



MEMORY LANE - Jolene Hawkins, Miss Sleigh Bell and Miss Waseca 1970, next to the Waseca County Historical Society exhibit case where her trophies and tiara are currently displayed.

Student wrestler passes away

The Grizzly Wrestling team posted recently on Facebook reflecting on the loss of a teammate.

"7th grader Brady Kessler passed on at the young age of 12.

Brady moved to our community 3 years ago and was invited to practice along with his twin brother Aaron. These two have been hooked on grizzly wrestling ever since.

Brady along with Aaron had a grit and competitiveness that is most

commonly found in boys with close age siblings. A tough grit that is rare and hard to find. He was always a positive teammate and never backed down. He learned a lot and improved.

Brady's growth in wrestling along with many other kids is one of the reason I am so proud of the WEM Youth Program.

Brady was excited to move on to JR High wrestling. This year he

showed mass improvement along with a continuous smile on his face.

Brady was also active in Baseball and Church.

Brady is a part of the grizzly community.

He is missed!

Please keep Brady, his twin brother Aaron, his Dad David, Mom Cierra, step Dad Tyler and his four younger siblings in your thoughts and prayers."



Brady Kessler moved to the community three years ago and practiced wrestling alongside his twin brother.

Pedestrian injured in January 14 accident

On January 14, 2026 at about 3:21 p.m., The Waseca Police Department was dispatched to a report of a crash at the intersection of State Street and Elm Avenue. It was reported the crash involved a vehicle and a pedestrian who had been struck and run over.

Upon arrival emergency responders located a 64-year old Waseca woman on the ground with life-threatening injuries. She was treated at the scene and shortly thereafter flown to an advanced care medical facility. She remains hospitalized.

The vehicle involved was a 2017 GMC Sierra pickup driven by a 68-year old woman from Waseca.

Initial information learned from the driver of the vehicle, witnesses and physical evidence indicates that the GMC pickup truck was turning from North State Street onto East Elm Avenue on a green light when the vehicle collided with the pedestrian, who was walking from north to south in the marked crosswalk.

Impairment is not a suspected factor in this crash. Our investigation is ongoing with the assistance of the Minnesota State Patrol crash reconstruction team.

The Waseca Police Department was assisted by the Waseca County Sheriff's Office deputies and 911 dispatchers, Waseca Fire/Rescue, North Memorial Ambulance Service and Mayo One Air Ambulance.



Identify Frosty for share of \$1,500

It's time again for the annual Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Identify Frosty event. This year's event is the 29th installment of the annual contest.

Who is Frosty?

Identify Frosty and win some cash! Prize money totaling \$1,500.00 is waiting to be won.

Frosty is a Waseca County resident chosen to be an ambassador for the Waseca Sleigh & Cutter Festival. Follow the clues and guess FROSTY'S name.

The grand prize is \$300.00. If you are at the official unmasking at the Waseca VFW @8:30 p.m., on Friday, Feb. 27, 2026, you will win an additional \$50.00. The first correct guesses from Janesville, New Richland and Waseca win \$150.00; and if you are at the unmasking, you will win an additional \$50.00. Only five names will be drawn for \$100 – must be present to win.

Five names are drawn to win \$50.00 – attendance at the un-

Frosty continued on 4



Compostings

by Al Batt

Kindness is the secret ingredient

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

I think my car was made in Prague.

What makes you think that?

Every time I start it, the Czech engine light comes on.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I fired up the car's furnace and pushed on. Old Man Winter had buttered the road for my driving pleasure. I felt like the last in line at a potluck, but there was no magma on the road. That was a good thing.

Winter is when we act like we're having a good time. It reminded me of another day when the weather had sneezed. The school bus roared past; its driver smiling and waving at me as I stood in the freezing rain at the end of our farm driveway while the wind filled my pockets. He was a safe and friendly bus driver, but forgetful.

I wore a coat that required an exhaustive search to find its brand name. Now when a glacier is nipping at any exposed skin, coats trumpet their brand names. I see people wearing coats of companies I should buy penny stock in. The North Face, Canada Goose, Patagonia, Columbia, Carhartt, Eddie Bauer, Land's End, REI and others. No need to ask what brand of coat someone wears. Their coats tell me.

THOSE THRILLING DAYS OF YESTERYEAR

I shared an office with Ed "Perky" Perkins. Perky was a great guy prone to playing the harmonica while wearing a sombrero. He was an extraordinary salesman. Perky could sell salt to a slug. He sold Kirby vacuum cleaners. I didn't. They were noisy machines. Perky explained the noise this way: "If you want music, use a radio. If you want clean carpets, use a Kirby." I wasn't as concerned about clean carpets as I was about being able to converse on the phone. Willie Nelson sold Kirby vacuum cleaners for a spell. Yes, that Willie Nelson—the famous singer and songwriter. I didn't share an office with Willie, but I'll bet he didn't sell as many as Perky. The noise might have driven Willie crazy. "Crazy" is a song written by Willie Nelson and popularized by Patsy Cline in 1961.

I'VE LEARNED

Motion-sensor faucets in public restrooms aren't emotion-sensor faucets. It does no good to yell at them.

You will always be too young or too old to do something.

Tarzan's yell originated when he stepped on a Lego.

You can't throw away a rock. A friend said that when he was a boy, they were so poor that they ate stone soup. He was given a small stone to put in his mouth and then spit it out after he'd sucked the moisture from it.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

A priest, a minister and a rabbit walked into a blood donation center. The nurse asked the rabbit, "What's your blood type?"

"I'm probably a type O," said the rabbit.

NATURE NOTES

I whistled while I walked.

The result of my breathing through the icicles that had formed in my nostrils.

I tiptoed through the little remaining snow. There was a breeze that enhanced the winter experience for me. The weather folks used to toss out the term "wind-chill factor" to make us feel more uncomfortable in our minds than we were in our bodies. I don't miss hearing it so often. It's true the weather doesn't always agree with me, but it isn't the weather's job to agree with me.

Canada geese flew over, sounding as if they were playing vuvuzelas. Other birds joined me on the raw January day. I heard no complaints from any of them, and I marveled at every feather. Birds dare to be great. They need to be great to survive. I watched chickadees and blue jays cache seeds for the next day. Their preparations remind me of "The Ant and the Grasshopper," one of Aesop's Fables. That fable describes how a hungry grasshopper begged for food from an ant when winter came. The ant refused to share. The tale sums up moral lessons about the virtues of hard work and planning for the future. I've seen the food storage behavior of chickadees, jays, nuthatches and squirrels. It's impressive. Nature leaves me in a perpetual state of astonishment. It's a wonderful state to be in.

Back in the house, where there was only a minor windchill factor, the bird clock sounded the call of an eastern screech-owl because it was 9 o'clock. I enjoyed that more than a cuckoo clock. Does the clock spark joy? You betcha! Life is good.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The secret ingredient is kindness.

Texas tale reveals unsettling details

It's well known that native residents of Texas like to brag about how "everything's bigger" in their part of the country. The boast is justified most of the time—just as an example, a drive from Minnesota's southern border to Canada is about 400 miles. In Texas, the distance from north to south is between 800 and 1,000 miles; from east to west, it's about 775 miles.

Apparently those huge distances also lead to a hunger for speed.

I believe I've mentioned in previous columns that my husband is good friends with a fellow named James who has lived in Texas for 20 or more years. I've commented on how he teases us all winter long about how cold it is in Minnesota, then we tease him all summer about how hot it is in Texas.

The story I feel compelled to share regards James' significant other, Paulette, a lifelong Texas resident. I was recently informed, to my complete surprise, a typical country speed limit in Texas is 75 miles per hour—This is on two-lane roads comparable to what we have in Minnesota—about 25 feet wide.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

All right, the stage is set. About a week ago, Paulette was driving her small-ish SUV on a country road after dark. Suddenly she realized there was a horse standing in the road facing away from her. A black one, not visible until the last moment. She didn't even have time to hit the brakes before

the collision occurred.

The horse's posterior rode up the hood of the vehicle, crashed into the windshield, and crushed in the roof right above the driver seat. A description that was shared with us stated that, if someone were sitting in the damaged vehicle's driver seat, there would be only about an inch between his or her nose and the crushed-in metal.

After the horse slid off Paulette's hood and roof, it landed in the roadway and was struck by a second vehicle.

Remembering a long-forgotten dream

Life is funny, isn't it?

For Christmas, I got a gratitude journal. Basically, it's 300 pages of the same prompts copied over and over.

What are three things you're grateful for today?

Why do these matter?

What did you learn today? In what ways did you show kindness?

And lastly, one word to describe the day.

Normally, I would say I don't really need daily help to feel gratitude. I would like to think I am pretty good at appreciating things in life, but I guess we all need a good reminder.

So every night, I pick up my purple pen and practice my cursive. Listing the three things I am grateful for is always pretty easy. I pick the things out of the day that were memorable, that I was grateful happened or grateful I got to be a part of. A person, an event, something in my life.

And then the question that always gets me — why do these matter? I find myself always defaulting to thinking "Because they are part of my life? Because they are what makes my life, my life?" How am I supposed to answer



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

that when they give me one line to respond? I could write paragraphs about why going to see SIX the musical was important to me, why the Broncos' win was important, why being able to go to the gym is crucial in my life.

So normally I respond with variations of "because it's life." They are the details in my life that bring whimsy, make the mundane daily routine less boring. The things I list are what make me stop and realize who I am, where I am, where I'm grateful to be in life.

To the doctor that published this "book," I need more lines. I could spill paragraphs onto the page and yet you limit me to one line.

Jack asked me the other day if I would ever want to return to the dream

of being an author. We were talking about our jobs and how we aren't necessarily the happiest we could be, yet we have reliable sources of income, so here we are.

I've dreamed of being an author since I was in fourth grade. I hand wrote 30 pages of a novel in an old spiral notebook no one will ever read because I realized later that it was just a knock-off Mulan storyline and that it's been done before. There goes that book. In high school, I realized I could probably fairly easily crank out a couple of Harlequin romance novels that I was fond of at the time. Just over a hundred pages of cheesy couples going from enemies to lovers? Seems pretty simple.

Ice cream on a cold day in New York



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

Last week I wrote about the first part of my long-term trip, describing my time in Philadelphia and New York City, and mentioning my next destination was the home of my friends in Florida. Now I am writing this column while sitting on Anastasia and Kyle's couch in the Orlando area. I have two birds, Petri and Loki, sitting on me as I type.

Monday afternoon was spent at the Jefferson Institute in Philadelphia. Think "Night at the Museum" style building. Large, classic, beautiful. Imagine an interactive science museum with numerous presentations. The first presentation was 'the night's sky' in their planetarium (My first experience in a planetarium.) Following the very picturesque trip through the sky and cosmos, we went to the fourth floor for a presentation on 'liquid air.' (A presentation about liquid nitrogen.) We were the only three in attendance as it was the last show of the day, on a Monday afternoon. Watching the performance I felt it was best described as a performance/play. Afterwards the lady presenter said, unprompted, that it's easier to teach theatre kids science, than teach science kids to perform.

We walked through a large exhibit of a heart, seeing up close all of the details as we went up stairs, walked through 'arteries' and were surrounded by the walls of the heart. Displays showed how AI is used in medicine today. Another section was entirely devoted to sports science. It was very fun and informative.

In the evening, following dinner in China Town, we went to Franklin's

Ice Cream shop, a famous establishment where the lines extend around the block... during the summer. We sat on the floor (they don't have seating) and enjoyed our Sundays and shakes. There was no one else in the store. To quote my friends, "I didn't think ice cream on a cold day would be good. But this was worth it."

Tuesday we got up early and drove to New York. Since I was small, I dreamed of visiting the big city. Back then I thought it would be cool to live there. As an adult, that idea is a nightmare.

Nonetheless, driving into the city was breathtaking. I felt like a kid again, but all grown up.

Our first stop was Battery Island and a ferry to Liberty Island to see the Statue of Liberty. Another boat ride brought us to Ellis Island where so many of our ancestors entered the country. Standing in the same spots, lines, building as those people was humbling.

On the ferry ride back, a 15-year-old Turkish immigrant sat next to us, whose family won the "green card lottery."

He could not believe I was 28 years old, thinking I must be a teenager. Additionally, he talked of his surprises coming here and the vast culture he

was seeing in New York. He may or may not have asked about different racial terms he had never heard before. I described the interaction as a 'teachable moment' as we talked for about 15 minutes.

Next we walked to the 9/11 memorial. This is the quietest place in New York City. Two large pools of ever-flowing water lie where the Twin Towers once stood. Every name of every person whose life was lost that day is engraved along the black edges of the square pools.

Walking around each large pool, we saw fresh flowers adjoining numerous names. I was only three years old on 9/11/2001, but I remember my daycare lady coming in to shut off the TV. She told us a bad movie had come on the screen. My dad arrived soon after to take me home.

From there we went to Times Square for a bite to eat. Joe's Pizza, I was told, was where we had to go. The pizza was cracker thin, crispy, and good. I enjoyed a classic slice of cheese.

"The Outsiders," a musical on Broadway, was the reason for the trip to Times Square.

The show was perfect. Music, phenomenal. Story, just as good. I remember reading the book and

Paulette's brake lights had offered that driver a warning; he had slowed down from full cruising speed. His vehicle was damaged, but not "totaled" in the complete way Paulette's was.

Imagining the forces involved, perhaps you will agree with my household's assessment that it was essentially miraculous that Paulette survived. She did end up with some frighteningly bloody cuts on her forehead which required hours of medical stitching to repair.

And one other thing. Since the horse was hit from behind, its bowels were emptied on and inside the car. James' laconic assessment was "If it can't be hosed off, it's probably not worth keeping."

Especially after hearing about this accident, I find myself thinking not only "bigger isn't always better," but also "You never know..."

But then I remembered why I decided to take journalism classes in school and not English or creative writing classes — because I wanted to help people. And because it allowed me to satisfy, daily, the itch of my curiosity. Why did this happen? When? Who does it help and why is it important? I got to hear people's stories, write them up, and pray my work was helping someone. Working at the magazine now, I don't get to satisfy that itch. Most of the time it feels like I'm a fake sales person — you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. How many little stories can I crank out about things that either require no effort on my part to write up or don't really mean anything important.

Hopefully someday I'll be able to go back to hard news, if it's still there. If AI hasn't taken over or if news outlets haven't been shut down for one reason or another. And then maybe, if I'm either retired or have more time, I'll get back to creative writing.

But that's how life goes, doesn't it? My Determination: "Feelings are irrelevant. Indeed, they are responsible for this mess." - Bridgerton

watching the movie as a middle school student in Mark Domeier's English class. My sister has the tattoo, "Nothing Gold Can Stay" on her back to honor her favorite quote experienced for the first time while reading her favorite book in that same English class.

I departed Philadelphia Wednesday morning and arrived in Davenport, Florida, on Thursday evening. My time visiting Kyle and Anastasia has been filled recounting numerous moments, memories and life updates over this past week. Anastasia's parents, Ukraine refugees, live with them. Each meal is generally prepared by them, beginning with breakfast.

Meals have included traditional borscht soup, "Herring Under a Fur Coat," and much more.

Today, Tuesday, I have errands to run before leaving for Miami for the wedding of my friends Paul and Heather. I am a groomsman. The bachelor party (we're visiting an escape room) is Friday, followed by dinner in the evening and the wedding on Saturday. I will spend Thursday exploring Miami with the two.

To recap, I have left Philadelphia after a wonderful trip which included a great finale in New York, driven to Florida where I have spent the last few days visiting two of my best friends. Next up, a drive to Miami and a wedding. More details to follow next week.

"A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles." - Tim Cahill. (In this case, I am using both measurements. My miles are up to 2,700.

gear

*Ready to start the quest,
The money — to whom will be
blessed.*

*The medallion in wait
For the finder, it's fate.
Within the city limits,
Visibility it permits
Near nature in its space
Ready to be found in its place.*

Medallion Hunt rules

The medallion is hidden outdoors, on public property within the Waseca city limits. There are many natural areas in Waseca, both new and old. A \$1,500 prize of Chamber Dollars will be awarded at the Waseca VFW at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 27, 2026. Bring the medallion to Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce or Waseca Music when found. Clues will be

published each week in the Waseca County Pioneer, the NRHEG Star Eagle, Facebook, the Waseca County News, and on the Waseca Sleigh & Cutter Festival website. Clues will also be broadcast on KRUE and KOWZ Radio and will be available online at Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce at www.waseca-chamber.com.

Medallion hunt sponsors: KEEN Bank, Xcel Energy, Blaze Credit Union, Ace Hardware, Waseca VFW Club 1642, and M Peters Enterprises. Please thank these sponsors for supporting the 29th Annual Medallion Hunt!

Medallion: Week 1 Clue

*It's that time of year
Medallion hunters are getting in*

WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

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

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GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

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Bead Art Keychain at the New Richland Public Library Jan. 29

Use a pattern to make fun animals and shapes, including crayons, lizards, and snakes by weaving pony beads together at the New Richland Library at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29. Then turn them into keychains to create a colorful accessory. For ages 9-12.

Adult Carnival at the Waseca Legion, Jan. 30

The Legion in Waseca will be holding another Adult Carnival starting at 5 p.m. on Friday Jan. 30. There will be a silent auction, live auction, food, games, prizes, wine wall and tastings. Donations wanted, drop off at the legion before Friday.

Deer Hunters Bingo and Membership Drive at VFW Jan. 31

The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association South Central Chapter will hold a Deer Hunters Bingo and Membership Drive at the Sweet-Sommers VFW starting at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31. Contact Tim at 507-201-7933 or Pat at 507-380-5363 with questions.

Waseca County Winter Farmers Market at Farmamerica Jan. 31

There will be a winter farmers market at Farmamerica from 8 a.m. till noon Saturday, Jan. 31. Find locally grown, baked and made while supporting our local producers. Farmamerica is located at 7367 360th Ave., Waseca.

Sixty Years of Herter’s Snowmobile Show and Ride Jan. 31

There will be a snowmobile show and ride celebrating 60 Years of Herter’s at Southside Marine and More on Wednesday, Jan. 31. Contact Terry for more info: 507-461-5424.

County-wide political precinct caucuses 7 p.m. on Feb. 3

All citizens are invited to attend political caucuses for the county Republican and Democratic parties. Registration will be at 6:30 p.m., with caucus business beginning at 7 p.m. One does not need to be a party member to attend. Information about locations, times, and more is available on the Secretary of State website at <https://www.sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/how-elections-work/precinct-caucuses/>

Watercolor Pansy class on Feb. 3 or Feb. 4

There will be a pansy watercolor class on either 1-3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3 or 5-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4 at the Waseca Art Center. Cost is \$30 for members or \$35 for non-members. For questions call 507-835-1701.

Pottery Wheel for all levels every Thursday starting Feb. 5

There will be a pottery wheel class for every level at the Waseca Art Center every Thursday from 5-7:30 p.m. starting Feb. 5 through March 26. Cost for all eight sessions is \$210 for members and \$235 for non-members, kids 13 and up.



SNOW COURT - Front row: Winter Pederson, Gabrielle Schlaak, Meela Budach, Nora Flatness, Kaitlyn Dobberstein, Kayden Warke. Back row: Ezekiel Morrison, Kaleb Hughes, Justin Beauvais, Quen Meyering, DeShawn Jones, Isaac Bauleke

NRHEG Snow Week fast approaching

The NRHEG 2026 Snow Week kicks off Jan. 31 and goes until Feb. 6. Coronation is set for 1:45 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3 at NRHEG High School, when royalty will be crowned based on a vote of the student body grades 9-12. Coronation is open to the community and will feature speeches from winter sports coaches.

Queen Candidates include
Meela Budach
Kaitlyn Dobberstein
Nora Flatness

King Candidates include
Isaac Bauleke
Justin Beauvais
Kaleb Hughes
DeShawn Jones
Quen Meyering
Ezekiel Morrison

Schedule
Coronation ceremony 1:45 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3.
Monday, Feb. 2: Dress Up Day

– Pajama/comfy; Snow Week Kick off Assembly; bean bag tournament prelims for 6th and 8th grade; Girls’ and Boys’ Varsity Basketball at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 3: Dress Up Day – Generation Day; bean bag tournament prelims for 6th and 7th grade; Snow Coronation; Girls’ and Boys’ Varsity Basketball at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 4: Dress Up Day – White Lie; bean bag tournament prelims for 7th and 8th grade,

finals for 6th grade; Snow Court will visit the Elementary school and New Richland Care Center.

Thursday, Feb. 5: Dress Up Day – Dress as your type; high school bean bag tournament; 7th and 8th grade bean bag finals; Varsity Wrestling at home at 5 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 6: Dress Up Day – Meme Day (Quarterzip and matcha); Varsity Girls’ Basketball at 6 p.m. and Varsity Boys’ Basketball at 7:30 p.m.

JWP Snow Week

Janesville-Pemberton-Waldorf has announced their 2026 Snow Week Royalty:

Snow King is Daulton Bauer.
Snow Queen is Ellie Mor-sching.

This year, JWP is starting a new tradition - the Snow Angels! Members of the Snow Court created their very own snow angels in the snow, and the student body voted to decide the winners.

Ms. Snow Angel was Aubrey Adams and Mr. Snow Angel was Travyn Shoultz.

Emcees were Rachelle Oelke and Tyson Johnson.



Leaders urge voters to attend caucuses

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

“If you want to see a better country, precinct caucuses are the way to start,” declares Deb Hogenson, chair of the Waseca County Democratic Party.

County Republican treasurer Charlie Priebe phrases it another way, “If you feel inclined to complain about the way things are, you should come help change them.”

Precinct caucuses will take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3; registration begins at 6:30. In the case of the

Democratic party, all county precincts are invited to the cafeteria of Waseca’s Central School Building. Republican precinct caucuses are at various school buildings and community centers across the county; a full list appears at the end of this article.

Much helpful information about precinct caucuses appears on the Secretary of State website at <https://www.sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/how-elections-work/precinct-caucuses>.

What local political leaders from both parties want people to know is

that they are encouraged to attend, will be able to engage at whatever level they find personally suitable, and will be speaking with friends and neighbors from their own precincts. There are 23 precincts in Waseca County. Based on population, they range from the size entire communities of Janesville, New Richland and Waldorf, to whole townships, to divisions of the city of Waseca, where precinct lines are drawn by local governments to help facilitate city and county elections.

Once they begin, caucus discussions will last as long as precinct

groups find suitable to accomplish a few tasks: select their precinct delegates to the county-wide convention and to endorsing conventions, elect party officers, and discuss possible changes or additions to party platforms.

Democrat Hogenson explains that the Secretary of State office requires all major political parties to hold precinct caucuses, and even designates what day and time they must be held. “But each party decides the details

Caucus continued on 5

Natalie McGuire, Heidi Jeub at Waseca Art Center

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Waseca Art Center held a gallery opening over a snowy afternoon on Saturday, Jan. 17. Those joining the celebration had to dodge snowplows and flurries outside but were safe and warm once they got inside and saw the artistry of painter, teaching artist and public artist Heidi Jeub and photographer and mosaic artist, Natalie McGuire.

The Beckman Gallery featured Heidi Jeub, who introduced herself to visitors during a “meet and greet” session prior to the official introductions and speeches. While perusing the Beckman Gallery, armed with a mug of apple/cinnamon tea, Jeub approached and shared her ‘personality on display,’ “There’s more to my abstract art making than just the paintings.” The majority of her work was on canvas, and there were a few that had small frames. Present with her was her partner, hip/hop musician Terrell X. She gave him credit for naming the majority of her work. Said Jeub, “Usually when I am done with a painting, I’m just done with it, that’s when my partner comes in, most of the names are Terrell’s brainchild.” Just a few examples of the names are: “Sounds Like Something Stupid I Would Say” and “Dark Corners of the Internet (In Broad Daylight).” She uses very solid colors, red is prominent, and a very thick paint that gives her work grit, like something colorful to take a bite out of.

Jeub says that, for her, the fronts of the canvases are the pictures. The sides and tops, however were solid colors, she was asked why her painting doesn’t wrap around the sides and tops like so many other painters like to do, but were instead painted solid colors, Jeub had an interesting reply, “I paint the sides, tops and bottoms so the white of the canvas doesn’t fade, it protects the canvas, and adds to the painting.” She also had a single painting with an old finished-wood style frame and she said, “One of my friends did this frame for me, I don’t know where he got the wood from, but it works with the painting.”

St. Paul native Natalie McGuire’s work was on display in the Harguth Gallery. It consists of photos with mosaic frames. She had a striking photo with birch trees, the white and black colored trunks were centered in the photo, but it didn’t stop there. The trees were also part of the broken white and black colored glass that was used for the frame. Hundreds of pieces of colored glass lined each photo. There was a picture of white and yellow daisies that continued past the picture, letting the frame in on some of the fun. She had a summer beach scene with old and worn fencing which ended in the photo to both the left and right. McGuire continued the fences by cutting small pieces of wood and wire to the edge. The bottom of the photo had brown colored sand, so the frame had brown glass mosaic pieces. A dragon fly photo had many, many different colors of green to match the shiny silver color of the dragon

Art continued on 4

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Local students receive academic recognitions

Central Lakes College, Brainerd and Staples, has announced its 2025 fall semester honors lists. The President's List includes 333 students who earned a grade-point average of 3.75 to 4.0 while enrolled for at least 12 credits. Central Lakes College is a comprehensive community and technical college in the Minnesota State system.

Jackson Tesch, Waldorf, MN, , President's List

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List. Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the Dean's List.

Jaiden Robinson of Waseca, Dean's List

Katharine Duffy of Waseca, Dean's List

Nevada Walsh of Janesville, Dean's List

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2025 President's List. Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List.

Chelsey Ulferts of Waseca, President's List

Donald Mcvey of Waseca, President's List

Central College of Pella, Iowa, recognizes students each semester who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement by naming them to the Dean's List.

This distinction is reserved for those who have earned a semester grade point average of 3.5 or higher while completing a minimum of 12 graded credit hours. The students exemplify academic excellence and a strong commitment to their education. We congratulate them on this well-deserved accomplishment.

Lilly Trager, Ellendale, in the Class of 2029 Dean's List.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has recognized students named to the Dean's List for the fall semester of the 2025-2026 academic year. Students who achieve at a high level academically are recognized by the dean at the close of each semester. To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in that semester.

Luke Yoder, College of Engineering, Dean's Honor List

The University of Minnesota Crookston announces students who were named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List which was recently released by the Office of the Registrar. To qualify for the Dean's List, students must complete 12 or more letter-graded (A-F) credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average. Students named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List include the following:

Siri Anne Kuhns, Agricultural Business Major, Agricultural Education BS, Waseca, MN Dean's List

Kloe Nell Wadd, Agricultural Business B S, Agricultural Communication Major, Waseca, MN Dean's List



Sacred Heart gets set for Catholic Schools Week

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Sacred Heart School has an important week coming up starting Sunday, Jan. 25 in celebration of Catholic Schools Week. With different themes for every day of the week, there's bound to be something for everyone. The mission of Sacred Heart School is: "To promote life-long learning and Christ centered values in a Catholic setting."

The sound of children was echoing down the halls as Tammy Seys came forward with her hand out to shake. She's the new principal for Sacred Heart school, having been there since November of last year, she was a professor at St. Mary's University for a year and a half and before that she was at JWP. She said, "This week is for celebrating Catholic life. We're trying to encourage other families to join, and this is a statewide effort." She understands that a lot of Wasecans get used to driving past Sacred Heart school and it can be easy to take for granted, "A lot of people have no idea what we have in here, we have so much to offer." She said

last year Catholic Schools Week didn't get as many visitors as they wanted, and that they hope to make up for it in 2026.

Tara Steffel, third grade teacher and parent to one student in Sacred Heart's kindergarten class and another in the on-site Montessori pre-school, told of having been a teacher at the school for the past 9 years. "I participate throughout the week to implement our mission and philosophy through the students so they can continue to strive and work towards it. Not just me as a teacher, but we as a staff collaborate together here to support all kinds of learning and tutoring and finding those students who need more help." She described the experiences she's had with her own children. "As a parent when my children come home and I hear their excitement in what they're doing in school, that is comforting. What's cool about a school like this is every student knows each other, the older students know the younger students and they get along."

Steffel also made reference to the school resource officers, "They come



FUN AND GAMES - The children of Mrs. FitzSimmons' kindergarten class at Sacred Heart School took time out from their memory game for a photo on Friday, Jan. 16, 2025.

Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann

and introduce themselves and read books to keep children's attitudes positive towards the police. One of the officers even brought in her little dog for the kids to play with. Not the police K-9 dog, but her own personal pet." One of the officers, Officer Brent even told the children he visited, "I drive past your school a bunch of times during the day, so you kids know I'm keeping you safe!" Steffel added, "The kids really liked that." Not all of the teachers are Catholic, Steffel said, but they all have the same mission in mind.

Jinger Woodring, who is in her first year as a fourth-grade teacher, but taught at St. Casimir in Wells until the school closed said, "When St. Casimir closed, I knew people here and that gave me a place to go. During our open house we'll have many volunteers available to answer questions and give tours, we'll also have teachers here in their class-

rooms and students will be here also." She was asked her favorite part about Sacred Heart School and getting to teach there and she said, "We get to practice our faith and teach the whole child, which is their mind, body and spirit. Our focus is faith and community. How do they go out into the community and serve? We need these kids to be strong in their faith in this culture, and we need them to be positive!"

For anyone interested, after the ten o'clock mass on Sunday, Jan. 25 there will be an open house at Sacred Heart school. There will be registration information for the 2026-2027 school year, donuts and coffee, a scavenger hunt and door prizes. This event is open to the public. Later on in the week will be the Penny Wars, Pajama Day, Celebrating Your Community Day, Celebrating Vocations Day and much more.

■ Caucus

from Page 3

and their way of going about things."

Because of this, there will be differences in the exact way business is handled—for example, how the Democrats are having all precincts gather in one large space, while Waseca County Republicans have spread their precinct caucuses across five locations.

County Republican Chair John Knotts observes that, with Tim Waltz's recent announcement he will not be seeking re-election in 2026, parties will want to know more about the qualifications voters want their candidates to possess. In fact, the Republican caucuses will begin with a "straw poll" on the question.

In order to vote or be selected as a candidate or alternate during the precinct caucuses, individuals must be eligible to vote by the Nov. 3 election. Others can attend and listen in, but depending on party procedures, are either not allowed to speak, or may speak only in limited circumstances.

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A look back at 2025

In the past year the Pioneer has covered many exciting stories worth remembering. Here is a look back at the best highlights from the year that was 2025.

October

- Waseca Homecoming week 2025 concluded after five exciting days of activities, themed dress up days, coronation, and parades. The excitement concluded with a 49-6 win over the TCU Titans on Friday evening.
- After two surgeries and chemotherapy, Waseca area resident Kim Maas has been cancer free since April. Because there have been times over her one-year battle with ovarian cancer when she questioned how many days she had left on earth, she observes, "I feel fortunate to be here; every day is a blessing."
- Waseca resident Jake Lieser, 28, is able to name friends he has made from across the state and even around the country thanks to his participation in Special Olympics.
- The Waseca Art Center (WAC) held a gallery opening for two artists on Thursday, Sept. 25. Displays by water color painter and Waseca local Cherie Jacobson and photographer Harry Popiel were kept on display until Oct. 31.
- It was a successful Homecoming for the Waseca High School football team. The Bluejays blew out Tri City United 49-6. Waseca improved to 5-0 while the Titans fell to 0-5.
- The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association's (MDHA) sixteenth annual banquet took place the evening of Saturday, Sept. 20 at the Sweet-Sommers VFW.
- School Resource Officer (SRO) Brent Brass was the staff spotlight at the Oct. 2 work session of the Waseca school board. Brass has been a police officer for 26 years, 16 of them in Waseca. He described his entry into the SRO position as "trial by fire" as it was during Homecoming week when he began his duties in the district.
- Business owner Shane Wendland, owner of Barden's Bar in Waseca, dined with some of his customers during Waseca's annual "Beers and Brats" night on Thursday, Oct. 2.
- The St. Paul Lutheran Church of Waseca held its Oktoberfest into the night on Saturday, Oct. 4. There were live music, food, refreshments, a bounce house, hammerschlagen and more.
- Hundreds of pounds of "fingerling" walleye were stocked in Clear Lake early in October. The fish spent the warm months of the year in a pond at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) hatchery near Waterville, growing from "the size of an eyelash" to being somewhere between six and nine inches in length, according to Brandon Eder, assistant area supervisor with the facility.
- Farmamerica held its annual Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct. 11. By noon more than 600 guests had arrived, leading to more than a thou-



Halloween night was kind of a nightmare for the Luverne Cardinals. The Waseca Bluejays, 10-0 and ranked No. 1 in the state in Class AAA in at least one poll, qualified for the state football tournament for the sixth time.

sand by the end of the event at 4 p.m.

- Christ the King Lutheran Church's Women of the Word held their second annual Baked Potato Bar and dessert over the lunch hour on Wednesday, Oct. 8.
- Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon visited Waseca County as part of his ongoing statewide tour of all 87 counties.
- The large numbers of families and children at Aspyn Acres' "Pumpkin Palooza" exceeded expectations and delighted event organizers the afternoon of Saturday, Oct. 18.
- The Rotary Club of Waseca welcomed polio survivor Linda Christianson for a moving program on living with purpose in the face of adversity.
- Farmamerica and the Waseca County Farmers Market launched the Waseca County Winter Farmers Market, a brand-new seasonal event bringing the best of local food, crafts, and community together—no matter the weather!
- Community leaders, investors, and local officials gathered Monday afternoon, Oct. 27, 2025, to celebrate the groundbreaking of Marketplace Commons, a new multi-unit apartment complex that marks a transformative step forward in Waseca's housing and economic development.
- Members of the NRHEG school board were given a positive audit report during their regular meeting the evening of Monday, Oct. 20.
- At the request of the county Information Technology (IT) department, county commissioners voted during their Oct. 21 meeting to approve about \$12,500 for additional annual cybersecurity insurance coverage.
- The Starfire Event Center saw a veritable who's who of Waseca County walk in the door on Saturday, Oct. 25 for the Waseca Art Center's Great Fall Get Together. This year's celebration,

was hailed as a truly gala event, as the Waseca Art Center began celebrating 50 years (1976 - 2026) of bringing art to the community.

- The Waseca High School girls' cross country team fell short in its bid for a second-straight state meet. But Ellie Kopischke, an 8th-grader, advanced to state as an individual after placing tenth in the Section 1AA meet at Bancroft Bay Park in Albert Lea.

November

- Waseca Floral, one of Waseca's longest-operating businesses, held its fifty-fourth annual open house on Saturday, Nov. 1.
- Faith United Methodist Church of Waseca held its Fall Bazaar and luncheon Saturday, Nov. 1. The soup of the day was chicken and wild rice, with fresh baked bread and assorted pies to choose from for dessert.
- Halloween night was kind of a nightmare for the Luverne Cardinals. The Waseca Bluejays, 10-0 and ranked No. 1 in the state in Class AAA in at least one poll, qualified for the state football tournament for the sixth time.
- On Wednesday, Nov. 5, members of the House Capital Investment Committee began their fourth regional tour of the fall, visiting communities in southeast Minnesota. Their fourth stop of the day was the city of Waseca where they visited with local community leaders at Clear Lake Park pavilion.
- The first installment of a Waseca Winter Farmers Market being held indoors at Farmamerica took place the morning of Saturday, Nov. 8, inside the main building.
- For the fiftieth time, the Waseca Marching Jays presented a lively indoor marching band concert filled with creativity, energy, and heart-

2025 continued on 16



The Pastor's Column

Word for the year 2026: Listen

By PASTOR RICK WULF

Have you ever stopped to listen? Maybe it's to the sound of a gentle breeze, or a child telling you a secret. Maybe it's to a low sound or a dialogue that's spoken softly. Hopefully it's not to eavesdrop on someone else's private conversation, just sayin'. Would you agree that we live in an age dominated by alerts and notifications? Of ideas and opinions? Do we let a relentless news cycle become an obstacle to silence? Have we let actually stopping to listen become a scarce commodity? I think we have. Whether it is accidentally or intentionally, we have trained ourselves to react instantly-scroll, comment, post. It's almost instinctive. And whichever side or any idea, aisle, or perspective you are on or have, it is so easy to tap our thumbs, hit send, seeming without a care for the consequences.

And while some of this is true and happening all around us, many people of faith are rediscovering an older, counter-cultural way of living. This is more than a habit, it's a discipline. It's listening to God. Listening, in the biblical sense, is not passively sitting, waiting, hoping for some audible voice from God. Rather, it is an active participation with God. It is being attentive and intentional. And while being uncomfortable is something we all try hard to avoid, it is often necessary to actually hear what God might be saying.

The truth is that faith is not merely believing. Faith is actively living out our Christian life, listening and responding to God. In Deuteronomy 6, God says, "Hear, O Israel". The Great Shema was a call that shaped Jewish life for centuries. Jesus echoes the same priority in the Gospels and in Revelation as He says, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." The assumption is clear-God is always speaking, but not everyone is listening.

Our culture, however, actively conspires against this practice of listening. Noise is no longer limited to sound. That's right. We call just about everything noise. And this noise can and often does include mental clutter, constant connectivity, social compliance, identity, comparison, and the pressure to create the perfect image of ourselves. Just look at social media or tv. It's obvious we love beauty, intelligence, power, fame, money, etc. But these things are not eternal. These temporary pursuits deny us the time and energy to chase after the greater, eternal values. Even prayer can become one-sided, a list of requests rather than an opportunity to sit at Jesus' feet, asking Him speak and to reveal Himself. Let me ask you if you would fall into this next category? Many believers are fluent in talking to God, but less practiced in waiting long enough to hear from Him. Hmm. This convicts me.

Yet, as we look throughout the Scriptures, we consistently see that God guides His people as they tuned everything else out to listen to Him. Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and countless others encounter God in different ways, yet all of them had to stop and listen. In each case, God's direction follows atten-

tiveness. God's purpose is revealed in our obedient listening.

As we listen to God, we become able to discern God's voice and His will for our life. In a world where information is available instantly, and content is free, they can't actually make the decisions we need to make. Sure, those things help and give us clarity, but decisions about vocation, relationships, ethics, and priorities are rarely resolved by information alone. Wisdom is different than knowledge and wisdom requires more than data. Wisdom is a result of aligning our wants with God's character and purposes. When believers slow down long enough to listen through Scripture, prayer, and reflection, we gain insight that cuts through anxiety, worry, fatigue, distraction, and impulse. This is discernment. And it's something we all need. And it's a way we show the world the way of Jesus.

Listening to God also confronts us with truths we might prefer to avoid. Think about the prophets. They were not popular figures. But they listened well, and they obeyed the voice of the Lord, even though their message would most often not be received well. They heard God's concern for justice, mercy, and faithfulness, and most often spoke it to people who had become comfortable. As we listen to God today, we must allow Him to challenge our assumptions, expose blind spots, and redirect our attentions and affections back to Him.

As much as I would love to write that if you pray long enough or hard enough, God will speak through dramatic voices, supernatural means, or physical manifestations. For most Christians though, His primary means of speech is Scripture. And when we read His love letter to us slowly and with humility, the Holy Spirit applies His Word to our hearts and lives.

And don't forget, when we read and apply Scripture within Biblical community, we can learn from others of like faith and allow the Spirit to speak through them as well.

Listening requires margin. It requires time without devices and prayer without an agenda. It means we must read without rushing, and to courageously obey what God says to us. But we must not allow ourselves to live on spiritual autopilot, because the cost is immense.

Like any meaningful relationship, our relationship with God deepens when we listen to Him and learn from Him. What would it be like if we heeded the words of James, and we speak less and listen more? For followers of Jesus, the discipline of listening may be one of the most important acts of obedience we can learn in this life.

As we finish, I have good news. Churches that listen to God together are better equipped to serve and love our community. When we prioritize spiritual attentiveness, we model patience and humility for the emerging generations. In a loud world, a listening church becomes a credible witness. So, as you are listening, go shine the light of Jesus. You'll be glad you did.



CERTIFIED RESPONDERS - Local students received their Emergency Medical Responders Certificate of Attendance on Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026, at the Janesville Fire Hall. Pictured from left: Janesville Fire Chief Mike Santo, Brayden and Zachery Blasing, Gavin Loken, Raylen Blasing, Dylan Hood, Lily Quast, Dustyn Hill, Jason Wheelock, Tyler Schmahl.

JWP students take first steps toward public service

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

There was a large gathering at the Janesville Fire Hall in the early morning of Wednesday, Jan. 14, attended by Janesville Fire Chief Mike Santo; Executive Director of the South-Central EMS Regional Program Mark Griffith; Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas; and Mankato Fire Training Captain Jay Kopischke. Also attending were nine exceptional Janesville Waterville Pemberton (JWP) students, Brayden and Zachery Blasing, Gavin Loken, Raylen Blasing, Dylan Hood, Lily Quast, Dustyn Hill, Jason Wheelock, and Tyler Schmahl.

Inside the Janesville Fire Hall was abuzz with a chatting group,

excited parents, volunteers and EMS professionals, all suited up and ready for any emergency, but this wasn't that type of gathering. This was a chance to recognize the hard work and dedication of a select group of JWP students, four of whom are high school seniors. Accepting their Emergency Medical Responder's Certificates of Attendance. Mike Santo said, "We really appreciate all these kids signing up for this, they passed all the minimal state requirements. The principal asked us about this and what it would take for this to happen. This was done with a recruitment intention, we know there's a lot of options out there, but we hope we got their attention. The first training for fire fighters is EMR, and

these students are also CPR qualified."

Peggy Zinniel, wife to Brad Zinniel, Health Educator at Medical & Safety Resources, Inc., was present to say on behalf of her husband, "Brad's training this morning, but he wanted you to know how proud he is of you. This is hard, and you guys did it. Medica and safety resources is a family business out of Eagle Lake. This is the first EMR class we've done, and we couldn't be happier with you guys and these results."

Mark Griffith said before he handed out their Certificates of Attendance, "We gave kits to the kids, and I have to say training kids like this is exciting. On behalf of the region, and on behalf of the

15,000 EMS people in all of Minnesota, congratulations on your achievements. You guys pulled together for this and thank you for sacrificing your time to do it. I promise this will set the tone for the rest of your lives. You have set yourselves apart from all the other high school students. Well done."

Toni Walker, manager of the Janesville Casey's was also present. Her business donated the donuts. She said, "I know all of these kids, I'm here to support all of them."

Once the new EMR recruits were done shaking hands and taking pictures with their certificates, one by one they wandered over to the juice and donuts table and had some breakfast.

New resident gives a lifetime of service

By ANN STALOCH

The Waseca Exchange Club has chosen Mikhail Rostislavovich the recipient of the prestigious Book of Golden Deeds, an honor reserved for individuals whose selfless service and lasting contributions help build a stronger, more connected community.

The Book of Golden Deeds recognizes those who consistently give of themselves to help others and make a positive difference in the world around them. In fewer than five years as a resident of Waseca, Rostislavovich has done just that consistently and with an unwavering commitment to service.

City Manager Carl Sonnenberg describes Rostislavovich as someone whose presence alone sets a tone. "With the mere mention of his name or acknowledgement of his presence," Sonnenberg said, "people tend to straighten up and

immediately consider their own sincerity for the occasion at hand." He added that Rostislavovich's intentions are never in question. "His speech and actions are clear, precise, and sincere. There is nothing left to wonder about concerning his motivations."

One of Rostislavovich's most visible contributions has been the restoration of a residential icon in the heart of Waseca. Through painstaking, historically accurate work, he brought the Tudor Revival back to life, restoring it to what it once was and elevating it even further. Today, the Alexander House on North State Street stands as a community landmark and gathering place, generously opened to the public for fundraisers, events, and tours. It reflects his belief that preservation, when done thoughtfully, should serve the entire community.

That same philosophy has guided

his leadership at the Waseca Art Center. Under his direction, the organization underwent a complete transformation. Bylaws were updated, the Board of Directors reconstituted, and long-needed policies such as accession and deaccession processes were implemented. A permanent gallery was installed, a ceramics studio opened, and the Tea Room was created to make the space more welcoming and accessible. The Art Center's public image was strengthened, and today it is recognized as one of the premier art centers in Southern Minnesota, one where artists actively seek to exhibit their work.

County Commissioner Brad Milbrath notes that few individuals have had such a broad and meaningful impact on Waseca in such a short period of time. "Since making Waseca his home, Mikhail Rostislavovich has taken on leadership roles

across several cornerstone institutions," Milbrath said. "His work has helped elevate Waseca's visibility, strengthen community engagement, and promote the city and county as vibrant places to live, work, and visit."

Rostislavovich's civic influence extends well beyond the arts. Beginning in 2024, he worked closely with Chamber leadership during a critical period of transition, helping reorganize the organization and put durable structures in place to ensure long-term success. His efforts helped empower emerging leaders, strengthen communication between the city, county, and Chamber, and foster a more collaborative civic environment. Tourism efforts were also completely overhauled, bringing renewed focus and energy to

Mikhail continued on 11

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* * * * *

CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH
309 6th St NE, Waseca
507-835-9176
Worship Sundays traditional 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Sunday School/Fellowship; 10:45 a.m. contemporary service
* * * * *

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

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

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

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

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH
111 4th St NW, Waseca
Father Glenn Ferichs
507-835-1222
Worship Sundays 10:00 a.m., Tues. and Wed. at 8:30 a.m. and Thurs. at 7 a.m.; Saturdays at 5 p.m.
* * * * *

REAL LIFE CHURCH
620 W Elm Ave, Waseca
* * * * *

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

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

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
1221 8th St SE, Waseca
507-835-2213
Sunday School 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.
* * * * *

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

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

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

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

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

VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH
* * * * *

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

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

ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Father Glenn Ferichs
Friday - 10 a.m. on 1st, 3rd and 4th Fridays p.m. Mass
Sunday - Mass at 8 a.m.
* * * * *

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

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Freedom Township
Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship
* * * * *

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

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN
Wilton Township
Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor
Services 6 p.m. Saturday
* * * * *

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

12-18
* * * * *

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

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

BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
43089 180th St., Morristown
Pastor Kathy King
Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Summer worship hours, (10:45 a.m. Worship, winter)
* * * * *

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

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

ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH
Alma City, Minnesota
Pastor Robert Harting
Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship
* * * * *

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

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

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

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Janesville

25 years ago

- Casey Schuneman, 19, was sentenced in Waseca County Court on November 28 for the August 30 robbery of G&S Gas Station in Janesville. His sentence includes 12 days in jail; a fine of \$6,000, \$3,000 if paid within two years; supervised probation for 10 years; a psychic evaluation within 30 days; attending parenting classes; maintaining employment; in patient treatment for 30 days after release; restitution to G&S; no contact with G&S owner or employee; no controlled substances. G&S employee, Tyler Winter, 17, was assaulted and robbed while working at G&S in the early evening hours of Aug. 30.

- Mellisa Cummins is a starter on the JWP girls' basketball team this winter. The 5'8" sophomore is playing with the Bulldogs for the second year. Cummins earned Athlete of the Week honors for her performances against Alden Conger and Fairmount. She scored 24 points and grabbed 18 rebounds in the two games. "We're excited about some of our younger players, and Mellisa is part of that excitement. Her play in the pain will be a key to our season." Cummins also competes in volleyball and track and field at JWP. She is the daughter of Ron and Cheeny Cummins of Jamesville.



50 years ago



- Three-year-old Mike Steinberg found that ice skating has its ups and downs when he skate with his mom at the local rink recently. Mike is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob A. Steinberg.

- Bobby Schmidt, son of Shelby and Bob Schmidt, was released from the University Hospitals January 3, after being confined for the past two months. Doctors have completed radiation treatment, and have started intensive chemo-therapy with three different cancer drugs. Doctors say the drugs will have various side effects. It is hopeful that young Schmidt will be able to take the drugs at the Mankato Clinic. His mother said Bobby is very happy to be home and hopes to gradually return to school.

- Martha Jean Wiebold, Janesville, became the bride of Bruce E. Wheelock at a two o'clock double-ring ceremony on October 25, at St. Ann's Catholic Church, Janesville. Father C.J. Haberman officiated. Parents of the couple are Mr. Walter H. Weibold and Mr. and Mrs. William Wheelock, all of Janesville. Songs sung at the wedding were- "The Wedding Song," "Give it Away: and "Follow Me." Soloists were Vield Wolff, Eagle Lake and Gail Westphal, St. Paul. Guitarist was Sheryl Wesphal, Janesville.

- The Janesville Mothers of Men in Service met in the American Legion Club Rooms on January 2, with eleven members present. Vice-President, Mrs. Augusta Dumdell, opened the meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, secretary treasurer and Sunshine reports were read and accepted. Thank you letters were read from the Rochester and St. Peter State Hospitals. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned after which cards were played at two tables. Lunch was served by Mrs. Linda Quast and Mrs. Tillie Walther.



75 years ago

- An operation was performed Saturday in St. Mary's hospital, Rochester, on Orville Witt, 20, Janesville youth who was accidentally shot by a .22 bullet. Rochester doctors stated that Orville came through the operation fairly well and that there was some prospect of improvement in the paralysis of his legs. However, the bullet was not removed. According to Miss Therese Steffes, Mankato, Orville was accidentally hit in the back by a discharged bullet fired from a .22 calibre pistol which was lying on the front seat of the car, causing complete paralysis in both legs. He was taken to Immanuel hospital, Mankato, before being taken to Rochester for the delicate operation.

- According to a bulletin from the Minnesota Game and Fish Department, Buffalo lake is now open to promiscuous fishing. After inspection of the lakes it was decided that the fish were in serious danger of smothering due to the shallow water, hence the order. According to the bulletin, fish may be taken in any quantity and in any manner except with the use of seines, hoop nets, fyke nets or explosives, by residents of Minnesota for their own personal use. The order will remain in force until February 28, says the bulletin.

100 years ago

- According to reports the women of America smoked some nine billion cigarettes during the past year. The fair sex has probably concluded that she may as well take her smoke first hand as to meekly sit by and take it second handed. Has it ever occurred to you that the average male appears around the house just about often enough to keep the premises beautifully saturated with stale tobacco smoke?

- A shower for the bride of the week, Mrs. Syril Gilday, was given New Years night at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Eustice by Miss Mabel Janke and Miss Mary Eustice. It is quite needless to say that the guests had a thoroughly enjoyable evening during the course of which a dainty lunch was served.

- A telephone wire might be termed a public highway, but rather a highway of speech than one for transportation.

However, this fact does not seem to be generally known, at least not among our animal friends. From Wilmington, Del., comes the story of a squirrel that travels a mile every day by telephone wire for its meals, crawling all the distance along the wires. William Krause, a grocer, some little time ago coaxed the squirrel down from a telephone pole by offering it nuts, and since then the squirrel has made its appearance every day.

Waseca

25 years ago

- Gary Placzynski and Kim Christenson are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Kelsey Marie Palaczynski, born on October 29, 2000, at the Waseca Medical Center. She weighed 9 pounds 7 ounces. She is welcomed home by her brothers and sisters, Joshua, 16, Nicole, 14, Levi, 13, Kelly, 13, Karissa, 9 and Kolten, 6. Maternal grandparents are Marlyn and Lois Gekeler, of Janesville.

- "We do answer all kids' letters," said Rachel Wobschall, a Wasecan who is director of Citizen Outreach in the Jesse Ventura administration. Wobschall was talking about the various ways in which citizens can reach the ear of our celebrity governor. Since Ventura receives 50,000 pieces of mail annually, which is equivalent to the governors of Texas and California.



- Renee Jean Gleitz graduated from Minnesota State University Mankato Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2000. Renee is a member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing and the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. The requirements for these honor programs is a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or grater and being in the top ten percent of the class.

50 years ago

- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day took its toll in the Waseca area with four accidents reported to authorities, one of them resulting in critical injuries for a 19-year-old Waseca man. Arleigh Dale Priebe, R. 2. Waseca is listed in critical condition with head injuries and a fractured left ankle today at S. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, as the result of a one car accident shortly before 2 a.m. Thursday.

- Waeca residents are reminded that as they take down the Christmas tree they will have an opportunity to recycle the tree through a project of the Hort Club at the University of Minnesota Technical College, Waseca. On Saturday, Jan. 10 club members will shred Christmas trees with the resultant mulch to be either given to the local resident who brings a tree to the campus for shredding, or it will be used as mulch on plantings on the campus.

- Only two weeks are left for citizens to send in their new designs for the new Waseca City flag. The Waseca Bicentennial Commission is sponsoring the contest which closes Jan. 15. The winner will receive a \$50 savings bond. The Waseca City Council will make the final decision concerning the flag around Feb. 1.

75 years ago

- Five Waseca county 4-H girls have found that sincere effort and interest in 4-H foods demonstration and project work really pays off. An array of dishes and baking equipment has been presented by commercial companies to the winners of the special Food Contest activities. These items were presented to the county winners by Miss LaVerne Larson, County Home Agent at the County Leaders Council Meeting in December.

- Waseca business and professional people will entertain members of the Waseca County Soil Water Conservation District and their wives at a dinner Thursday, Jan. 25. This date is the annual meeting of the organization and a cafeteria dinner will be served at noon by the Waseca Chamber of Commerce. At a meeting Wednesday noon the Chamber voted to sponsor the dinner and President Allan Wolf named C.C. Clapper, chairman of the committee in charge of the dinner. The meeting will be held at the Waeca Community building and between 200 and 300 are expected.

- He got here a little late but he is the first 1951 baby in Waseca County. Gary Wayne Eldeen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Eldeen of Isosco township has been named officially First Baby of 1951 in Waseca county and as such is winner of the list of prizes officially donated by Waseca merchants who sponsor the First Baby contest.

100 years ago

- People who thought bus competition was going to spell the doom of the railroads have another guess coming. Most of the railroads had a good year, according to financial statements and it is noticeable that financial journals are listing railroads stocks as a good buy at this time.

- A daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Root, Saturday, Dec. 26. John Swanson came Thursday from Minneapolis and spent Christmas at the Laird home here. Several from here attended the confirmation services at Wilton Sunday. Rev. Wacholz conducted the services at the Lutheran Church.

- The Waseca Journal want ad column proved its pulling power again last week. Harry Meyers found a ladies' glove and advertised it in the Journal. In less than a half hour after the paper was out the owner of the glove was found.

- The Waseca Chapter of the Issac Walton League is collecting a fund for the purpose of purchasing thirty-three pairs of Hungarian Partridge from the Washington State Game Commission. The partridge will be set out in Waseca county.

New Richland

25 years ago



- Taking the oath of office as New Richland City Council members, Monday evening, were these five men. Seated at the left is Myron Schumacher, who was elected in the November election and Steve Templin, who was re-elected to a position in November. Standing in the back center is Mayor Richard Baker. To fill vacancies due to resignations of Stanley Getskow and Richard Baker as trustees appointed for two year terms were Jay Johnson (left) and Kermit Kalke.

- Doug and Karla Christopherson, rural New Richland, are the parents of a daughter born Friday January 5, 2001, at Naeve Hospital, Albert Lea. The little Miss has been named Olivia and she weighed 7 pounds and 8 ounces. Olivia has one sister, Abby, 2 ½ years old.

50 Years Back



- Members of the New Richland FFA Wildlife team which placed second in the Region-District contest, Saturday, are pictured here with some of the props which helped them learn about birds. They are from the left; seated: Greg Swenson, Shannon Neumann; standing: Don Pederson and Mark Light.

- Gary Lust, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Lust of New Richland, is getting a comprehensive survey of mankind from a variety of perspectives in a special January Term course at St. Johns University. The course is entitled "Images of Man in the World."

- Emily Jane Streng, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Streng of rural New Richland was baptized at Trinity Lutheran Church, New Richland January 11, with the Rev. Allan Grundahl officiating.

75 Years Back

- A daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. John R. Kent of near New Richland, at the Waseca Memorial hospital Thursday, February 8. The baby has been named Kathryn Ann and has a sister, Betty, age four.

- The locals (Morlea) took the measure of the Reed Oilers in an overtime game last Thursday evening 44 to 40. This has been the third overtime game this year, the local team being the victor in each fracas.

Wilson retiring from SWCE, Nordahl promoted to member services manager

Steele Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) Member Services Division Manager Kim Wilson stepped from behind her desk for the last time on Jan. 8, retiring from the cooperative after more than 27.5 years.

Steele-Waseca wishes Kim a fulfilling retirement and thanks her for years of dedicated service to the co-op and its members.

Steve Nordahl was promoted, Nov. 16, to member services and business development department manager.

She started with Steele-Waseca in the front office on June 8, 1998, and was promoted to her present position on May 14, 2022.

He started with Steele-Waseca in May of 2016 as a system technician.



BOUNCING BACK —The Waseca girls' basketball team followed a pair of losses with a win at Minnesota Valley Lutheran Saturday. In action against New Ulm at home last Friday are, from left, Ahvah Maas (11), Shakiyah Owell (20, and Reese Rodriguez (14). Photos by Jim Lutgens

Lady Jays hold off Minnesota Valley Lutheran

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

It didn't matter how many times Minnesota Valley Lutheran went on a scoring run.

The Waseca High School girls' basketball team had an answer for it.

The Bluejays played what coach Brian Rupe called their most complete game of the season Saturday while holding off MVL 66-57 in a nonconference clash at New Ulm.

According to Rupe, the Bluejays were able to do it because of shooting and defense. They were 41 percent from beyond the three-point line - making 11 threes on the game - and sank some key free throws down

the stretch to win for the third time this season.

"We defended very well, especially in the first half only allowing 23 points," said Rupe. "It was great for the girls to play in a game like this where MVL was not going to go away and they kept hanging around and battling back."

Reese Rodriguez, a sophomore, led the Bluejays with 21 points, including six three-pointers.

Individual totals: Adrianna Willingham 9P, 3 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 steals; Ava Miller 17P, 4R, 6A, 3S; Belle Miller 3R, 1S; Rodriguez 21P, 10R, 2S, 1A, 1 blocked shot; Libby Miller 7P, 3R, 1S; Hannah Sommers

6P, 6R, 1S, 1A; Shakiyah Powell 6P, 9R, 1B.

The Bluejays hosted a strong New Ulm squad Friday and trailed 39-7 at halftime en route to a 79-38 loss.

"We had our struggles putting the ball in the hoop tonight," said Rupe, whose team shot 25 percent from the field and 21 percent behind the arc. "New Ulm is a high-pressure defensive team, which forced us into a lot of early turnovers. When we got past their press, we got pretty excited in the first half and forced some shots that we typically wouldn't. Down the stretch we were able to get into more of a rhythm on the offensive end, getting some good shots and knocking them down."

Individually: Willingham 3P, 2R, 2A, 1B; A.Miller 7P, 3R, 3A, 1S; B.Miller 3P, 3R; Rodriguez 8P, 2R, 2S, 2A; L.Miller 7P, 5R, 1S; Sommers 4P, 3R, 1S, 1B; Alexa Welander 1P, 3R, 1S, 1B; Powell 2P, 6R, 2B.

The Bluejays struggled last Tuesday in a 73-33 loss at Belle Plaine, where they trailed 35-16 at halftime.

"We just could not find our rhythm consistently on the offensive end to get things going," said Rupe. "When we were able to get the ball inside to Hannah and Shakiyah, they were able to do some good things. We just were not able to do that enough. We tried to do a couple new things on defense and the girls adjusted well to that. Belle

Plaine does a really good job attacking the basket, which forces you to help out and puts you in a tough spot to rebound the basketball. The girls got some good shots that just didn't fall. Sometimes that happens, and it is tough to build the confidence when the ball just isn't going in that night."

Waseca stats: Willingham 2P, 1S, 1A; A.Miller 9P, 1R, 2A; B.Miller 1R; Rodriguez 3P, 4R, 1S, 1A, 1B; Maren Schimming 3R; L.Miller 5P, 1R; Sommers 10P, 3R, 1A, 1S; Powell 6P, 6R.

The Bluejays are in action Friday at Maple River. They host Blue Earth Area Monday at 6 p.m. and play Tuesday at 7:30 at Tri-City United.



SHOOT TO SCORE — Above, JWP's Tyson Kronbach looks to the basket against Hayfield last week. Below, Caleb Quast (10) goes up for two. Photos by Jim Lutgens



JWP boys win three more, improve to 16-0

It was three up and three down this past week for the JWP High School boys' basketball team.

The Bulldogs, ranked among the top three teams in the state in Class A, ran their record to 16-0 with three more victories, the most recent a 70-49 decision over Jordan Saturday at Southwest Christian. JWP pulled away in the second half after leading 33-22 at halftime.

JWP leaders: Daulton Bauer 22 points; Gavin Bauer 24P, 15 rebounds, 5 assists, 7 steals; Caleb Quast 7P, 6R, 5A; Gavin Weedman 10P.

The Panthers dominated

Hayfield at Janesville on Friday, winning 84-56 after leading 43-26 at halftime.

The leaders: D.Bauer 27P, 5R, 5A; G.Bauer 14P, 7R, 5S; Quast 18P, 5A; Jaxon Wolff 12P.

Last Tuesday, the Bulldogs blew out United South Central 89-24 at Wells. It was 53-12 at halftime.

JWP leaders: D.Bauer 23P, 5S; G.Bauer 18P, 9R, 6S; Quast 17P, 5A; Weedman 8P; Wolff 10P, 7A; Michael Walker 6P.

After a Tuesday game against WEM, the Bluejays play Friday at Blooming Prairie and Monday at NRHEG.

Overtime goal lifts Jays past Luverne

Waseca wins 5-4 in rematch of Big South leaders

For the Waseca High School boys' hockey team, the rematch with Luverne was on the calendar for some time now.

That time came Saturday.

And the Bluejays made the most of it.

Waseca, leaders of the Big South Conference Black Division, hosted East Division leader Luverne Saturday and came away with a 5-4 overtime decision at Waseca Community Arena, avenging a 4-2 setback at Luverne earlier this season.

Aydan Kath registered the winning goal just 1:25 into overtime, assisted by Griffin Storey.

Most of the first period was scoreless until the Bluejays' Jude Gehring connected at the 10:43 mark, assisted by Cash Lynch and Storey. Less than a minute Jayden Gehring made it 2-0, scoring on assists from Jude Gehring and Storey.

The Cardinals, outshot by the Bluejays 18-10 in the opening period, finally got on the board with less than a minute remaining.

It remained 2-1 until Jude Gehring scored at 7:08 of the second period on assists from Storey and Ausust Hansen, but the Cardinals responded with two quick goals and it was 3-3 going into the third.

A power-play goal by Jackson Dahl, assisted by Storey and Henry Huttemier, put the Bluejays up 4-3 at the 3:29 mark of the third, and the score stood up until Luverne tied it with two seconds left in regulation.

That set up Kath's heroics early in overtime.

Josiah Schmidtke was in goal for the Bluejays, who were outshot 43-41 for the game.

Waseca took 10 penalty minutes on five infractions to Luverne's six on three.

The Bluejays lifted their record to 11-4-1 while Luverne fell to 15-3.

The Bluejays won another big game Thursday at home, defeating



BIG WIN — The Bluejays' Josiah Schmidtke, above, defelects a shot during Waseca's 5-4 victory over Luverne last Saturday at Waseca Community Arena. Below, Owen Welseler (18), battles for the puck against Luverne's Colton Haulbich (7). Photos by Jim Lutgens

Rochester Lourdes 5-2 to avenge last year's season-ending section semifinal loss to the Eagles.

It was tied 1-1 after one period, with the Bluejays taking a 4-1 cushion into the third. Lourdes held a 33-24 shots advantage.

Storey and Jude Gehring each scored two goals, Huttemier one. Assists were by Dahl, Kath, Lynch, Jayden Gehring and Beckett Srp.

Schmidt was in the net.

The Eagles' record fell to 11-4-1.

Last Tuesday, the Bluejays defeated Minnesota River 4-2 at LeSueur while outshooting their opponents 25-21.

Lynch scored two goals, Avery Selvik and Huttemier once each. Assists were provided by Huttemier, Dahl and Storey.

Waseca led 2-1 after one period and 4-2 after two.

Schmidtke was again in goal.

The Bluejays are home Friday for a 7 p.m. game against Windom. They host Blake Academy Saturday at 2 and play Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 7 at Owatonna.

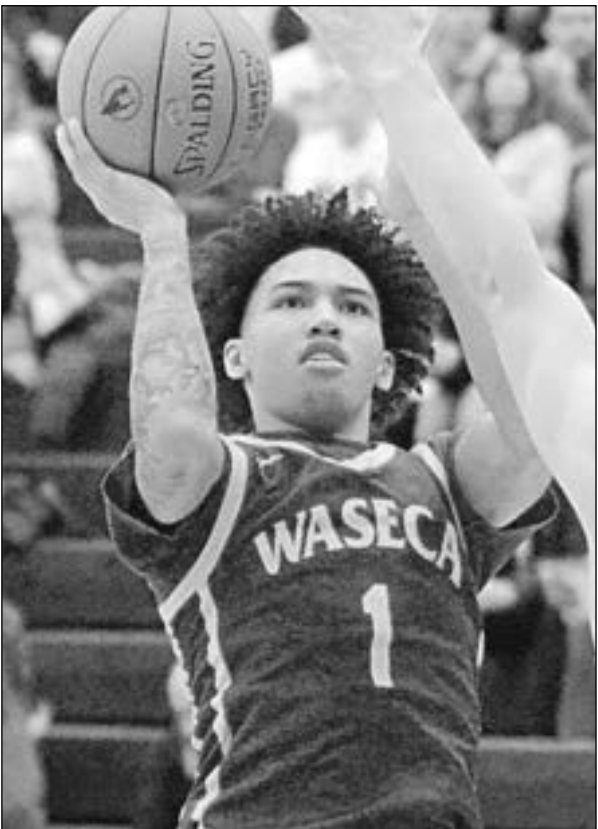


With the help of Russell, WHS boys overcome adversity

Senior scores 42, 36 points as Blueays win two of three

It wasn't a pretty week for the Waseca High School boys' basketball team. But it was a winning week. For the most part. The Bluejays won two of three, falling to Belle Plaine but bouncing back to defeat New Ulm and Minnesota Valley Lutheran. Saturday at MVL was a struggle as the Bluejays faced a 36-27 halftime deficit before rallying for a 69-66 decision at New Ulm. "We played terrible and weren't very organized," said WHS coach Seth Anderson. "But we climbed back and found a way to make a couple plays right at the end to win it. We shot poorly all game." Deron Russell had another big game for the Bluejays, finishing with 42 points, 3 rebounds, 1 assist and six steals.; Others: Ethan Hiller 7P, 9R, 4A, 1S, 1 blocked shot; Cyrett Long 5P, 4R, 1A, 1S Wyatt Hager 10P, 9R, 2A, 2S; Owen Honstad 3P, 5R, 1A, 2S; Brody Dufault 1R1 Toby Jeske 2P, 3R, 1A. A night earlier, the Bluejays were at New Ulm and emerged 84-69 in a Big South Conference game. Waseca led 41-34 at halftime.

"We played very well overall," said Anderson. "It was fun to see us get some more balanced scoring with four guys in double figures." Individual totals: Hiller 15P, 8R, 4A, 2S; Russell 36P, 12R, 4A, 2S; Long 11P, 2 R, 4A, 3S; Hager 10P, 3R, 1A, 1S, 1B; Honstad 6P, 1S; Dufault 2P, 1S; Rupe 2A, 2S; Jeske 4P, 3R, 3A, 4S. The Bluejays lost 82-75 last Tuesday at home to Belle Plaine. "It was a great game all night," said Anderson, whose team trailed 44-40 at the break. "It was tied with 1 minute to go and they made a couple plays." Individually for Waseca: Hiller 13P, 11R, 4A, 3S; Russell 28P, 14R, 2A, 2S; Long 5P, 2R, 4A; Hager 11P, 2R, 3S; Honstad 11P, 2R, 1S; Jeske 7P, 4R, 2A; Rupe 1A. The Bluejays, 9-5 overall and 4-4 in the Big South Gold Division, play tonight at 7:30 at Glencoe-Silver Lake. They host Madelia Friday at 7:15, Blue Earth Area Monday at 7:15 and Tri-City United Tuesday at 7:15.



TWO OF THREE — In action against Belle Plaine are Deron Russell (1), left, and Owen Rupe, right. Photos by Jim Lutgens



THREE IN A ROW — The JWP girls' basketball team won three times last week to improve to 11-6 on the season. At left, the Bulldogs' Ashlynn Wolff looks to the basket against USC last Tuesday. In the middle, Nevaeh Weimert drives to the hoop. At right, the Bulldogs' Kwynn Krause (5) advances the basketball. Photos by Jim Lutgens

Milestones fall, as do JWP girls' opponents

Olson breaks school record, Weimert reaches 1,000 career points as Bulldogs enhance record to 11-6

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor
It was a week of milestones and victories for the JWP High School girls' basketball team. But mostly victories. The Panthers won three times last week, improving to 11-6 overall and 4-1 in the Gopher Conference West, with two Bulldogs reaching career milestones. Most recently, the Bulldogs prevailed 72-61 at Hayfield last Thursday in a game they led 40-21 at halftime. "The girls were ready and came out on the attack from the jump," said JWP coach Brandon Goebel. "I was happy with how we started...after the first 3 minutes. We

"We did the little things well, something we have been focusing on a lot as of late." — Coach Brandon Goebel

were a little sloppy with the ball to start, but after that once we settled in I thought they did a great job pushing the ball, executing on offense, and defending at a high level, especially throughout the first half, which helped us build a 20 point lead. The second half we got a little stagnant on offense and let them back in the game, but ultimately we were able to get stops down the stretch and get to the line to put the

game away at the end." Katie Olson led the Bulldogs with 20 points. Ashlynn Wolff scored 18. Individual leaders: Olson 20P, 6 rebounds, 3 steals; Nevaeh Weimert 11P, 4R, 5S; Mikayla Wheelock 6P, 5R, 2S; Wolff 18P, 9R; Jacelynn Mulder 6P, 4R; Kwynn Krause 7P, 3R. Tuesday was milestone night as the Bulldogs defeated United South Central 74-27 in Janesville. It was

43-14 at halftime. The individual accolades went to Olson and Weimert. Olson finished with 26 points to become JWP's all-time leading scorer with 1,829, surpassing previous record holder Heather Johnson. Weimert, meanwhile, scored 23 to surpass the 1,000-point barrier for her career. "The girls came out fast and came out together," said Goebel. "I was really pleased with some of the things we were able to do tonight. We did the little things well, something that we have been focusing on a lot as of late. It was nice to see them transfer those things to a game. They shared the ball well, and truly played for each other. They helped

each other on the defensive end and we played a solid game of team defense. We have to do our best to carry this momentum into our game on Thursday vs. a very talented Hayfield team." Individually for JWP: Olson 26P, 8R, 9S; Weimert 23P, 3R, 4S; Wheelock 8P, 4R; Wolff 8P, 4R; Aubrey Adams 4P, 3R. The Bulldogs hosted Minnesota Valley Lutheran last Monday and won 71-58 after taking a 35-30 half-time advantage. "The girls started off the game well, building a pretty solid lead early in the first half," said Goebel. "But we took our foot off the gas a bit and let them back into it. We didn't take care of the ball as well as we

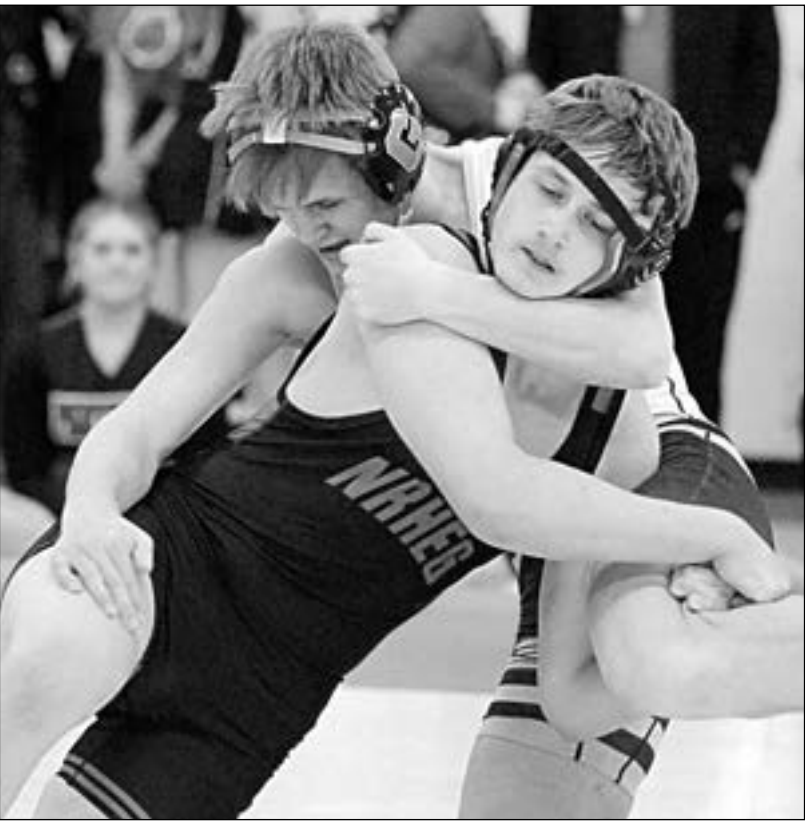
needed to in the first half. We cleaned up some of the turnovers in the second half, and started to string together some stops. I was really happy with how the girls responded to some adversity throughout the game." Individual leaders: Olson 17P, 7R, 4S; Weimert 8P, 3R, 4A, 5S; Wheelock 17P, 4R, 2S; Ray Blasing 6P, 3R; Wolff 18P, 12R, 4S; Mulder 4P, 3R. The Bulldogs have another busy week forthcoming, playing Tuesday at WEM, Friday at home against Blooming Prairie and Monday at NRHEG.

Grizzlies take title at St. Croix

WEM/JWP shuts down NRHEG

The WEM/JWP wrestling Grizzlies captured the championship in Saturday's St. Croix Lutheran Invitational. The Grizzlies topped a 15-team field with 215 points. Cannon Falls was second with 172.5. Five WEM/JWP individuals reached the finals, with Brady Murphy taking the championship at 139 pounds and Trenton Huber finishing first at 172. Placing second were Finn Root, 114; Brenden Masso, 121; and Trey Richards, 127. Charles Adams took third at 119 Kavan Sheehy third at 215, Ben Root fifth at 160, Aiden Gruber fifth at 133, Otto Root sixth at 107, Parker James sixth at 145, and Isaac Miller sixth at 160.

The WEM/JWP girls finished fourth among 17 teams with 96 points. Apple Valley won with 187.5. Bre'Ana Masso won the championship at 112, Payton Miller was second at 112, Anaelyse Skidmore third at 106, Kayle Langford third at 136 and Ivy Shaw fifth at 124. On Thursday, the Grizzlies prevailed 51-22 in a Gopher Conference dual meet at NRHEG. WEM/JWP winners: Brendan Masso, Richards, Gruber, Murphy, James, Ben Root, Adams, Sheehy and Quinn Anderson. The Bulldogs, 7-6 overall and 2-2 in conference competition, face Medford tonight at 7 at Waterville and wrestle Saturday in the Sibley East Invitational starting at 10 a.m.



TECH FALL — WEM/JWP wrestler Ben Root, tops, mixes it up with NRHEG's Khaiden Madson during last week's Gopher Conference wrestling dual meet at New Richland. Photo by Jim Lutgens

WHS wrestling team continues to count on Barnett, Veroeven

Slade Barnett and Matthew Veroeven provided the biggest highlights for the Waseca High School wrestling team in Saturday's 13-team Hutchinson Invitational. Barnett won the 172-pound championship while Veroeven took the title at 285. Also placing for the Bluejays: Kole Nelson, 4th, 107; Deven Parpart, 5th, 133; Braxton Nelson, 5th, 152; Sam Selthun, 6th, 160; Ton Bethke, 6th, 189. The Bluejays finished fourth as a team with 232.5 points. First-place Willmar at 431.5. The Bluejays wrestled in a quad at triangular at Mapleton last Tuesday, where they lost 45-23 to LeSueur-Henderson and 43-24 to Maple River/USC. Winning against LSH: Kole

Nelson, Jacob Knutson, Sam Selthun, Barnett, Veroeven. Victories against Maple/River USC: Kole Nelson, Parpart, Lucas Selthun, Barnett, Lucas Selthun, Veroeven. The Bluejays fell twice in a triangular at Marshall Thursday, 40-33 to Tracy-Milroy-Balaton-Westbrook-Walnut Grove and 44-21 to Marshall. Kole Nelson, Sam Selthun, Barnett, Lucas Selthun and Veroeven were victorious against TMBWWG while Knutson, Barnett, Lucas Selthun and Veroeven picked up wins against Marshall. Waseca hosts a quadrangular today at 5 p.m. Then the Bluejays are off until a 5 p.m. Jan. 29 triangular at Plainview.

STANDINGS

Boys' Basketball		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Conf.	Ov.
St. Peter	6-1	10-3
Belle Plaine	5-1	10-1
Marshall	4-3	6-6
Waseca	4-4	9-5
New Ulm	3-4	6-7
Worthington	1-4	2-11
Tri-City United	0-6	0-12
Big South Conference - Gold		
	Conf.	Ov.
Fairmont	8-1	11-2
Luverne	6-2	10-3
Jackson County Central	6-2	9-5
Blue Earth Area	5-3	9-3
St. James Area	4-4	7-4
Pipestone Area	2-6	4-9
Redwood Valley	1-7	2-12
Windom Area	0-7	6-8
Gopher Conference - West		
	Div.	Ov.
Janesville-WP	4-0	16-0
Waterville-EM	2-2	6-7
New Richland-HEG	2-2	5-9
United South Central	2-2	3-8
Medford	0-4	3-11
Gopher Conference East		
	Div.	Ov.
Triton	5-0	11-3
Blooming Prairie	3-2	12-3
Hayfield	3-2	8-6
Bethlehem Academy	2-3	6-7
Randolph	1-4	4-13
Kenyon-Wanamingo	1-4	5-9
Girls' Basketball		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Conf.	Ov.
Marshall	5-0	10-2
New Ulm	5-1	9-3
St. Peter	4-3	8-5
Belle Plaine	3-3	7-6
Tri-City United	3-3	6-8
Waseca	1-7	3-13
Worthington	0-5	2-12
Big South Conference - Gold		
	Conf.	Ov.
Fairmont	8-0	13-1
Pipestone Area	7-1	13-1
St. James Area	6-2	10-4
Windom Area	5-3	13-3
Luverne	3-5	8-6
Jackson County Cent.	2-6	6-10
Blue Earth Area	1-7	3-11
Redwood Valley	0-8	0-15
Gopher Conference - West		
	Div.	Ov.
New Richland-HEG	4-0	14-2
Janesville-WP	3-1	11-6
Waterville-EM	2-5	5-11
United South Central	1-6	7-8
Medford	0-0	0-0
Gopher Conference - East		
	Div.	Ov.
Hayfield/Schaeffer Ac.	5-0	14-3
Triton	5-1	9-5
Blooming Prairie	3-1	8-6
Randolph	2-4	3-10
Kenyon-Wanamingo	1-4	6-9
Bethlehem Academy	0-6	5-710
Boys' Hockey		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Div.	Ov.
Waseca	5-0	11-4-1
New Ulm	3-3	9-6
Minnesota River	3-3	8-8
Marshall	0-5	4-12
Big South Conference - Gold		
	Div.	Ov.
Luverne	5-0	15-3
Fairmont	4-2	5-7
Redwood Valley	2-4	3-11
Windom Area	2-5	4-12
Worthington	1-3	2-14
Girls' Hockey		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Div.	Ov.
Minnesota River	5-1	15-5
Marshall	3-1	18-4
New Ulm	1-3	4-14
South Central	0-4	0-14
Big South Conference - Gold		
	Div.	Ov.
Fairmont	3-0	8-7
Luverne	3-1	12-7
Worthington/Fulda	1-2	7-111
Windom Area	0-4	4-13
Wrestling		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Div.	Ov.
New Ulm	3-0	8-0
Marshall/Lakeview	2-0	11-2
Worthington	3-1	4-3
Tri-City United	2-2	5-4
St. Peter	2-2	4-5
Waseca	1-3	3-7
Martin County	0-5	5-8
Big South Conference - Gold		
	Div.	Ov.
Windom/Mt. Lake	3-0	11-7
Jackson County Central	2-0	2-1
St. James-Madelia	3-1	10-4
Pipestone Area	2-1	11-2
Redwood Valley	1-3	5-8
Luverne	1-3	4-11
Blue Earth Area	0-2	3-10

Lady Panthers run streak to 14

Q.VanMaldeghem tops 1,000 points

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Not much surprises NRHEG High School girls' basketball coach Onika Peterson.

But the fact the Panthers are halfway through the season? That prompted a moment of pause.

"It's crazy to think that we only have 10 games left in the regular season," said Peterson.

But that's what the Panthers have left after another pair of victories last week that ran their winning streak to 14 games.

The Panthers pounded WEM 79-50 in a Gopher Conference game Tuesday in New Richland, one night after a 65-37 nonconference victory at St. Peter.

The WEM game was business as usual for the Panthers, who led 43-23 at halftime.

"The girls moved the ball well on offense and did a great job finding the open shooter," said Peterson. "Our defense had some lackadaisical moments at times, but overall it was a great team win."

It also a great night for NRHEG

senior Camryn VanMaldeghem, who scored 37 points, and her twin sister Quinn, who topped all players with 15 rebounds.

Full stats: Gabby Schlaak 10P, 9R, 3 assists; Ezra Boerner 5P, 1R; Q.VanMaldeghem 13P, 15R, 3A, 4S; Clara Buendorf 12P, 4R, 4A, 1 blocked shot; C.VanMaldeghem 37P, 8R, 4A, 2S; Savannah Farr 2P; Chloe Stork 9R, 1A, 1S, 1B; Alayna Groskreutz 1R.

Monday saw more of the same at St. Peter, where the Panthers led 30-15 at halftime.

It was a memorable evening for Quinn VanMaldgehem, who topped the 1,000-point scoring milestone early in the second half after finishing the first half with 15 points and 11 rebounds. She finished the night with an outstanding performance of 21 points, 21 rebounds, and 5 steals.

"Congratulations to Quinn," said Peterson. "Overall, we didn't shoot the ball extremely well, but our rebounding was outstanding. We were able to generate second and third-chance scoring opportunities because of our effort on the glass.



FOURTEEN AND COUNTING — The NRHEG girls' basketball team made it 14 consecutive wins by defeating WEM and St. Peter last week. From left, Gabby Schlaak (1) grabs a rebound; Quinn VanMaldeghem (4) goes in for a layup. VanMaldeghem topped the 1,000-point scoring milestone against St. Peter.

Photos by Jim Lutgens

Defensively, we continue to be stifiing. The girls do a great job of knowing where each other will be and understanding their responsibilities within our defensive schemes. Every now and then I'd like to hear a little more communication on defense, but the effort, awareness, and execution continue to be very

strong."

Individual totals: Schlaak 9P, 2R, 1S, 1B; Boerner 3P, 2R; Q.VanMaldgehem 21P, 21R, 5S; Buendorf 4P, 2A; Kenley Gehrke 1R; C.VanMaldeghem 25P, 3R, 3S, 3A; Farr 3P; Stork 3R, 2S, 3A; Groskreutz 1R, 1S; Hadley Roeker 1R.

The Panthers improved to 7-0 in the Gopher Conference, 4-0 in the West Division, and 14-2 for the season.

After a Tuesday nonconference game at Grand Meadow, the Panthers host Randolph tonight at 7 and entertain Houston Saturday at 6:30.

NRHEG matmen can't stop WEM/JWP

\$1632 raised for Kessler family

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

A stroke took the life of WEM/JWP seventh-grade wrestler Brady Kessler last week.

Last Thursday, the fans at NRHEG High School in New Richland gave something back.

A total of \$1632 was raised for the family of Kessler, who had a twin brother, Gus on the Grizzlies' squad.

There was, incidentally, a dual meet between the hometown Panthers and WEM/JWP, which the Grizzlies took by a 52-22 score.

"We didn't have our best tonight," said NRHEG coach Krey Kory. "But the guys keep learning and working to get better."

The Panthers started strong, with a 17-2 technical fall by Owen Schlaak at 107 pounds. Graham

Jacobson followed with a 15-0 tech. fall at 114 and it was quickly 10-0 Panthers.

But it was almost all Grizzlies after that.

The Panthers' only other wins were by Dakota Schlaak at 133 and Ryan Schlaak at 189. Both won by fall.

Also wrestling for the Panthers: Charles Tufte, Aaron Merritt, Braxton Arnold, Wyatt Hendrickson, Khaiden Madson Noah Weller and Wyatt Larson.

The Panthers wrestled Saturday in the Hayfield Invitational, where they lost 45-26 to Dover-Eyota and 43-18 to Owatonna. Jacobson and Ryan Schlaak won both their matches.

Also winning were Owen Schlaak, Tufte Bo Holland and



BONUS POINTS — NRHEG's Graham Jacobson throws Otto Root during the 114-pound match in last Thursday's dual meet loss to WEM/JWP in New Richland. Jacobson won by technical fall.

Photo by Jim Lutgens

Arnold.

"We had some kids battling illness and injuries and it was noticeable in the performances," said

Cory. "We weren't attacking or being as aggressive as we are capable of being."

The Panthers wrestle tonight at 5

p.m. at Waseca and Saturday at 9 a.m. at the Orono Invitational.

Feisty Panthers battle back for road victory

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Say this about coach Dan Schmidt and the 2025-26 NRHEG High School boys' basketball team: they don't go down without a fight.

Facing a 10-point deficit in the second half, the Panthers rallied for an 81-79 nonconference victory over Martin Luther/Granada-Huntley/East Chain/Truman in Granada last Thursday.

"The boys never quit," said Schmidt. "They played extremely gritty basketball."

After a back-and-forth first half, which saw the Jaguars leading 36-35 at the break, the Panthers quickly

found themselves down by 10 thanks to some questionable shot selection and untimely turnovers.

"We chipped away at it," said Schmidt, who took the lead with 2 minutes remaining and never relinquished it, thanks to some very timely free throws down the stretch that helped counter a couple late Jaguar three-pointers.

"Our rebounding was so much better tonight," said Schmidt. "We've really pushed that it's all about effort and will, and the boys went out and battled for every rebound and loose ball. We got outstanding performances from everyone on the roster tonight, with six

players in double figures, some clutch free throws and tremendous defense when it was needed the most. All eight guys put together great games in their own ways."

Brock Holland led the Panthers in scoring with 16 points, including four threes. Mack Gilliland scored 15, going 7-for-11 at the free-throw line, and A.J. Deen and Calvin Nissen scored 12 apiece. Brooks Gilliland and Dom Olson contributed 10 points apiece. Brendan Schmidt hit two free throws in the waning seconds.

"Fynn Baumann did a fabulous job doing the dirty work for us, trying to create things on the defensive

end," said Coach Schmidt.

Full NRHEG statistics: Deen 12P, 13R, 1S; Olson 11P; Nissen 12P, 4R, 5S; B.Gilliland 10P, 7R, 5A; Baumann 1R; B.Schmidt 4P, 3R, 3S; M.Gilliland 15P, 5R, 5A; Holland 16P, 5R, 3A 3S.

Two nights earlier, the Panthers hosted Gopher Conference rival WEM and lost 94-70 in New Richland.

It was close early. Then the Buccaneers started making almost every shot they attempted.

"Between their shooting and rebounding, we had a hard time battling back," said Coach Schmidt. "We continue to struggle on the

boards with positioning and being strong to the ball, and in a game like tonight it really showed, as WEM dominated in that aspect."

Mack Gilliland led NRHEG with 24 points.

Individually for the Panthers: Deen 14P, 5R, 3A, 1B; Olson 1R, 1A; B.Gilliland 13P, 3R, 2A, 1S; Baumann 1S; B.Schmidt 2P, 3R; M.Gilliland 24P, 2R, 2S; Holland 5P, 7R, 3A, 3S; Levi Whiteside 2P, 1R.

The Panthers, 5-9, play tonight at 7 p.m. at Randolph. They host top-five ranked JWP Monday at 7 in New Richland.

Tournament champs again

The Waseca PeeWee hockey team won its second tournament of the season in Austin on Jan 9-11.

The team defeated Madison, Wis. 7-5, Kansas City 9-1, Des Moines 6-4 and Austin 3-2.

Front from left: Blake Neegaard, Easton Corchrn, Hunter Calhoun, Blake Steinberg, Kamden Goettl, Carson Osborne, Jace Ulschmid. Back: coach Auston Larson, coach Griffin Wangen, Hudson Grunwald, Beckett Foels, Drake Bubak, Jakub LaCanne, Korbin Collins, Lucas Johnson, Easton Schlueter, Tucker Parpart, Nicholas Ferris, Ethan Jackson.



Certificate of Appreciation



VALUED - The Exchange Club presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the City Manager on Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2025. Pictured from left: President-elect Ann Staloch, City Manager Carl Sonnenberg and Exchange Club President Mikhail Rostislavovich.

Remembering our shared humanity

By STACY SCHROEDER

Humanity - the shared experience of being a human being. At this time, we are all sharing the same time and space, living in this world together. Yet our world is experiencing a troubling lack of seeing each other as humans.

It is no secret that each one of us will experience life differently. Even siblings growing up in the same household will see their parents differently and can have vastly different childhood experiences. What will always remain as the common thread is that we are humans. We have hearts that beat, a desire to love and be loved, the need to have a purpose, and at the very least, need the basics to survive in life.

So where in society did we forget to see each other as humans? When can we acknowledge that at the ground level, we all need the same things?

I believe several things have happened, often simultaneously, that have led us to this place. We've abstracted each other into categories. People have become labels - political affiliations, demographics, income brackets, "those people" versus "us." Once someone becomes a category rather than a person with a beating heart, it's easier to dismiss their needs, their pain, their dreams. We forget that the person we disagree with also lies awake at night worrying about their kids, also feels joy watching a sunset, also needs to feel valued.

Technology has created connection without proximity. We can communicate with thousands without ever looking into someone's eyes, without seeing their hands tremble when they're vulnerable, without that visceral reminder that this is a living, breathing person. It's easier to be cruel, dismissive, or indifferent to a screen name than to a human face.

Our systems reward division. Media, politics, even algorithms profit from outrage and polarization. There's no incentive structure for reminding us of our commonality. "We're all struggling and deserve compassion" doesn't drive clicks or votes the way "they're the problem" does.

Scarcity mentality has taken



Stacy Schroeder

over. When people feel like there isn't enough - enough opportunity, enough security, enough recognition - they start viewing others' gain as their loss.

Your thriving becomes a threat to mine, rather than something we could celebrate together or work toward collectively.

But here's what I know from my work in our community: the path back to seeing each other's humanity isn't a grand societal shift waiting to happen somewhere else. It's millions of individual choices happening right here, right now - in city council meetings, across salon chairs, at farmers markets, in how we talk about the people we disagree with.

It's choosing to remember that everyone is trying to make it through this life with some measure of dignity and purpose. It's treating economic development not as a zero-sum game but as creating rising tides that lift all boats. It's organizing events that bring people together rather than divide them. It's setting boundaries with compassion rather than contempt. We don't need to wait for permission to acknowledge our shared humanity. We can choose to act from that recognition ourselves, today, in our own communities. We can choose to see the human being in front of us - with their beating heart, their desire to love and be loved, their desire for purpose, their basic needs for survival and dignity.

That choice, multiplied across countless daily interactions, might just be how we find our way back to each other.



NRHEG plans for year; considers budget

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

During their Jan. 5 organizational meeting, members of the NRHEG school board reinstated the same slate of officers as during 2025: chair, Rick Schultz; vice chair, Loren Schoenrock; clerk, Terri Engel; treasurer, Pat Theuer.

Board members will also receive the same compensation as in 2025: \$100 for each regular or special meeting; \$150 for all-day meetings. Three officers will also receive a small stipend for serving in their positions: board chair, \$200; clerk, \$150; treasurer, \$100.

The NRHEG Star Eagle will be the school district's official publication. The New Richland State Bank and Minnesota School District Liquid Assets Fund are the official depositories. Board meetings will continue to take place at 6:30 p.m. on the third Monday of each month, except when displaced by legal holidays, when they will be on the Tuesday following the third Monday. The location of regular meetings alternates between the media centers of the Ellendale and New Richland sites. The January,



MEET THE BOARD - The NRHEG School board held its annual organizational session the evening of Jan. 5. For 2026, the board chair is Rick Schultz (front center); vice chair is Loren Schoenrock (front right); clerk is Terri Engel (front left); treasurer is Pat Theuer (standing at left). Remaining board members are (standing, from center) Kelly Delacruz, Amy Ihrke and (not pictured) Aaron Phillips.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

March, May, July, September and November meetings will be at the elementary building in Ellendale. In February, April, June, August, October and December, the meetings will be in the secondary building in New Richland.

Board members also accepted positions on various committees; examples are the policy, transport, and buildings and grounds committees.

With the organizational work of the meeting complete, district superintendent Michael Meihak initiated a discussion regarding the school district's finances.

He acknowledged that the district has a 39% general fund balance, roughly enough to support district operations a third of a year; state agencies recommend that public entities maintain an undes-

igned fund balance of about 25% as a buffer against emergencies or delays. While complimenting business manager Karla Christopherson on her acumen in maintaining the balance, Meihak pointed out the district has gone into deficit spending in a number of recent budget years, eating away at the fund balance.

As the Star Eagle reported in June, the district's 2025-26 budget called for just over \$39.5 million in expenditures with expected income of about \$39.3 million. With other elements taken into account, the numbers lead to an anticipated decrease of \$67,000 to the \$10.5 million general fund.

Meihak pointed out this year's expenditures will determine the actual end of year balance, suggesting that a warmer winter might

lead to unspent budget money while an emergency repair could have the opposite effect. His comments implied the district may want to begin considering going to area taxpayers for a tax referendum—money approved by voters to support the school's operation. For the current school year, about 17.5 percent of the costs are covered by local taxes, with the remainder coming mostly from the state. At this time, of the 363 school districts in Minnesota, roughly three-quarters rely on voter-approved referendum money to meet annual operating costs.

If the board should support going to voters for a referendum, the soonest the vote would likely occur is this fall's November election; preparing for it would require months of work and planning.

ZED by Duane M. Abel



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Mikhail

from Page 6

Chamber Executive Director Robin Dulas expounded by saying, "Mikhail comes from a place of genuine care for people and community. His commitment is not driven by recognition, but by a deep belief in showing up for others."

As Chamber President, Milbrath noted, Rostislavovich brought a global perspective shaped by earlier work in federal and state government. "That experience translated into a strategic approach to local economic development, business advocacy, and community promotion," he said, adding that partnerships between government, businesses, and civic organizations were strengthened under his leadership.

Rostislavovich has played a pivotal role in several of Waseca's most significant community initiatives in recent years. He was instrumental in helping move the Marketplace development from concept to reality, providing steady guidance, thoughtful collaboration, and a unifying presence among public and private stakeholders. Equally impactful has been his work to strengthen relationships between the community and its elected leaders. Through organizing a major bonding bill visit and hosting visits from Congressman Brad Finstad and Secretary of State Steve Simon, Rostislavovich ensured that local priorities were clearly understood and that Waseca had a direct seat at the table in state and federal conversations. These efforts not only advanced key projects but also reinforced Waseca's voice and visibility beyond its borders.

City Councilor Stacey Schroeder emphasized how quickly Rostislavovich became deeply embedded in the community. "When Mikhail moved to Waseca, he didn't just make it his home, he immediately became a driving force," Schroeder said. "Dedicating more than 40 hours weekly to service, he has transformed how our organizations work together."

Service has long been central to Rostislavovich's work with the Exchange Club. He helped resurrect the local club, growing membership from just three members to 24, while expanding its mission and footprint. He was a driving force behind nationally recognized Child Abuse Prevention initiatives, helping the club earn back-to-back national awards. Drawing from his own lived experiences, he became a vocal advocate for protecting vulnerable children and strengthening families, even appearing before the Waseca County Board of Commissioners and Waseca City Council to encourage official recognition of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Beyond that work, he pulled service clubs together rather than allowing them to operate in isolation, reinstated honoring local law enforcement, and helped launch the Special Olympics committee.

Schroeder described his ability to unify people as one of his greatest strengths. "He has a unique ability to pull people together and close gaps," she said. "Mikhail is always showing up, leading by example, and fostering collaboration across service clubs and community initiatives."

Rostislavovich's service extends further still. He serves as Chairman of the Board and Chief of Staff for The Redemption Project. He regularly speaks at City Council meetings, continually advocating for what is best for the community he now proudly calls home. During his tenure serving as chair of the local Republican Party, he set a firm expectation of civility, making it clear that personal attacks would not be tolerated.

Despite his visibility, Rostislavovich is never focused on promoting himself. Instead, he consistently uplifts businesses, nonprofits, and worthy causes, using his platform to tell the community's story rather than his own. As Milbrath noted, "Across all his roles, he has become one of Waseca's most visible ambassadors, encouraging residents, newcomers, and visitors alike to explore the community's natural beauty, cultural assets, and welcoming spirit."

Those who work alongside him know that when he is asked to help, his answer is always the same: "Sure, we can do that." He attends nearly every community event, opens his home freely,



Mikhail Rostislavovich

and serves with generosity, humility, and purpose. For a man whose phone is always ringing, text notifications coming through, and a barrage of daily emails needing his attention, one would think that he collects several paychecks from all the organizations he works with. On the contrary, he does all this for the community that he lives in.

"I don't believe in keeping score," Rostislavovich said. "If you see a need and you can help, you help. This community welcomed me and serving it is both a responsibility and a privilege."

In honoring Mikhail Rostislavovich with the Book of Golden Deeds, the Waseca Exchange Club recognizes not just a list of accomplishments, but a pattern of service rooted in sincerity, collaboration, and a steadfast belief that Waseca is a place worth investing in, and worth discovering. Rostislavovich will formally be recognized at the Community Awards Banquet on Monday, January 26, at Starfire Event Center.

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STATE OF MINNESOTA
Before the
BLUE EARTH & WASECA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SITTING AS DRAINAGE AUTHORITY
FOR JOINT COUNTY DITCH 83

In the Matter of:

Final Survey Report Hearing for
Improvement Petition for portions of Joint
County Ditch 83 (JTD 83)

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

Joint Judicial Ditch 83 Final Survey
Report Hearing

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, the Blue Earth and Waseca County Board of Commissioners, sitting as the Drainage Authority for Joint County Ditch 83, will host a Detailed Survey Report Hearing on **February 3, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. in the 2nd Floor, Board of Commissioner’s room at the Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse, 204 South 5th St., Mankato, MN.** The purpose of the hearing is to hear public comment on the final engineering plans for the improvement petition affecting portions of Joint County Ditch 83. Any party wishing to comment may appear at the hearing and be heard. The hearing will be conducted in-person. Agenda information is available at www.blueearthcountymn.gov/agendacenter on the Thursday prior to the meeting. Written comments will be accepted at the hearings. Comments made by mail will be accepted up to the date and time of the hearing at the office of Property and Environmental Resources, Drainage Management, 410 South 5th Street, PO Box 3566, Mankato, MN 56002-3566.

The petition for improvement is still pending final approval by drainage authority for JTD 83. The draft Detailed Survey Report and draft Viewers Reports have been filed with the joint drainage authority. The DNR Commissioners Final Advisory Report has also been filed with joint drainage authority staff.

A draft copy of the Detailed Survey Report is available for inspection at the Blue Earth County Property & Environmental Resources Department, Drainage Management, or available online at <https://blueearth.drainagedb.net/#/portal>.

The proposed improvement includes enlarging current subsurface tile sizes and capacities for portions of Joint County Ditch 83, mainline public drainage system. Affected areas of the proposed improvement include Sections 6 and 7 of Alton Township, Waseca County; and Sections 1 and 12 of McPherson Township, Blue Earth County, Minnesota.

The following owners of property are affected by the current petition for improvement affecting portions of Joint Judicial Ditch 83, Main Line subsurface tile.

Blue Earth County:

ANDERSON, IVAN H & SANDRA E (LE) & KOBYLINSKI, BADE, ERVIN A & MARY L, BADE, ERVIN A, BADE, GERRY D, BENNING, JEFFREY P, BENNING, KYLE R, BERG, NAKIA P & WITT BERG JANELLE R, BILITZ, DAVID PAUL & KARISA K, BONNIFIELD, DAVID C & TAMARA, BORCHARDT, IVAN D, BRITTON, ADAM E, BRITTON, TODD R REVOCABLE TRUST, CORDS, COREY & JENNIFER, DELING, KEVIN J & DIANE R, DIMMEL, ANDREW S & HEATHER A REV TRUSTS, DRUMMER, ANDREW GERARD, EILRICH, NICHOLAS, FLITTER, JON LYLE JR, GLAMM, DAVID LIVING TRUST, GLAMM, DAVID, GUSE, HERBERT & MAVIS LIV TRST, H & J PROPERTIES LLC, IRELAND, FRANK J, KRUSE, ROBERT S & MARY PAT, LANG, JEROME A & KRISTINE K, LANG, JEROME L & MARY A, LANG, THOMAS A & KATHRYN, LOEFFLER, BRIAN & SHELLY, LOEFFLER, BRIAN H & MICHELLE J, MAKI, CAROLYN PENN, MCDONNELL, MAUREEN A & JOHN, MILLER, JUDITH ANN TRUST AGREE, NICOLAI, TROY & KIMBERLY (CFD), PAGE, DAVID, PEMBLE, JOHN R & LYNNELL M REV TRUSTS, PENN, JOHN C W & NANCY J (LE), PETERS, MICHAEL & LINDA, ROESSLER, CURTIS D REVOCABLE TRUST, SACK, GREGORY R & TERESA M (CFD), SACK, MICHAEL D & CASSANDRA C, SCHWANDT, JOYCE E, SCHWANDT, MATTHEW & TAMMY J, SCHWEIM, RALPH & ROBERTA LIVING TRUST, SIEBERG, JEROME D, SIMMONS, WILLIAM S, STATE OF MINNESOTA, SWANSON, DANIEL G & CAROL J, TAYLOR FAMILY FARMS FOUNDATION INC, THOOFT, KEVIN R & KRISTIN L, TRAHMS, DAVID & JAE, TRAHMS, R DAVID, TRAHMS, THOMAS H & SHERRY L, VICTOR, OHNO & SUE LUNDQUIST REV TRST AGMT, WARD FAMILY TRUST, WOLFE, MALCOLM G & KAREN M FAMILY TRUST, WOLFF, CHARLES L JR & YVONNE H (LE), WOLFF, GERALD W & MARY K REV TRUSTS, WOOD, SPENCER D & MICKEY L, YOUNGERBERG, MICHAEL & VICKI (LE), YOUNGERBERG, ORVILLE L & CYNTHIA A REV TR, YOUNGERBERG, TODD O & KIMBERLY A (CFD)

The following road authorities in Blue Earth County are affected by this petition for improvement:

LERAY TOWNSHIP - ANN ARNDT – CLERK, MCPHERSON TOWNSHIP - LYNDA KRUSE – CLERK, BLUE EARTH COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS – RYAN THILGES,

The following government entities in Blue Earth County are affected by this petition for improvement:

BLUE EARTH COUNTY, STATE OF MINNESOTA

Waseca County:

LYNCH, SCOTT D, JORGENSON, BETH A, HALEY, KAREN R TRUSTEE WILLIAM J HALEY TRUSTEE, LOTTON, DUSTIN J, LAMPHEAR, LUCY

The following road authorities in Waseca County are affected by the petition for improvement:

ALTON TOWNSHIP - DEB WESTPHAL – CLERK, WASECA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

The following governmental entities in Waseca County are affected by the petition for improvement:

WASECA COUNTY

Ryan Hiniker
Blue Earth County,
County Drainage Systems Coordinator
507-304-4264

Dated: January 13, 2026

Chris Howard
Waseca County
Land & Water Resources Director
507-835-0534

PUBLIC NOTICE

2026 OFFICIAL PUBLICATION FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Waseca County has designated its website, www.wasecacounty.gov, as the 2026 Official Publication for Transportation Projects, as allowed by MN Statute §331A.12. Waseca County will publish any transportation project advertisements for bids on its website.

Contact:
Jim Kollar, Public Works Director/County Engineer, (507) 835-0661

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

WASECA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Waseca County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at the Waseca County East Annex (Commissioner’s Room), 300 N. State Street, Waseca, MN 56093 on Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.to consider the following item:

Request for a Conditional Use Permit to use an agricultural parcel for cannabis cultivation. Dane Brower requests for a conditional use permit to engage in cannabis cultivation on parcels with identification numbers 03.025.0310, 03.025.0300, 07.030.0900 and 07.030.0910. Two of the parcels are in Section 25 T105N R23W of Byron Township and the other two in Section 30 T105N R22W in New Richland Township. The project will encompass 1.5 and 3-acre plots to be subleased, all to be used for outdoor cannabis cultivation. The parcels are owned by Lucas Routh and zoned A-1 Agricultural Protection with portions in the Shoreland Overlay and Floodplain Overlay districts. The requested use will be pursuant to section 6.16 of the Waseca County Unified Development Code, MS 342 and MN Rule 9810.

The staff report on this item will be available at the Waseca County Planning and Zoning Office, 300 N State St., Waseca during regular business hours 8-4:30, and will be on the county website www.wasecacounty.gov at the agenda tab by February 2, 2026. Oral comments will be accepted at the meeting. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all Waseca County services, programs and activities.

Maame Quarcoo, AICP, County Planner.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer January 22, 2026

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STATE OF MINNESOTA
WASECA STEELE JOINT COUNTY DRAINAGE AUTHORITY
ACTING AS THE DRAINAGE AUTHORITY UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES CHAPTER 103E
FOR WASECA STEELE JOINT DITCH 5

NOTICE OF FINAL HEARING

Please Take Notice: The Waseca Steele Joint County Drainage Authority Board of Commissioners, acting as the drainage authority under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103E (“Drainage Authority”) for Waseca Steele Joint Ditch 5 (“JD 5”), will hold a final hearing on the Viewers’ Report of Benefits and Damages for the pending redetermination of benefits and damages of JD 5. The Viewers’ Report has been filed with the Drainage Authority. The hearing will be held on February 2, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., or thereafter as the agenda allows, in the Commissioners’ Room, East Annex, 300 North State Street, Waseca, Minnesota 56093.

JD 5 consists of subsurface drainage tile and open ditch and begins at the east section line of the Northeast Quarter (NE¼) of Section 18, Township 106 North, Range 21 West (Lemond Township) in Steele County, and flows generally west northwesterly through the North Half of the Northeast Quarter (N½NE¼) of said Section 18, the South Half (S½) of Section 7 of Lemond Township before crossing over the county line and flowing westerly through the South Half (S½) of Section 12, Township 106 North, Range 22 West (Otisco Township), Waseca County, into the North Half of the Northeast Quarter (N½NE¼s) of Section 15, Otisco Township, where it outlets into the Little Le Sueur River in Waseca County, Minnesota. JD 5 includes laterals in Section 7 of said Lemond Township, and Sections 11, 12, and 13 of Otisco Township.

The Viewers’ Report, along with amendments, if any, a copy of all property owners’ reports, and records describing the drainage system, are available for inspection by contacting Brian Zabel, by email or phone (brian.zabel@wasecacounty.gov or (507) 835-0652) or Jennifer Mueller by email or phone (jennifer.mueller@steelecountymn.gov or (507) 444-7410).

At the final hearing, the Drainage Authority will accept public comment regarding the Viewers’ Report. Any party having an interest in the proceedings may appear and provide comment per the instructions above. Written comments will be received through 3:30 p.m. on January 30, 2026, by email to brian.zabel@wasecacounty.gov or by U.S. Mail directed to Waseca County Land & Water Resources, Attn: Brian Zabel, 900 3rd Street NE, Waseca, MN 56093; or to jennifer.mueller@steelecountymn.gov or by U.S. Mail directed to Steele County Property Tax & Elections Department: Attn: Jennifer Mueller, PO Box 890, Owatonna, MN 55060.

The following properties are affected by the pending redetermination of benefits and damages for JD 5:

Lemond Township, T106N-R21W, Sections 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, Steele County.
Otisco Township, T106N-R22W, Sections 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, Waseca County.

The following owners of property are affected by the pending redeterminations of benefits and damages for JD 5:

BORNEKE, JOSEPH E; MACY, DON C & MENTA K; KALLHOFF, WADE & NICOLE ASHLEY EVANS; PRIEBE, BONNIE J TESTAMENTARY TRUST % CHARLES A PRIEBE & JODIE A THOMPSON TRUSTEES; FITZSIMMONS, JOHN T & REBECCA J FITZSIMMONS; ARTHUR, WILLIAM L & VICKI J; MARSCHEL, RONALD W & THERESA M; BORNEKE, JOSEPH E AS TRUSTEE; WARD, JAMES A & SUSAN K; KIENHOLZ, KENT C & ELIZABETH P KIENHOLZ TRUSTEES; CEDAR ROSE ASSOCIATES LLC; BETHKE, DONALD W; WALKER, ROGER D & ROBERTA; MILLER, WILLIAM M & ILENE A; SASSER, ALFRED & DAWN; SCHULTZ, LARRY A; KECK, BRIAN L & BRADLEY J KECK; RADKE, ARDINA M; JOHNSON, MARY L; PAULSON, SUSAN D; JOHNSON, HILDING L TRUSTEE OF THE HILDING JOHNSON REV LIV TR; HOFMANN, JOHN H & GAYLE L; JOHNSON, CURTIS R & AMY J; SPRINGER, JAMES E & LORI E; KAMP, CHRISTOPHER ROLLAND; SWENSON GROVELAND FARMS, LLC; JACOBSON, JOHN P & ELLEN M; SCHULTZ, LARRY A & CINDY S; JOHNSON, DARYL T & JANET M; CASSEN, KEITH & ANGEL; SCHULTZ, LOWELL G & SHIRLEY J TRUSTEES & LISA L JOHNSON TRUST; JOHNSON, HILDING L, TRUSTEE & GERALD W & BETTY J JOHNSON TRUSTEES; JOHNSON, CRAIG A TRUSTEE; KECK, BRIAN L & JODI L; JERDE, JEFFREY & PATRICIA, PETER JERDE, LOKEN, DALE R TRUST % JENNIFER THERRING; BRUE, KJERSTEN; ANTHONY, ORRIE; JACOBSON, JAMES B; NELSON, GLEN W & SHIRLEY E; BORNEKE, RACHEL J IRREVOC TRUST % MARIE F JEWISON TRUSTEE; PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN CHURCH % CHURCH TREASURER; TRAXLER, JACOB & TARA; JOHNSON, GARY L & JUDITH R TRUSTEES; KOPPERUD, DEREK M & PAIGE E RADUE; SCHLEICHER, NICHOLAS J; MOEN, MICHAEL C & JULIE M AS TRUSTEES; HAGEN, CARLYLE O & JUDITH M; JOHNSON, TERRY L & LAURIE K; EATON, QUINTON; HANKS, CAROL M TRUSTEE & CONNIE M GRANDIA TRUSTEE; EATON-BORCHERT, DOREEN R TRUSTEE; MITTELSTADT, ADELINE & RUTH LIVING TRUST; RIOG PROPERTIES LLC; PRIEBE FARMS LLC; SWENSON, DUANE & DONNA SWENSON; SINGLESTAD, SCOTT G & VICKY K; SCHMIDTKE, HERMAN DAVID TRUSTEE & LILA I SCHMIDTKE TRUSTEE; BORCHARDT, KELLY J & CHAD G HAMMER; HAMER, ERIC; GEHLOFF, MICHAEL D; GEHRING, GREG A; ULLAND BROTHERS INC; PAULSON, GARY F & LEE ANN PAULSON; BERG, EVAN B ETAL; PETERSON, BARRIE E & DAWN M; PRIEBE, BONNIE J TRUST; ESCH, JONATHAN B & CHARLENE J; BUFFALO FARMS LLP; MOEN, JULIE M TRUSTEE, MICHAEL C MOEN TRUSTEE; MOEN, ALEX R & ANDREA L; SYBILRUD, DAVID M TRUSTEE; SCHWARTZ, GARY P & DAWN SCHWARTZ; GEHRING, DUANE A, DEBRA L GEHRING; HAAS, CHRISTINE A, JESSE M HOFFMANN; PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN CHURCH OF LEMOND CEMETER ASS’N AR , E ER D E ER , R CE A R E WIENER, CHRISTOPHER E & ELIZABETH A WIENER; JEWISON, MARIE F TRUSTEE; MCMURPHY, PAUL A, SHELLY MARIE MORGAN; EATON, ZACHARY; HANSON, LUTHER B; FISCHER, CINDY & GARY TRUSTEE, NATHAN L HANSON TRUSTEE; PACZKOWSKI, MATTHEW & RAMONA; EATON, QUINTON, ZACHARY EATON; MCNAB, DAVID J, PATRICIA J MCNAB; PRIEBE, CHARLES A TRUSTEE, CHARLOTT M WILHELM TRUSTEE; PROECHEL, TODD A & JOYCE I; EATON, QUINTON, MICHELE EATON; PETERSON, ALEX R & JOSEY J; PETERSON, DANIEL EVAN TRUSTEE; JOHNSON, BRADLEY W, GRATIA M JOHNSON; ROBRAN, TODD A TRUSTEE, BRITTA D ROBRAN TRUSTEE; PETERSON, RAYMOND A TRUST, MAIL TO CRAIG PETERSON; REIN, KYNDRA TRUSTEE, RONALD & LOIS CLAUSEN TRUST; GIESEKE, GORDON J TRUSTEE, DARLENE M GIESEKE TRUSTEE; HINES, ROGER J, RUTH A HINES; MOEN, JOSHUA & ALEX; NELSON, ALLEN W TRUSTEE, SANDRA M RATH TRUSTEE;

SCHENDEL, GERALD E JR; TORRES, ALEJANDRA, JOSEPH KNEECE II; AMLEY, HAROLD M & JEAN S TRUSTEES, HAROLD M & JEAN S AMLEY REV TRUS.

The following governmental entities are affected by the pending redeterminations of benefits and damages for JD 5:

STEELE COUNTY PROPERTY TAX & ELECTIONS; LEMOND TOWNSHIP; WASECA COUNTY ROADS DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY & ELECTIONS ATTN: TAMMY SPOONER; OTISCO TOWNSHIP ATTN: JENAE PETERSON.

WASECA STEELE JOINT COUNTY DRAINAGE AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JD 5 DRAINAGE AUTHORITY

/s/ Doug Christopherson, Chairperson

Dated: December 16, 2025

STATE OF MINNESOTA
WASECA STEELE JOINT COUNTY DRAINAGE AUTHORITY
ACTING AS THE DRAINAGE AUTHORITY UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES CHAPTER 103E
FOR WASECA STEELE JOINT DITCH 10

NOTICE OF FINAL HEARING

Please Take Notice: The Waseca Steele Joint County Drainage Authority Board of Commissioners, acting as the drainage authority under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103E (“Drainage Authority”) for Waseca Steele Joint Ditch 10 (“JD 10”), will hold a final hearing on the Viewers’ Report of Benefits and Damages for the pending redetermination of benefits and damages of JD 10. The Viewers’ Report has been filed with the Drainage Authority. The hearing will be held on February 2, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., or thereafter as the agenda allows, in the Commissioners’ Room, East Annex, 300 North State Street, Waseca, Minnesota 56093.

JD 10 consists of subsurface drainage tile and open ditch, and begins in the Southwest Quarter of Section 5, Township 106 North, Range 21 West (Lemond Township), Steele County, and flows generally westerly through said Section 5, and the South Half (S½) of Section 6, Lemond Township, and the South Half of Section 1, Township 106 North, Range 22 West (Otisco Township), Waseca County, and then generally northwesterly through Section 2 of Otisco Township, and then generally southwesterly through Section 3 and Section 4 of Otisco Township where it outlets at the quarter section line between the Southeast Quarter (SE¼) and the Southwest Quarter (SW¼) of said Section 4, into a tributary of the Little Le Sueur River, in Otisco Township, Waseca County, Minnesota. JD 10 includes laterals and branches in Sections 6 & 7 of said Lemond Township, and Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 of said Otisco Township.

The Viewers’ Report, along with amendments, if any, a copy of all property owners’ reports, and records describing the drainage system, are available for inspection by contacting Brian Zabel, by email or phone (brian.zabel@wasecacounty.gov or (507) 835-0652) or Jennifer Mueller by email or phone (jennifer.mueller@steelecountymn.gov or (507) 444-7410).

At the final hearing, the Drainage Authority will accept public comment regarding the Viewers’ Report. Any party having an interest in the proceedings may appear and provide comment per the instructions above. Written comments will be received through 3:30 p.m. on January 30, 2026, by email to brian.zabel@wasecacounty.gov or by U.S. Mail directed to Waseca County Land & Water Resources, Attn: Brian Zabel, 900 3rd Street NE, Waseca, MN 56093; or to jennifer.mueller@steelecountymn.gov or by U.S. Mail directed to Steele County Property Tax & Elections Department: Attn: Jennifer Mueller, PO Box 890, Owatonna, MN 55060.

The following properties are affected by the pending redetermination of benefits and damages for JD 10:

Lemond Township, T106N-R21W, Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, Steele County.
Meridan Township, T107N-R21W, Section 31, Steele County.

Otisco Township, T106N-R22W, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, Waseca County.
Woodville Township, T107N-R22W, Sections 34, 35, Waseca County.

The following owners of property are affected by the pending redeterminations of benefits and damages for JD 10:

SWENSON GROVELAND FARMS LLC; SAMMON, PAUL E & ZARETH J; VOLKMAN, CURTIS; LENTZ, RICHARD H & TAMARA REICH-LENTZ; STEWART, THOMAS C; SOUBA PARTNERS; BORNEKE, JOSEPH E; BORNEKE, RACHEL J BORNEKE IRREVOC TRUST, c/o MARIE F JEWISON, TRUSTEE; MCSHANE, EUGENE R & DIANE; MCSHANE, MARK A; LEE, DAVID E & BRENDA H; MACY, DON C & MENTA K; KALLHOFF, WADE & NICOLE ASHLEY EVANS; PRIEBE, BONNIE J TESTAMENTARY TRUST C/O CHARLES A PRIEBE & JODIE A THOMPSON TRUSTEES; MILLER, WILLIAM M & ILENE A; BORNEKE, JOSEPH E AS TRUSTEE; KOHN, JONATHAN & SHANNON; JACOBSON, JOHN P & ELLEN M; WOLFE, BRUCE E; ROLLINS, DANIEL B; JEWISON, MARIE F TRUSTEE; NELSON, ZACHARY B & AMANDA K; RIECK FARMS LLC; SPIES, DARWIN D, JULIE D SPIES; HAGEN, CARLYLE O & JUDITH M; LINDQUIST, KYLE; SCHMIDT, LOWELL; JOHNSON, SCOTT M & KANDICE E; HANSEL, SHIRLEY R TRUSTEE, SHIRLEY R HANSEL TRUST; LEWER, ALAN D TRUST; EWEST, KATHERINE A; EATON, QUINTON, MICHELE EATON; EATON-BORCHERT, DOREEN R TRUSTEE; SOUTHRIDGE FARMS LLP; BETHKE, EDWARD C; RIOG PROPERTIES LLC; EATON, ZACHARY; PRIEBE, CHARLES A TRUSTEE; PALM, ANDREW, MACKENZIE HOY; GRINNEN, JEFFREY; LEWER, HOWARD, SHARON LEWER; BAUMAN, ORLIN A; EATON, ISAAC, MELISSA EATON; JUNG, WILLIAM M; RAYMOND, SANDRA J; BAUMAN, LAVOY C; HUBER, LARRY D; KOTTSCHADE, ERIC; JM PROPERTIES OF WASECA LLC; BELOW, LYNN A & ANN Y TRUSTEE; PRECHEL, EMILY E, OWEN L PRECHEL; BARTZ, JACOB D, EMILY BARTZ; PETERSON, JAMIE & MACKENZIE R; KRIENKE, LUANN J; HANKS, CAROL M TRUSTEE, CONNIE M GRANDIA TRUSTEE; PRIEBE, JOEY A; MITTELSTADT, ADELINE & RUTH LIVING TRUST; PRIEBE FARMS LLC; SCHMIDTKE, HERMAN DAVID TRUSTEE, LILA I SCHMIDTKE TRUSTEE; ALAN LEWER FAMILY FARM LLC; EATON, LINDA; GERDTS, GARY L TRUSTEE, DORIS L GERDTS TRUSTEE; SCHMIDT, LOWELL, HELEN SCHMIDT.

The following governmental entities are affected by the pending redeterminations of benefits and damages for JD 10:

STEELE COUNTY PROPERTY TAX & ELECTIONS DIRECTOR, JENNIFER MUELLER; LEMOND TOWNSHIP; OTISCO TOWNSHIP; WASECA COUNTY DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY ELECTIONS ATTN: TAMMY SPOONER; JENAE PETERSON OTISCO TOWNSHIP CLERK.

WASECA STEELE JOINT COUNTY DRAINAGE AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/ Doug Christopherson, Chairperson

Dated: December 16, 2025

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF WASECA
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT PROBATE
DIVISION
Estate of Roger F. Volkmann, aka
Roger Fredrick Volkmann,
Decedent
Court File No. 81-PR-25-920
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
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ACTING IN MINNESOTA

mann, a resident of the State of Iowa.

On December 16, 2025, the Personal Representative filed with the Court a document stating an intention to exercise, as to assets in Minnesota, all powers of a local Personal Representative and to maintain actions and proceedings in Minnesota in accordance with Minnesota Statutes section 524.4-205.

Notice is also given that any Minnesota creditor who objects to the Personal Representative’s exercise of power over assets in Minnesota must file a written objection within 60 days from the Personal Representative’s filing. If no objections are filed, the representative

may, after the expiration of the 60-day period, exercise all powers of a local Personal Representative.

Dated: December 29, 2025
Court Administrator
Attorney for Foreign Personal Representative: Daryl D. Bail
Patton, Hoversten & Berg, P.A. 150 W. Park Square, PO Box 506
Owatonna, MN, 55060
Attorney License No: 191978
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STATE OF MINNESOTA
WASECA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ACTING AS THE DRAINAGE AUTHORITY UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES CHAPTER 103E
FOR WASECA COUNTY DITCH 33

NOTICE OF FINAL HEARING

Please Take Notice: The Waseca County Board of Commissioners, acting as the drainage authority under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103E (“Drainage Authority”) for Waseca County Ditch 33 (“CD 33”), will hold a final hearing on the Viewers’ Report of Benefits and Damages for the pending redetermination of benefits and damages of CD 33. The Viewers’ Report has been filed with the Drainage Authority. The hearing will be held on February 2, 2026, 10:00 a.m., or thereafter as the agenda allows, in the Commissioners’ Room, East Annex, 300 North State Street, Waseca, Minnesota 56093.

CD 33 consists of subsurface drainage tile and open ditch and begins in the Southeast Quarter (SE¼) of Section 22, Township 106 North, Range 22 West (Otisco Township), and flows generally northerly through said Section 22, Section 15, and Section 16, of said Otisco Township, where it outlets into the Little Le Sueur River in the South Half of the Northeast Quarter (S½NE¼) of said Section 16. CD 33 has branches and laterals in Sections 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 26, and 27 of Otisco Township that confluence with the main trunk of the drainage system.

The Viewers’ Report, along with amendments, if any, a copy of all property owners’ reports, and records describing the drainage system, are available for inspection by contacting Brian Zabel, by email or phone (brian.zabel@wasecacounty.gov or (507) 835-0652).

At the final hearing, the Drainage Authority will accept public comment regarding the Viewers’ Report. Any party having an interest in the proceedings may appear and provide comment per the instructions above. Written comments will be received through 3:30 p.m. on January 30, 2026, by email to brian.zabel@wasecacounty.gov or by U.S. Mail directed to Waseca County Land & Water Resources, Attn: Brian Zabel, 900 3rd Street NE, Waseca, MN 56093.

The following properties are affected by the pending redetermination of benefits and damages for CD 33:

Otisco Township, T106N-R22W, Sections 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, Waseca County.

The following owners of property are affected by the pending redeterminations of benefits and damages for CD 33:

EATON, QUINTON & MICHELE; RIOG PROPERTIES LLC; EATON-BORCHERT, DOREEN R TRUSTEE; FISCHER, CINDY & GARY TRUSTEE, NATHAN L HANSON TRUSTEE; PRIEBE, CHARLES A TRUSTEE, CHARLOTT M WILHELM TRUSTEE; PETERSON, ALEX R & JOSEY J; EATON, ZACHARY; PETERSON, DANIEL EVAN TRUSTEE; JOHNSON, BRADLEY W, GRATIA M JOHNSON; MITCHELL, BRADLEY; ROBRAN, TODD A TRUSTEE, BRITTA D. ROBRAN TRUSTEE; PROECHEL, ORVAL A, JOAN M PROECHEL; PROECHEL, MERLYN R. & BONNIE M TRUSTEES PROECHEL REV TRUST; MICHAEL D KUNKEL; PROECHEL, MERLYN R, BONNIE PROECHEL; EATON, STEVEN G. TRUSTEE; PROECHEL, LONNIE D; DONELAN, BERNARD G & JUNE M TRUSTEE, PAUL & DENISE BRITTON TRUSTEE; EATON, ISAAC A, MELISSA EATON; SWENSON, RICHARD ETAL; REMMEY, JACOB & MAGGIE MAE; PETERSON, RAYMOND A TRUST, MAIL TO CRAIG PETERSON; MONSON, RONALD A JR & CARRLIE L; MILLER, JAMES TRUSTEE, JUANITA MILLER TRUSTEE; GIESEKE, GORDON J TRUSTEE, DARLENE M GIESEKE TRUSTEE; HINES, ROGER J & RUTH A; MOE, GREGORY D TRUSTEE, DONNA M MOE TRUSTEE; STENDEL, BRIAN K, SUSAN L STENDEL; FRISK, ROBERT C TRUSTEE, KATHLEEN E FRISK TRUSTEE; BARTELT, BRADLEY D & CRYSTAL D; TOMMY GOBBLE LLC.

The following governmental entities are affected by the pending redeterminations of benefits and damages for CD 33:

OTISCO TOWNSHIP.

WASECA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CD 33 DRAINAGE AUTHORITY

/s/ Doug Christopherson, Chairperson

Dated: December 16, 2025

STATE OF MINNESOTA
WASECA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ACTING AS THE DRAINAGE AUTHORITY UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES CHAPTER 103E
FOR WASECA COUNTY DITCH 40

NOTICE OF FINAL HEARING

Please Take Notice: The Waseca County Board of Commissioners, acting as the drainage authority under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103E (“Drainage Authority”) for Waseca County Ditch 40 (“CD 40”), will hold a final hearing on the Viewers’ Report of Benefits and Damages for the pending redetermination of benefits and damages of CD 40. The Viewers’ Report has been filed with the Drainage Authority. The hearing will be held on February 2, 2026, 10:00 a.m., or thereafter as the agenda allows, in the Commissioners’ Room, East Annex, 300 North State Street, Waseca, Minnesota 56093.

CD 40 consists of subsurface drainage tile and open ditch, and begins near the southeast corner of the Southwest Quarter (SW¼) of Section 23, Township 105 North, Range 24 West (Vivian Township) and flows westerly along the south boundary of said Section 23, then Section 22, where it turns south and drains southerly across the West Half of the Northeast Quarter (W½NE¼) of Section 27, then southwesterly across the South Half of said Section 27 where it outlets into the Cobb River, in Waseca County, Minnesota. Branch 1 and Branch 1-A are in Sections 23 and 22; Branch 2 in Section 22; Branch 3 in Section 26 and Branch 4 in Section 26 of said Vivian Township.

The Viewers’ Report, along with amendments, if any, a copy of all property owners’ reports, and records describing the drainage system, are available for inspection by contacting Brian Zabel, by email or phone (brian.zabel@wasecacounty.gov or (507) 835-0652).

At the final hearing, the Drainage Authority will accept public comment regarding the Viewers’ Report. Any party having an interest in the proceedings may appear and provide comment per the instructions above. Written comments will be received through 3:30 p.m. on January 30, 2026, by email to brian.zabel@wasecacounty.gov or by U.S. Mail directed to Waseca County Land & Water Resources, Attn: Brian Zabel, 900 3rd Street NE, Waseca, MN 56093.

The following properties are affected by the pending redetermination of benefits and damages for CD 40

Vivian Township, T105N-R24W, Sections 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, Waseca County.

The following owners of property are affected by the pending redeterminations of benefits and damages for CD 40:

BARTLET, LOUISE J, LOUISE J BARTLET ETAL TRUSTEE; BARTLET, BARRY L; WEBSTER, JAMES R TRUSTEE, JAMES R WEBSTER REV TRUST; BARTLET, GARY G TRUSTEE, DEBRA G BARTLET TRUSTEE; SONNEK, CHRISTOPHER C; ROESLER, GENE T TRUSTEE, SALLY A ROESLER TRUSTEE; KLUGHERZ, JOHN; ROESLER, GREGORY T, BARBARA J HEIDER-ROESLER; RICHARDSON, SHERMAN L TRUSTEE, RAMONA J RICHARDSON TRUSTEE; MALAKOWSKY, MARY K & DAVID M; SUPERIOR PORK NURSERY INC; GROSKREUTZ, MICHELLE L TRUSTEE, ROBERT E GROSKREUTZ TRUSTEE;GROSKREUTZ, LAVERNE A; CRUMB, BRADLEY W TRUSTEE; GROSKREUTZ, LAVERNE A TRUSTEE; SONNEK, CHARLES D, CHARLES & CHRIS SONNEK TRUSTEE; SONNEK, PETER C, LORI MAE SONNEK; BLOCK, LOGAN, HANNA PROEHL; GROSKREUTZ, BETTY J; PRIEM, CALVIN K TRUSTEE, KAREN M PRIEM TRUSTEE; GROSKREUTZ, JOEL R & RENAE L; ROESLER, ALAN, SUSAN ROESLER; SONNEK, PETER; ROESLER, RUTH A TRUSTEE; KAISER, DEAN.

The following governmental entities are affected by the pending redeterminations of benefits and damages for CD 40:

MINNESOTA DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION ATTN: CHAD BLESS; WASECA COUNTY DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY AND ELECTIONS, ATTN: TAMMY SPOONER; VIVIAN TOWNSHIP C/O MINDY MCDONOUGH.

WASECA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CD 33 DRAINAGE AUTHORITY

/s/ Doug Christopherson, Chairperson

Dated: December 16, 2025



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Waseca Rotary delivers books on kindness to all first graders in Waseca

The Waseca Rotary Club is proud to have their annual partnership with Greater Mankato Area United Way and Capstone Publishing to place a copy of The Kindness Booth into the hands of every first-grade student in Waseca schools.

Rotarians visited TEAM Academy, Hartley Elementary School, and Sacred Heart School to personally deliver the books, sharing a message of empathy, compassion, and the importance of kindness in everyday life. The book encourages young readers to reflect on how small acts of kindness can make a meaningful difference in their communities.

Supporting education is one of Rotary’s core areas of focus, and this project reflects the club’s commitment to nurturing not only academic growth, but also character development among young learners.

“This project is about more

than giving a book, it’s about reinforcing values that help children grow into caring, thoughtful adults,” said Molly Hendrickson, Service Committee Chair for the Waseca Rotary Club. “Kindness is a skill that can be learned and practiced, and we’re grateful to our partners for helping us share that message with every first grader in Waseca.”

The Waseca Rotary Club extends its sincere thanks to Greater Mankato Area United Way and Capstone Publishing for their collaboration and shared commitment to literacy and youth development. Through partnerships like this, Rotary continues its mission of Service Above Self while investing in the next generation.

For more information about the Waseca Rotary Club and its service initiatives, please contact the club or visit a bi-monthly meeting.



RAISING WOMEN - Farmamerica staff and board members who were present at Raise a Toast included (from left) Hilary Kruger-Administrative Coordinator; Kari Wadd- Program Coordinator; Angie Younberg - Board Member; Morgan Mudgett - Communications Coordinator; Jessica Rollins - Executive Director; Baylee Sorenson - Board Member; Lisa Gjersvik - Board Chairperson; and Julie Tesch - Board Member.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently



Tara Slattery (left) and owner Meghan Larson of Waseca's Magnetic North produced personalized photo magnets for those in attendance at Farmamerica's Raise a Toast. More information about the business is available on Facebook at Magnetic North Custom Photo Keepsakes.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

■ Toast from Page 1

“I wouldn’t trade it for the world,” she stated.

Sources of income for the farm, she mentioned, include the sale of frozen chickens, goat milk products including soap, and various other products, commonly at the Mankato area farmers’ market. More information about her farm and its offer-

ings is available online at rebelroosterfarm.com.

She said a chief lesson for her has been the importance of “building a strong cohort,” that is, creating a circle of friends who are willing to provide advice, help with projects and tasks, and generally help build a person up.

The one thing she misses from her former life, she said lightheartedly, is the ability to have a pizza delivered. “There are some nights,” she stated, “when it would be nice to have a warm meal without having to cook.”



Waseca County Dairy Princesses Katy Eldeen (left) and McKenna Eichhorn created a three-dimensional video recording during Farmamerica's Raise A Toast. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

■ 2025 from Page 5

stirring music.

- The Waseca High School football team made school history, defeating Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton 14-13 to earn the school’s first-ever trip to a state championship football game.
- Ella Bulfer, a senior at Waseca Junior Senior High School, signed her letter of intent to play Women’s Soccer for the University of Colorado Pueblo on Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025.
- Representative Keith Allen of legislative district 19A visited with the senior students from Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton school district during their social studies class with Blake Frink on Friday, Nov. 7.
- About 25 representatives from the Ellendale and New Richland American Legion posts, along with many veterans who attended as individuals, were present for a 45-minute Veterans Day program at the NRHEG Secondary site in New Richland. Students in grades 4 through 12 attended, as did about 70 members of the general public.
- On September 30, Kevin Cumberland became the new golf clubhouse manager at Prairie Ridge golf course in Janesville.
- The 2025 Harvest came to a close with a mixed bag on yields for both corn and soybeans. Much of the crop looked decent from the road only to be consistently inconsistent.
- Rubles exchanged hands between the curious and the greedy as the scandalous scent of murder tainted the air of Waseca’s Alexander House on Friday and Saturday evening, Nov. 14 and 15, but it was all in a good cause.
- The members of the Waseca County Board of Commissioners were surprised during the Waseca County 4-H Achievement Celebration the evening of Nov. 14 when it was announced they were receiving the organization’s “Distinguished



Left, the Waseca chapter of the Minnesota Honor Society (MHS) inducted 23 new members the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2025 in the high school performing arts center. Right, the Janesville Waldorf Pemberton (JWP) school district held its eighth annual Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony at the Purple Goose ballroom in Janesville on Saturday, Oct. 4. Mike Niemczyk and Lance Nelson were the masters of ceremony. There were eight individual inductees for 2025 along with three teams.

- Service Award.”
- Waseca Junior Senior High School senior Kelsey Draeger signed her letter of intent the morning of Wednesday, Nov. 19. Surrounded by her mother Delain, her sister Kendra, classmates and friends, she signed her commitment to Waldorf University’s Cross Country/Track and Field, located in Forest City, Iowa.
- The Waseca County Mounted Sheriff’s Posse proudly delivered a \$15,329 donation Nov. 21 to Children’s Minnesota Hospitals, supporting the health care facility’s ongoing mission to provide exceptional pediatric care to families across the state.
- Jason Lennox, a mental health and recovery advocate, visited with all high school students at Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton schools on Nov. 14 about the importance of paying attention to mental health and the harm that comes from stigma.
- The Waseca Drama Department presented two showings of the play, “A Lighter Shade of Noir” in the Waseca Junior Senior High School’s Performing Arts Center on both Friday, Nov. 21 and Sunday, Nov. 23.
- The Annandale Cardinals defeated the Bluejays 17-7 at the U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, finishing the season 13-0.
- December**
- The temperature was 16 degrees and there was a medium breeze from the west, but some of the runners at Farmamerica’s third annual “Turkey Trot” were sweating as they worked their way around the 5k course that takes participants past—and in one case, even through the organization’s historic locations.
- Since shortly after being pardoned by former President Joe Biden last year, Waseca County’s famous resident turkeys, Blossom and Peach, continued to live the



- high life at Farmamerica.
- The five members of the NRHEG FFA livestock judging team won a place at this coming April’s state competition during an October contest in Arlington, where 25 chapters were represented.
- The Waseca High School girls’ basketball team is an overall young squad that’s facing a very tough schedule. The Bluejays have a new head coach this year in Brian Rupe.
- “The spirit of Waseca is alive, resilient and shining long before a single bulb is switched on,” declared Mikhail Rostislavovich, president of the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, as a robust crowd of community members gathered at the Waseca Art Center on the evening of December 4 for the debut of the city’s new decorative holiday lights.
- The community learned Caribou Coffee will be moving into the

- location previously occupied by Taco Johns at 1401 N. State St. in Waseca.
- Nancy Westphal might say she only had to move one building over to go from the home of her youth to a lifelong home of a different type next door, Janesville’s city-owned Whispering Creek elder care facility. After working there for more than 46 years, Westphal was presented with the facility’s “Caregiver of the Year Award” on Nov. 10.
- During the chilly morning of Wednesday, Dec. 3, students at the Waseca Junior Senior High School gathered to witness senior Deron Russell sign his letter of intent to attend North Dakota State University, Fargo.
- In a brief special meeting the afternoon of Wednesday, Dec. 10, county commissioners gave the go-ahead on general specifications regarding the justice center to be constructed west of the county

- courthouse beginning next fall.
- “Working hard makes a bigger difference in a smaller community,” observed Mike Patel, who took ownership of Waseca’s American Hotel at 1313 North State Street this past January.
- The 5 p.m. service at Waseca’s Sacred Heart Church on Saturday, Dec. 13 featured “Mariachi America,” an authentic mariachi band, helping celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- In back-to-back concerts presented the evening of Dec. 8, the vocal and instrumental music departments at NRHEG shared an array of lively holiday tunes performed by students in grades 6 through 12.
- The Waseca Exchange Club is proud to announce the formation of a Special Olympics Fundraising Committee, created as an offshoot of the Club’s ongoing commitment to service and community support.