



■ Inside:

• 3 - Art Center

• 3 - Swing dance

• 4 - Obituary

• 4 - Session dinner

• 5 - Cook the Book

• 5 - Kelm's BBQ

• 6 - Bible study

• 8-10 - Sports

• 12 - Math competition

Trinket Dishes at the Janesville Public Library, Feb. 26

Transform a simple dish into a sweet trinket holder by adding pretty paper to the surface at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26. This simple crafting technique turns basic into beautiful. Ages 13-18.

Canvas Bag Design at the New Richland Public Library Feb. 26

Transform a canvas bag into a custom tote that reflects you at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 26. Connect with other teens while you add vibrant patterns, intricate illustrations, or inspiring quotes. Ages 13-18.

Waseca Sons of American Legion Fish Fry Feb. 27

The Waseca Sons of American Legion will be hosting a 3 piece Fish Basket, Fish Sandwich Basket, or 6 piece Shrimp Basket on Friday, February 27 and Friday, March 6 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Waseca Legion Club. All baskets are served with fries and are \$10 each.

Mitten Button Art at the Janesville Public Library Feb. 27

This project brings the cozy vibes to home decor. Use your vintage buttons to create a special art piece at the Janesville library at 6 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 27.

Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Dinner and Dance, Feb. 27

The Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Dinner and Dance will be Feb. 27 at the Waseca VFW Hall. Meal at 5 p.m.; music provided by Los T from 6:30 to 9:30.

Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Parade, Feb. 28

The Sleigh and Cutter parade will begin at noon, traveling from the Waseca County fairgrounds through downtown Waseca and back to the fairgrounds.

Winter Farmers Market at Farmamerica Feb. 28

There will be a winter farmers market at Farmamerica from 8 a.m. till noon Saturday, Feb. 28. Find locally grown, baked and made while supporting our local producers. Farmamerica is located at 7367 360th Ave., Waseca.

Annual Vintage Snowmobile Show/Ride/Ice Drags Saturday, Feb. 28

The Annual Vintage Snowmobile Show/Ride will take place at Southside Marine in Waseca from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28. For questions contact Seth at 507-837-9230 or Marissa at 507-461-4501.

A word from
The Word

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:2

Famous Wasecan Steve McLoone dies after lengthy, distinguished career

Steve McLoone, 72, one of Waseca's best-known musicians, died Feb. 14 in the Twin Cities area. Raised in Waseca as the youngest of eight children in a family of musicians, McLoone was a member of the final graduating class of Sacred Heart High School in 1971. McLoone sang with a band for the first time at age 11 and went on to become nationally known for his musical performances and for writing and co-writing songs for the piano and guitar.

McLoone held a celebration at Waseca's Club '57 in December of 2024 to commemorate 60 years in the music business; he was joined by fellow guitarist Tom Williams and, for a few songs, by long-time friend and collaborator Jim Kozan. Asked at the time how he selected Waseca for his celebration over a more famous venue, McLoone replied "Because it's always been Waseca for me. This is where I'm from, this is where my best friends are, this is home."

Pioneer reporter Ben Revermann shared in an article at the time that McLoone earned a bachelor degree in Wellness, then went on to earn a Master's in Business Administration in healthcare from the University of St. Mary's in Winona.

While he did do some work in the health care field, including serving as a weight loss coach, the majority of McLoone's time was devoted to music. The many bands he performed with included Sands of Tyme, 1966-'69; Cletus Hane, 1969-'71; Headstone, '71-'74; Phoenix, '74; Zero Ted, '75-'77; The Judd Group, '76-'79; and Caribou, '79-'81. From then on, McLoone produced and recorded under his own name.

Across his career, he worked with and met many famous musicians and bands including, in no particular order, the Carpenters, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Stevie Nicks, Tom Petty, Bette Midler, Paul Simon, Walter Egan,

McLoone continued on 5



LEGACY - Steve McLoone was one of Waseca's best-known musicians. He became nationally known for his performance style and for writing and co-writing songs.

Waseca EDA looks at area projects

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

During a brief meeting the morning of Feb. 18, members Patti Schuch, Brad Krause, Russ Frederick, Matt Harrington and Chris Osterloh of the Waseca County Economic Development Authority (EDA) received an update from Planning and Zoning department administrator Tina Wilson regarding numerous ongoing initiatives which Wilson has assisted or interacted with.

She mentioned a Feb. 10 visit by a delegation from Quebec whose purpose was to build relationships with communities in the U.S. Local representatives joined the Canadians in

touring both the Guardian Energy ethanol plant near Janesville and Berry Pallets in Waseca.

Wilson also provided an update regarding the Workforce Development Center currently being planned for the lowest floor of the county Human Services Building on Elm Avenue West.

Because the work is being completed using federal grant money, various conditions must be met before each step of the process can continue. Wilson anticipated that construction work can be let out for bids within the next few weeks.

She also mentioned that the project is one of only two nationwide which is moving forward fairly

smoothly, and that she and other county representatives will be presenting information about the process that was followed during a national conference in July.

Members of the EDA also discussed their idea for a publication meant to inform the public about the many programs and opportunities available under the Authority's umbrella.

Schuch suggested the brochure should be as clear and succinct as possible, drawing readers' attention to the EDA, and encouraging them to make contact to find out more. The brochure is still in the planning stages, but the intent is to distribute it throughout the county once it's

complete.

Wilson also mentioned a recent meeting organized by New Richland city council member Jason Casey, who called area farmers and business people together at a Feb. 11 gathering attended by about 25 people at the New Richland City Hall. Casey asked the group to share ideas and information pertinent to a possible farmers' cooperative to grow camelina as a local crop, and perhaps even to work toward having a processing plant built somewhere in the area. Camelina is used by many Minnesota farmers as a cover crop, but can also be grown to maturity and harvested. The seeds are used in making sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

Waseca Soil and Water open house offers free tree giveaway

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff Writer

The Waseca Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office held its 78th annual open house on Friday, Feb. 20. It was open to anyone who had questions about the agency's services. There were also a drawing for a free tree, gift bag items for children, and refreshments.

The SWCD distributed information and an order form for purchasing "bare root" trees. According to Joe Edel, the SWCD technician who coordinates the program, property owners pay much less per tree when they take part in the bulk purchase rather than contacting nurseries themselves. The SWCD program warns that, due to that popularity, all interested persons should place their orders as quickly as possible. The department has arranged for contracted numbers of trees from various nurseries; if increased numbers are needed, orders need to be placed in a timely fashion. Even with the rush Edel says assuredly, "The earlier the better, but anyone can order at any time."

According to Edel, nearly everyone purchases the bulk trees with the intent of beginning or maintaining a windbreak. Available plants offer consid-



OPEN HOUSE - The Waseca Soil & Water Conservation District held an open house on Friday, Feb. 20 to encourage people to take advantage of the programs available. Resource Technician Cammi Phelps was answering questions for guest Elizabeth Anselmo.

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

erable flexibility, with mature heights beginning as low as 5 feet and going as high as 75. Plants are selected with versatility in mind—some are suitable for most conditions; others prefer specifically moist or dry soil. Some trees flower and produce berries, others are evergreens.

Also offered are some elm and maple trees—the highest-priced plants available through the program, they are priced at \$160 and \$150 for bundles of five—but they are also up to 6 feet tall.

For those who do not need trees, an alternative is a mix of native wildflowers. For \$55, property owners can acquire 48 green plants in 12 species. Orders can be mailed using the distributed form,

placed in person at the SWCD office at 300 North State Street, or registered at the SWCD website online: www.wasecaswcd.org. Payment is expected when the order is placed.

Of the tree acquisition program, which has been operating since at least 2007, Edel says, "Trees play an important role in soil and water conservation. From controlling erosion along stream banks or even catching blowing winter snow, trees are beneficial."

"We want to offer affordable trees to landowners so they can meet their needs on their farmsteads or homes; by doing so, we all benefit because our natural resources are protected."

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

Council approves policies, procedures

Various business transacted during the Waseca city council meeting the evening of Tuesday, Feb. 17, included a new ordinance which states city residents will not be billed for work done to ensure the city water supply is in compliance with the Minnesota Department of Health expectations. Instead, the city is eligible for a grant which will cover testing and expenses.

Both Andrew Fischer and Dave Ziegler were reappointed to the city airport board. There are two t-hangar spaces still available for rent.

An off-site gambling permit was approved for the Sleigh and Cutter Festival Association. A gaming application was approved for a fundraiser to be held at The Boat House to benefit Aspyn Acres Wildlife Rehab and Farm Sanctuary.

An empty seat on the city's Economic Development Authority has been filled by Dwight Tostenson. The city agreed to reimburse Waseca County for seal coat coat improvement costs on 14 Ave. SE, 139 St, 345 Ave and 4 St. SW; the work will be performed this summer under the terms of a contract arranged by the county engineer.

Council members approved naming the Clear Lake Park basketball court, "Willingham Community Court" and installing a recognition plaque near the basketball court seating area that will include Malik and Kyreese Willingham's history, community engagement, and accomplishments.

Kris Markeson, Waseca public safety inspector, was present to discuss the joint powers agree-

Council continued on 4



Identify Frosty for share of \$1,500

It's time again for the annual Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Identify Frosty event. Continue reading for week two's clues.

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 un-

Frosty continued on 4



Compostings

by Al Batt

The benefits of house burping

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

I was walking an Alaskan trail when I met a bear. All I had in my backpack was a can of fly spray, so I sprayed the bear.

What happened?

The bear flew away.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. The wind nearly took my nose off. I leaned into it so hard, I may never stand straight again. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. So that leaves those folks off the curling squad. Olympic curling stones are made of granite quarried on Ailsa Craig, an uninhabited volcanic island in Scotland's Firth of Clyde. Ailsa Craig translates to "fairy rock" in Gaelic. Curling stones must weigh between 38 and 44 pounds. On average, 42 pounds, equivalent to the weight of about 131 baseballs. A stone costs \$960 and up. Sadly, a Minnesota curler's ingestion of performance-enhancing tater tot hotdish led to his disqualification.

Sloths don't curl or watch curling. Costa Rica is a mecca for sloths like me. I spent time watching other sloths do a lot of little. Birds of a feather flock together. Sloth is one of the seven deadly sins, but the two kinds of sloths in Costa Rica, the two-toed and the three-toed, are nobody's deadly sin. No sloth has ever medaled in the Olympics because they're among the slowest-moving mammals in the world. On average, a sloth moves 41 yards per day. Sloths are folivores, meaning they consume leaves, twigs and buds exclusively, and they have four-chambered stomachs similar to the digestive systems of ruminants such as domestic cattle. When it needs to, a sloth creeps down a tree, and once on the ground, it digs a hole, defecates in it, and covers it with leaf litter. Then, it's a sluggish climb back up the tree. Sloths appear mottled green due to algae growing on their fur. They sleep in the trees and reportedly snooze 15-20 hours per day, but recent studies show they sleep only 8-10 hours. It's believed sloths sleep so much because they can't get Netflix in the trees.

I'VE LEARNED

We never have normal weather. "You like potayto, I like potahto; you like tomayto, I like tomahto; potayto, potahto, tomayto, tomahto, let's call the whole thing off!" I've never heard anyone call a spud a

"potahto."

House burping is a wellness trend involving opening doors and windows on opposite sides of a home for 5-10 minutes daily to flush out stale air, reduce humidity, and prevent mold/carbon dioxide buildup. The cross-breeze improves indoor air quality. House burping can also be achieved by allowing a group of young boys to drink as much root beer as they want.

We hear about people saving the best for last, but my wife, when given a box of assorted chocolates, saves the worst for last.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

I went to my childhood home, knocked on the door, and asked the residents if I could come in and look around. They said, "No," and slammed the door in my face. My parents are the worst.

Arguing over a Scrabble game is all fun and games until someone loses an i.

"Hey Siri, why am I so bad with names?"

"I'm Alexa, you idiot!"

NATURE NOTES

Fox and gray squirrels are scatter-hoarders. They hide food in many small caches scattered across the landscape. Fox squirrels are the largest tree squirrels native to North America and are calmer than the grays, which are more squirrely. The agility and skittishness of a gray squirrel have given it the nickname "cat squirrel," which I've heard it called in Texas. A UC Berkeley study published in the journal Royal Society of Open Science found that tree squirrels use a mnemonic technique called "spatial chunking" to sort and bury nuts by size, type and possibly by nutritional value and taste. It's a meticulous preparation to survive a harsh winter. One squirrel can bury 3,000 to 10,000 nuts, and its tremendous spatial memory and excellent sense of smell allow it to retrieve 26 to 95% of the nuts it had squirreled away. Central Connecticut State University research reported that an eastern gray squirrel engages in deceptive caching by digging a hole and pretending to drop a nut in it, before covering the hole. They do this covert action to fool other squirrels who might be watching. Both the owners and thieves move the caches. Squirrels listen to the sounds of birds like robins, jays and chickadees, and use them as alarms or all-clear signals.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"We are made kind by being kind."—Eric Hoffer.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

Going through file photos

I was recently asked whether I have any "file photos" of some parks and public attractions in the Waseca area. It would not have worked to go take new photos at this time because the pictures were meant to depict the area as it looks in summer.

I take a lot of pictures, both for the sake of the NRHEG and Waseca County Pioneer newspapers and because I can barely resist taking pictures of attractive and appealing things. Alongside that, most of the photos I have taken for the last decade or so have been conveniently stored in certain online applications—so referencing them did not require digging out any dusty boxes or photo albums. Instead, it was a matter of opening the application and scrolling. The electronic system even knew the date each photo was taken and could tell me where I was at the time.

Since it was so easy to investigate, I set to work, not realizing what an enjoyable journey I was

beginning.

As I came across likely options, I sent them via email to the person who had placed the request. I probably drove her to distraction as her computer repeatedly signalled she had received yet another email from me.

Honestly, I am grateful for the request. I had never before had a reason to scroll so far into the annals of my photographic past. Since the pictures are in reverse chronological order (most recent first), I watched my grandchildren and other family members grow younger. Equally importantly, I traveled backward in time to the places and events that comprised my past decade.

It would be difficult to count the number of times I made spontaneous noises of recognition or fondness. Children playing in the park during a summer birthday party. Northern lights above a lake. Swans in flight lit from above by sunlight.



ROBIN FILES - A photo Deb found among her files while looking through them to find appealing images for an acquaintance.

My sons and grandchildren swimming in a pool below a waterfall. I sent them via email to the person who had placed the request. I probably drove her to distraction as her computer repeatedly signalled she had received yet another email from me.

Robins during a spring snowfall eating dried crabapples still hanging in the tree. Sunrises and sunsets galore, each beautiful and dramatic in its own way. Sandhill cranes wading among cattails. Faces up close making silly expressions.

I spent a delightful couple hours reviewing and remembering. What a privilege it is to be able to record moments and look at them again later.

'Wherever you walk, I go with you'

As some of you might know, I've had an interesting relationship with religion. I grew up at Sacred Heart Catholic church and had a great time. I was happy and never questioned anything in my faith until I hit college.

I had thought that going to a large school like the University of Minnesota would be the perfect place to explore my religion with more people of my age looking to do the same. I explored a few groups, but nothing felt right for me. Don't get me wrong, I met some of the nicest and kindest people, but their studies and the way they did things just weren't what worked for me.

So I took a break for a few years.

All this to say, I've finally ventured out and found a church in Denver. Being something of a backslider, I missed Ash Wednesday and proceeded to eat meat on Friday while not fasting during Lent. On top of that, I



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

haven't even decided to do anything for Lent in general. I can't give up delicious sweets, I don't drink enough alcohol to give it up, and I wouldn't know where to start if I decided that, instead of giving up something, I should take on a significant project or cause instead.

But this church is a nice 15-minute walk from my apartment, and Christ the King Roman Catholic Church seemed perfect. So I ventured out.

I was nervous to go to a new church alone, but knew it would be worth overcoming my reservations. My boyfriend was raised by a Catholic mother and Jewish father and could never

find the right fit for him, so he never really got into religion or explored his faith.

After arriving at the church, I stepped in; the lingering smell of incense enveloped me, the familiar scent was comforting. I found an open pew in the back, and scooted all the way to the right, sort of hidden in the back corner. It was quiet and allowed me to view the room and appreciate the stained glass of the church. I was ten minutes early and surprised at the lack of people, but as time went on, the pews began to fill satisfyingly. A family with two young children happened to sit in front of me, providing plenty of distraction and entertainment

as I watched the boy try to read along with the priest in the book and the girl dance and squirm in the pew.

When I found Christ the King Church, I had high hopes it would be the one, but it was just another church. The choir consisted of two older men singing, beautifully mind you, in more Latin than I was used to, the readings were read, and the homily was alright (a few too many "ums" for my taste).

Of course I will not give up and will try again, but we will see if this is the church for me. At this point in my life, I am not even sure Catholicism is for me, but I will keep an open mind.

Even if I don't attend mass, I enjoy finding God in the trees, the sun, and the people around me. He's never far from me, even outside of church.

My Determination: "Wherever you walk, I go with you. Selah." — Anita Diamant, The Red Tent

WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

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

PHONE: 507-837-6767

email: news@wasecacountypioneer.com

Address: Office at 111 Elm Avenue West

Mail: PO Box 578, Waseca MN 56093

DEADLINES: Pioneer: Noon Monday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

ELI LUTGENS	Publisher
DEB BENTLY	News Editor
AMELIA ROESSLER	Editor
JIM LUTGENS	Sports Editor/Dad
JON LUCCA	Ad Design
BEN REVERMANN	Staff Writer
TERESA ROSACKER	Advertising Sales
MELISSA DUNN	Staff Writer

Contributing writers/photographers: Dave Zika, Al Batt, Darin Reese, Payge Rosacker, Rachael Jaegar, Rachel Loverink, Jessica Lutgens, Cassie Rupe, Debbie Rodriguez, Pastor Michael Coglán, Rev. Glenn K. Frerichs, Pastor Michael Granis, Pastor Rick Wulf, and Pastor Jillene Gallatin

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$59 Per Year, Waseca County Residents

\$69 State of Minnesota • \$79 Outside Minnesota

Waseca County Pioneer (USPS permit #25304) is published weekly on Thursday, by Pioneer Publications Inc., 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca, MN, 56093. Entire contents copyright © 2026 PIONEER Publications, Inc. and respective authors. Opinions expressed in editorials or letters to the editor are those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the Waseca County Pioneer or PIONEER Publications, Inc. Letters may be edited for content or length. Periodicals Postage at New Richland, MN. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Waseca County Pioneer, P.O. Box 578, Waseca, MN, 56093.

Unknown science behind the pain

I had the pleasure of attending another Minnesota Sessions Priority event with the Waseca Chamber of Commerce this past week. We were introduced to many candidates for governor, including Senator Amy Klobuchar and local representative Peggy Bennett. Those were the two we had pictures taken with, anyway.

We provided updates about our local community, and chatted about the candidates' goals, what made them a good candidate and why they devoted their lives to public service.

After about an hour and half of walking around talking to folks, my body started to yell at me pretty strongly. Mikhail, Waseca Chamber President, noticed my discomfort and asked me if I was alright. I had already texted one of my friends telling them how much pain I was in. My friend told me to leave, but I responded I couldn't because Mikhail had asked me to attend this event. "He is my friend, and it would be incredibly rude and disrespectful



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

to leave," I told my friend via text message.

I told Mikhail I was hurting rather badly. He asked me a few questions and promptly told me, as my friend, I should go home—few things are worth being in that kind of pain over. Honestly, I only intend to ever put up with discomfort like that in the future if the pain is for my future children and or spouse.

After three years of mystery pain, it seems with the help of a lot of research and many, many doctor visits, we might know what's wrong with me: splenic flexure disorder. My enlarged spleen and my stomach pinch together against my insides causing a lot of pressure and pain. This occurs when I stand too

long or sit in a slouched position—the sort one usually has when driving a vehicle. There are a number of things I am now doing to combat this problem. One, I don't drive after I've eaten food as if there's nothing in my stomach, it doesn't hurt as much because there's nothing leaving my stomach to get pinched or stuck. Mikhail asked me how I did my vacation driving. Well, I didn't eat before or during my drives, and if I did, it was very light. Also, I now sit with a rolled up towel behind me while I drive.

There are a number of other things I do to decrease how much pain I feel every day. Mainly, my only goal for 2026 is to be healthier and in less pain.

So far, I feel some progress has been made.

I'm grateful Mikhail told me to go home. It was not until about 24 hours later that I physically felt my left side release and the pain pass. I was quite miserable for that entire period of time, simply from all of the standing around. (I am told gravity pulls my insides together when I am standing. But, when I'm walking around it's fine because then everything is moving around.)

I really don't know the science behind it. All I've been able to do is recognize what works and what doesn't.

For anyone else who has dealt with chronic pain of any sorts, you have my sympathy.

On a lighter note, I have been eating a very healthy diet now for a couple months, getting a great number of steps per day, and overall do feel better doing all of these things.

"Healing starts with a single breath and a hopeful thought." — Unknown

Murphy Brothers Band at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Feb. 28
The Murphy Brothers Band will be performing at the Indian Island Winery from 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 28. They perform rock, blues rock, originals and covers.

Farmamerica Red Cross Blood Drive Monday, March 2
There will be a blood drive at Farmamerica from 11 a.m. through 4 p.m. on Monday, March 2. One pint of blood can save up to three lives. Visit www.redcrossblood.org to set up an appointment.

Lenten Services at Christ the King Wednesday, March 4
There will be Lenten services at the Christ the King Lutheran Church at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 11, 18 and 25. They are located at 309 6th St. NE Waseca.

Waseca Sons of American Legion Fish Fry Friday, March 6
The Waseca Sons of American Legion will be hosting a 3 piece Fish Basket, Fish Sandwich Basket, or 6 piece Shrimp Basket on Friday, March 6 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Waseca Legion Club. All baskets are served with fries and are \$10 each.

Waseca World Day of Prayer Vigil at Grace Lutheran Church Friday, March 6
Join us at 10 a.m. on Friday, March 6 at Third and Elm Gathering Space at Grace Lutheran Church for the Waseca World Day of Prayer Vigil. Prayer times are organized in 20-minute blocks and continue through 10PM or until the last filled time slot. Participants can choose to walk the labyrinth or pray in multiple stations throughout the space.

Los T at the Indian Island Winery Saturday, March 7
Musical group Los T will be performing at the Indian Island Winery from 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 7. They perform today's hits and Tex Mex music.

Plant Bingo at Farmamerica Sunday, March 8
There will be a houseplant Bingo event at Farmamerica from 1-3 p.m. on Sunday, March 8. Everyone receives a houseplant to start with and can upgrade to a bigger plant if you win. Purchase tickets here <https://farmamerica.ticket-spice.com/plant-bingo>.

4-H Bingo at Waldorf Community Center Sunday, March 8
The Waldorf Peppy Peppers 4-H Club will be holding a free Bingo event at the Waldorf Community Center starting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 8. Exciting prizes and homemade snacks.



Swing dance jazz event draws over 100

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer
A Swing Dance at the Starfire Event Center the evening of Saturday, Feb. 21, featured dance lessons by Lynette Dawley, live music by the Waseca Junior Senior jazz bands, and refreshments for those burning calories out on the dance floor. The event drew about 100 participants.

Paul Davis, instructor at Waseca high school was the first of two band directors; he introduced the band and said, "Welcome everyone to our swing dance."
"We're really glad you've found us even with the change of venue." The 2025 swing dance took place at Farmamerica. Davis continued, "And since it's so quiet, let's start and turn this from a funeral vibe into a dance vibe." There was laughter from the crowd.
Thomas Howe and his wife Mary



Noelle Drake-trumpet, Skyler Gilmore-piano, Olive Scheffert-piano, Charlotte Griffith-saxophone, Elliott Galle-trumpet, Bob, Kim, and Amber Hagen were all present at the Starfire Event Center's Swing Dance on Saturday, Feb. 22, 2026. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

were there, after "cutting a rug" out on the dance floor for the class, they took a seat as the music began. The jazz bands started out with the seventh-grade group. Said Mary, "My daughter Dalisaya is in the ninth-grade band so we're here to watch her play. We signed up for the dance class, I don't usually dance like that, but I wanted to try it, be goofy for a night." Thomas said, "That class started out with swing dancing but it ended with line. Dalisaya has been

playing the trombone for three to four years, I'm so proud."
Mark Griffith, director of South-Central Emergency Medical Services, was there watching his daughter Charlotte Griffith, "My Pumpkin is in the eighth-grade Jazz Band, she's been playing the saxophone for a year and a half now. She has two saxophones, a Barry Sax, a tenor sax, she also plays bass guitar, electric guitar and trumpet, but to night she's only playing her tenor."

Art Center now featuring photographer, illustrator

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer
The Waseca Art Center held a gallery opening for two artists on Saturday, Feb. 21 and it couldn't have happened on a sunnier day. Photographer Lauren Jacobson now has works on display in the Harguth Gallery and Mark Braun in the Beckman Gallery. Mikhail Rostislavovich, president of the Waseca Arts Council gave a quick introduction before bringing up the artists to explain their crafts and take questions from the audience.
Lauren Jacobson was introduced first; she was wearing a black, long-sleeved shirt which contrasted her hands and face—a technique she makes use of when photographing herself, using darker backgrounds in many of the photos. She was asked about a photograph she had taken in a wooded area and where the smoke in the photo came from and she replied, "That isn't smoke, that is the result of long exposure to my pale hands in the dark passing back and forth in front of the camera. The circular things in a line across the middle of the photo is the result of me dragging a flashlight in front of the lens." During her presentation she said, "I decided that a single second, which is about what it takes to snap a regular picture, can only capture so much. So, each photo I take is between 15 to 20 seconds of exposure."
Jacobson has a family home in Faribault and that's where she began her journey using the scientific method to learn photography; she is also a



FEATURED ARTISTS - There was a new gallery opening at the Waseca Art Center (WAC) on Saturday, Feb. 21, 2026. Pictured from left: WAC President Mikhail Rostislavovich, photographer Lauren Jacobson, illustrator Mark Braun, and WAC Vice President Penny Vought. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

design consultant and art framer. She uses her own body as a subject and raw footage with no digital alteration, "I'm drawn to mysticism and I would like to capture what our eyes can't see." She's been featured at the Paradise Center for the Arts, Flaten Art Museum and a solo installation at St. Olaf.
Mark Braun is a professional illustrator who earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Mankato State in 1975. Before retiring in the 2000s, he held jobs at various Mankato area companies including Kato Engineering, Ads and Ink printing company, and Taylor Corporation's book printing division. It wasn't until after retiring he returned to his love of illustration. He uses circles as his background; a drawing titled "Adolescent and Confusion" features a young man aged 14 or so, leaning against a wooden fence, dressed in a flannel shirt and his pants have cuffs like the kids

wore in the 60s.
Braun uses linen or textured paper, and number 2 pencils for his work. He observed, "You can get those pencils anywhere." Each of his drawings can take 10-15 hours but, said Braun, "I get bored or need to do something else for a while and I come back to it later. My work comes out of everyday occurrences. Some of my work does reflect my approach towards advertising. I've always tried to take a message and capture it." He spoke about Chief Sleepy Eye, a native American Chief who died in the 1860s. "His tribe was starving and he was forced to sell their land. There weren't a lot of pictures of him because of the time, but the one I did find was just sadness and I wanted to capture that."
After the introductions guests were invited to mingle with the artists and enjoy sweet treats and sparkling cider in the Tea Room.

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

County to allow additional deer hunting firearms

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor
Thanks to a decision made by the members of the Waseca County Board of Commissioners during their Feb. 17 meeting, deer hunters in Waseca County this fall will have the opportunity to use any type of firearm legal for the hunt. During a listening session attended by about 50 people the evening of Feb. 5, commissioners had heard from 13 individuals who spoke up on the topic; 10 stated they support allowing rifles in addition to shotguns.

The question was at issue because of a statewide ordinance issued in 2025 which declares that, beginning with the 2026 season, deer hunters will be able to use any type of firearm legal for the hunt unless individual counties issue their own ordinances limiting the allowed weapons. On Feb. 17, commissioners decided not to create a local ordinance.

The topic had been touched on repeatedly over the past several meetings as commissioners investigated questions surrounding safety, enforceability, and steps taken in nearby counties.

Commissioners also heard from Emmie Scheffler of the LeSueur County Soil and Water Conservation District (LCSWCD), who is the administrator of the "One Watershed, One Plan" program for the Cannon River Watershed. Scheffler revealed the area covered by the plan extends across eight counties, but only 5.3% of its territory—the northeast one-fifth of Waseca County's total area—is included.

Scheffler's summary related that the majority of the funding for the program comes from state agencies, but that counties pay dues based on the amount of land they have within the watershed: Waseca County pays \$1,500 yearly. At the current time, the watershed has well over \$1 million on reserve, but Scheffler said amounts are being spent down as more and more programs are implemented. Types of projects used to protect water quality include quite a range, from funding erosion control to testing water quality in area lakes to sealing unused industrial wells.

Scheffler stated the agency also offers numerous webinars on its website covering topics like shoreline septic systems, supporting pollinators, and freshwater wildlife. An upcoming workshop will provide information important to realtors.

Under the plan, the water quality in four Waseca County lakes will be tested this year.

Anyone looking for more information will find the watershed plan at <https://www.lesueurcounty.gov>

County continued on 4

PH & B

PATTON, HOVERSTEN & BERG, PA

A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION / ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Waseca Office

215 Elm Ave E

Waseca, MN

507-835-5240

888-835-5244

Janesville Office

216 N Main St

Janesville, MN

507-234-5106

888-980-1210

Owatonna Office

150 W Park Sq

Owatonna, MN

507-451-9000

866-451-9010

Faribault Office

415 2nd Ave NW

Faribault, MN

507-332-7425

Your Trusted Local Law Offices for Over 50 Years



DENNIS STEFFEL OMTVEDT

FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICE

109 3RD STREET NE, WASECA, MN 56093

WASECA • JANESVILLE • WATERVILLE

PHEASANT

CAFE

• SINCE 1942 •

Great Home Cooking • Catering

Full Breakfast Menu • Daily Lunch Specials

104 State Street, Waseca MN • 835-1259

BATTENFELD

LAWN CARE

Lawn Maintenance & Residential Snow Removal

Zach Battenfeld

507-521-0226

zachbattenfeld@gmail.com

JB

JAMES BROS.

CONSTRUCTION

507.267.4789

jamesbrosconstruction.com

Complete Septic Service and Installation • Excavation
Residential and Commercial Site Preparation and Utilities
Locally Owned and Operated since 1978

OBITUARIES

Elaine Hanson

Elaine Marie Hanson of Waseca passed away on February 15, 2026, at home surrounded by family after a short battle with illness at the age of 87. She was born on January 7, 1939 to Walter and Marie Meinke. She grew up in Waterville, graduating from Waterville High School in 1957. She was a homemaker for the last 36 years, and also held various jobs throughout her life.

She was passionate about and actively involved with the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Morristown American Legion Post.

She was preceded in death by her former husbands Robert (Bob) Janike and Ray Schaub. She is survived by her husband David Hanson and by her children Bruce (Pam) and Carrie (Marc) as well as step-children Jeff (Julie), Jodi (Tom) and Richard, along with



Elaine Hanson

numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Family and friends are invited to attend a funeral at Trinity Lutheran Church in Medford at 3 p.m. on March 7, 2026, with visitation an hour beforehand.

Keen Bank expands access to affordable homeownership

Keen Bank and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines (FHLB Des Moines) have joined forces to offer Mortgage Rate Relief—a housing affordability initiative designed to support income-qualified homebuyers by reducing mortgage interest rates up to 1.5% lower than the current market rate for a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage loan.

“Being able to offer a rate that is 1.5% below market has given many first time buyers a chance they didn’t think they’d have at homeownership,” said VP of Mortgage Lending, Sara Lynch. “I’m proud to support a

program that creates real opportunities.”

Introduced in 2024, Mortgage Rate Relief has impacted more than 3,200 households, with over \$58 million in grant funding applied to more than \$655 million in funded mortgage loans across the FHLB Des Moines district.

All owner/occupant’s income must be considered when determining eligibility for this interest rate reduction product. For more information and to verify eligibility for Mortgage Rate Relief contact Keen Bank at 507.835.2740.

Council

from Page 1

ment-for public safety mutual aid assistance. This is to aid surrounding towns or further away than that like Minneapolis during times of civil unrest, by sending in Waseca officers. This is a common practice, for example when a fire gets out of hand, firefighters from surrounding towns come and aid local firefighters.

The Electric Utility Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) former ordinance for 2025 will soon run out. The council was asked to vote on a new resolution. City manager Carl Sonnenberg, summarized “the monthly ECA rate calculation on kilowatt hour consumption shall be

established and implemented by the city manager or designee on all retail electric account holders on a monthly basis as provided to electric customers through the monthly municipal utility services bill as issued by Waseca Utilities, and shall be based on the following calculation, where a 0.948 adjustment accounts for Waseca electric distribution infrastructure electrical resistance.”

Council woman Stacey Schroeder commended councilman Conrath for his assistance with the Hertz Antique snowmobile show. She also congratulated the Waseca Legion Riders for their ice fishing contest on Clear Lake. Mayor Zimmerman received a letter from a parent from Grand Rapids during a recent wrestling tournament saying how great Waseca was during their visit.

storms and tornadoes, drought, wildfire, extreme heat or cold, and more.

County engineer Jim Kollard presented what he referred to as “the first of many summer construction contracts” for approval. This one entailed seal coating to take place on about 20 miles of county roads and included some “piggy-backing” for projects to be performed on roads maintained by Woodville Township and the city of Waseca.

Commissioners approved about \$524,000 for the maintenance: scheduled for seal coating are sections of County Roads (CR) 5, 6, 29, and 55; County State Aid Highways (CSAH) 33, 43, 45; and parts of Bunker Drive in Waseca and Highlands Drive in Woodville Township.

County

from Page 3

Cannon-River-One-Watershed-One-Plan.

Commissioners accepted the updated All Hazard Mitigation Plan presented by county emergency management director Denise Wright. The 70-some page plan must be updated every five years and is required before property owners within the county can be eligible for emergency funds through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The plan summarizes resources and agencies which can be accessed in case of situations including floods, electrical failure, severe



REPRESENTING WASECA - From left, Katie Gonzales, Jodie Thompson, Representative Tom Sexton, Robin Dulas, Mikhail Rostislavovich, Jessica Klinger, and Commissioner Brian Harguth attended the annual session priorities dinner in St. Paul.

Waseca delegation joins Minnesota Chamber at annual session priorities dinner

Leaders and business advocates from the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and the Waseca community came together Tuesday evening as part of the statewide delegation attending the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce’s 2026 Session Priorities Dinner in St. Paul. The event, held at the Saint Paul RiverCentre on February 17, served as the official kickoff to the Minnesota legislative session and attracted business leaders, policymakers, elected officials, and chamber representatives from across the state.

The Session Priorities Dinner, recognized as the Minnesota Chamber’s largest and highest-profile annual gathering, provided attendees with insights into the legislative agenda for 2026. Guests heard from top business and legislative leaders on key issues impacting Minnesota’s economy, including tax competitiveness, workforce challenges, regulatory priorities, and broader strategies to drive economic growth.

The evening featured a meet-and-greet with all declared gubernatorial candidates, giving members of the Waseca delegation the opportunity

to speak directly with those vying for Minnesota’s highest office. The personal conversations allowed local leaders to advocate for the priorities that matter most to southern Minnesota businesses and communities.

Governor Tim Walz addressed the crowd, outlining his administration’s perspective on the upcoming legislative session and the state’s economic outlook. The program also included a bipartisan legislative panel moderated by Tom Hauser of KSTP. Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle participated in a thoughtful discussion covering workforce challenges, tax competitiveness, economic growth, and the regulatory environment facing Minnesota employers.

“We were proud to join colleagues from all corners of Minnesota to engage directly with the policy priorities that will shape the year ahead,” said Mikhail Rostislavovich, President of Discover Waseca Tourism and the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce. “This event is a powerful reminder that when we bring our collective voices together, we strengthen our ability



These additional photos show Waseca delegation members with (above) Senator Amy Klobuchar and (below) State House member and GOP candidate for Governor Peggy Bennett, who currently represents the Albert Lea area.

to advocate for a thriving business climate here in Waseca and across the state.”

The Waseca delegation’s participation underscores the community’s

commitment to advancing the interests of local businesses and ensuring Waseca’s voice is represented in statewide policy discussions.

Frosty

from Page 1

masking at the Waseca VWF @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 unmasking is not necessary.

Contest rules Clues are published by the Waseca County Pioneer; NRHEG Star Eagle, Facebook; and Waseca County News; Waseca Chamber of Commerce; KOWZ/KRUE radio; Waseca Sleigh & Cutter Festival.

1. One guess allowed each week.
2. Each entry must have name and complete address of person making the guess. Entries without complete information are not valid.
3. Entrant must live in Waseca County and be over 18 years of age.
4. If there are multiple correct guesses, a drawing will be made to determine the winner.
5. If there are no correct guesses, a drawing will be made from all entries received.

7. Entries must be received before 3:00 p.m. February 27, 2026.

8. Submit entries to:
 - a. WASECA: Submit entry at Waseca Music; 111 South State, Waseca, MN 56093; or via mail.
 - b. JANESVILLE: Mail or drop off at Waseca Music; mark your entry as Janesville.
 - c. NEW RICHLAND: Drop off at NRHEG STAR EAGLE NEWS; or mail to Waseca Music - mark your entry as New Richland.

Frosty sponsors: iWealth – Brad Connors; Domino’s; Latham Place; Mediacom; Lake Shore Inn; and Xcel Energy. Please thank these sponsors for supporting the 29th

Annual Frosty Contest!

Frosty: Week 6 Clue
*This final week
Offers a final clue
Frosty’s identity -
Do you know too?
Retired after 34-years in the field,
But still in the thick of things,
Still working for the greater good,
Excited for what the future brings.*

*Days are anything but relaxing,
Frosty with full hands and full heart,
3 grown children, 7 grandkids
And 1 more soon added to the flowchart.*

Rick's Appliance
ricksappliancewaseca.com
AMANA Sales & Service 507-461-9615
Q Speed Queen
MAYTAG Hours M-F 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM Sat 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM Sunday Closed
Whirlpool
Visit our new Showroom!
405 West Elm Ave, Waseca MN

Waseca Music
C O M P A N Y
YOUR LOCAL MUSIC STORE
Band Instruments • Repairs
Guitars • CD, DVD, & Vinyl
507-835-2980
111 South State Street

USED BOOKSTORE
507-455-3440
eatonsbooks@q.com
Mon-Fri 10-5 Sat 10-3:30
602 North Cedar Ave Owatonna MN 55060
RECYCLE YOUR BOOKS WITH US

STEVE JAMES EXCAVATING
DAM CONSTRUCTION
ELYSIAN, OWATONNA, WASECA & WATERVILLE
507-451-3080
SteveJamesExcavating.com
Offering Commercial & Residential Services
• Excavation
• Site Development
• Site Utilities
• Basement Digging
• Trucks & Hauling
• Landscape Supplies
• Rock, Sand, Gravel & Dirt
• Demolition
• Water & Waterline Repair
• Jetting, Camera & Locating
• Septic Services
• Snow Plowing

HIGH POINT LAND COMPANY
TROY STAFFORD CPA, MBA
507-259-3047
Troy@HighPointLandCompany.com
HIGHPOINTLANDCOMPANY.COM

H&J Fuel, Inc.
507-461-0604
On-Site Bulk Fuel Delivery
Waseca, Mn

Spelling Bee Winner



NATIONAL STAGE - JWP 8th grader Ava Place is D.C.-bound! Ava defeated 24 other area school spelling bee champions to be crowned the regional spelling bee winner. The winning word? Entrepreneur!

She will proudly represent JWP and the South Central Service Cooperative this May in Washington, D.C., at the prestigious Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Ava is the first student from Janesville, Waldorf-Pemberton, or Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton to win a regional spelling bee and advance to the national stage! What an incredible accomplishment!

Hartley school working on numerous projects

By MELISSA DUNN
Staff Writer

WASECA SCHOOL BOARD

During their Feb. 19 meeting, Hartley Principal Ben O'Brien spoke to the members of the Waseca school board about the vision card for the Hartley site, which he described as a "break-off" of that of the district in terms of goals for students, student support, academic programming, and teaching and learning.

O'Brien explained the vision statements aligning under each section; READ Act goals as prescribed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for grades K-3, continuing the Character Strong Social Emotional curriculum for students, continuing to pilot several math teaching programs with the goal of making a K-6 curriculum purchase in the

spring of 2026, and Professional Learning Communities for teaching staff focused on the essential questions around data and instruction.

District Business Manager Andrew Adams gave a brief financial update; the revised budget will come before the board at the end of March. Formerly an auditor in a CPA firm, Adams became the business manager first at the Medford school district, then St. Paul Public Schools and most recently Eden Prairie before arriving at Waseca.

The next work session is on March 5 at the Junior/Senior High School.

■ McLoone from Page 1

Journey, the Beach Boys, and many others.

Every person in Minnesota who lived through the eighties and nineties knows the Twins song, "We're going to win Twins, we're going to score." McLoone helped write and perform the song; he can be heard and recognized on the original track.

During his 2024 interview, McLoone said the project he took the most pride in was working with Solomon Witherspoon on the song "Starlight" which can be found on Youtube. In that song, children from Sacred Heart School are heard in the background. The project was to help during the tragedy of Sandy Hook, "That's what I'm most proud of," he declared. Another philanthropic endeavor for him was helping sponsor an orphanage in Africa called Ultimamission.



HOW NOT TO AGE - From left: Stacy Ewert, Afton Finley, Karen Dahle, Gwen and David Oraskovich, Erica Forsythe and Valarie Bartelt all took part in the Waseca Public Library's Cook the Book potluck-style event on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026.
Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Another Cook the Book hits the library

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Waseca Public Library held a "Cook the Book" potluck-style event the afternoon of Thursday, Feb. 19. The book for the day was Michael Greger, MD's "The How Not to Age Cookbook," a vegan take on modern recipes and healthy living, with recipes by Robin Robertson.

Seven guests came for the potluck, each bringing dishes made with recipes from the book. Foods included soups, potato salads, dessert and spaghetti. There were pans and crock pots lined up along the counter and 7 hungry people armed with plates and bowls. Stacy Ewert was the first to announce herself and present her dish for the day, Roasted Tomato Basil Soup, "This recipe called for 2.5 pounds of ripe tomatoes and I would've added salt but the recipe did not call for it." One comment about her soup was,

"There's a pure tomato taste to it, very fresh and unique."

Waseca library's head librarian Afton Finley was next to present her dessert dish, Mocha Chia Pudding, "I had to boil a cup of dates to soften them, add lemon juice and date syrup, almond milk and mix." There was also a cup of coffee added and she said, "That's why I didn't give any of this to my child." It looked like a chocolatey dish, like pudding. One comment was, "It's fooling my tastebuds, I think it's going to taste like chocolate, but it doesn't."

Karen Dahle, whose schedule has never before allowed her to join one of these Cook the Book events, presented her dish, White Bean Cassoulet. "I already had at home a ton of dried beans, I did add salt to mine if you can't tell." One immediate comment was, "That's why it tastes so good." She also admitted to having trouble locating one ingredient, "I did not find any savory, that must be a hard to find item. But after tasting it myself I would definitely make this again."

Gwen and David Oraskovich presented their combined dish, grilled vegetable skewers with umami sauce, said Gwen, "The cooking was just basic roasted vegetables, the recipe didn't say if they had to be peeled or not so I just left them as is. We wanted to grill them and had everything ready, but with the snow I ended up baking them in the oven." David took care of the umami sauce, "It was a vegetable broth, garlic, ginger, molasses, tomato paste, papali, lemon, and apple cider vinegar." David also read an interesting fact from his sauce recipe, "Umami is one of the five original tastes." He received a few "Oh's" and "Ah's" from the group in amazement.

Valery Bartelt was next to present her dish, spaghetti squash with edamame and basil pistou. "I grow squash in my own garden. The recipe also called for three cups of fresh basil, now I thought that would be a lot, so I purchased more than one of those plants, but I ended up only using one plant, and that was enough. Once you get that first leaf in there it fills up quickly." She made the pesto sauce in her food processor and used a garlic infused olive oil.

Fellow librarian Erica Forsythe was the final presenter with her dish, French style potato salad: "I used a meso pasta with lemon juice, some of the salad is mashed potatoes and dressing. I didn't want all the parsley, there was also a lot of dill and chives and green onions, which I didn't add because it was getting to be a little much." But if there were any complaints none could be heard.



WELCOMED - The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism recently welcomed Kelm's BBQ as a new member. Kelm's BBQ is owned and operated by Kevin and Amy Kelm.

Waseca Chamber welcomes Kelm's BBQ

The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Ambassadors recently welcomed new member Kelm's BBQ, owned and operated by Kevin and Amy Kelm.

Kelm's BBQ is a locally owned food truck serving up delicious, slow-smoked barbecue and offering catering services for events of all sizes. From community gatherings to private celebrations, Kevin and Amy are passionate about bringing quality BBQ and friendly service to the Waseca area and beyond.

"The addition of Kelm's BBQ to our Chamber membership is exciting for our community," said Mikhail Rostislavovich, President of the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Board of Directors. "Locally owned businesses like Kevin and Amy's add energy and flavor to Waseca's business landscape, and we're proud to support their continued growth."

Robin Dulas, Executive Director of the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, added, "We are thrilled to welcome Kelm's BBQ to the Chamber. Food trucks bring a unique vibrancy to community events and local business partnerships. We encourage everyone to watch for their bright green logo around town and support this fantastic new member."

Be sure to look for the bright green Kelm's BBQ food truck at local events and around the community. You can also follow them on Facebook to see where they're headed next.

To book catering or learn more, contact Kelm's BBQ at 507-521-1969 or email kelsmbbq@gmail.com.

For more information about the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism and its members, visit www.wasecachamber.com.

Waseca County awards opioid grants

Waseca County is proud to announce the recipients of the first round of funding from its Opioid Settlement Grant Program. The grants, totaling nearly \$30,000, will support local efforts focused on prevention, recovery, and intervention related to opioid misuse and substance use disorders.

The first round of grants includes the following awardees:

- Janesville Waldorf Pemberton (JWP) High School – Hope Squad for Healthy Choices - \$15,800
- JWP High School will launch a peer-led Hope Squad for grades 9–12 using the evidence-informed Hope Squad Curriculum to promote mental health, resilience, and substance misuse prevention. The program aims to increase awareness, strengthen coping skills, encourage help-seeking, and foster a connected school culture that supports healthy decision-making and early intervention.
- Waseca County Community Corrections – Rehabilitative Support for Youth on Probation or Diversion (RESET) Program – \$10,500
- The RESET Program, offered by Fernbrook Family Resource Center, provides a 12-week, evidence-based counseling curriculum for youth on probation or diversion. Using Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, it builds decision-making, coping, and accountability skills while addressing individual needs. The program helps reduce vulnerability to substance use and supports lasting behavioral change and community reintegration.
- Waseca County Recovery Events – \$3,000
- Monthly pro-social events in Waseca County will bring together individuals in recovery and their sober supports for activities like bowling, bingo, and volleyball. Grant funds will cover event costs and support a mentorship program that empowers participants to guide others in recovery, strengthening community connection, accountability, and long-term sobriety.

BC739881

ALBERT LEA ROOFING

SIDING | WINDOWS | DOORS | GUTTERS

A Division of Local Roofing, LLC

Exteriors... It's what we do!

507-391-3108

www.AlbertLeaRoofing.com



The Pastor's Column

Embrace the cross

By FATHER GLENN FRERICHS

As a pastor, I have been invited into many homes over the years. In addition to having the opportunity to visit without interruption, the decor of a home often speaks volumes about what families value, their family history, and their priorities. One of the most recognizable symbols that instantly identifies a home as Christian is the cross. Among all the objects that exist, the cross is arguably the most unique. Why is that? Unlike anything else in the world, the cross has become more than just a tool or an instrument of torture. It has also become a symbol for Christians and a representation of their way of life.

This Lenten season is a time to reflect on what Jesus has done for us by willingly dying on the cross. The cross was mainly used for slaves, foreigners, political agitators, and rebels. The death was cruel, and deep shame and humiliation accompanied this sentence. The Romans used this tool to punish, but perhaps even more to erase a person's memory and reputation.

The cross is a powerful symbol for Christianity because that instrument intended for shame overcame sin, thus representing the ultimate act of love, victory, and redemption won for us by Christ. Many Christian denominations will sing the Exultet, which proclaims, "O happy fault that merited for us, so glorious a redeemer. If the first tree in the Garden of Eden became our downfall, the second tree, of the cross, brought restoration and salvation to mankind. Christians do not see the cross as a morbid but as paradoxically happy but through Christ's obedience, satisfaction having been attained and the resurrection

being achieved.

The cross was once a tool of torture, but it remains a symbol of Christianity. Its most important significance for Christians is its meaning as a way of life we are called to follow. This command comes directly from Luke 9:23: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." The Christian does not seek out crosses, but he does embrace them for the sake of Christ and others when they appear: enduring trials with faith, helping those in need, and patiently bearing the consequences of fallen humanity are all simple ways the Christian follows the way of the cross.

As Christians, we encounter the cross in three ways. Nature challenges us with difficulties like illness and natural disasters. We can also bear crosses in our own lives through our sinful and reckless actions. The third way is by receiving personal crosses caused by the actions of others.

This might include something they have done, struggles in relationships, and similar issues. Of these three, most people have the least patience for carrying the third.

As we journey through this season of Lent, let us place the cross at the center of our prayers and lives. I often say that in 25 years of priesthood, I've never seen a hearse pull a loaded U-Haul to the cemetery. God shows His power through weakness, delights in those who choose obedience over comfort, and embraces self-sacrifice and service to others before themselves. May the death of our old self, which we embraced at baptism, be renewed during this season of Lent. And through the cross, we hope it becomes a wellspring unto eternal life.

IN BRIEF

Guided Beer and Pizza Pairing at Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm Thursday, March 12

There will be a Guided Beer and Pizza Pairing at the Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 12. Each 4oz. Pour has been carefully matched with specialty pizzas created for this event. Call or text 715-523-0857 for tickets.

Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2026 Board Meeting Thursday, March 12

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

Winter Farmers Market at Farmamerica Saturday, March 14

There will be a winter farmers market at Farmamerica from 8 a.m. till noon Saturday, March 14. Find locally grown, baked and made while supporting our local producers. Farmamerica is located at 7367 360th Ave., Waseca.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration at the Mill March 14

There will be a St. Patrick's Day

celebration at the Mill with music starting at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 14. Complete with Sacred Heart Mass and a noon lunch.

Farmamerica Pizza and Puzzles March 14

There will be a Pizza and Puzzles event at Farmamerica at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 14. Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm included with admission price. Register at <https://farmamerica.ticketspice.com/march-pizza-puzzles>.

Comedy Show at the Indian Island Winery March 14

There will be a comedy show at the Indian Island Winery at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 14. Ian Pope will star as the opening act with Dante Powell headlining, complete with storytelling and punchlines.

Waseca County Farm & City Luncheon at Farmamerica March 19

The county farm and city luncheon at Farmamerica will begin at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 19 to acknowledge the hardworking individuals who continue to move our ag industry forward. Tickets are \$20 per person and must be purchased in advance at the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism. The deadline to purchase tickets is March 9. Must have a ticket to attend.



COFFEE CHAT - Zdenek Kavka, an 18-year-old Czech exchange student, along with Sheriff Jay Dulas, Robin Dulas, Representative Tom Sexton, Chamber President Mikhail Rostislavovich, Ann Staloch, and Jess Klinger, all attended the latest installment of Coffee with Tom Sexton on Friday, Feb. 13, 2026. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Coffee with Sexton addresses key issues

By ANN STALOCH

At the recent Coffee and Conversation with Representative Sexton event held at the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, community members gathered to discuss

critical local issues impacting Waseca and surrounding areas. Water quality in and around Waseca was a central topic of conversation, with Sexton affirming his support for infrastructure improvements. "I am committed to passing a

bonding bill that has appropriations for Waseca in it," Sexton said, highlighting his dedication to securing state investment for local water concerns for lakes, watersheds, and capacity. Attendees also raised questions about proposed changes to deer hunting regulations in response to recent state legislative action. The Minnesota Legislature passed changes that will eliminate the statewide shotgun-only deer hunting zone starting with the 2026 season, allowing the use of rifles throughout much of the state unless individual counties choose otherwise. Counties that were previously in the shotgun-only zone may decide to adopt their own ordinance restricting firearm types for deer hunting, following public hearings and

local decisions. "When it comes to the rifle versus shotgun discussion, I believe our county commissioners have a better grasp on the needs and wants of local hunters and landowners than the state legislature does. They are closest to the people, and they should be trusted to make that decision," stated Sexton confidently.

Discussion also focused on the local option sales tax proposal. Waseca County is exploring an additional sales tax to support a proposed justice center. While the County already has a sales tax in place, this new tax would require voter approval. Community members asked whether this would affect the City of Waseca's ability to pursue its own local option sales tax for city projects. Representative Sexton shared that the answer was "possibly," noting that the interaction between county and city sales tax authority could influence future project funding options. These monthly gatherings, Coffee with Tom, are held at noon on the second Friday of every month at the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, and are open to the public for dialogue with Representative Sexton on issues that matter most to the community.

Local church invites all to study with 'The Chosen'

A group of 20 or more has begun gathering regularly at First Lutheran Church in Waldorf to watch episodes of the Christian series "The Chosen" and use it as a basis for short Bible study sessions. The group will meet again at 6 p.m. on March 15. At that time, season one episode 5 will be viewed. The meeting after that will be 6 p.m. March 29.

The sessions began in January and are held every other Sunday in the basement of First Lutheran Church. The video is shown on a

6-foot-tall screen and popcorn is served at no cost.

Session leader Rev. Larry Sipe says he believes the show will help viewers "gain a deeper understanding of God's love for mankind and especially for themselves." The series is produced by Dallas Jensen, who has been making Christian films for decades. In its fifth season and available online, the series depicts Christ and the apostles, adding elements about their daily lives and personalities which are not mentioned in the

Bible, but are not in contradiction to information and circumstances provided in the New Testament.

Regarding the dramatizations, Sipe observes, "One of the appealing aspects is we get to see how human Jesus was, that he laughed, played, had friends, joked around, not just that he is God but also that he is man. Another appealing aspect for me is that 'The Chosen' shows how much we have in common with the great heroes of the Gospels, Peter, who made the great confession that Jesus was the

Christ the Son of the living God, had a wife and marital problems. 'The Chosen' does a good job at helping us understand what life was like under Roman occupation and the sense of longing for a savior/messiah/deliverer."

Sipe goes on to say the dramatized version inspires viewers to read the gospels for themselves; it also offers a low pressure opportunity to invite family members and friends to connect or reconnect with the central occurrences of Jesus' life.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-833-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m. * * * 4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m. * * * FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m. * * * CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH 309 6th St NE, Waseca 507-835-9176 Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m. Sunday School/Fellowship 10:15 a.m. Wednesday Eve Worship 6:30 p.m. * * * 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.
--	---	---	--

GUARDIAN ENERGY

AMERICAN MADE, FARMER OWNED
www.guardianrng.com

ETHANOL

Child’s History of Waseca County

CHAPTER VIII, 1855. Martin Krassin and John Greening – First Settlement in St. Mary – First Log Cabin to Burn in the Settlement – Joseph and Abraham Bird, John White – Bernard Gregory and Mr. Tower – John and David Jenkins Locate in Wilton.

Martin Krassin and John G. Greening, next to Mr. Sutlief, were the oldest land lookers of the county. Martin was a native of Prussia, born in the year 1821, and came to America with his family in July, 1854, stopping temporarily with his brothers, near Princeton, Wisconsin. He left his young wife there in the fall of 1854, and with Greening made an extensive tour of Minnesota, the greater part of the way on foot. They passed through this section, pushed on to Minnesota river, thence down that stream and on to St. Paul, whence they proceeded to La Crosse by boat, and thence to Krassin’s family in Wisconsin. As soon as grass started the next spring, Mr. Krassin, in company with his father and mother, his wife and one child, his brother, John F.; his brother-in-law Gottlieb Prechel, who was accompanied by wife and children; his youngest sister, Justina, now Mrs. J. E. Child; Fred Wobschall, Fred Proechel (Big Fred); and John G. Greening and family, made preparations to move to Minnesota. The journey was a toilsome one, and they did not arrive until about the first of June, 1855.

They intended at first to settle about where Steve Krassin has a farm near the southwest corner of St. Mary township, but they soon learned that the Winnebago Indians owned the western tier of sections in St. Mary, and they were obliged to seek other locations. Martin, his father, Gottlieb, Sr., and his brother, John F., made claims in sections 34 and 35. Fred Prechel, then a single man, made his claim in section 34, next to Martin’s. Fred Wobschall, also a bachelor at that time, made his claim in section 35, where he resided up to the time of his death. All of these were in St. Mary township. Gottlieb Prechel and family first settled in the same township, on section 32, but the next year exchanged with Christian Krassin and settled on section 27, in St. Mary, where Mr. Prechel resided with his family until his death. John G. Greening, who came with the Krassins, was the first blacksmith to settle in the county, and he decided to make his home in the town of Otisco, on section 7. He constructed the first dugout in the county. Late that fall, his log cabin took fire and was consumed. It was too late to build another, so he dug out a house in a side-hill, covered it with hay and sod, and lived there during the winter very comfortably.

Very soon after the arrival of Martin Krassin and his company, two brothers, Joseph Bird and Abram Bird, and their brother-in-law, John White, with their families, settled in the vicinity of what has since been known as St. Mary. Abram Bird settled on section 4, Wilton; Joseph Bird on Section 32, St. Mary; and John White, on section 33 of the latter town. The Bird brothers and their sister, Mrs. White, were English by birth, while John White was a native of the Emerald Isle. The Birds were industrious and successful farmers. Abram died in February, 1869, leaving a widow and several children. Joseph, about 1870, sold his farm and removed to Oregon. John White some years ago removed to Iosco, where he died.

Almost simultaneously with the settlement of the Messrs. Bird and White, came Bernard Gregory and his brother-in-law named Tower, with their families. They Tower family remained long enough to help Mr. Gregory build his log house on section 32, St. Mary, and then pushed on further west into what was then called the Blue Earth valley. Mr. Gregory’s family consisted of his wife, two daughters, women grown, and three sons somewhat younger. Louise A. Gregory, the elder daughter, married a Mr. Ballard. She died August 15, 1878, aged forty-one years, five months and twelve days. Martha, the younger, became the wife of Mr. Robert B. Moore, of this county. She passed away December 5, 1875, aged thirty-seven years, six months and thirteen days. Mr. Gregory died in this county July 12, 1880, aged eighty-one years, five months and thirteen days. His wife, Amanda C., died February 28, 1883, aged sixty-seven years, eight months and fourteen days. Austin, the oldest son, died in 1888. Mr. and Mrs. Gregory were kind hearted, agreeable toward strangers, and, during their first year’s residence, kindly entertained many a weary traveler. Peace to their ashes.

The latter part of June, the same year, Andrew Scott and wife, parents of Chris Scott, accompanied by their son, Charles D. Scott, with his wife, came on from Wisconsin. The old gentleman was a “character,” having some peculiar ways. He first made a claim on section 24, in Wilton, which he sold to John Jenkins, and then made on one section 13, in the same town. After much suffering from blood poison, which commenced in his feet, the old gentleman died about 1863 in Wilton. C. D. Scott made his claim on the town line between Otisco and Wilton, in sections 13 and 18, where he lived for many years, but always in poor health. He finally lost nearly all his property. He died several years ago.

WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

SUBSCRIBE

WASECA'S ONLY LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED NEWSPAPER!

\$59 IN WASECA COUNTY

\$69 ... IN STATE OF MINNESOTA

\$79 OUTSIDE STATE

NEWS FOR LOCALS BY LOCALS

CALL, EMAIL, OR STOP IN OUR OFFICE!

111 WEST ELM AVE, WASECA, MN

(507) 837-6767

NEWS@WASECACOUNTYPIONEER.COM

Waseca

25 years ago

- Waseca Student Writes: “Describe an invention or discovery that would make you famous or honored by others.”

Zakkery Reese-Grade 4: I would invent a remote that would change the channel for you. You would just need to tell it to change the channel. It would be for fat people so they would not have to move a finger. It would order pizza for you. It would shop for you. It would feed your pet. It would go get pop. It would do your work.

Marissa Wolff-Grade 4: I invented the robot that does your homework and school work. She makes your bed. She is very nice. She does everything for you. Some day I will invent a boy. Then they will fall in love. The end.

Howard Mack-Grade 4: The invention I would make is the TV WATCH and mini DVD player. With a radio in it. It’s a watch that you put on your wrist. You can listen to your favorite music star. A built in mini TV over 1000 channels!!! With a mini DVD player, with 100 DVD VIDEOS!! The sale price is 50.00!! It would make front news, even MARS!! The End

50 years ago

- Schoolchildren ran home with mittens stuffed in pockets and open coats yesterday when the thermometer soared to a high of 52 degrees. If they didn’t have to contend with bitter cold, however, the kids did have to contend with slush and puddles. Pictured above from left to right are: Stacy Mokoff, a seventh grader at the middle school; Dennis Hoy, also in seventh grade at the middle school; Denise Anderson, a fourth grader at Hartley; and Lisa Mokoff, a first grader at Hartley.

- Les Rocek won the color TV at the Waseca Fire Department’s fundraising dance at the American Legion last Saturday. Also winning were Roger Hanson, who won a clock radio, Maynard Sell who won a portable radio, and Dan Sommers who won a fire extinguisher. The dance was held to raise money in order that the department may purchase new equipment.

- The Vista Community is making plans to celebrate the 120th anniversary of its founding on Sunday, Aug. 15, 1976. Members of the community recently met and elected Herb Hokanson as anniversary chairman. David Swenson, vice chairman. Mrs. Raymond Peterson, secretary and Robert Frisk, treasurer. A one day celebration is being planned with an outdoor morning worship service for the forenoon, and in the afternoon a featured speaker. Plans are being made to update the community genealogy. The genealogy was completed to the hundredth anniversary in 1956, and will now include the following 20 years. A new history book will be compiled with Ron Johnson and Manley Youngberg editing it.

- The Waseca County Singles Club will meet at 8 p.m. in the clubroom of the American Legion in Waseca. ALI singles are welcome, whether a member or not. The guest speaker will be Lewis Fitterer, Owatonna. Coffee and cookies will be served.

75 years ago

- Pictured above is the beautiful Studebaker delivery unit by the Waseca Co-op Creamery in the early morning deliveries of their milk and dairy products. Lower operating costs was one of the major factors considered in the purchase of the Studebaker 1 ton delivery unit shown. In the picture above Percy Turnacliff is shown receiving an early morning order through former Waseca Coop. manager Rill Turnacliff. “For early morning starting in cold weather, this Studebakers dependable starting was a great satisfaction,” says Percy.

- George I. James, manager of Western States utilities, Inc., in Waseca, reported that during the cold weather period from Jan. 28 through Feb. 1 the company had to exceed their contract demand by a considerable amount. The company’s contract allows 2383 thousand cubic feet of gas per day. A penalty payment applied on all usage over that amount. Heaviest use reported here was on Monday, Jan. 29, when the demand went up to 2790 thousand (2,700,000) cubic feet of gas. This exceeded the contract demand by 407,000 cubic feet. James reported a minimum of trouble calls during the recent extremely cold weather.

100 years ago

- If you aren’t much of a success as a carpenter and frequently hit your finger instead of the tack, stick the tack through a piece of paper and hold the paper instead of the tack. Then you can bang until you finally hit it without accidents.

- Heard the story of the man who showed up at his golf club on Sunday and said it was a toss-up whether he should go to church or out to the links? He had to flip the coin 15 times. -Seattle Times.

- The great highroad of human welfare lies along the old highway of steadfast well-doing; and they who are the most persistent, and who work in the truest spirit, will invariably be the most successful; success treads on the heels of every right effort. -Samuel Smiles.

New Richland

25 years ago

- Winning the Grand Prize of \$500 given away during the annual St. Olaf Lake Ice Fishing Derby, sponsored by the New Richland area Sportsmen’s Club, Sunday afternoon was Trenton Thurman of New Richland.

- Jeff and Doreen Coy of Pemberton announce the engagement of their daughter, Sarah Coy, to Jason Meschke, son of Bob and Sandy Meschke of Fairmont. Sarah is a 1997 graduate of Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High school. Jason is a 1996 graduate of Fairmont High School.

- Ashley Misgen lands after completing a vault in the gymnastic triangular the Panther Gymnastics team entered in Waseca, earlier this month.

50 years ago

- These New Richland-Hartland High school Band members will attend the Dorian Band Festival at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, February 29-March 1. They are, from the left, Judy Tollefson, C-Flute; JoAnn Haen, Eb Contra Bass Clarinet; Naomi Hokanson, Bb Bass Clarinet. Each will play a solo for adjudication. The public is invited to the 7:30 pm, Monday evening concert at Luther.

- The Colts of Waldorf-Pemberton defeated the Lake Crystal team, 56-47 in the first round of play in District 6A basketball Tournament action at Mankato State University, Monday evening. The Colts shot a hot 80 percent from the free throw line, while their opponents were shooting 75 percent. Scoring in double figures for the Colts were Pete Hinton with 12, Brett Jans, 25 and Bob Drager, 10.

75 years ago

- A registered Guernsey cow, Boulder Bridge Waterlily, owned by Harold Halstead, Waseca, put 10,115 pounds of milk and 551 pounds of butterfat into the country’s breadbasket. Harold is a member of the Woodville Hustlers 4-H club in Waseca County and showed this heifer at the Waseca County Fair, State Fair and the Waterloo Show last year as a 4-H club project.

State tourney stays elusive for WHS hockey

Jays fall 4-3 to Dodge County in Section 1A semifinal round

The state tournament remains elusive for the Waseca High School boys' hockey team.

The Bluejays fell 4-3 to Dodge County in overtime Saturday night in the Section 1A semifinals at the Rochester Recreation Center. Waseca finished with a record of 20-6-2.

Waseca drew first blood, with Griffin Storey scoring at 6:45 of the opening period on an assist from Avery Selvik.

After the Wildcats cut the lead in half on a power-play goal by Nolan Steele at the 10:47 mark, Henry Huttemier put Waseca on top 2-1 with a goal at 13:36.

The Wildcats stormed back to knot it 2-2 at 6:23 of the second period on an even-strength goal by Gabe Coshenet as Dodge County held a 10-5 shots advantage in the session.

Coshenet gave Dodge County a 3-2 edge at 2:31 of the third period, and the Bluejays answered it at the 12:29 mark on a goal by Huttemier, assisted by Jude Gehring and Beckett Srp.

In the extra session, Jeremiah Peterson-Gordon's power-play goal at 4:41 won it for the Wildcats.

For the game, Waseca held a 30-26 shots advantage. Dodge County took four penalty minutes to the Bluejays' eight.

Josiah Schmidtke was in goal for the Jays, registering 22 saves.

The Bluejays, seeded second in Section 1A, eliminated seventh seed Red Wing 8-2 last Thursday at Waseca Community Arena. Waseca improved to 20-5-2 overall while the Wingers ended their season with a 10-16 record. The win advanced the Jays to the semifinal round against No. 3 Dodge County at the Rochester Rection Center, with the winner meeting top-seeded Northfield or No. 4 Rochester Lourdes Wednesday at Rochester for the section championship and state tournament berth, which would be Waseca's first.

After a somewhat slow start, that saw Waseca up 2-0 after one period, the Jays pulled away to a 5-1 lead after two periods while outshooting the Wingers 55-11 for the night. Waseca took six penalty minutes on three violations while Red Wing was in the box for four minutes on two penalties.

Jayden Gehring scored first for the Jays, at 2:08 of the opening period on an assist from his brother, Jude. Selvik made it 2-0 at the 8:09 mark, scoring on an assist from Storey.

Storey's power-play goal at 3:59 of the second - assisted by Ayden Kath and Otto Schoenrock - extended it to 3-0 before Red Wing finally



PLAYOFF INTENSITY — Above, the Bluejays' Cash Lynch hits the post during the first-period of last Thursday's 8-2 victory over Red Wing. Below, Otto Schoenrock advances the puck.

Photos by Jim Lutgens



Bluejays top Hope Academy, Pine Island

With a 40-point lead about mid-way through the second half, Waseca High School boys' basketball coach Seth Anderson was able to substitute liberally at Hope Academy in Minneapolis last Thursday.

It didn't make much difference. Everyone played well.

The Bluejays, who raced to a 44-15 halftime lead, parlayed it into a 74-49 nonconference victory, improving their season record to 18-7. And they did it without top scorer Deron Russell sitting out to rest a sore ankle.

"We were comfortable at all three levels," said Anderson. "It was fun to see a lot of other guys step up in Deron's absence. Our defense was very good."

The Bluejays were also very efficient shooting the ball, evidenced by Ethan Hiller's 5-for-5 night from the floor. Toby Jeske was also perfect, making 4 of 4.

Waseca totals: Hiller 17 points, 7 rebounds, 5 assists, 7 steals, 1 block; Cyrett Long 11P, 2R, 2A, 2S; Kameran Ferch 1R; Wyatt Hager 12P, 3R, 4A, 3S; Owen Honstad 10P, 5R, 3A; Logan Reger 4P, 4R, 1A, 1S; Brody Dufault 4P, 2R, 2S; Owen Rupe 3P, 4R, 1A, 1S; Caleb Wulf 1R, 1A; Jeske 8P, 4R, 1S 2B; Nate Kaiser 2P.

Two nights earlier, the Bluejays rallied past Pine Island 85-69 in a nonconference game on Senior Night at Waseca.

The Panthers controlled the action early in a very physical game, holding a 37-36 halftime advantage after leading by as many as 11 points in the opening half.

"After a really slow start to the game, we played a great second half," said Coach Anderson. "We defended very well in the second half and shot the ball well."

Russell had another big game, finishing with 27 points, six rebounds,



PHYSICALITY – The Bluejays' Wyatt Hager (4) and Ethan Hiller (0) fight for a rebound during Waseca's 85-69 victory over Pine Island last Monday on Senior Night at Waseca. The Bluejays went on to complete a 2-0 week with a 74-49 victory over Hope Academy at Minneapolis Thursday night. Waseca's top scorer, Deron Russell, did not play at Hope Academy, and coach Seth Anderson was pleased with the play of his reserves.

Photo by Jim Lutgens

four assists and a blocked shot. Hiller scored 11, making four of six frmo the floor, to go along with 9 rebounds, 4 assists and 3 steals.

Others: Long 10P, 3R, 1A (3-for-4 field goals); Hager 13P, 9R, 2A, 2S, 1B; Honstad 9P, 3R, 3A, 3S; Reger 3P; Dufault 2R, 1A; Riley Mitchell 1P, 1R; Rupe 1R; 1A, 1B; Jeske 8P, 2R; Kaiser 3P.

The Bluejays, who improved to 17-7, made 18 of 39 two-point shots

for 46 percent.

Pine Island's record fell to 8-17. Waseca plays at LeSueur-Henderson in nonconference action tonight to finish the regular season.

WHS basketball girls edged by Maple River

Loss follows setback to talented JWP squad

The Waseca High School girls' basketball team had a chance to tie it with 10 seconds to play at Maple River last Tuesday night.

It was not to be.

The Bluejays couldn't convert and came home with a close 49-45 setback.

"We played very good team defense to shut down Maple River's post players," said Waseca coach Brian Rupe, whose team faced a 23-20 halftime deficit. "We battled back-and-forth in the first half, taking the lead for a short time."

The Bluejays found themselves down by as many as 10 points in the second half before battling back.

"The girls did a good job taking care of the basketball and limiting our turnovers," said Rupe.

Sophomore Reese Rodriguez reached double figures with 10 points, adding five rebounds, five assists and a blocked shot.

Others: Adrianna Willingham 7P, 3R, 2 steals; Ava

Miller 9P, 3R, 4A, 1B; Belle Miller 6P, 3R, 1A, 1S; Maren Schimming 4P, 4R, 1A; Libby Miller 3R; Hannah Sommers 6P, 8R, 2A; Alexa Welander 3P, 2R; Shakiyah Powell 6R, 1B.

The Lady Jays had a nonconference home game against a strong Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton team a night earlier and fell short 77-35. It was 52-14 at halftime.

"JWP is a very talented and well-rounded team," said Rupe. "They jumped out on us early and we just couldn't find much offense in the first half. Ava was about our only source of offense, scoring 27 of our 35. We defended better in the second half and didn't give them as many fast-break points."

Waseca totals: A. Miller 27P, 3R, 1A; Willingham 4P, 1B; Rodriguez 1R, 2A; Schimming 5R, 1A, 2S; L.Miller 1R; Sommers 4P, 4R, 1A; Welander 1P, 2R; Tyler Stagman 1P, Powell 2P, 7R, 1A; Ahvah Maas 1R.

The section tournament starts tonight.



IN THE PAINT — Looking to score against JWP at Waseca last Monday are Reese Rodriguez, left, and Shakiyah Powell, right.

Photos by Jim Lutgens

Registration open now for spring sports

Waseca Junior-Senior High School is now accepting registrations for the 2026 spring sports season for both high school and junior high athletes. Families are encouraged to complete the registration process early to ensure students are ready to participate on the first day of practice.

Please visit the Web site <https://www.waseca.k12.mn.us/o/wpsactivities/page/sports-registration-information> to begin the registration process.

Registration Process (3 Steps):

1. Complete Online Registration

Athletes must submit all required information through the Spring Athletics Registration Webform. Separate forms are available for returning athletes and first-time participants.

2. Pay the Activity Fee
Fees are paid through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal under Optional Payments:
High School Sports: \$200
Junior High Sports: \$100
(Partner school students may pay in person.)

Note: Registration and payment are two separate steps. Both must be completed for registration to be finalized.

3. Submit a Valid Physical
A current MSHSL Sports Qualifying Physical (valid for three years) must be on file before participation.

Mandatory Parent-Athlete-Coach (PAC) Meetings

All athletes and at least one parent/guardian must attend:
Sunday, March 1 at 6 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center (PAC)

Sports included: Baseball, Clay Target League, Golf, Girls Softball, Boys Tennis, and Track & Field.

Programs are available in Baseball, Clay Target League, Golf (Boys' and Girls'), Softball, Tennis (Boys'), and Track & Field (Boys' and Girls'), with both high school and junior high levels offered. First practice dates range from March 9 to March 30, depending on the sport and level.

Requirements to Participate on Day One:

All registration forms and documents must be submitted online by 12 noon on the Thursday before the season begins, including eligibility forms, insurance and handbook acknowledgements, health questionnaires, and a valid physical.

Students are encouraged to get involved and take advantage of another exciting spring sports season. For questions about registration or eligibility, families should contact the Activities Office.

Veroeven, Barnett return to state wrestling tourney

Four other Bluejays earn places in Section 1AA tournament

By BROCK NELSON
Wrestling Writer

The lights were bright. The air was thick with anticipation. And if you weren't inside the Rochester Civic Center this past weekend, you missed something special.

The Minnesota Section 1AA Wrestling Tournament is where seasons are tested and a gateway to the state younament is offered; only the top two at each weight class punch their ticket to St. Paul. When the dust settled Saturday night, Waseca walked out with two state qualifiers and a story of heart, resilience, and flat-out toughness that won't soon be forgotten.

At 285 pounds, Matthew Veroeven put on a clinic. Falls echoed through the arena as he powered his way to the finals, leaving no doubt about who controlled the bracket. In the championship match, he sealed it with a composed 5-1 victory, capturing the Section 1AA title.

At 172 pounds, top-seeded Slade Barnett looked every bit the contender. A technical fall. A major decision. He rolled into the finals with confidence and control.

The championship match came down to inches.

Locked in a 1-0 battle, Barnett nearly secured the winning takedown in the final seconds. The whistle beat him by a heartbeat. He finished second but wrestled like a

champion. And he, too, is headed to state.

The Blood Round Battles: Where Character Is Revealed

If you've never experienced the "blood round," you can't understand it fully. Win, and you're on the podium. Lose, and your season is over.

Four Bluejays stared that pressure in the face.

Devin Parpart – 6th Place

After dropping his first-round match, Parpart refused to let his senior season end quietly. He battled back with wins of 15-6 and 12-8 before losing a razor-thin 4-3 match that sent him to the 5th/6th place bout. He ultimately fell 5-0 in that final match, finishing 6th, a testament to grit and refusal to fold.

Braxton Nelson – 5th Place

Nelson's tournament was pure heart. After an opening loss, he strung together a major decision and a fall to fight back into contention. In his final match, trailing 7-1, many would have faded. Instead, he stormed back, securing an 11-9 victory to claim 5th place. That's fight.

Ton Bethke – 4th Place

Unseeded. Underrated. Unshaken.

Bethke dropped his opening round match, then ignited. Two wrestleback wins by fall and one by major decision launched him all the way to the 3rd-place match. Though he

finished 4th after being defeated by fall, his performance was one of the most impressive runs of the weekend.

Lucas Selthun – 4th Place

After falling to the eventual champion in the quarterfinals at 215, Selthun battled back with authority, including a technical fall, to reach the 3rd-place match. He narrowly lost 5-3, finishing 4th—just steps from the state stage.

With their performances, Veroeven (285) and Slade Barnett (172) advance to the Minnesota State Wrestling Tournament at Grand Casino Arena in St. Paul.

Veroeven will take a season record of 29-3 to the state tourney. He has pinned 25 opponents.

Barnett is 60-18 with 18 pins and 24 technical falls.

The state tournament runs Feb. 25-28.

But beyond the medals and brackets, what stood out most was the fight.

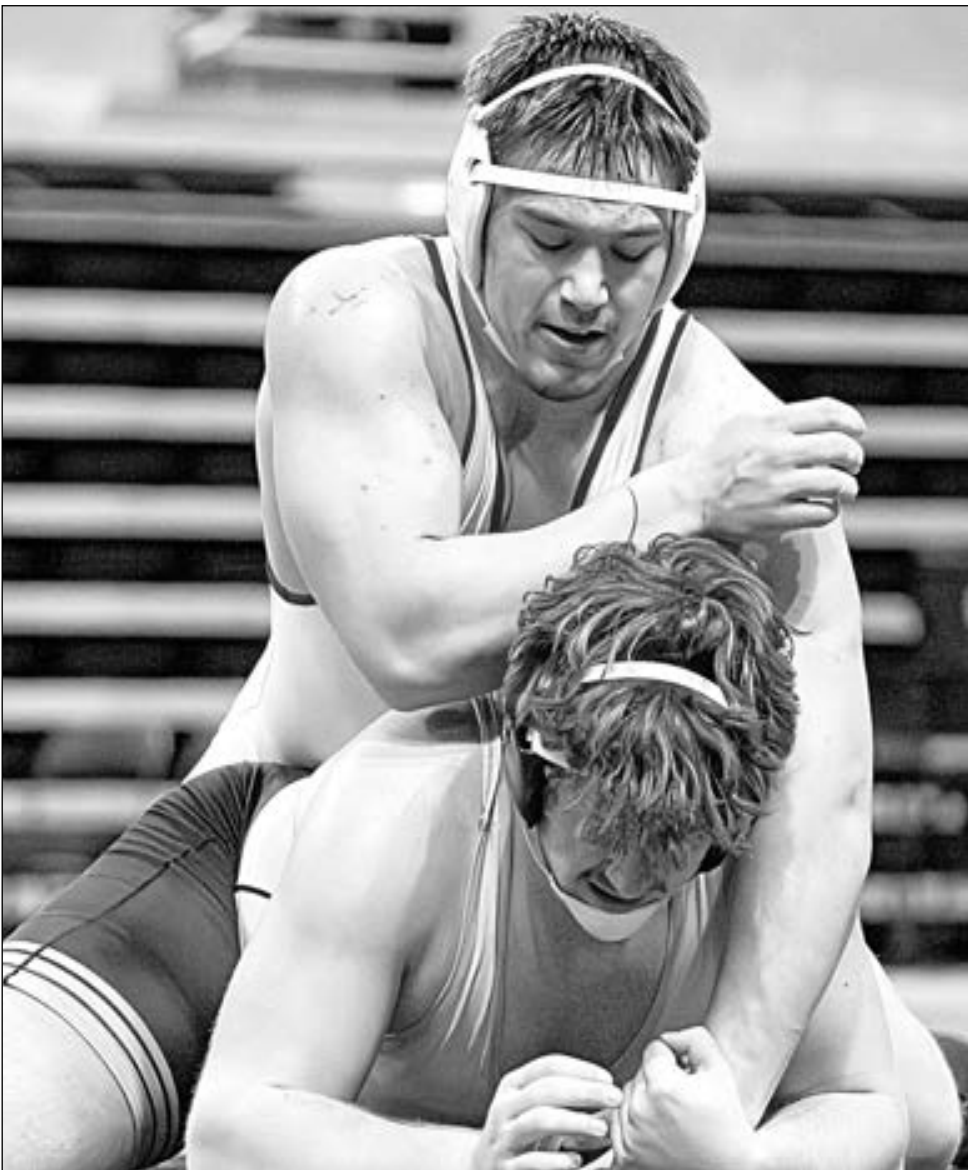
The comebacks.

The near misses.

If you weren't there, you missed something special.

And if you were watching, you saw what it looks like when young men empty the tank—when they give everything for six minutes on a mat under bright lights.

Section 1AA tested the Waseca Bluejays. Waseca didn't back down.



BACK TO STATE — Waseca High School's Matthew Veroeven, top, has advanced to his second straight state wrestling tournament after placing second in Saturday's Section 1AA tourney at Rochester. He'll be joined by at state by senior Slade Barnett.

Photo by Johnnie Phillips/Steele Counry Times

Olson tops 2,000 points as JWP girls beat Waseca

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School girls' basketball team defeated Sibley East 74-40 at Janesville last Tuesday night.

It was another strong outing for the Bulldogs, who pulled away in the second half after holding a 42-25 halftime advantage.

"The girls had another strong showing," said JWP coach Brandon Goebel. "We started off the game a little slow and our communication on defense wasn't great. We started to figure it out a bit midway through the first half. We continued it in the second half to build a pretty commanding lead. Something that was not great for us last night was our rebounding. We have to rebound better in the play-offs if we want to be successful."

Individually: Katie Olson 12 points, 5 rebounds, 8 steals; Nevaeh Weimert 22P, 6R, 3A; Mikayla Wheelock 3P, 3R, 4S; Ashlyn Wolff 12P, 5R; Jacelynn Multer 12P, 5R; Haylee Appel 7P.

The Bulldogs improved their season record to 19-7.

At Waseca Monday, Feb. 16 the

Bulldogs made good on their coach's game plan and Olson made school history, becoming the first JWP girl in history to top 2,000 career points.

The first half was especially kind to JWP as the Bulldogs built a 52-13 halftime lead on their way to a 77-35 nonconference triumph.

"The girls came out ready to go from the jump," said Goebel. "I was really pleased with how they started the game. We have a tendency to not come out ready to go when we are playing a team that might not have as good of a record as us. So it was great to see them come out from the jump and compete at a high level. They were doing a lot of the little things the team needed to be doing at this point of the year."

Individual totals: Olson 22 points, 4 rebounds, 5 assists, 5 steals; Weimert 9P, 6R, 4A, 4S; Wheelock 13P, 3R, 4S; Wolff 10P, 7R; Mulder 10P, 6R; Kwynn Krause 5P, 4R; Appel 5P.

The Bulldogs improved their overall record to 18-7. They were 10-2 in Gopher Conference play.



MILESTONE — Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton's Katie Olson topped the 2,000 career-point mark as the Bulldogs defeated Waseca 77-35 last Monday.

Photo by Jim Lutgens

Grizzlies send 4 wrestlers to state

Several WEM/JWP individuals place in Section 2A tournament

The WEM/JWP wrestling Grizzlies advanced four individuals to the state tournament from Saturday's Section 2A tournament at Janesville.

Anyone placing in the top two of the section qualifies for next week's state tournament in St. Paul at Grand Casino Arena (formerly Xcel Energy Center).

The Grizzlies rounded up four statetate participants.

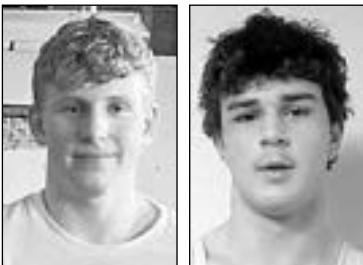
Senior Brady Murphy was the section champion at 139 pounds.

Aiden Gruber took the championship at 152.

Trenton Huber was the runner-up at 189 while Kavin Sheehy placed second at 215.

Also wrestling for the Grizzlies at section: Otto Root, third, 114; Trey Richards, third, 127; Brenden Masso, third, 133; Parker James, fourth, 145; Charles Adams, fourth, 172; Quinn Anderson, sixth, 285. Demian Reyes did not place at 107.

Murphy, a senior, will put a 27-10 season record on the line in the



Huber

Sheehy



Langford

WHS gymnasts conclude season at Section 1A meet

Bluejays' Keith leads team in all-around as WHS takes 6th

The Waseca High School gymnastics team faced tough competition in their final action of the season Saturday, Feb. 14 at the Section 1A meet at Mankato.

The Bluejays finished sixth out of eight teams with 132.675 points. Mankato East was first with 143.775, followed by Blue Earth Area, Martin County Area and New Ulm. Faribault was seventh, St. Peter eighth.

Waseca's Layla Keith finished seventh in all-around with 34.975 points. Also in all-around: Katelyn Weber, 12th, 32.875; Ellie Clark, 14th, 35.525; Hannah Parks, 17th, 32.4; Avery Carda, 19th, 30.35.

Places and scores by event:

Vault - Clark, 13th, 8.75; Keith, 17th, 8.725; Weber, 22nd, 8.65; Carda, 30th, 8.4; Parks, 36th, 8.3.

Floor exercise - Keith, 7th, 9.375; Weber, 19th, 8.9; Parks, 23rd, 8.8; Clark, 29th, 8.45; Carda, 33rd, 8.1.

Uneven parallel bars - Keith, 8th, 8.6; Weber, 18th, 7.725; Parks, 27th, 7.25; Clark, 30th, 7.075; Carda, 35th, 6.65.

Balance beam - Keith, 15th, 8.275; Clark, 16th, 8.25; Parks, 21st, 8.05; Weber, 28th, 7.6; Carda, 35th, 7.2.



SEASON FINALE — The Waseca High School gymnastics team concluded the 2025-26 season Feb. 14 at the Section 1A meet at Mankato.

JWP boys defeat United South Central

Daulton Bauer surpasses 2,000 career-point mark

Sophomore Daulton Bauer became the latest area player to surpass the 2,000-point milestone for his career as the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton boys' basketball team defeated United South Central 73-35 at Janesville last Friday.

The outcome of the game was never in doubt as the Bulldogs built a 43-10 half-time lead as JWP improved to 23-2 overall and 13-1 in Gopher Conference play.

Daulton finished the night with a game-high 22 points to go with seven rebounds and five assists.

Others: Gavin Bauer 6P, 5R; Caleb Quast 8P; Michael Walker 5P; Gavin Weedman 6P; Zander Terbeest 5P; Tyson Kronbach 7P; Jeffrey Simonson 5P.

The Bulldogs fell to Triton Saturday for the conference crown. Scoring: Daulton Bauer 12P, 5A; Quast 16P; Weedman 7P.

The Bulldogs' season record dropped to 22-3.



PLAYOFF ATMOSPHERE — The NRHEG girls' basketball team got a taste of playoff intensity in an 85-71 loss to Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's last Thursday in New Richland. At left, the Panthers' Gabby Schlaak drives the lane. In the middle, Ezra Boerner looks to make a pass. At right, Camryn VanMaldeghe, who scored 46 points, lines up for one of many three-pointers for the senior.

Photos by Jim Lutgens

Panthers can't hold off SESM in top-five battle

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

If the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva girls' basketball team wasn't ready for postseason play, it is now.

The Panthers, ranked No. 3 in the state in Class A, faced their toughest opponent of the season last Thursday before a packed New Richland gymnasium and in the end dropped an 85-71 decision to Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's, rated No. 4 among the state's Class A schools.

It was, according to NRHEG head coach Onika Peterson, a game of runs that saw the Panthers race to a 38-28 halftime advantage, which the Knights kept chipping away at in the second half before finally pulling away

with free throws in the final minutes.

The Panthers' record fell to 24-3 while the Knights improved to 25-1.

"It was truly a game of runs," said Peterson. "We had a great first half. We came out strong, defended at a high level, and executed well."

They held Knights top scorers Mathowitz and Schieffert to 14 and nine points, respectively, which Peterson was pleased to see through the first half.

"Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's plays a very aggressive and disciplined man-to-man defense," said Peterson. "We knocked down nine three-pointers tonight, which kept us in a great rhythm offensively, but at times we struggled finishing at the rim. I'm extreme-

ly proud of how our girls continue to compete. It was a great game overall."

The Knights finally forged the lead in a five-minute stretch in the second half.

"During that stretch, we struggled to convert some good looks," said Peterson. "Against a strong team, those small windows make a big difference. In a dream scenario, we'll get another opportunity to face them, but we have a lot of work ahead of us."

Camryn VanMaldeghe had a huge game offensively for NRHEG, pouring in 46 points to go along with three rebounds, four assists and two steals. Her twin sister, Quinn, led the team in rebounding with 19, adding seven points, five steals and four

assists. Gabby Schlaak also reached double figures in scoring with 12 points.

Panther totals: Schlaak 12P, 1R, 3S, 1A; Ezra Boerner 2P, 1A; Q.VanMaldeghe 7P, 19R, 5S, 4A; Clara Buendorf 1R, 1A; C.VanMaldeghe 46P, 3R, 4S, 2A; Chloe Stork 4P, 3R.

The Panthers are seeded atop Section 1A, and faced eighth-seeded Houston Monday at the Rochester Recreation Center. The winner plays in the semifinals Saturday at 4 p.m. at Rochester. The section crown and state tournament berth will be decided March 5 at 5:30 p.m. at Rochester.

"Section 1 is loaded with talented teams," said Peterson. "We'll need to show up ready to compete every single night."

The good thing?

"Our girls," said Peterson, "love to compete."

The state tournament is March 11-14 at Williams Arena, the University of Minnesota's Maturi Pavilion, and Concordia University's Gangelhoff Center.

Said Peterson, "In a dream scenario, we face Sleepy Eye St. Mary's again."

Hayfield/Shaeffer Academy is seeded No. 2 in Section 1A, followed by Southland, Lewiston-Altura, Spring Grove, Fillmore Central, Lanesboro, Houston, Bethlehem Academy, Alden-Conger/Glenville-Emmons, Kingsland, Grand Meadow, Wabasha-Kellogg and LeRoy-Ostrander.

Panthers send three to state

Three NRHEG High School wrestlers have advanced to the state tournament on Saturday's Section 2A tournament in Janesville.

Winning section championships were freshman Owen Schlaak at 107 pounds and junior Ryan Schlaak at 189. Graham Jacobson, an eighth-grader was the runner-up at 114 to earn a return trip to state.

The top two finishers at each weight qualified for state.

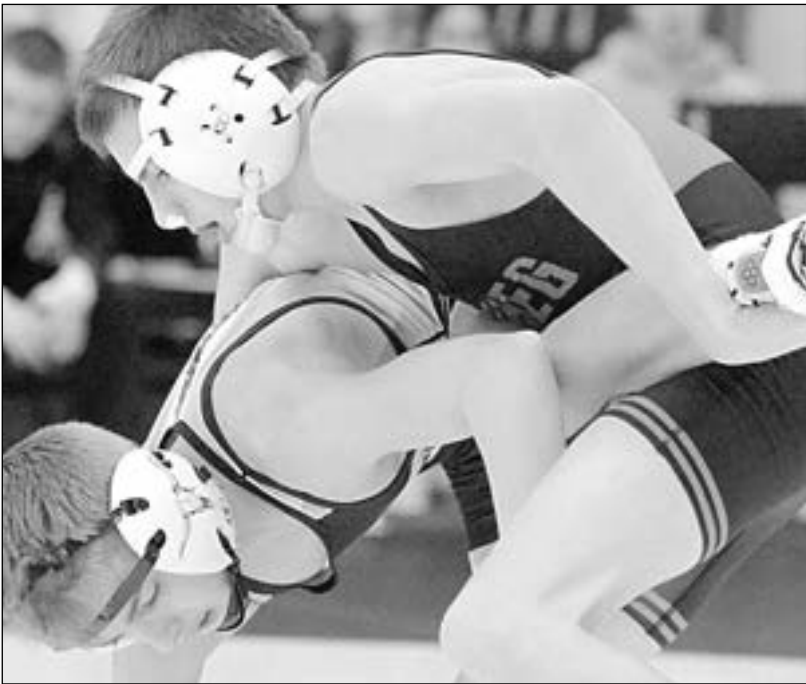
The Panthers had four fifth-place finishers in seventh-grader Bo Holland at 127, junior Chase

Johannsen at 139, sophomore Noah Weller at 127, and senior Wyatt Larson at 215.

Also wrestling but not placing for NRHEG: Dakota Schlaak, 133; Wyatt Hendrickson, 152; and Khaiden Madesn, 160.

Owen Schlaak will take a 29-5 season record to the state tournament at Grand Casino Arena (formerly Xcel Energy Center) in St. Paul. Ryan Schlaak has a 31-4 record. Jacobson will take an impressive 43 victories to state.

The state tournament runs Feb. 25-28.



STATE QUALIFIERS — NRHEG's Ryan Schlaak (on bottom at left), and Owen Schlaak (on top at right) have advanced to the state wrestling tournament after winning Section 2A championships Saturday at Janesville.

Photo by Jim Lutgens

Slow-starting Panthers fall at WEM

NRHEG boys' can't contain Nicollet in 95-50 loss at New Richland

The first half was rough for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva boys' basketball team in the final game of the regular season at WEM last Friday.

"We struggled mightily on the defensive end," said Panthers coach Dan Schmidt. "We had a tough time talking through our switches, as well as letting ourselves drift out of help-side defense. That, coupled with not getting shots to fall on the other end of the court, put us in a tough hole."

The second half was better, but not good enough to catch the Buccaneers as WEM held on for a 74-52 victory.

The Panthers came out in the second half with better energy on the defensive end and held WEM to 27 second-half points.

Coach Schmidt was able to substitute freely in the second half, and he liked what he saw.

"We struggled mightily on the defensive end." — NRHEG coach Dan Schmidt

"We let some guys play that don't see a lot of minutes, and they really stepped up the last 7-8 minutes and worked hard," said the coach. "It was good to see them play the way they did, and I'm proud of the effort they played with."

Brendan Schmidt and Sean Lassahn led the Panthers with 10 points apiece. Brooks Gilliland added eight, Calvin Nissen seven. A.J. Deen scored what Coach Schmidt called a quiet six points, but he came up big on the boards with 11 rebounds.

NRHEG totals: A.J. Deen 6P, 11R, 5A, 3 blocked shots; Dom Olson 3P, 1R, 2A 1 steal; Nissen 7P, 1R, 3A, 2S; Brooks Gilliland 8P,

3R, 1A, 1S; Fynn Baumann 1P, 3R; B.Schmidt 10P, 3R, 1A; David Deen 2R; Brock Holland 2P, 6R; Jackson McGannon 1B; Lassahn 10P, 2R, 1S; Levi Whiteside 5P, 1R.

The Panthers took on a tough Nicollet squad Saturday, Feb. 14 afternoon and lost 95-50 at New Richland.

"We knew it was going to be a tough game, with a 2:30 p.m. start time coming off of a game the night before, and with Nicollet being as good as they are," said Schmidt. "We looked tired and two or three steps slow all afternoon, and were never really in it."

Schmidt praised the play of the Raiders.

"Nicollet does a great job of constantly cutting to the basket, and we just couldn't keep up," he said. "We spend a lot of time talking about the translation from practice to game, and it's a mindset that we have to start exhibiting."

Nissen led with 19 points. Gilliland was close behind with 17.

Panther totals: A.J. Deen 4 points, 8 rebounds, 2 assists; Olson 3P, 1R; Nissen 19P, 1R, 1A; Gilliland 17P, 4R, 2A, 2 steals; Baumann 3R; B.Schmidt 1 steal, 1 blocked shot; D.Deen 1A; Holland 4P, 4R, 1A; Reid Sandry 3P; Lassahn 1R, 1S; Whiteside 1R, 1S.

The Panthers await seeding for playoffs. The Panthers could possibly end up with a home game Friday, or a bye to Tuesday, March 3, depending on where they end up.



MONSTER GAME ON THE BOARDS — NRHEG's A.J. Deen scored what coach Dan Schmidt called a quiet six points, but had a big game rebounding with 11 at Waterville last Friday.

Photo by Jim Lutgens

JWP Junior High Math Mania Competition Feb. 13



On Friday, February 13, 15 JWP 6th, 7th, and 8th graders competed at the annual Junior High Math Mania competition in North Mankato. Of the 77 students competing, JWP 8th grader Aubrey Anderson was declared the individual champion. Nash James, Miranda Bonnifield, Ava Place, and Jackson Ling also placed individually. In the team competition, a JWP team consisting of: Jackson Ling, Charlotte Haekenkamp, Miranda Bonnifield, Waylon Schuch, and Dom Winters won first place out of 16 teams. All participating students include: 6th Graders: David Adams, Felix Fellows, and Nashville James; 7th Graders: Miranda Bonnifield, Charlotte Haekenkamp, Jackson Ling, Amelia Schisler, Liam Schisler, and Waylon Schuch; 8th Graders: Nate Adams, Aubrey Anderson, Ayden Bennett, Erika Eilertson, Ava Place and Dom Winters. The JWP Public Schools posted on their Facebook page congratulating the team. "The results truly exceeded expectations! Very proud of how hard the students worked and how well they represented JWP at both the event and during lunch at the River Hills Mall! Way to go, Bulldogs!"

Jeremy Munson receives Republican Party endorsement for Senate

Former State Representative Jeremy Munson (Republican-Lake Crystal) was strongly endorsed Saturday as the Republican candidate for the Minnesota State Senate in District 22. On the first ballot at the Party's endorsing convention held at the Kato Ballroom, Munson received 90% of the votes cast by Republican delegates from across the district in a two-way race against Michael Woletz, a former mayor of Belle Plaine. "I appreciate the continued, vocal support from conservatives across the district," Munson stated after receiving the endorsement. "The current condition of Minnesota politics and the unprecedented billions of tax dollars lost to fraud have put us on the national map for all the wrong reasons. We must restore the limited, sensible government that made Minnesota great for past generations and implement

strict financial controls over state agencies being used by DFL insiders for personal and political gain." Munson previously represented area residents in the Minnesota House of Representatives, serving as a strong conservative voice. He is running to succeed current State Senator Rich Draheim, who is not seeking reelection after serving residents of Scott, Rice, Le Sueur, Blue Earth, Watonwan, Faribault, and Martin counties in the new district, redrawn for the 2022 election. "We owe Senator Draheim great respect and appreciation for his many years of leadership and common-sense representation of District 22," Munson continued. "I look forward to seeking his guidance and expertise, especially on matters critical to communities in our district." A closely divided Minnesota Legislature, with a current one-seat DFL

majority in the Senate and a 67-67 tie in the House of Representatives, will be dealing with critical issues like declining results among the state's K-12 students, rampant fraud in state agencies and publicly-funded nonprofits, and social concerns including the DFL's push to allow boys to compete in girls' sports. After his endorsement, Munson announced that his first goal as a candidate is to work to secure majorities for Republicans in both houses to put Minnesota back on the right track. "I pledge to help Republican candidates win in swing districts this summer and fall, so our party serves in the majority in St Paul. Issues critical to our State's future, like exposing and ending billions in fraud and holding those responsible accountable, will not be resolved until we do."

Got news? • 837-6767

Teacher Spotlight



Meet Taylor Sonnek, a JWP educator. "I've been in education for 11 years and at JWP for 9 years. The best thing about working with our school's students and community is getting to see all students from preschool level to 6th grade, throughout the week and watching their creativity come alive. I love that the art room brings a different opportunity to our students and allows them a time in the week to create. Each child brings their own personality and ideas into the art room, and it's such a joy to see them light up when they create something they're proud of. Having the chance to build those relationships with so many students and watch them grow every year is such a rewarding part of being here." Mrs. Sonnek's fun fact is that she is expecting a baby in February! Her interests are: "I love to read, go on walks, and spend time with my family. We love visiting the zoo, going to the lake, baking, painting, exploring new places, playing games, and watching movies."