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WASECA
COUNTY
PIONEER

LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY

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State Bound



HISTORIC - Daniel Baker, a civil war soldier associated with a local family, is said to have escorted Confederate General John C. Pemberton to Ulysses S. Grant when Pemberton was surrendering at Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Military service links generations of Baker family

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

A veteran who served in Korea and the son of a veteran who fought in World War II, New Richland area resident Dale Baker, 71, discovered in 2007 that his family is even more richly connected to the military than he had always realized.

As he was helping sort through his mother's papers after her death, he came across some materials mentioning four men—his great-grandfather and three of his brothers—some of whom marched more than 9,500 miles and took part in as many as 15 decisive battles of the Civil War.

"I saw that," he remembers, "and right away I wanted to know more."

"After a while, I got in pretty deep. History's really interesting, and I was learning about history that involved my ancestors."

Regarding their decision to volunteer for the Civil War, Dale comments, "I'm proud of them for their service and their bravery in action, and how they wanted to help free the slaves."

Brothers John, Henry, Andrew Jr. and Daniel, born in the 1830s and '40s, were among eight children—only one of whom was a daughter—born to Andrew and Barbary Baker, whose home was in Ohio. When John, Andrew Jr., and Daniel reached

adulthood, they moved to Wisconsin.

The Civil War began in 1861 and the four volunteered within a year. Dale's research discovered that Daniel and Andrew landed in Wisconsin regiment 23, which was led for at least part of its deployment in turn by both Ulysses S. Grant and William Sherman. The regiment marched southward along most of the length of the Mississippi River and proceeded to engage in battle throughout the south. Henry, Dale's great-grandfather, had enlisted with the Sixteenth Ohio regiment, and also marched down the length of the Mississippi. John joined the Sixth Wisconsin, a unit which represented itself well at Gettysburg, as well as in many other battles.

Dale came across a painting from the Siege of Vicksburg in which Confederate General John C. Pemberton is shown arriving at the Union encampment carrying a white flag. In the painting, two soldiers are standing guard at the camp's perimeter ready to receive Pemberton and his entourage. The painting is especially meaningful to Dale because he learned that Daniel was one of two soldiers who escorted Pemberton to General Grant's position. Though the images of the two



FAMILY HISTORY - Henry Baker, great-grandfather to area veterans Don and Dale Baker, served in numerous battles of the Civil War.

Service continued on 12

Santa Anonymous Program receiving applications

The Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center (WANSC) is now taking applications for the Santa Anonymous Program. This annual event provides gifts, toys or clothes to Waseca families in need. Parents of newborn children through grade 12 who are income eligible, and who are residents of Waseca County may apply.

Additional details can be found on Facebook, or by stopping at the WANSC building at 203 Third Avenue Northwest in Waseca to make an appointment or inquire about eligibility requirements. Applications can also be picked up at the County Health building, 1000 West Elm, or at the Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) office, 108 Tenth Avenue Southeast, in Waseca. Further information is also available by calling Cindy Kolander, WANSC Executive Director at 507-833-4119.

Glitter and Grace Open House Nov. 6-8

There will be a Glitter and Grace Holiday Dazzle Open House, located at 1800 North State Street from Thursday, Nov. 6 through Saturday, Nov. 8. Half off table, daily drawings, treats and more, this event is during regular business hours.

Porch Pot Workshop at Waseca Floral Saturday, Nov. 8

There will be a porch pot workshop at Waseca Floral from 10 a.m. till 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8. Cost is \$55, and includes pots, tree tops, extra greens, red twig dogwood. Waseca Floral is located at 810 North State Street.



HONORING SERVICE - Pam Quiram (left) and Stephanie Albert (right) have arranged with Theresa and Dean Grubstad, owners of the Red Leaf Cafe in New Richland, that any members of the New Richland American Legion can enjoy either breakfast or lunch at no cost to themselves on the second Tuesday of each month.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

Couple shows appreciation in an 'appetizing' way

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

"It's really only a small way of showing our appreciation," comments Stephanie Albert. "New Richland is such a wonderful town, and the veterans are a big part of what helps make it special."

"Buying them a meal now and then is barely anything compared to the sacrifices they made for us."

Albert, who is married to New Richland native and 1978 New Richland-Hartland graduate Pam Quiram, says she is thrilled to have the community as her hometown by proxy. The couple made the decision about four years ago to send a wordless "Thank you for your service. May I buy your lunch?" message to area veterans by setting up an arrangement with Theresa and Dean Grubstad of Red

Leaf Cafe. The couple reimburses the cafe for the cost of any breakfast or lunch served to a member of the New Richland American Legion and his or her spouse on the second Tuesday of every month.

Dean and Theresa Grubstad have operated the cafe for more than 11 years. Theresa explains the reimbursement arrangement began when Albert and Quiram arranged to buy meals on Veterans Day. Soon after, the decision was made to expand to every second Tuesday. Theresa says Legion meetings are occasionally held at the cafe. Those days, there may be as many as 15 veterans and their spouses. Other times the number is as low as four or five couples.

Meals continued on 3

Waseca Drug Court honors 118th Graduate

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

A small gathering of around 20 friends and family members of David Schlaak, 34, were present to mark his graduation and release from Steele-Waseca County Drug Court on Thursday, Oct. 30. Also attending were numerous members of the drug task force and Waseca County Law Enforcement to congratulate and share good wishes. The proceedings were overseen by the Honorable Judge, Carol Hanks.

Schlaak was confident and steady-handed standing in the third floor courtroom of the Waseca courthouse in his black hoodie with a white cross on the front. His wife, Jillian, 36, was in the other room, since this was a court proceeding, females had to be separated from the males. Said Schlaak, "There was a lot I had to do, 19 months of sobriety, (18 months minimum), I got my GED, and had to pay a lot of fines to maintain my driver's license. Avoid any jail time with heavy penalties for any violations when you're in the program." A woman appeared walking up the stairs and Schlaak introduced her, "This is Mrs. Raetz, her husband is Gerald Raetz, he does masonry out of Waseca, that's who I work for." Mrs. Raetz said, "Gerald is coming, he's a little behind

today but he will be here, even if he's a few minutes late." She patted Schlaak on the back and said, "We're so proud of you." Schlaak said, "I have five kids, Colton, 16, Nolan, 14, Wyatt, 10, Braxton, 4 and little Brooklyn is 1. We live in Owatonna right now, but we were living in Waseca before that." He attended high school in New Richland.

Once inside the courtroom, there were five people on the stand, including Schlaak, some of the others had difficulty meeting the requirements of the court to graduate. "But" said Judge Hanks, "It isn't all bad news." She went on to say how surprised she was Schlaak had, "Not only gotten married in the program, he and his wife had a child. David will be the one-hundred-eighteenth person to graduate from us; he's had 470 days of sobriety." Also present was Waseca commissioner De Malterer, who had this to say, "It's been a pleasure and celebration to be here and to watch you grow. As a former educator and teacher, I assure you this is a blessing to see." Gerald Raetz was a few minutes late, but he was allowed to add, "I promised to never hire him again, then I did, and I'm glad I did."

Graduate continued on 11

Waseca County opioid funds application now open

The Waseca County Opioid Settlement Advisory Council is pleased to announce the launch of Opioid Settlement grant funding! Applications will be accepted year-round starting November 1, 2025. This program offers critical funding opportunities to support community-based efforts to prevent opioid misuse, expand access to treatment, and promote recovery services.

National opioid litigation settlements fund this grant initiative, which aims to tackle the opioid crisis locally by investing in evidence-based prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction projects.

"We are committed to leveraging these funds to save lives and build healthier communities," said Andrea Kronbach, Waseca County Public Health. "By offering a rol-

ling application process with quarterly reviews, we provide flexibility to applicants while making sure to provide timely support to impactful programs."

Key Highlights
Application Open: November 1, 2025

Quarterly Review Dates: December 16, 2025, March 16, 2026, June 16, 2026, and September 16, 2026

Notification: Within 45 days after each review

Funding Priorities: Prevention, treatment, recovery support, harm reduction, and community education

Eligibility: Nonprofits, healthcare providers, local governments, and other community organizations working to address opioid misuse

Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals early to en-

hance funding opportunities while the grant funds are available. Detailed application information, guidelines, and deadlines are available at: <https://mn-wasecacounty.civicplus.com/581/Opioids>.

For questions or assistance, please contact Andrea Kronbach at 507-835-0685 or andrea.kronbach@wasecacounty.gov.

A word from The Word

Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.

Psalm 62:5-6



Compostings

by Al Batt

A sea of kind words

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING
Pick a number between 1 and 10.

Why?
I want to see if you can do it.
DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. It was a Goldilocks Day, not too hot nor too cold. It was just right. I had a sandwich in Iowa. I wasn’t the only one. There are a lot of sandwiches in need of eating in Iowa, but the state is known for loose meat sandwiches, also known as a Maid-Rite, after the chain that made it famous, or a tavern, spoonburger and beef burger. It’s like a sloppy joe without the sauce. I had one at Starbuck’s in Nevada. I put yellow mustard, dill pickles and onions on it. It was delicious. The Starbuck’s Drive-In in Nevada (pronounced nuh-VAY-duh) shouldn’t be confused with the franchised coffee business. Darrell Starbuck founded the Drive-In in 1956.

I’M A DING DONG DADDY FROM DUMAS

Not long after leaving Iowa, I was in Texas, listening to Robert Earl Keen sing about being a ding dong daddy from Dumas while driving past Whataburger restaurants. Harmon Dobson opened the first Whataburger in 1950 in Corpus Christi. His goal: to serve a burger so big it took two hands to hold and so good that after one bite customers would say, “What a burger!”

I’ve read John Steinbeck’s books for years. He wrote, “I could have bypassed Texas about as easily as a space traveler can avoid the Milky Way.” While working in Austin, Texas. I purchased a Larry McMurtry book that came with a bookmark presenting the Texas state symbols. Here are some: Bird-mockingbird, Fruit-Texas red grapefruit, Insect-monarch butterfly, Pie-pecan, Pepper-jalapeno, Motto-friendship, Large mammal-longhorn, small mammal-armadillo, Footwear-cowboy boot, Hat-cowboy hat, Tree-pecan, Vegetable-sweet onion, Vehicle-chuckwagon, Reptile-Texas horned lizard (also called horny toads, it’s a threatened species in Texas), Flower-bluebonnet, and Flying mammal-Mexican free-tailed bat. I watched Mexican free-tailed bats emerge at sunset from under the Congress Avenue Bridge. They poured out and cascaded east over Lady Bird Lake on their way to feed on insects. There were 1.5 million bats, but I didn’t count them. President Herbert Hoover once promised “a chicken in every pot,” but that “chicken” was sometimes an armadillo—nicknamed “Hoover’s Hogs.” Jerry Jeff Walker sang, “London Homesick Blues,”

which included the lines, “I wanna go home to the armadillo. Good country music from Amarillo and Abilene. The friendliest people and the prettiest women you’ve ever seen.”

I’VE LEARNED
Placing “In God We Trust” on a U.S. coin occurred in 1864, but Theodore Roosevelt objected to its use. He felt putting those words on money was sacrilegious.

Onychophagy is the practice of biting one’s nails.

John Wayne’s movies were filmed in Arizona, Utah, Mexico, California and Colorado.

Halloween has the orange of bonfire flames and harvest, and the black symbolizing black licorice. Not really. Black is for darkness and the long winter nights.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

At the supermarket, I saw a man and a woman wrapped in a barcode. They were an item.

The tooth went to prison after being found guilty of incisor trading.

What do you call a pumpkin working at the pool? A lifeguard.

After disagreeing on how to pronounce the name of Nevada, a town in Iowa, a couple pulled into a fast-food restaurant in that city, where they asked a clerk, “Could you tell us the name of this place and say it slowly, we’re from Minnesota.”

The young woman rolled her eyes and said, “SUB-WAY.”

NATURE NOTES
Squirrels drank from the bird-bath, probably because they couldn’t find any squirrel grey tea.

There were Eurasian tree sparrows in my yard, in a flock of house sparrows, which were called English sparrows in the past because the first house sparrows released in the US (Brooklyn) in 1851 were from England. In late April 1870, a shipment of European birds from Germany was released in St. Louis to provide familiar bird species for newly settled European immigrants. The shipment included Eurasian tree sparrows, which prospered. Unlike its relative, the house sparrow, it’s not a bird of the cities, preferring farms and treed residential areas.

The barred owl is called the hoot owl, swamp owl, striped owl, eight-hooter, round-headed owl, laughing owl, crazy owl, wood owl, old-folks owl and rain owl. It says, “Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?” It has eight vocalizations, earning it the nickname eight-hooter. Why the rain owl? It’s because it calls loudly before or after a rainstorm. And every hoot brings rain—or not.

MEETING ADJOURNED
A sea of kind words makes for smoother sailing.

The personality change of the sun

Something I like about this time of year is the personality change the sun undergoes.

Through July and August, it had the character of a domineering supervisor—someone whose gaze you would rather avoid, even if you weren’t misbehaving or breaking some kind of rule. It would glare harshly, leaving us happier when it couldn’t see us.

When it could, we felt its heat. Returning to my car after it had been parked in the sun, I resented having to open my doors or windows just to let the heat out and make it bearable to get inside. My air conditioner never seemed to engage quickly enough.

I was academically capable of reminding myself that winter is also a season and that I should be grateful for the sunshine and warmth, but it wasn’t only “warmth,” it was “heat,” so I appreciated the green and the growth and the grace of the season, but not always the sun that



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

made it possible.

Now the story changes. I find it much easier to welcome and greet the “kindler, gentler” sunshine. Rather than having an impulse to avoid it, I feel drawn to places where it washes over me.

Perhaps what I am most grateful for, though, is the sun on autumn leaves; it is an appreciation on many levels.

First, there is the individual leaf which calls out for my attention as it flutters like a landing butterfly and comes to rest in a small patch of sunshine. It doesn’t much matter what it lands on—gravel, dry grass, or even mud do not detract from its color,

shape and glow. This small blessing happens in winter, too, when a long-held stem lets go and a brightly colored symmetry comes to rest on white snow.

Resting where it’s fallen, it calls attention to how beautifully shaped it’s always been, but was too anonymous to appreciate all summer long.

The next level of recognition is the sunlit branch still holding a bouquet of leaves the size of an easy chair. The rest of a tree might be bare branches, but the wind and sun turn the colors of this remaining vestige into a panoply sufficient to itself. The shadows shift and new outlines

appear. Colors become more and less vivid. I find myself speculating about questions of fate and luck—what has kept this collection in place while the rest of the tree has emptied itself?

Even more breathtaking, of course, is a whole tree shining with color. Like a giant, brightly dressed lady, the tree seems to be granting an audience to the nearby countryside. In a light breeze, it almost seems she is raising her arms in greeting.

Then there are hillsides of color.

Trees of yellow, orange, red and brown stand shoulder to shoulder like brightly dressed spectators at an all-encompassing celebration. Whether walking, riding or driving, a person is tempted to come to a stop and breathe in admiration at every turn. Autumn days are simply not long enough to take in all the beauty.

Career reflections and family veterans

As I sit in my fifth floor apartment watching the city traffic roll by, 860 miles from Waseca, I forget the extent to which my words reach.

To those of you who send word through my parents or relatives, I see you! And thank you for all the kind words. It warms the cockles of my heart that some of you might find enjoyment in my ramblings.

But this week I would like to spill my thoughts on Veterans Day, which we all know is on Tuesday, Nov. 11 this year.

In all honesty, I’ve never really put much thought or care into Veterans Day. Yes, like many others, I have family who are veterans or who have served in some capacity. But as a young person seeing most of these family members still alive, it wasn’t anything I bothered to spend a second thought on. Growing up, all I knew was that my grandpa served as a marine, my uncle was in the Army, having gone to West Point, and my other grandfather was in the army reserves. My grandpa and uncle were still alive and healthy, so for a while I didn’t feel the need to worry about their service. My other grandfather had sadly passed away when I was about ten, and I did not know any of his stories nor could I ask him about them.

So I went on living in ignorant



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

young bliss. It wasn’t until my senior year of high school that I really started to care.

You see, in my senior year of high school, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life, just like a lot of young people at the doorstep of their future. All I knew at the time was I wanted to help people. And I was decent at writing.

At one time, I was deciding whether I should go to West Point and join the army, or if I should be a nun. Believe it or not, those were the two options I was weighing. Obviously I decided against either of them, instead opting to help people by sharing their stories, struggles, and triumphs.

But even so, my interest was still piqued. I started asking my grandpa more questions about his time in service and I remember asking my grandma what she remembered about my grandfather’s time in the reserves.

My grandpa told me stories, mostly the more lighthearted

ones, about painting cockroaches on the ship and playing cribbage tournaments in the downtime. He even mentioned his time in boot camp, and somehow smiled through the memory of being hit and yelled at and beat down. He remembered the jungles overseas, his contemplation of getting a tattoo to signify his time served, the funny stories of his buddies on the ship. I have yet to hear the more harrowing stories, but I am sure they are there.

I cherish every story, and one day I hope to record more permanently the stories of both my grandparents so I and other family members have an account of what they did for us and how they sacrificed, maybe not their lives, but their time, safety, and wellbeing.

I had an army recruiter come to my house once. He asked if I had any interest, and I said I was going to go to school to be a journalist. He frowned and said that there weren’t really any positions for me in the army. When my

uncle, who went to West Point and served in the army, heard that, he was furious. Yes, he told me, of course there are journalists and writers in the army. If I had bothered to look into it and not been told no, maybe that’s where I would be right now.

But I remember the worried look on my grandma’s face when I told her I was thinking about going to West Point. She wasn’t going to tell me not to, but I could tell she was remembering the hardship of letting her only son join, go overseas, and get wounded in battle.

It’s not just those who served who sacrificed either, and I realize that now. Everyone who cares about a service member, loves one the way family does, goes through trials of wondering each day whether their loved one is okay or forever thankful that they are.

Although I may never serve in that capacity, I respect all those who have and I say thank you for your time so that I may grow up in a safer world.

My Determination: “The moment had arrived, life or death, freedom or captivity. I had chosen the only way possible that would allow me to look my friends in the face again, if indeed I should live to see my friends again.” — Christopher Gallagher, “The Cellars of Marcelcave”

A live version ‘Google machine’

I attended a new church with my dad this weekend. It was the first time since the closing of the Congregational Church in New Richland that we have attended the same service. Dad tried a couple different churches before deciding on Christ Community Church in Waseca. (I attend church with Deb in Wilton from time to time.)

My dad told me beforehand that I should expect a different church experience from any I’d had before. It would be laid back with lots of music, he told me.

I don’t think I would venture to say it was all that different from other services.

I enjoyed the music. It was not the typical hymnal and piano music I grew up with (which I also enjoy).

The bible reading and sermon were essentially combined. I liked that.

Pastor Rick Wolf would read scripture, and translate what was



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

happening into more modern terms. I do read my bible, including having read the entire New Testament last year. There are numerous places where I became somewhat confused: online sources helped with some of my questions.

Pastor Rick served as a live version, ‘Google machine.’

I almost felt like I was in class, learning.

I also like scripture readings on their own and sermons on their own, as has been my experience. Those two and the music are my favorite parts of a church service.

This type of service was a new

experience for me. One which I’ll have to try again before determining if I have a preference.

I understand why my dad likes it. The people were very kind, I recognized numerous faces in the room. However, I am not used to services with that many people. It was not a bad thing by any means.

Attending church in Wilton with Deb feels similar to my home, now closed, church. Classic music, service, scripture reading and sermon. I enjoy Rev. Larry Sipe’s sermons. He does a good job.

After church we chatted with a few folks. I was asked if the girl

I wrote about in my column was my girlfriend. She is not. Both Deb and my Dad said Madi sounded like marriage material from my writing. I told Deb I’m glad I gave the nice ladies who read my column something to talk about around the tea table.

Mind you, the person who asked about Madi, I had not met before. But they knew me from my column.

I met Pastor Rick Wolf briefly and after chatting, my dad and I departed.

My dad went to the office and I went to watch the Vikings game with my friends. Dad later said he picked a bad game to skip. I told him I had invited him to watch the game and reminded him I had been optimistic.

I think the moral of my column this week is simply a snapshot of my journey to find a church home. And to publicly tell my dad I told him so.



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

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Waseca County Winter Farmers Market at Farmamerica Nov. 8
New in 2025 will be a winter farmers market at Farmamerica every other Saturday open from 8 a.m. till noon starting on Saturday, Nov. 8. Find products which are locally grown, baked and made while supporting our local producers. Farmamerica is located at 7367 360th Ave.

Friends of the Library Book Sale at Janesville Public Library Nov. 8
The Friends of the Library will hold a book sale at the Janesville Public Library from 8:30 a.m. till 1 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 8. Proceeds go toward reading promotions, craft activities and other programs for both children and adults.

Muriah and Angel Val at Indian Island Winery Nov. 8
Music duo Muriah and Angel Val will perform at the Indian Island Winery from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8. A great collaboration between two talented musicians.
37th annual Scandinavian Dinner at North Waseca Lutheran Church Nov. 9

The 37th Annual Scandinavian Dinner will be held at the North Waseca Lutheran Church with three seatings at 1 p.m., 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. with carryout available. Adults \$20, children 10 and under \$10. For reservations call Roy Srp at 507-521-1185 or Greg Thomson at 612-619-3868.

Waseca Christian Assembly Youth Fundraiser Nov. 9
The Waseca Christian Assembly located at 900 14th Ave. SE, will hold a youth fundraiser starting at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 9. There will be a soccer game, bingo, boutique garage sale, bake sale and run/walk. Proceeds go towards rescuing girls from trafficking.

Mythical Creatures Club at Janesville Public Library Nov. 10
Each month, dive deep into the lore of one incredible mythical creature, from ogres to kelpies. Mythical Creatures Club begins at 3:30 p.m. Monday, November 10 at the Janesville Public Library. Club members will also complete an activity, craft, or game inspired by the creature of the month. Ages 7-12.

Dr. Jon E Bathke book signing at Waseca Public Library Nov. 12
Waseca native Dr. Jon E. Bathke, who also wrote under his pen name of 'Dutch N. Almasboi' will be signing books at the Waseca Public Library from 10 a.m. till noon on Wednesday, Nov. 12. His most recent mystery/detective/psych thriller, "The Janus Deceptions," is set in Waseca and in the words of the author, "Why not have the book signing there." His book is available for purchase on Amazon or Barnes and Noble, there will be a limited amount of books available for purchase day of.

Waseca Floral prepares for the holidays

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer
Waseca Floral, one of Waseca's longest-operating businesses, held its fifty-fourth annual open house on Saturday, Nov. 1. Upon arriving, visitors were met by a Christmas tree, holiday music, free cookies, cider, and owner Rick Morris.
Dressed in a red/green flannel shirt and brown pants, he fit right in with the holiday mood. He shook hands as people arrived and immediately directed all attention to the Christmas tree. With Halloween behind us, 'tis the season, said Morris, "This open house is a good day for us, we get to show off our Christmas items and all our other stuff." Around him were floral items mixed in with holiday décor, baskets, bears, flowers, and wreaths.
Rick and his wife Sheila were kind enough to pose for a photo behind the counter: Rick was quick to point out, "We're also doing classes." Sheila continued, "Today we have two classes, and we'll be holding two more next Saturday, Nov. 8, at both



BLOOMING - Rick and Sheila Morris, owners of Waseca Floral held their annual open house on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2025.
10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Anyone can attend, they just need to call and register." Rick said, "We provide the spruce tops, any plants that you may need, pots, pinecones, birch logs, berries, red twigs, extra greens and any instructions." So far this year they've only scheduled four classes but depending on public feedback they would like to have more. The greenhouse in the back was set up with long tables, fancy tablecloths and other workshop related items.
Waseca Floral used to sell Christmas trees, said Rick, "We stopped selling trees, those were Fraser Firs, that was three years ago, we were having trouble with our vendor getting them, so we had to scrap that. But we still have wreaths and roping and we're open all year around and we love Christmas." While he spoke, he was reminded about the free rose giveaway for a customer that had

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann
walked in, "What color rose can I get for you?" Were his first words, the color yellow was chosen, and he took the time to wrap it up professionally. After answering a few questions he told the customer, "We also work well for birthdays, funerals, and anniversaries."
The next Porch Pot workshop at Waseca Floral will be Nov. 8 at both 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Anyone wishing to register can call 507-835-3790.

Santa Anonymous applications available

The Christmas Holiday season is fast approaching! This means the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center is now taking applications for the Santa Anonymous program.
The Santa Anonymous Program provides the opportunity to Waseca County families to provide gifts for their children for Christmas. Parents of children from newborn to eighth grade who are income eligible and are residents of Waseca County may apply. Check the Service Center Facebook page and website for additional details regarding dates and times for sign up, stop in at the Waseca Area Neighborhood Center or call to make an appointment and inquire about eligibility requirements for this program: Call 507 833-4119 ext 301 or 302.
Applications will also be available at the County Health building, MVAC Waseca and through the Waseca schools.

Hide and Seek builds community

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor
A crowd of 40 or so participants gathered outside the New Richland City Hall prior to the scheduled 7 p.m. Oct. 30 start time for the game of "hide and seek" organized by city police officer Dale DeRaad and staffed by volunteers from New Richland and Waseca County law enforcement agencies.
City Mayor Janda Ferguson and Waseca Sheriff's Posse members Victoria Genelin and David Hodgkins helped by checking participants in and providing them with identifying wrist bracelets, then supervising the area where everyone gathered over the next hour or more after being "found."
The game had been announced more than a month in advance; the majority who signed up to take part were children and young adults, with a few parents accompanying their children. Most were dressed in dark colors; many had hoods, hats, or scarves to conceal their faces. A few had even brought "ghillie" suits; the vegetation-like covering of this camouflaged outerwear is meant to blur

the outline of the human form while blending into the background.
The "hiders" were given directions regarding the public areas where they could conceal themselves: these included the Legion ball field, the space along the railroad tracks between Aspen Avenue and Broadway, and the city park. The southern boundary was the waterway running east and west just north of Hwy. 30.
After about a 15-minute wait time, New Richland officers DeRaad and Joe Johnson and Waseca County Sheriff Deputies James Johannsen, Brayden Berg and Brandon Hermann set out with their flashlights having decided to follow a standard search grid and apply techniques which allowed them to use the event as a training exercise as well as a public relations opportunity.
It took more than an hour for the search to be complete. Commented DeRaad, "What I found to be most successful is how creative the children were in their hiding. Several of them surprised the seekers. We would find one person hiding, and another would make a noise right next to the seeker who had not even noticed the one next to them. The participants demonstrated their abilities to use minimal resources to hide very well in a multitude of different environments."
DeRaad expressed particular satisfaction regarding the number of participants who chose to take part the evening of Oct. 30. He also commented on how much everyone seemed to enjoy the event: "From beginning to end the participating individuals' happy expressions and stated interest in doing this again next year was exactly what I hoped for. All the seekers really enjoyed this event and found it challenging and fun. Overall, I was glad we could meet and then exceed all expectations."
"The smiling faces and happy demeanors were a sight to behold."
DeRaad said the positive interaction with area youth is highly beneficial since it allows young people to feel more comfortable about approaching and speaking with law enforcement personnel. It helps community members recognize, "we, as law enforcement, care about them and will listen to them."



GAME ON - New Richland Police Officer Drew DeRaad helped check participants in, then provided ground rules for the event
Pioneer photo by Deb Bently
The hide and seek event joins an annual water balloon fight, the nation-wide "Night to Unite," and community movie nights as times to mingle with law enforcement personnel in a lighthearted setting. DeRaad points out events improve when partnerships are formed with local retail businesses, philanthropic societies and agencies.
"Chief Bruegger and the other officers of the New Richland Police Department appreciate everyone who comes to these events. This includes those who help plan and set up the activities as well as those who lead and participate. It takes many helping hands to make these events happen."
"Having community members and those who come from other cities come here to enjoy these events means a lot to us and we are thankful for their support."

■ Meals

from Page 1

"I wish more would come in," she says. "I like to honor them, and I want to see them enjoy each other and the food." She mentions that the veterans tend to sit together in one group and the spouses in another, separate one.
Even though the small cafe is very full with about 30 "extra" people in the seats, she says if anything, the days when the veterans are there are the most orderly and composed.
"They're a prim and proper group,"

she comments, estimating nearly all who come are between the ages of 60 and 90. "These guys take it very seriously that they're representing the military," she says. "Though they don't say it, it's easy to see they're proud of who they are and the service they've given."
Of some area veterans who choose not to take advantage of the free meal, Grubstad observes, "They're a proud bunch. But this isn't meant to be charity. It's gratitude."
Quiram says her appreciation for veterans began with her father, Elmer, who with her mother Marilyn ran the bakery in New Richland throughout her childhood. She remembers the story of her father's tattoo—a ribbon-like banner with the word "Mom" printed in it.
She explains Elmer joined the military soon after finishing high school. He and Marilyn had been dating, but he couldn't be sure she would still be available when he returned.
"Tattoos are permanent, so he went with the safe option," Pam remembers.
Elmer didn't talk much about his experience in the military. She did learn, however, that he was originally trained as a ranger, but when he arrived in Korea, the company was more interested in his skills as a baker. "He spent his time making food in-

stead of going on missions," she says lightheartedly.
Her most profound memory of Elmer's connection to his service in the army came at his funeral, she remembers, when local veteran organizations provided military honors. "It sent a message about the connection and mutual respect veterans feel for each other," she recalls.
Stephanie's impressions center around time spent in New Richland during visits and celebrations, most importantly Farm and City days. "These folks returned from their service and went to work helping build the community," she observes. "Some of them returned from truly horrific experiences," she comments. "All of them had the mental trajectory of their lives changed by their service."
"It's so important to remember how we got what we have as American citizens—why we have the right to protest, the freedom to express ourselves. I've always felt honored to be part of this country and to be able to live the life that I pursue."
"We all know our lives would be much different without the Constitution and the rights it gives us."
"These veterans protected that Constitution."
"That's part of why we think it's so important to show them honor."

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OBITUARIES

John Langford

John Wesley Langford, age 78 of Waseca, MN, died at his home surrounded by the love of his family on October 28, 2025.

John was born in Fairmont, MN, on April 10, 1947, the fifth of six children to parents Clarence Levi and Mae Viola (Bishop) Langford. John was raised in rural Truman where his strong work ethic was developed and his love of working on and fixing all types of farm machinery and mechanical equipment was forged. After John graduated from Truman High School, he moved to Owatonna, MN, where he attended Pillsbury College and worked at OMC. He met Eileen Lindsay at church in Waseca and they married on May 31, 1969. The young couple lived in Owatonna during the births of their first two children then planted their roots in Waseca where they welcomed their youngest two children to their family. John worked at E.F. Johnson from 1972 to 2000 starting as a Journeyman and later became a licensed Master Electrician. John started John Langford Electric in 2000 after the E.F. Johnson plant shut down. John's small business continued for 25 years as he loved to help people and companies in the community. To further support his family as a young father, John worked at Hildebrandt Refrigeration and Charlie's Hardware. He also mowed lawns, tilled gardens and plowed snow along with various other small jobs he would enjoy doing throughout the surrounding communities. John took his family on camping trips and road trips to Roanoke, Virginia, and to Vista, California. The family also took multiple trips to Morton, IL, to visit friends. On John and Eileen's 40th wedding anniversary, the family met together and celebrated at Yellowstone National Park. John loved cheering on the many sports and music activities of his children and grandchildren over the years in Waseca, Janesville, and Chaska. In April 2013, John suffered a heart attack and doctors performed a quadruple bypass surgery. True to John's character, he resumed work on a limited basis and lived for twelve amazing years during which he celebrated 50 years of marriage and became a great grandfather. John had a servant's heart and ministered to the youth at Christ Community Church and



John Langford

the FCA sports camp in Waseca. John will always be remembered for his gentle spirit, his love for people, and most of all his love for his family.

John is survived by his devoted wife of fifty-six years, Eileen Langford of Waseca; three children, Dwight (Tracy) Langford of Janesville, Kevin (Katrina) Langford of Chaska, and Christine Langford of Lee's Summit, MO; three siblings, Dennis Langford of Roanoke, VA, Ellen Herme of Mankato, and Crystal (Jeff) Blickem of North Mankato; eight grandchildren, Breanna, Sydney, Monte (Joy), Tristen (Brooke), Mitchell (Brittany), Matthew, Michael, and Kayle Langford; and two great-grandchildren with a third on the way. He was preceded in death by his parents Clarence and Mae Langford, two siblings, Geri Thomas and Roger Langford; and one infant son, Daniel Dwight Langford.

Visitation was held from 2:00 until 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 2, 2025, at Christ Community Church in Waseca, and continued for one hour before the service at the church on Monday. In lieu of flowers, John's family asks that donors direct their memorial contributions to St. Croix Hospice. The love and care that St. Croix provided to John and his family was invaluable, and the Langford family is very grateful to their entire staff.

Funeral services were held at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, November 3, 2025, Christ Community Church in Waseca with Rev. Rick Wulf officiating. Interment followed at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca is handling the arrangements. dsfuneral.com

Norma Stone

Norma Darlene Stone, age 88 of Waseca, died in the early morning of Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at the Owatonna Hospital.

Norma was born in Waseca County on March 8, 1937, to parents Arthur and Emilie (Behr) Gehring. She graduated from Waseca High School. In 1966, she was married to John Stone at Trinity - Wilton Lutheran Church. She held several jobs over the years, but her favorite was as a cook at Happy Chef in Mankato where she made many lasting friends. John and Norma traveled frequently because of his role in the Air Force and Norma loved the opportunity to see

the world. John passed away in 1992, but Norma soldiered on, happily continuing her involvement throughout the community. She offered babysitting services to family and friends and she enjoyed playing cards, sharing coffee with friends, cooking, baking, gardening, reading, puzzle books, and watching television - especially game-shows. She was also an exceptionally talented seamstress.

Norma is survived by three brothers, Ronald, Gerald, and Kenneth Gehring; two sisters-in-law, Alice and Farolyn Gehring, and many nieces and nephews and their families. She was preceded in death by both of her parents; her husband; and numerous siblings, nieces, and

nephews.

The Gehring family would like to offer their thanks to Jill Christensen, CNP, and the entire staff at the Owatonna Hospital for the exceptional care they offered to Norma.

Funeral services for Norma were held at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 2, 2025, at Trinity - Wilton Lutheran Church near Waseca. Visitation was held from 1:30 p.m. until the time of the service at the church. Norma's interment will take place alongside her husband, John, at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca is handling the arrangements. dsfuneral.com



Norma Stone

Charlotte (Olson) Lau Anderegg

Charlotte Lau Anderegg, a beloved woman known for her kindness, humor, and unwavering love for family and friends, returned to the Lord on the evening of October 5, 2025. Born in Minneapolis on August 2, 1932, Charlotte lived a life filled with compassion, generosity, and devotion to others. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." - Acts 20:35

The daughter of Robert and Gladys Olson, Charlotte grew up in a lively household alongside her five brothers, who taught her strength and independence. She pursued her passion for 4-H throughout her youth and graduated from Waseca High School in 1950. On September 25, 1953, she married her beloved Wilfred ("Bud") Lau, and together they built a warm and loving home filled with laughter and the joy of raising eight children: Gerald (Carrie) Lau, Jeffrey (Cindy) Lau, Jimmy (Gloria) Lau, Dawn Santucci, Debra Hanson, Marjory (Mike) Gilsrud, Craig Schueneman, and James (Kindra) Kostka.

Charlotte was an active member of the American Legion Posts 281 and 289 and the Waseca

VFW, where she enjoyed socializing and sipping her beer with olives. A founding member of Faith Lutheran Church, she found deep comfort and community in her faith. Charlotte worked at EF Johnson for 30+ years after enjoying time spent raising her family.

On December 17, 1989, Charlotte

married Willard Anderegg, and together they shared a love of travel and adventure. She found joy in the outdoors, especially in tending her garden and proudly caring for her beautiful red roses. She delighted in her "fishbowl" - a round tank the size of a coffee table - and loved introducing guests to all her aquatic creatures. Charlotte's home was always a place of warmth and welcome; no one ever left hungry. Saturday mornings often carried the aroma of fresh-baked cinnamon rolls and donuts, while Friday nights were reserved for family movie gatherings with a popcorn bowl big enough for the whole neighborhood.

Charlotte is lovingly remembered by her children Gerald (Carrie) Lau, Jimmy (Gloria) Lau, Dawn Santucci, Marjory (Mike) Gilsrud, and James (Kindra) Kostka; daughters-in-law Cindy Lau and Jean (Don) Eickhoff; brothers Mike Olson and Bruce Olson; and sisters-in-law Helen Olson, Doris Waknitz, Sharon Boyd, Betty (Leo) Prechel, and Arlene Braun.

She was preceded in death by her husbands Wilfred ("Bud") Lau and Willard Anderegg; her parents Robert and Gladys Olson (Strodtman); father- and mother-in-law Wilbert and Erma Lau; children Jeffrey Lau, Craig Schueneman, Debra Hanson, and infants John, Jacob, and Mary Lau; brothers Robert Olson Jr., Donald Olson, and David Olson; grandson Justin Hanson; daughter-in-law Mary Lau; brothers-in-law Richard Lau, Kenneth Lau, Marvin Lau, Willard Lau, Marlin Boyd, Ben Waknitz, and Lawrance Braun; and sisters-in-

law Judi Olson, Jeannette Lau, Mary Parish-Olson, Marilyn Lau, Dorthy Olson, Ester Olson, and Deloris Lau; as well as granddaughter-in-law Kristi Eickhoff.

Charlotte's legacy of love, laughter, and generosity will continue to shine through her family, friends, and all who were blessed to know her.

A special thank-you to Colony Court for their wonderful care of Charlotte.

Urn Bearer:

Parker Kostka

Honorary Urn Bearers:

All children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren

Visitation

November 8, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Trinity Lutheran Church
418 N. Main Street
Janesville, MN 56048

Service

November 8, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Trinity Lutheran Church
418 N. Main Street
Janesville, MN 56048

Cemetery Details

Janesville Cemetery Janesville, MN 56048

Meal Gathering

Following the cemetery service
Trinity Lutheran Church
418 N. Main Street
Janesville, MN 56048

Grandchildren, Great-, and Great-Great-Grandchildren

Lindsey (Jon) Sadeh; Sam and Sage Alexander (Kelly) Lau; Owen and Colt

Michael Lau

Richard (Kaylee) Lau; Madeline, Amelia, Isaac, Addyson, and Charley



Charlotte Anderegg

Hilary (Jason) Cowdin; Elouise and Archie

Jacqueline Linderman; Jordan, Tyler, and Chloe; Great-Great Elena and Jordin Carolyn (Nate) Graves; Noah and Nicholas Ashley (Josh) Hanson; Anthony and Audry Matthew Eickhoff; Brody and Grady Emilie (Jeremy) Prang; Ryliegh, Adelynn, and Emma Kenneth Lau

Tori (James) Moore; Frankie Shelby (Ryan) Pinter; Jane and Bennett Christi Santucci; Asher and Hudson Casey Schueneman Demi Jo (Kaitlyn) Kostka Parker Kostka Chelsey (Robair) Shaker; Zavien Brandi (Troy) Callahan; Summer And many honorary grandchildren who lovingly called her "Grandma." DSOFuneral.com

Alan Wilker

Alan "Al" Wayne Wilker, age 75, of Waseca, died on the evening of Friday, October 31, 2025, at the New Richland Care Center.

Al was born in Waseca on October 8, 1950, to parents Herbert "Sid" and Arlene "Blondie" (Eischen) Wilker. He attended school in Waseca and graduated with the class of 1968. In December of 1971, Al married Barbara Bult at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca. The couple was blessed with three children in the years that followed. His entire working life, Al worked in the supply room at Brown Printing Company in Waseca. He made countless friends there over the years, finally retiring in 1996. Despite suffering from a genetic condition called Marfan Syndrome all his life, Al worked through his difficulties and enjoyed fishing, ice fishing (he had an enormous ice house), woodworking, and generally being handy in countless ways around his home and for the people that he loved. He was passionate about cars and he and his cousin, Butch, often raced stock-cars at the Morrilstown track. More than anything else in the world, though, Al's children and family came before all else. He was an incredibly devoted father, and his children remember that he was always there whenever they needed him. He was a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca.

Al is survived by his loving wife



Alan Wilker

of nearly 54 years, Barbara Wilker of Waseca; three children, Rhonda Wilker of El Paso, TX, Jason Wilker of Waseca, and Tonya Wilker of Waseca; one granddaughter, Courtney Robinson of El Paso; three great-grandchildren; and one sister, Robin (David) Jansen of Waseca. He was preceded in death by both of his parents, and one great grandchild.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 2:30 PM on Friday, November 7, 2025, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca, with Rev. Glenn Frerichs officiating. Visitation will be held from 1:30 PM until the time of the Mass at the church. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca is handling the arrangements. dsfuneral.com

SMIF to award \$1.3 million to southern businesses
Competitive grants provided through a partnership with MN DEED are designated for existing operations or planned growth projects

Through a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) will award \$1.3 million in competitive grants to businesses in southern Minnesota to invest in existing operations or planned growth.

Grant awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 and can be used for working capital to support payroll expenses, rent or mortgage payments, utility bills, equipment, and other similar expenses that occur in the regular course of business.

Grant awards will be limited and approved on a competitive

basis. Not all eligible businesses will receive a grant. Primary business operations must be located in SMIF's region, which includes 20 Minnesota counties and one Native nation. Businesses must earn \$750,000 or less in gross revenue (based on prior year's (2024) taxes) to be eligible. Additional eligibility requirements are listed on SMIF's website.

The grant cycle opens October 16, 2025 and will close on November 17, 2025. For the application and guidelines visit smifoundation.org/promise. Contact

Melissa Langer (melissal@smifoundation.org) or Brian Conzemius (brianc@smifoundation.org) with questions.

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SOUP OF THE DAY - Lori Pommerenke and Linda Griffen served 125 bowls of soup by the noon hour at the bazaar at the Faith United Methodist Church on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2025. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Faith United Methodist Church, fundraising with many options

By **BEN REVERMANN**
Staff writer

Faith United Methodist Church of Waseca held its Fall Bazaar and luncheon Saturday, Nov. 1. The soup of the day was chicken and wild rice, with fresh baked bread and assorted pies to choose from for dessert. When the total was tallied, there were 180 diners and 30 people just there for thrift and baked goods.

Alongside the thrift items, cookies and baked goods, Kelly Boeddiker was selling homemade items like baskets and soaps; there was also a pan flute. Said Boeddiker, “I work for Caregiver Services and I’m a member of the church here, just helping to raise funds when I can.”

Up at the serving table, armed with plastic gloves and bowls, Lori Pommerenke and Linda Griffen were ready, willing and able to

feed. Said Pommerenke about the day’s attendance, “By noon we’ve filled up to 97 soup bowls through our line, that’s not counting the 25 or so to-go’s that have gone out the door.” The thrift and bake sales were ongoing on the other side of the room. The two servers looked in that direction and Griffin added, “That’s not counting the people who are here just for the sales, some of them aren’t eating at all.” Both ladies said they helped to prepare the soup, but another woman walked up, and they wanted her to have all the credit, said Pommerenke, “Lela Jones is the one who made the soup, I just brought the celery and the carrots.”

For the cookie sale, there were ginger snaps, sugar, oatmeal, chocolate stars, snickerdoodle, sugar cookies with cream cheese and of



RAFFLE TIME - Terra LaMont and Nancy Tollefson were managing the raffle items at the Faith United Methodist Church bazaar and luncheon on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2025. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Bazaar continued on 12

Cook the Book at Waseca Public Library on Nov. 13

Visit the Waseca Public Library to choose a recipe from the selected cookbook. Then bring the finished dish to Waseca Public Library at 12 p.m. Thursday, November 13, where the cooks will sample all the dishes and share their experiences. It’s a great way to meet people in the community, share cooking tips, and try out delicious food. Open to all cooking and baking skill levels!

Wood Slice Birds at New Richland Public Library Nov. 13

Craft colorful birds using wood slices at 4 p.m. Thursday, November 13 at the New Richland Public Library. In this hands-on event, kids will use natural wood slice as their canvas to design and create bird-inspired artwork. Ages 7-12.

Murder at Alexander House interactive mystery the evenings of Nov. 14 and 15

Interactive murder mysteries will take place at Anderson House, 610 State Street North in Waseca, at 6:30 and 8 p.m. the evenings of Friday, Nov. 14 and Saturday, Nov. 15. Funds raised will benefit the Waseca Exchange Club’s community programs. Cost is \$35 a person; tickets available at the Waseca Art Center, cash or check only.

Waseca VFW Scout Troop all-you-can-eat pasta feed Nov. 15

Waseca Sweet-Sommers VFW will host an all-you-can-eat pasta feed for the Waseca Scouts troops 85 & 1085 from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Nov. 15. Adults \$10, kids 10 and under \$6.

Rules of the road

Signs are one step in safe driving

By **DEB BENTLY**
News Editor

The Minnesota “Manual on Uniform Universal Traffic Control Devices” (MUTCD) is more than 1,000 pages long. There are rules for how large signs should be based on their location and purpose, rules about how they should be spaced, and rules about not having too many of them so that drivers don’t become overwhelmed and stop paying attention altogether.

Keeping Waseca County’s road signs in place is the job of Joe Barbknecht with the county highway department, who has had the job for about three years. He points out the task does not occupy all of his time—after all, signs typically last 12 years or so, and some he has replaced have been more than 30 years old. But things do happen.

“The wind plays a major role in the lifespan of signs,” he comments, pointing out that a rocking motion can gradually increase the size of the openings used to mount a sign to a post, eventually making them large enough to slip right over the heads of the mounting bolts.

Signs and posts are of course also occasionally damaged in traffic incidents, although Barbknecht states this is a rare occurrence compared to the work of everyday repairs and general upkeep.

Similarly, he says vandalism and theft are not common: The county has made the decision, though, to replace any missing “420th Avenue” signs with simply “42X Avenue,” given the number

420’s association with marijuana use and the number of those which have disappeared.

The county keeps hundreds of signs in stock, organized on a set of shelves about 24 feet long, 10 feet tall and three feet deep. Alongside “Stop” and “Yield” and “Speed Limit” signs are bright orange “Detour” and “Caution” indicators. Barbknecht points out some are there for quick replacements when needed, others are kept for use in construction or emerging situations.

In some cases, he mentions, stored signs can be modified in-house, for example by adding an arrow pointing the appropriate direction to indicate a detour.

When signs are needed that are not already on his shelves, Barbknecht mentions he must order them from specialty businesses. Turnaround time is typically three to four weeks. The signs are made of aluminum coated with an adhesive-backed reflective sheeting.

He explains signs are so reflective because “micro-prisms” are built into the sheeting creating “retroreflectivity”: In other words, the light of car headlights is reflected back at the car.

When a sign is meant to remain in place indefinitely, it’s mounted on a specially constructed steel pole which is set at least 3.5 feet into the ground using a hydraulic pounder. When an old sign must be removed, a hydraulic puller is used.

Barbknecht says the largest signs the county highway department is likely to use have a sur-



SIGN EXPERT - Joe Barbknecht is the "sign man" with the Waseca County Highway Department. It's his job to be sure all the various signs needed along county roads are in place and in good condition.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

face area of about 3 by 6 feet; for large jobs like those, the “sign truck” has a crane.

Perhaps obviously, the construction season is much busier for Barbknecht than the remainder of the year. He is responsible for ensuring proper signage is in place when county crews are working on roads or completing projects. It’s not as busy as it might be, however, since the bids for tasks taken on by contractors usually in-

clude posting the needed signage.

In conversation about his job, Barbknecht comes across as someone who simply takes things in stride, coping with situations as they arise, admitting only that some days are busier than others.

“Signs are important,” he acknowledges. “We do everything we can to be sure they’re in place and in good repair so people can make safe driving decisions.”

JANESVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Janesville council approves family leave

By **RACHAEL JAEGER**
Staff Writer

During their Oct. 14 meeting, members of the Janesville City Council approved terms for the city’s paid family medical leave coverage after some of them carried out independent research on the topic. City Administrator Clinton Rogers summarized some important elements of the state-required coverage which allows an employee to receive reduced wages while taking up to 12 weeks of medical leave or 12 weeks of family leave, with a statutory maximum of 20 weeks.

“I just want to point out a couple things with this law – the employee has to apply for this with the state and the state has to approve it,” Rogers added. “The state has to approve it, not the employer.”

He also explained that an employee is paid a portion of their wages only, with the state determining the amounts: the maximum was \$1,372 a week.

“That will probably change every year, as inflation and everything changes, of course,” Rogers said. “The employees do have to notify their employer if they are applying for this, so kind of preventing any unpleasant surprise.”

In answer to one council members’ concerns, the group determined employees will not continue to accrue sick time or vacation while on leave; employers will be expected to pay toward health insurance premiums during the absence.

Another major discussion during the meeting regarded the city’s proposed property tax levy for 2026. In September, council members approved a preliminary 15-percent levy increase; information shared during the October meeting indicated the increase will be 11 percent or less thanks to some adjustments in anticipated expenses and revenues.

Rogers explained the state had sent an updated summary of income expected from state aid programs, including fire and police aid.

Council continued on 7

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Santa & Mrs Claus

11am-2pm

Waseca Garden Club slows down for winter season

By **BEN REVERMANN**
Staff writer

Members of the Waseca Garden Club held their monthly meeting at the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center on Monday evening, Oct. 27. The topic under discussion was decorative use of spruce tops, presented by Pat Forshee.

There were 20 members of the garden club present to watch the presentation. Forshee explained sellers acquire what look like miniature trees by cutting the top two to four feet off of specially grown trees. She assured everyone, “Don’t worry, they grow back, it takes a few years, but they do come back. They harvest them from August through November, then refrigerate the plants to keep them fresh.” She gets her tops from Bachman’s Cedar Acres in Farmington. Since these are being gathered from the tops of the trees, a lot of that gathering is done by machine, said Forshee, “These are not easy to harvest,

and a lot of that land is owned by private people; you have to get state and county permits to gather and grow.” She mentioned spruce trees prefer an acidic soil, then elaborated, “They grow best in bogs, a type of wetland with spongy, water-saturated soil rich in peat and naturally decayed plant matter.” The trees are packaged in a bundle of 10 to 20 plants. She decorates them to look like miniature Christmas trees or with leaves for a fall motif, for decoration around the house for holidays or to leave with a loved one at the cemetery.

For anyone who wants to create their own projects, she teaches classes where she provides pots, soil and decorations. She also will decorate them herself for sale; pertinent information can be found on Facebook by searching for Pat’s Potting Shed. Interested individuals can place orders; groups can schedule a class.

In other Waseca Garden Club news, there are 4 to 5 gardens ready

to be considered for the 2026 Waseca Garden Tour, with additional recommendations anticipated over the next few months. A spring plant sale to raise funds was mentioned but no details have been set in stone. A few members of the garden club recently underwent a broccoli challenge where they tried eight different types of broccoli. The fairground garden will be having its perennials pulled in the next week or so; that garden is reported to be doing well. There will be elections in November with the new club officials being selected next February.

Refreshments were served after the meeting by Jolene Gundermann and Kathy Oftedahl and included pumpkin cake and cookies/bars along with lemonade. This meeting was free and open to the public. The next Waseca Garden Club meeting will be held on Monday, Nov. 24 at the University of Minnesota Research and Outreach Center and is open to the public.



The Pastor's Column

When strangers meet God in the wilderness

By PASTOR MIKE COGLAN

We were lounging on a stone shelf that sloped from our island campsite, surrounded by blue water, rocky shorelines, and endless green pines. A thoughtful spiritual discussion was underway when I noticed a dot in the distant sky. The dot grew and became a bald eagle and silently glided over us. I was overwhelmed with the presence of God. The noise of life had faded, and creation itself was speaking. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands" (Psalm 19:1).

This was my first visit to Adventurous Christians camp (AC) in northern Minnesota. I had heard of the AC wilderness camp, and I love the lake country known as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. So, when I saw an invitation to a "clergy canoe trip," I quickly registered for this one-of-a-kind adventure.

Not only was I new to the camp, but new to everyone else in our group. I joined a team of eight leaders from various Christian ministries, most of whom had no prior association with each other. We had three women, five men, and a 50-year age range. Our ages included all life-decades from the 20s to the 70s. Paddlers traveled from as far as California and Connecticut. The team included lead pastors, a family pastor, a hospice chaplain and a retiree as well as our camp ministry leaders. There was diversity of experience, strength and skills.

We were strangers in a strange land. Together we shared a strenuous journey through pristine wilderness. Friendship developed quickly as we shared the burdens of paddling, portaging, gathering wood, cooking, cleaning and sorting dishes. We would share our stories of life and our common mantle of Christian ministry. The result was a unique communal experience of God.

On arrival, we met our skilled and experienced leaders. Trisha Haugen is a professional wilderness guide. David Cairns is the Director of Covenant Pines Ministries, which manages AC. Trisha gave us a thorough orientation. Canoes were taken out of racks. The parts were named: bow, stern, thwart, gunnels, and the yoke. We were shown the proper ways to hoist and carry heavy equipment. We were placed on the water, and coached on our paddling mechanics.

Together, Dave and Trisha assessed our skills and strength. In the evening, we ate a nice meal at the common lodge, and were taught the requirements and ethics of wilderness travel. We examined our gear, and culled unnecessary weight. Then we all tried to sleep while anticipating the adventure ahead. In the morning, we paddled into the unknown.

Trisha crafted an ambitious route for us through seventeen lakes that required fifteen portages of varying difficulty. Together, we pulled our weight. And we shared our stories. We prayed together. Times of intentional silence and meditation were encouraged. Wonderful campfire meals were seasoned with gentle teasing and loud laughter.

I'm still processing lessons from this experience. For one, I was reminded of the gift of strangers. Years had passed since I had emersed myself in an unknown community. It's sometimes easier to open up with strangers who don't bring the same history or expectations, especially when we all know the unique pressure of professional ministry. God reminded me that the church family is bigger than my usual circles.

Wilderness travel strips away distractions and comforts. We had to trust that we would have all the supplies we needed, but not the excess luxuries that would add weight on a portage trail. I had to ponder what is essential. I had to trust that what I needed would be in my pack, or someone else's pack.

I also had to trust that the strength and skills of the group would be shared as necessary. I had to learn to ask for help. At one point, I overestimated my agility while carrying a canoe over a patch of wet rocks. I took a fall, and was briefly pinned under the canoe. I waited for friends to lift the canoe and help me up. Other than my ego, I was not seriously hurt. This was an opportunity for humility on my part, and for mutual care. Moments like these made me feel a depth of connection that might otherwise take years to develop. And in that companionship, I was reminded that we are the Body of Christ—many members, but one body (1 Corinthians 12:12).

I think what I loved most about this trip was the change of roles. The yoke of a canoe felt lighter than the yoke of leadership. I was neither the teacher nor the shepherd. I felt cared for.

Mornings began with the gentle voice of Trisha singing, "Give Me Jesus." Daily devotions were blessings without burdens. It was refreshing to take direction rather than take charge.

Something sacred happens when strangers enter the wilderness. Walking into an unfamiliar territory with unfamiliar companions is like the journey of faith itself: stepping out without full knowledge of what's ahead. God meets us even when we don't know the people or the path. In the end we were no longer strangers. We parted as brothers and sisters, knit together by shared vulnerability, laughter, prayer, and God's unmistakable presence in creation.

For more information on AC, visit: adventurouschristians.org



BINGO! - Starfire Event Center employees Melony Olson and Hannah Piha, left, were supplying adult beverages at the second Purse and Gun Bingo night on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2025. To the groans of those who didn't win, Darla Dahnert, right, was the first to yell, "Bingo" at the second Purse and Gun Bingo night.



Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Purse and Gun Bingo at Starfire sold out again

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The second annual Purse and Gun Bingo happened at the Starfire Event Center the evening of Saturday, Nov. 1. A change from the previous event is that tickets were required in advance so that the crowd could be kept to a size that fit the available space. There were a few stragglers who came at the last minute, said Mindy Jimenez, event coordinator. "No one was turned away, everyone who wanted to play with us, got to."

With either a designer purse or a gun on the winners' table for each of 16 games, and with double winners getting a cash prize, the stakes were high. Tickets were \$50 presale, with six cards for each game. Krysa Cardenas, 31, bingo and gun enthusiast observed, "I was disappointed last February when I played and didn't win a gun; I am hoping to fix that this year. I paid the entrance fee and that includes a free raffle entry." The conversation had to be cut short as the calling of numbers began and Cardenas was on a mission and had to focus.

This event was a joint venture organized by both the Starfire Event Center and Sleigh and Cutter festival. Said Jimenez, "The proceeds go to Sleigh and Cutter. We sold 150 tickets and after discussing it with my manager, we are definitely going to be doing this again, either in February or March of 2026, but we don't have any dates nailed down yet." Jimenez added, "Because of the success of our last Purse and Gun Bingo, we were also able to iron out a lot of the details and problems, you know, what works and what doesn't. Last time we had one bar open for

both food and adult beverages that got a little cluttered, so this time we opened two windows with additional staff. One for drinks, the other for food, it made things so much smoother, it's little things like that and the notes we take, improvements to serve you better."

There will be another event for adults only, Flannels & Fizz at the Starfire Event Center from 5:30 to 11:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 22. Food, games, live auctions, prizes and live band. \$30 per person or \$50 per couple.

Neighborhood Service Center Reopens



Volunteers and staff at the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center and Food Shelf have spent the past two weeks or more redesigning the floor plan of the facility's thrift store. Current estimates are that Second Street Northwest will be paved and driveable by Monday, so the services offered at the facility at 203 Third Avenue Northwest will be easily accessible without any detours.

Pictured here are some of the folks who have helped with the many hours of work needed to reach this point. Seated, from left, are volunteer Jessica Lemickson and staff members Sadie Smith and Deb Wolff. Standing, from left, are staff member Sharon Hanks, volunteer Jim Mosher, and staff member Eileen Borchert.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

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507-835-2235
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* * * * *

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

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

CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH
309 6th St NE, Waseca
507-835-9176
Worship Sundays 9 a.m., Sunday School/Fellowship 10:15 a.m., Wednesday evening 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
507-607-8245

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

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

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

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

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

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

LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Dan Kordahl
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday 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 Sammy Pothiredy
Saturday - 5 p.m. Worship
* * * * *

TRINITY LUTHERAN
Wilton Township
Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor
Sunday - 8 a.m. summer worship; 10:45 a.m. Worship starting Sept. 1
* * * * *

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
Rev. Timothy Contreras
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
Father Robert Schneider
Sunday - 8:30 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.

Child's History of Waseca County

Continuing Chapter II, 1854-5

The next morning the wind blew a gale and the thermometer indicated 20 degrees below zero, rendering traveling across the prairie simply impossible. All parties were compelled to remain over during the day. There were some forty travelers thus detained, this place being on the stage road from Dubuque to St. Paul.

Many a good story and some not so good were told that day, and jokes passed among the hotel guests in a manner peculiar to the West. One fellow, a liquor peddler, was quite chagrined at finding his liquor keg bottom up and his whisky spread out in the snow. The crowd insisted that he had been on a spree, and had left the keg in that condition himself; and, as no one pretended to know anything to the contrary, he was obliged to smother his pent-up wrath and make the best of the situation. His attempt at the retail business in the morning was, without doubt, the primary cause of his sad bereavement – at least some of the ladies intimated as much to his face.

The wind lulled during the night, and the next morning was bright and pleasant, though still cold. Our first settlers tackled up early and started across the prairie for Mantorville. That village was then less than a year old and contained only three or four small cabins. It was the last settlement on the route of our “first settlers” until they should reach their destination on the Le Sueur.

Think of the recklessness, not to say foolhardiness, of the trip.

Council from Page 5

He said he observed no huge difference in the police fund, but the fire department could see an increase.

“As far as expenses, we actually found the employer share for the city's health insurance premiums will be less this year than we had with the HealthPartners,” Rogers added. “So we saw some savings with the health insurance.

In regards to auto property and liability insurance, he said he anticipates he will know what those new numbers will be in the next month or so, then went on to say the levy increase would be smaller than the 15 percent approved in September.

“I would love to see it under 10 percent,” Mayor Andy Arnoldt stated.

He added he and Rogers had a discussion earlier this week about raising the city's building permit and franchise fees, saying he would like to know how the city's fees compare to those of similar communities.

“It would be a way to build

our revenue and bring our budget down a little bit, too,” Arnoldt said. “Then we can maybe just check with a couple other towns and see where they're at.”

In other business matters, Rogers alerted the council he had been contacted by Midcontinent Communication, known as Midco, about building infrastructure sometime in 2026 to provide the community with cable television, phone, and internet service. Meanwhile, Rogers and City Attorney Jason Moran are drafting an agreement with the company for the council to review on Nov. 10.

In other matters, Paul Voges from the Park Board reported holding Songs in the Park during farmers market events continues to be well-received and that he and his wife Shelly continue to enjoy putting the event on. On behalf of the farmers market portion of the Park Board, he said he received feedback from the vendors who asked if the start time could be 5 p.m. rather than 4:30. The council indicated agreement with Voges' suggestion the market could run from 5 to 7 p.m.



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Waseca

25 years ago

- Friends and teammates of Waseca High School junior Neil Dickie are sponsoring a spaghetti benefit supper for him and his family to help cover Neil's medical expenses resulting from a motor vehicle accident on Aug. 23. The benefit will be held from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., Friday at the Waseca VFW.

- The pseudorabies swine disease has been eliminated from Minnesota hog farms state officials said recently. There were 28 herds quarantined statewide by the Minnesota Board of Animal Health in June. Eight of those herds were in Waseca County. Farmers, especially those in southwest Minnesota are being advised to have their hogs vaccinated for the disease. They are also being advised to have hogs bought in Iowa, where there are still about 500 farms quarantined, tested for pseudorabies.

- Hello from Miss Waseca County: Hello, my name is Courtney Adams, I am from Janesville and I am currently serving as Miss Waseca County 2000. Since my crowning in mid-July, I have been quite busy. My first appearances as Miss Waseca County was at the County Fair in Waseca. There I was judge for the Diaper Derby. I also did the kiddy coin find and was able to walk away with a few coins for myself.

50 years ago

- Members of the Waseca County Sheriff's Office are continuing their investigation into the shooting of Lyle Hoffman, but have no new information to release at this time, according to Sheriff Don Eustice, who admitted today that he, along with his deputies, are in the process of checking several possible leads. Lyle Hoffman, 33 was shot in the right leg by a 12 gauge shotgun shortly before 7 p.m. Saturday night as he was working on a backhoe in the ditch near County Road 4, five miles northeast of Waseca.

- The October pack meeting for Cub Scout Pack 86 was held at Hartley school Monday evening. Supervising activities for the first time was new, Cubmaster Duane Berglund. The general theme for the initial meeting of the year was “Sounds of Scouting.” The Webelos, under the direction of Dave Zimmermann, presented the colors and led in the pledge of allegiance. Den mothers for the year will be: Sharon Routh, den one, Janet Gray, den two, Darla Vilt, den three, and Judy Seeley, den five.

- Two thefts were reported to the Waseca Police Department Wednesday. The first was reported by Scott Armstrong, 900 9th St. NE who said four or five music tapes were taken from his car while it was parked in front of his residence. The second was reported by Jon Jellum who said his apartment at 1010 3rd. Ave. SE was broken into. A watch and set of keys were reportedly taken. The Police department is investigating both thefts.

75 years ago

- John A. Tabbert of Waseca, custodian at the Farmers National Bank, sustained injuries last Saturday evening when he was involved in an automobile accident about six miles northwest of Windom, Minn. Mr. Tabbert suffered several cracked ribs, a cut on the chin that required several stitches and bruises and minor cuts.

- Six men from Waseca county were inducted into the army Wednesday, according to word received from the Selective Service office in Waseca. The six, who went to Fort Snelling to be sworn in and will be assigned from there, are Edwards Shulz, Lester Jobe and Richard Mann, all of Waseca and Erwin Flitter, John Mulcahy and Rex Glynn, all of Janesville. They took and passed preliminary examinations some time ago.

- The Third Annual Membership Drive of the Waseca Concert Association will get under way, Monday, Oct. 30, at the Waseca Hotel when over 125 campaign workers will gather for the “Kick-off” dinner. A worker talent poll will be conducted at the dinner by Robert Thomson, concert adviser of the University of Minnesota. “This poll,” Thomson explains, “will be closely adhered to when the board of directors and the talent committee pick the programs for the coming season.”

100 years ago

- Fourteen gallons of evidence taken into the jury room resulted in the discharging of the jury in the case of the State vs. Patsy Cahill of Janesville. The jury went out after three o'clock Monday afternoon. At 5:15 the jury returned to the court room for further instructions from the Judge. While the jury was in the room Judge Senn noted that one of the men showed the effect of too much “evidence.” After instructing the jury he sent them back to the jury room and investigated further into the condition of the men. When he found that one of the men was visibly intoxicated and that two others showed effects of liquor, he called them back and discharged them.

- Many friends in Waseca will be pleased to learn of the marriage of Miss Martha Arndt of Owatonna to Herman Wilken of Waseca last Wednesday afternoon, October 21, at 8 o'clock. Rev. Kildow of Owatonna performed the ceremony. The bride's attendant was Miss Edith Henkensiefken of Waseca. Paul Arndt was the best man.

- James B. Duke, the tobacco king, left a colossal fortune of \$150,000,000. Many men use tobacco and through persistent advertising Mr. Duke was able to get them to use his make. Hence his fortune. When gum is mentioned you instantly think of Wrigley's, of course, and Mr. Wrigley is a very wealthy man. Produce something the masses can be induced to use, advertise it persistently and your fortune is made.

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New Richland



25 years ago

- This group of area farmers harvested 65 acres of corn for Ronald Roehrs Thursday, October 19, and hauled it to market in New Richland. The volunteer harvesters were, from left: kneeling, David Swenson, Phyllis Peterson and Greg Moe; standing, Rolland Peterson, Dennis Roesler. Tim Nelson, Oliver Roesler, John Nelson and Darrol Sponberg. Roehrs, who has been fighting cancer, is confined to a wheelchair and was unable to harvest the crop.

- Shawn Prescher has graduated from the Army Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC) Advanced Camp at Fort Lewis, Tacoma, Washington. At camp, the cadet completed a five-week course consisting of intensive military leadership training and evaluation exercises in communications, management, and survival training. He is the son of Mr. Leon Prescher of Blue Earth. Preacher, a 2000 graduate of Blue Earth Area High School, Blue Earth, is currently attending Minnesota State University, Mankato.

- The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva volleyball girls completed the season with 17-6 overall record. They finished second in the Gopher Conference behind Faribault Bethlehem Academy.



50 years ago

- Roy Peterson (Center) is retiring from the Skelly bulk truck route, after 39 years of delivering fuel in the New Richland area, in all kinds of weather. He is pictured with Tony Arnfelt (left), Skelly bulk plant owner and Karl Proehl (right), who will take Roy's place behind the wheel.



- Rev. and Mrs. Allan Grundhal are pictured here along with their sons outside of the Trinity Lutheran parsonage in New Richland, shortly after their arrival this week. Rev. Grundhal is the new pastor at Trinity. Their sons are, from left: Jason, Nathan and Joel. Marcus is held by his father.

75 years ago

- Dorothy Ann Tofte was baptized Saturday evening at the home of her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John Amley, by her paternal grandfather, Rev. James Tofte of Hawley. Sponsors were Mrs. Willis Tofte, Miss Dorothy Amley and Roger Tufte.

- Pvt. Harold R. Sybilrud 22, son of Reuben Sybilrud, New Richland, has completed his AF basic airmen indoctrination course at Lackland Air Force Base the “Gateway to the Air Force.”

- The choir of St. Peters Lutheran church honored Robert Billing at a party at the church, following regular rehearsal Wednesday evening. “Bob” gave many years of service to the choir and St. Peter's church is grateful. A fine lunch was served and a gift was presented to “Bob.”

VETERANS DAY 2025

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



Devre Arkadie



Elizabeth Arkadie



Heather Arndt



Braedon Barr



Jackson Barr



Curt Barr



Cary Barto



William Beiser



Steve Bohannon



Mr. Brenden



Charlie Brua



John Buck



Mike Buenger



Adalberto Castro



Mike Clevenger



Don Collins



Jeff Conwav



John Conway



Clifford Coy



Jon Davis



Angelica Delapena



Drew DeRaad



Donald DeSart



Dan DeSart



Paul Downing



Dean Farley



Mike Felske



Rachel Felske



Autumn Finke



Arnold Follstad



Loren Frink



Mahlon Lee Fritz



Michael Gerber



Donald Gilbertson



Victor Gilmore



Martin Gruenhagen



James Gwilt



Kevin Haekenkamp



James Hanson



William Hanson

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Farmamerica’s Turkey Trot returns Nov. 28

Farmamerica’s Turkey Trot is back on Friday, November 28th, and everyone is invited- walkers, joggers, runners, and stroller-pushers- to hit the farm trails for a fun, family-friendly 5k.

Sure, there are plenty of turkey trots this time of year, but how many take place in the quiet countryside? Not many. And how many are home to Peach and Blossom, the two lucky turkeys who traveled to Washington, D.C. last Thanksgiving to be pardoned by President Biden? Only Farmamerica’s Turkey Trot can boast that honor!

Farmamerica’s Turkey Trot is the perfect activity for friends and families coming together for the holiday to get outdoors, embrace the fresh air, support local agriculture, and have fun together. Participants can complete the full 5k or walk a lap or two at their own pace. Strollers are

welcome, making it an event for all ages.

Event Details:
Date: Friday, November 28th
Check-in: 9:30 AM | Fun Run: 10:00 AM
Registration Fee: \$20 (Includes Turkey Trot t-shirt and race medal)
Register by November 18th to guarantee your T-shirt
Register at: farmamerica.ticketspice.com/turkey-trot
Farmamerica is a non-profit agricultural interpretive center that connects people with the evolving story of agriculture through educational hands-on experiences like historic farm tours, day camps, family-friendly events, partnerships, and community engagement. The 360-acre Farmamerica site is located right off Highway 14 on County Road 2, west of Waseca, MN.

Mamma Mia to run Nov. 6-8

By **RACHAEL JAEGER**
Staff Writer

After rehearsing the musical “Mamma Mia” for a few months, Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP) High School English teacher and theater director Teagan Knoblich says she is thrilled to see the fruits of her labor. The play will run in the JWP auditorium beginning at 7 p.m. from November 6 to 8, with an additional performance at 2 p.m. on Saturday.

When one witnesses how Knoblich interacts with the students onstage as she rotates set designs, communicates to the students about timing and coaches them about their characters, she can leave quite an impression.

“Some of that came from grad school,” Knoblich said when asked about her efficiency and timeliness. “I’ve also helped out with productions since I first started teaching here, in one way or another.”

She also said she feels like she grows sharper every year with each performance since she learns something new and acquires a stronger sense of where her students need to be in the performances at a certain time.

Knoblich mentioned two observations specifically about rehearsals for Mamma Mia. The first is that her students picked up the music quickly because the musical group ABBA has returned in full force with its popularity.

“I was just thinking recently about how it’s a leg up for learning all the music because everyone knows most of it already and there are twice the musical numbers than in other shows,” Knoblich stated. “It almost makes me want there to be more musical numbers out there that are based on a character log.”

The second observation she made had to do with changing her mind



HERE WE GO AGAIN - JWP students will be performing the musical “Mamma Mia” in the school auditorium at 7 p.m. the evenings of Nov. 6 through 8, with a 2 p.m. matinee on Saturday.

Pioneer photo by Rachael Jaeger

about how she thought about “Mamma Mia” in general.

“It’s funny because when I’m watching the musical, I’m kinda of nonplussed about it and think it’s a cheesy rom-com,” Knoblich noted. “But when it’s performed onstage, there’s a lot of room for the kids to creatively add some funny stuff like their expressions or how they move. So I’m getting way more enjoyment out of it than I anticipated.”

Since Knoblich must work within a budget, she says she uses her resources to the best of her ability. She’s also grateful to the volunteers like the Johnson family who donated a generous amount of time for a couple rotating set designs pieces which she has been able to reuse.

Carol Langford, who has a musical background, has also assisted Knoblich and Borneke with teaching the high school students the songs and choreography for Mamma Mia.

Knoblich expressed her gratitude for families who have pitched in and fed the students meals over the rehearsal times.

Senior Katelyn Olson plays Donna, mother to Sophie, who investigates to discover who her father is. Formerly, she performed in “The Little Mermaid” at JWP as one of the sisters three years ago.

With it being her last year in high school, Olson said she thought she might as well go for auditions and was excited when she learned she received one of the major roles.

“I was very shocked when I got Donna and from there, it was easy to fall into character,” Olson stated.

What helps to put herself in the shoes of this current character, Donna, is that Olson shared her family’s shared obsession of the movie musical. Since she described as having seen it “at least a hundred times,” she draws most inspiration from there.

“But to make it different, I make the big scenes like ‘Winner takes it all’ heartfelt rather than angry,” Olson said.

In her own life, Olson finds it hard to become really upset over a situation so that’s one aspect of her character development she’s working through. Otherwise she said, between rehearsal times and when she’s not at school, she’s played the “Mamma Mia” soundtrack on repeat.

Another challenge she has worked through is becoming comfortable with her voice on stage.

“I have never really sung before and I don’t think my family has really heard me sing,” Olson shared. “It’s my first time singing in front of other people. Becky Bornecke has been so helpful to me and makes me feel like I’m a superstar.”

As far as her favorite musical number in the whole drama, Olson said she really enjoys “Money, Money.”

“I can go from hopeless to being in a different world and have a lot of fun with that,” she said.

Olson said she would encourage anyone who wants to try something new, to stop thinking about it and just do it.

“I’d say from experience, don’t be afraid to go out of your comfort

zone,” Olson said.

Travyn Shoultz plays Sam Carmichael, one of Donna’s past love interests whose profession is an architect. Shoultz said he has enjoyed learning where the heart of his character is. In all, Shoultz has accumulated three years of theatre at JWP. He played Bruce in “Matilda” and last year, Albert in “The Newsies.”

“I give him his confidence in a way that I really haven’t seen in the movies much,” Shoultz said. “I think the way that I take the character is much more outgoing and expressive.”

What Shoultz said he found challenging is leaning into the professional side of Carmichael, but expressed assurance at the end of rehearsal on October 30 he has gotten the hang of what he needs to do. What helps him in his role is when he wears a button-up dress shirt with casual business black pants which provides him with the reality that he owns his company.

“Chest out and I’m ready to go!” he said with enthusiasm.

Schoultz says the most enjoyable part of the play for him is when the Flipper Boys come onstage with actual flippers during “Lay All Your Love on Me.”

As far as what he wished others to know about performance or about the play, Shoultz agreed with Olson.

“If you’re thinking about joining theatre, go out and try it,” Shoultz said. “It’s an amazing experience. Even if you think you can’t act or you can’t sing, you can have a lot of fun with the cast and crew.”

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GRADUATE - David Schlaak was surrounded by family and friends for his "drug court" graduation on the third floor of the Waseca courthouse on Thursday, Oct. 30, 2025.

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

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■ Graduate

from Page 1

Judge Hanks also had a plaque which stated Schlaak’s accomplishments and put dates on them. There was also a letter from Senator Amy Klobuchar, Judge Hanks asked, “Do you want me to open and read it to everyone, or do you want to take it home and open it in private?” Schlaak opted to take it home. He also had a two-page written statement to read to the room, filled with things he had learned and hoped to pass on, a few notable quotes, “Addiction doesn’t care about promises. I was enslaved in something I couldn’t control; my life was chaos. What changed everything was the day of the raid, when I saw the look on my 2-year-old son’s face while I was being arrested and I knew I couldn’t be there for him. My life fell apart because of my own choices. But that day of the raid ended up being the best day of my life, because it changed it for the better, I just didn’t know it then.”

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Keen Bank honored as community champion

Keen Bank has been recognized by the Minnesota Bankers Association (MBA) as one of 88 Community Champions that have worked with hundreds of organizations in their communities this year, providing funding, volunteers, materials, supplies and/or food for their neighbors. Recipients of the recognition range in size from small community banks to large banks with multiple branches and play a vital role in their communities.

In the wake of another challenging year for many, Minnesota bankers stepped up their efforts to give back to their communities and citizens. Just during the MBA's September Community Impact Month alone, these 88 banks and 425 branches devoted more than 4,000 volunteer hours, completed hundreds of community service projects and donated tens of thousands of dollars to charitable organizations. In total, more than 296 distinct communities in Minnesota were impacted by their efforts.

"Minnesota banks provide an extraordinary level of commitment to the communities they serve," said MBA President/CEO Joe Witt. "In addition to providing the capital that helps families and local businesses thrive, the banking industry's record of supporting charitable and community causes is second to none. The MBA is pleased to recognize these banks for their commitment to making a real difference in their local communities."

Keen Bank is a local, third generation family-owned and managed community bank, committed to customers and their financial wellbeing. For more information visit keen.bank.

About Keen Bank
Keen Bank is a local, family-owned and managed bank that has been proudly serving southern Minnesota since 1874 with three locations in Waseca, Owatonna and Ellendale. Their commitment to customers, responsiveness to find solutions and genuine willingness to help is the makeup of their organization. Keen Bank meets the needs of customers while maintaining the personal aspects of service that are synonymous with community banking. For more information visit keen.bank. Member FDIC

■ Bazaar

from Page 5

course chocolate chip. Vada Dahmert, who was staffing the cookie counter said, "We all made 10 dozen for the day, I would bet I've sold at least 300 cookies by now and it's only noon." For the bake sale, which was separate from the cookies, there were pork and bean bars, cinnamon streusel cupcakes, Aronia berry, jelly, berry jam, strawberry rhubarb jam, mixed berry and Special K bars.

For the thrift sale, Roberta Walker was keeping an eye on things; as she looked around, a woman came up behind her and whispered, "You just got a huge compliment on your bread." Ever humble, Walker apologized and said, "I am sorry, we've been so busy today we hardly have anything left, we've had to spread things out, so it looks like more." She was asked what she thought of the soup, and she replied, "You know, I haven't had a moment to go get any yet." She assured, "All of the funds raised today go toward missions in Waseca and the surrounding area."



DOING GOOD - The Waseca Fire Department plans to place the new AEDs gained due to Tuscan Lodge's donation in response vehicles to ensure faster deployment during medical calls.

Tuscan Lodge donates \$6,500 to Fire Department

The Tuscan Lodge No. 77 of the Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota has generously donated \$6,500 to the Waseca Fire Department to support the purchase of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), life-saving devices used to assist individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest.

The funds were raised through the Lodge's annual Soapbox Derby, held this past August in Waseca. The family-friendly event drew participants and spectators from across the region and continues to be a cornerstone of the Lodge's commitment to community service.

"Freemasonry is built on the principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth," said Rick Kritzer, longtime Brother of Tuscan Lodge No. 77. "We believe in giving back to our community in ways that make a tangible difference. Supporting our local fire department with the tools they need to save lives is exactly the kind of impact our members strive for."

Freemasonry is one of the world's oldest and largest fraternal organizations, emphasizing moral integrity,

charitable work, and the betterment of individuals and their communities. Locally, Tuscan Lodge No. 77 has a long tradition of supporting youth programs, scholarships, and civic causes throughout Waseca County.

An AED is a portable medical device designed to analyze a person's heart rhythm and, if necessary, deliver an electric shock to help the heart reestablish an effective rhythm. Quick access to an AED can make the difference between life and death during a cardiac emergency.

"This donation from Tuscan

Lodge No. 77 will directly enhance our department's ability to respond quickly in cardiac emergencies," said Waseca Fire Chief Jason Forshee. "Every second counts in these situations, and having additional AEDs available means our firefighters will be better equipped to save lives. We're deeply grateful for this partnership and the Lodge's ongoing support of our first responders."

The Waseca Fire Department plans to place the new AEDs in response vehicles to ensure faster deployment during medical calls.

■ Service

from Page 1

sentries are too small to show much detail, Dale points out there are distinct similarities between a surviving photograph of Daniel and one of the two sentries in the painting. History tells however, that Daniel was not a sentry, he simply happened to be in the first "rifle pit" Pemberton's group approached.

Andrew was injured at the Twenty-Third's first battle, but stayed on as the unit's Corporal of the Guard.

Military service during the Civil War was brutal. Between injuries, infected wounds and disease, the casualty rate on both sides was higher than 25 percent, with about 360,000 deaths among Union forces and 258,000 among Confederate fighters.

"So it was pretty impressive they all survived," observes Dale regarding his ancestors.

He has spent many hours looking through historical information and genealogical records. Wisconsin regiments, he shared, wore a distinctive "Hardee" style hat, with a wide brim folded up on one side. Particularly noted on battlefields was the fact that their hats were black in color, rather than blue, leading them to be called the "black hatters."

Daniel's memoirs describe an incident when his regiment was divided, forcing him and some fellow soldiers into a watery bayou. He wrote, "The Union men were outnumbered five to one. We were hemmed in on all sides by the rebel cavalry, but we held them until reinforcements came."

John was among the group which acquired the moniker "Iron Brigade" after the regiments proved themselves particularly well disciplined and fierce, amassing the highest casualty rate in battles they entered. According to historic records, Confederate forces would begin to lose confidence when they saw "those damn black hats" on the field.

After the Civil War ended, the Baker brothers spread out across the country.

Once he had learned of his ancestors' role in the Civil War, Dale searched out family members to gather information about their post-war lives. Thanks to assistance from many sources, he located the graves of all four of his ancestors who fought in the Civil War. He has traveled as far as Missouri and Kansas to visit their respective graves, place a flag near their headstones, and give them a military salute.

Dale says it became important to him to build connections with those individuals from three generations back because he, they, and all American soldiers are linked by their service.

He names some of the ideals all

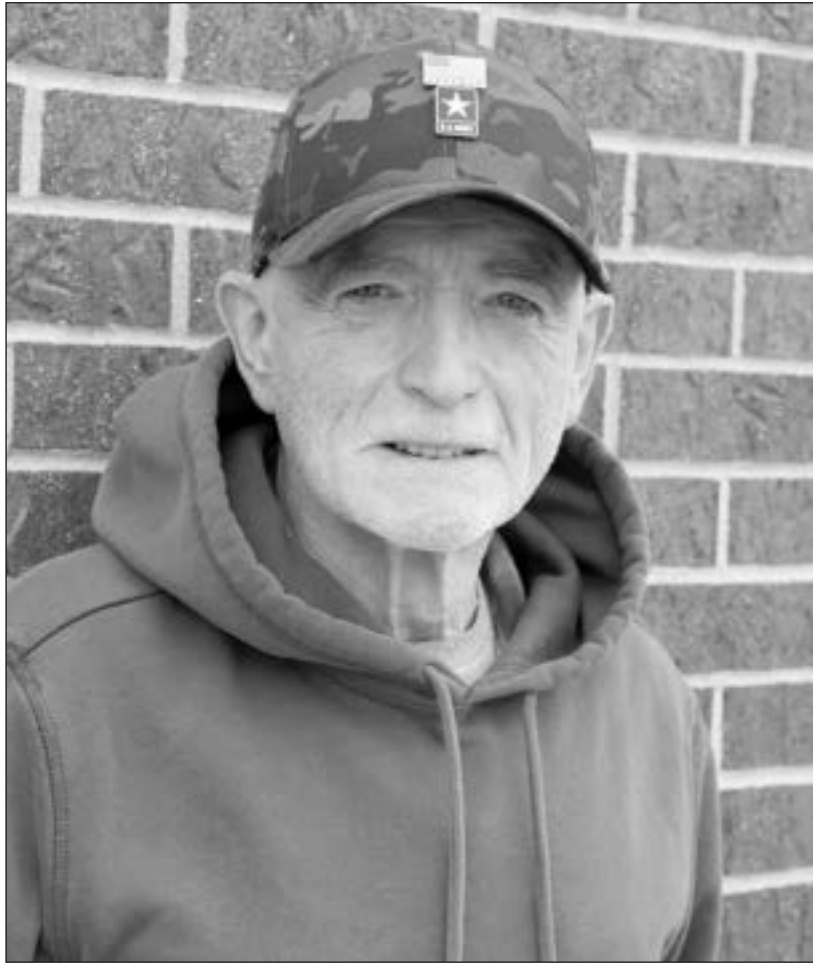
members of the military cherish: "Service to country, loyalty to each other, respecting the flag and all it represents."

Dale's father Ralph served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II from 1942 to 1945. Though he was officially a "radar plotter," Dale reports that Ralph filled many roles, including guarding prisoners of war, driving an ambulance, and even manning what was known as an M-50 machine gun when his base was under attack. Dale describes that it took at least two people to fire the elaborate weapon—one to aim and hold the trigger and another to keep the long string of bullets feeding smoothly.

During one attack, Ralph was struck by a small piece of shrapnel near his nose. When describing the incident, Dale says Ralph talked about how the wound was instantly cauterized, and so he was able to stay at his station until the attack was over before seeking medical treatment.

Dale makes light of his own service, since, as a "combat-ready engineer" who learned to operate cranes and bulldozers, any fighting seen by him and his brother Don, who served in a similar role, was incidental. Even though he was stationed near the demilitarized zone in Korea for 13 months, "I was never a soldier on the field," he says. "I didn't see any enemies face to face." In addition to his time in Korea, Dale was a squad leader at Fort Hood, Texas. Don, who currently lives in Waseca, served in the military for more than two decades, spending three years in active duty and 19 in the reserves.

Though he never carried a weapon in battle, Dale says he is proud to have served, and still consistently wears pins on his military-style cap showing he was stationed in Korea. Dale graduated from New Richland-Hartland High School in 1974 and enlisted in the Army soon afterward. He served three years of active duty and was in the reserves for another three; he achieved the



CONNECTIONS - New Richland area veteran Dale Baker discovered rich connections to history when he began studying the genealogy of his family.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

rank of sergeant and was selected as a squad leader while stationed in Fort Hood, Texas.

He remembers a "battle simulation" at Fort Hood where his squad of bulldozer drivers was challenged to shape terrain in such a way that large equipment would be unable to reach a target destination. "It was over in two days," Dale describes. "Thanks to what we did, they couldn't get across."

Two other incidents he recalls included one where he maneuvered a bulldozer to the top of a plateau to establish a firebreak where lightning had started a fast-spreading fire, and another when he extricated three amphibious vehicles which had be-

come stranded in an overflowing river.

Dale received an Army Achievement award noting his "conscientious attitude and dedication to mission accomplishment" set a fine example of a professional soldier.

After his military service, Dale went to a community college to learn welding and went on to work for Streater of Albert Lea for 36 years. For 33 of those, he was the lead welder on his shift.

Alexander House murder mystery Nov. 14, 15

Area mystery buffs will have the chance to take part in an interactive murder investigation at Alexander House, a restored historic Edwardian style home located at 610 State Street North in Waseca the weekend of Nov. 14 and 15.

The event will be similar to one held last year which drew sell-out participation while raising money to support the Waseca Exchange Club's philanthropic activities.

Tickets are available for sale on a first-come, first-served basis at the Waseca Art Center and the Chamber of Commerce office for \$35 each. Start times for the two mysteries each night are at 6:30 and 8 p.m.

About 20 "investigators" at a time will spend an hour touring the house and questioning its occupants; each group will then be asked to determine who the murderer was, where the crime was committed and what weapon was used. In connection with the Russian roots of homeowner Mikhail Rostislavovich's name, the mystery is set in Russia at a point in history which aligns with the construction of the Edwardian home. The story line is that the Imperial Family, surrounded by members of their dutiful staff, have convened awaiting an appearance and performance by the celebrated composer and pianist, Sergei Rachmaninoff, who has not yet arrived. Those in the house have learned of an unexplained explosion in the city's streets, and do not know whether it is the cause of Rachmaninoff's tardiness. Along with that, rumors that the Bolsheviks are planning a revolution have tensions running high; many of the country's wealthy families are despairing at the increasingly radical violence shown by the Bolsheviks despite the Tsar's abdication of the throne in an attempt to preserve the empire.

Now a murder has been committed, and those in the house wonder whether a Bolshevik has entered the sanctity of Alexander House.

About 25 members of the Waseca Exchange Club will dress in costume and present the evenings' mysteries, each of which will have its own solution. Participants will be given check-off lists and will use clues provided by character narratives to eliminate suspicious elements one by one. Enthusiasm among participants is high, since the club has been challenged to reach a specific financial goal which will then be matched by an anonymous donor.

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CITY OF WASECA CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the **City of Waseca City Council** will hold a Public Hearing at **7:00 p.m., on Tuesday, November 18, 2025**, in the **COUNCIL CHAMBERS of CITY HALL** located at 508 South State Street in Waseca, Minnesota.

The purpose of the public hearing is to gather information regarding the following:

- VARIANCE REQUEST:** Ann Staloch is requesting the following Variance from Section § 154.159 of the Municipal Code:

Granting construction of a fence that is eight (8) feet in total height, whereas the maximum allowable fence height in a residential district is six (6) feet.

The property is Parcel ID No. 173760280, which is located at 105 7th Avenue NE and is currently zoned R-2 (Urban Residential District).

Complete copies of the proposed Variance are available in the office of the City Clerk located at 508 South State Street in Waseca, Minnesota.

Those interested in commenting may appear in person or by counsel or may submit written comments to the City of Waseca at 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

Upon request, accommodations will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Waseca services, programs, and activities.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on Thursday, November 6, 2025.

SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642 November 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 Burger night 5-7pm	5 6pm BAR BINGO	6 7pm HALL BINGO	7 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	8
9 VFW BREAKFAST 8am to NOON Host ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSION	10 7pm Post & AUX & Meeting	11 Burger night 5-7pm Veterans DAY	12 6pm BAR BINGO	13 7pm HALL BINGO	14 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	15
16	17	18 Burger night 5-7pm	19 6pm BAR BINGO	20 7pm HALL BINGO	21 WALLEYE OR SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 TO 7pm	22 <i>Turkey Bingo 7:00pm</i>
23	24	25 Burger night 5-7pm	26 6pm BAR BINGO	27 HAPPY THANKSGIVING CLOSED	28 MEAT RAFFLE 4:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	29
30						

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On to state

Bluejays blow out Luverne 31-12 in Section 3AAA football finals

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Halloween night was kind of a nightmare for the Luverne Cardinals.

The Waseca Bluejays saw to that. The Bluejays, 10-0 and ranked No. 1 in the state in Class AAA in at least one poll, qualified for the state football tournament for the sixth time, defeating third-seeded Luverne 31-12 at New Ulm last Friday. The 10 wins tied a school record for most in a season.

Next up for the Jays is a state quarterfinal game Saturday, Nov. 8 at noon against Holy Trinity Catholic at Apple Valley High School.

“We talked last week about winning any kind of fight,” said WHS head coach Brad Wendland. “Last week was more like a fist fight. Tonight was more like a track meet. The fact that we can do both is a good sign.”

Wendland credited Luverne for keeping it close until just before halftime.

“We knew they were very good,” said Wendland.

Last Friday, the Bluejays received the opening kickoff and, as in recent weeks, failed to move the ball, punting after three plays.

The Cardinals punted after four plays.

From there, it didn't take the Jays long to light up the scoreboard, Kellen Klinger connecting with Deron Russell for 68 yards and a touchdown. Owen Rupe kicked the PAT. The Bluejays needed only three plays to cover 81 yards.

The Cardinals responded with a long, impressive drive, going 74 yards in 13 plays, capped by an 11-yard touchdown pass from Josh Hanson to 6-foot-7 receiver Max Williamson on the first play of the second quarter. A two-point conversion failed.

The Bluejays smoothly moved the ball on their next possession, with Ethan Hiller - playing his first game of the season because of an injury - caught an 11-yard touchdown from Klinger. Rupe added the PAT.

After forcing a three-and-out, the Bluejays appeared to score a touchdown - or at least come close - when Russell caught about a 70-yard pass, was tackled at the 3-yard line, and fumbled through the back of the end zone.

It gave the ball to Luverne at its own 20 and, temporarily at least, drastically swung the momentum.

The Cardinals quickly moved the ball the other way, mostly with passes, and found themselves on the Waseca 11 with 36 seconds left before halftime. Two plays later, Kallen Glynn made a big hit, dislodging the football, and the Bluejays' Brady McKenna picked up the fumble and took it to the Luverne 41.

Hiller, who caught three passes on the Jays' next four plays, scored his second touchdown of the night, snaring a 12-yard pass from Klinger. There was 1 second on the clock when Rupe kicked the PAT and the Jays led 21-6 at halftime.

An unsuccessful on-side kick gave Luverne the ball at the Waseca 45 to start the third period, but the Cardinals did not capitalize, punting after three plays.

The Bluejays' next drive was impressive - 20 plays, 89 yards - and it culminated with a 1-yard touchdown run by Klinger. Rupe added the PAT.

Luverne did not throw in the towel, covering 65 yards in nine plays, Hanson connecting with Jaydon Johnson on a 14-yard scoring pass. Another two-point conversion failed.

On the first play of the fourth quarter, Russell brought Luverne's drive to an abrupt halt, intercepting a pass and returning it to the Waseca 34.

The Bluejays' next drive did not produce any points, but they did run several minutes off the clock before punting. The punt was fumbled and the Bluejays recovered it on Luverne's 11.

The Bluejays put it out of reach on a 26-yard field goal by Rupe with under 3 minutes remaining.

The Cardinals' last-chance drive ended when the Waseca defense stopped them on fourth down.

The Jays ran out the clock, then

ran off with the section championship trophy.

Wendland, for one, was happy to have Hiller back.

“Ethan Hiller is a big deal,” said Wendland. “He’s a weapon we kind of had up our sleeve. What a time to get him back.”

Hiller finished with six catches for 80 yards, while Russell caught six for 201. Klinger completed 16 of 20 passes for 236 yards.

While acknowledging the Bluejays' passing game is very strong, Wendland said the squad hangs its hat on defense.

“That’s our best phase,” he said. “It’s just what they’ve done all year. We’ve got good talent there, they’re well coached and it’s going to be tough for anyone to score points against us.”

Said defensive coordinator Eric Teders: “We’ve been through a lot this year. We were a young team coming in. We won 7-6 at St. Peter in the opener and were down at halftime to Fairmont. We’ve been in some situations, and the guys know that if we keep playing our game that we’re going to come back.”

Teders listed numerous players as having an impact on defense, though he did mention Russell’s name more than once.

“I’m proud of our seniors and their leadership,” said Wendland. “I’ve been very impressed about the maturity of this team. We weren’t the most mature bunch and we lacked discipline earlier in the year. If you’ve watched our team, you’ve seen that get better. I’m just really proud of the kids.”

Wendland also gave credit to his assistant coaches.

“We’ve got a great staff here, great special teams and defensive coaches,” said Wendland. “They’ve earned this.”

Hiller said it felt “surreal” to return to the Bluejays’ lineup, and credited others for getting him there.

“I wouldn’t be even out on the field if it wasn’t for my teammates and coaches,” said Hiller. “They had to win to get me to this point.”

Hiller spent the entire fall in rehab from a broken collarbone sustained a week before the season started. It required surgery. He was finally cleared to play last Wednesday.

On his touchdowns, Hiller said he knew what would happen from watching game film.

As for the rest of the season, Hiller said, “The job’s not finished. We’ve got bigger ambitions. We want to get to U.S. Bank Stadium, and we’ve got a state championship to win.”

Wendland said he’s proud to be a party of the Waseca community.

“Waseca’s a great school,” said Wendland. “it’s a great community, and we’re just proud to be a part of that and bring Waseca with us as we go further here.”

If the Bluejays win again on Saturday, they will play in the state semifinals Saturday, Nov. 15 at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. The Class AAA state championship game is Saturday, Nov. 22 at 1 p.m. at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Waseca 28 LUverne 12			
LUV -	0	6	0
WAS -	7	14	7
First Quarter			
WAS - Russell 68 pass from Klinger (Rupe kick)			
Second Quarter			
LUV - Thone 8 pass from Hanson (two-point conversion failed)			
WAS - Hiller 11 pass from Klinger (Rupe kick)			
WAS - Hiller 12 pass from Klinger (Rupe kick)			
Third Quarter			
WAS - Klinger 1 run (Rupe kick)			
LUV - Johnson 14 pass from Hanson (two-point conversion failed)			
Fourth Quarter			
WAS - Rupe 26 field goal			
	LUV	WAS	
First downs	13	13	
Rushing yards	23	48	
Passing yards	190	326	
Total Yds.	213	374	
Penalties	1-5	7-66	
INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS			
Passing - WAS: Klinger 16-20, 326; LUV: Hansen 21-35, 190			
Rushing - WAS: Johnston 11-25; Parpart 1-2; Russell 3-18; Klinger 12-3; LUV: Dolo 2-8; Hartquist 2-14; L.Lais 7-1; Hansen 3-5; Bork 1-1; J.Lais 1-3			
Receiving - WAS: Russell 6-201; Hiller 6-80; Johnston 2-29; Rupe 2-16; Johnston; Rupe; LUV: Dolo 3-12; Jayson 4-43; L.Lais 2-8; Thone 2-10; Bork 1-5; Thone 2-10; J.Lais 8-101; Thedens 1-11			
Waseca Defense - M.Noble 2T; Hiller 1A; Mansfield 2T, 2A; Russell 3T, 2A; Glynn 2T, 6A; Rohl 2T, 1A; Kath 4T; Oviedo 3A; Veroeven 1T; Selthun 1T; Garza 1T, 2A; McKenna 3T, 2A			



PAYDIRT — Waseca quarterback Kellen Klinger signals touchdown after crossing the goal line in the third quarter to put Waseca ahead 28-0 in last Friday's Section 3AAA championship game in New Ulm. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



SECTION ACTION — At left, the Bluejays' Jordan Johnston follows a block by Cyrett Long in last Friday's Section 3AAA title game at New Ulm. At right, Ethan Hiller signals first down after a key pass reception. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



HOW SWEET IT IS — At left, Ethan Hiller embraces a teammate after scoring one of his two touchdowns in the section championship game. In the middle, the Bluejays' Kaden Garza sacks the quarterback. At right, Lucas Selthun corrals the quarterback. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



Above, William Mansfield exalts in the Bluejays' victory. Below, Owen Rupe hangs onto a pass.



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Wobbrock finds success at state

NRHEG freshman earns all-state honors, finishes 18th

Like the section competition a week earlier, the state meet saw NRHEG High School's Juliann Wobbrock had a day.

Wobbrock, a freshman, ran a great race to finish 18th in Class A in the state cross country meet last Saturday at the University of Minnesota's Les Bolstad Golf Course.

Wobbrock clocked a time of 19:21.3 in a field of 158 runners, earning all-state recognition. It was the highest finish ever for an NRHEG girl in the state meet.

"For me to say that I am proud of Juliann's accomplishment would be an understatement," said NRHEG coach Larry Nydegger. "This season's success has its beginnings back in June as the summer began. She put in the time and the effort and ran the miles so that she could be prepared for the opportunity to compete at this level. She is the textbook example of Preparation plus Opportunity equaling Success."

The course, according to Nydegger, was challenging, with Wobbrock getting off to a strong start, leading the pack out of the gate to where the course narrowed

"For me to say that I am proud of Juliann's accomplishment would be an understatement."

— Larry Nydegger

so she could avoid "The Mosh Pit," as some like to call it.

"But this is the state meet, and the favorites quickly closed the gap and overtook her in that first mile.," said Nydegger.

Undeterred, Wobbrock found a rhythm and started to move forward through the pack that had passed her earlier. Over the final 400 meters, she was locked in a battle with a Winnona Cotter runner and a Greenway/Nashwauk competitor for the 16th overall position. The trio finished within 1 second of each other, with Wobbrock ultimately taking the 18th overall position.

Said Nydegger, "Congratulations Juliann on a wonderful season."



A GREAT DAY — At left, NRHEG's Juliann Wobbrock leads the pack during the state meet in the early going last Saturday at the University of Minnesota's Les Bolstad Golf Course. At right, Wobbrock gets a fist bump from NRHEG head coach Larry Nydegger.



Bluejays' Kopischke finishes 67th at state meet

Waseca eighth-grader Ellie Kopischke finished in 67th place among Class AA girls in the state cross country meet last Saturday at the University of Minnesota's Les Bolstad Golf Course.

Kopischke clocked 20:02.21 for 5000 meters, beating her time of last year when the Bluejay girls qualified for state as a team.

Keira Friedrich, a senior from St. Peter, won the race with a time of 18:03.0. There were 160 competitors in the Class AA girls' race.

"Ellie's season was one of growth and improvement throughout," said WHS head coach Grant Popp. "She had some challenges early in the year and didn't start the season where she wanted to, but she kept working and was able to stay healthy late in the year when it mattered the most."

Popp said while Kopischke's place at state was close to last year, her experience on the challenging state course was evident.

"Her finish at state was similar to last year, but she ran a lot more aggressively," said Popp. "She showed she really wants to compete



CHALLENGING COURSE — Waseca's Ellie Kopischke (20) runs in the state cross country meet at the University of Minnesota's Les Bolstad Golf Course.

at the state level and I think she'll be ready next season to really build on what she has done so far.

Minneapolis Southwest won girls' Class AA team title with 38 points. Perham was second with 52.

A Facebook post said Kopischke represented Waseca with incredible strength and determination at the state meet, offering a big thank you to her family, friends and coaches for all the love and support at state.20:02.

Next up: for Kopischke is the Nike Regionals... and maybe a well-earned nap!

NRHEG spikers' tourney run ends in semifinals

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The glass slipper didn't fit so well this time.

The seventh-seeded New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School volleyball team, the Cinderella squad in the Section 1A tournament, saw its post-season run come to an end last Thursday with a 3-1 setback to third-seeded Kenyon-Wanamingo at the Rochester Mayo Civic Center.

The Panthers, who two nights earlier upset No. 2 seed Mable-Canton, finished the season with a record of 21-8.

According to NRHEG head coach Bethany Tennis, it was a battle. The Panthers took the first set 25-20, but dropped the next three 25-9, 25-16 and 25-22.

"From start to finish, the girls battled with heart and determination, showing the same grit and teamwork that has defined our season," said Tennis.

Despite facing a strong opponent, the Panthers came to play, keeping rallies alive and maintaining energy.

"Offensively, we worked to stay aggressive and find ways to score against a tough defense," said Tennis. "While the result wasn't what we hoped for, our effort and fight throughout the season and in the section tournament was exceptional."

The Panthers were led in kills by senior Gabby Schlaak with 10. Chloe Riewer had a team-best nine digs, and Quinn VanMaldeghem resistered four blocks. Addy Stadheim, as usual, paced the Panthers with 23 set assists.

Full individual statistics: Schlaak 10K, 7D, 2B, 1SA, 1A; Camryn VanMaldeghem 8K, 5D, 1B, 1A; Anika Ladlie 8K, 4D, 3B; 1SA; Q.VanMaldeghem 3K, 8D, 4B, 2SA; Stadheim 5K, 4D, 1B, 23SA; Chloe Stork 2K, 2D, 2B; Riewer 9D, 3SA.

The Panthers eliminated Mabel-Canton 3-1 in the section quarterfinals, rallying to win 15-25, 25-22, 25-23 and 25-20.

"We came away with an upset," said Coach Tennis.

The key, according to Tennis, was scrappy play and communication.

"We played with grit tonight, making hustle plays and key offensive adjustments consistently throughout the sets," said Tennis. "Our defense allowed our offense to see good attack opportunities. As a team, we communicated well and were able to take advantage of open spots on the court."

Camryn VanMaldeghem put down 16 kills, adding 13 digs and two service aces. Schlaak finished with 14 kills. Stadheim totaled 39 set assists.

Full statistics: Schlaak 14K, 9D, 2SA, 1A; C.VanMaldeghem 16K, 13D, 2A; Ladlie 8K, 4D, 2B; Q.VanMaldeghem 1K, 11D, 1B; 1SA; Stadheim 4K, 7D, 2B; 39SA, 1A; Stork 3K, 3D, 4B; Riewer 14D, 1SA.

The Panthers will graduate seniors Schlaak, Camryn VanMeldeghem, Nora Flatness, Quinn VanMaldeghem, Kyera Eustice, Kayden Warke, Stadheim, Stork, Meela Budach and Riewer. The rest of the 2025 squad included juniors Ladlie, Izley Boerner, Clara Buendorf, Sierra Fish, Clara Stenzel and Kylie Olson, and sophomore Brooklyn Summer.

"This group of athletes has so much to be proud of, both in their growth as players and in the culture they've built together," said Tennis. "Our seniors especially have left an incredible legacy of leadership, dedication, and love for the game."

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AUG 29 Saint Peter (A) W 7-6

SEP 5 BELLE PLAINE (H) W 37-6

SEP 12 Fairmont (A) W 21-14

SEP 19 NORWOOD YOUNG AMERICA (H) W 21-0

SEP 26 TRI-CITY UNITED (H) W 49-6

OCT 3 Worthington (A) W 42-13

OCT 10 Albert Lea (A) W 35-10

OCT 15 NEW ULM (H) W 21-14

OCT 25 TCU (H) W 21-0



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Friday, October 31, Section 3AAA Championship

Luverne (New Ulm)

W 31-12

2026 SENIORS

The Waseca Bluejays Football team improved its overall record to 10-0 following a win against Luverne 31-12 in the 3AAA Section Championship game. With the win, the Bluejays move on to the State Quarterfinals for the sixth time in school history and will play Holy Family Catholic, at noon on Saturday in Apple Valley. The following players comprise the Bluejays' roster: Mason Prescher, Owen Arndt, Titan Rahe, Jonah Worke, Nolan Dufault, Lual Garang, Ethan Hiller, Ty Krautkremer, David Haley, Jordan Johnston, Lincoln Castro, Sawyer Ellis, Riley Mitchell, Calvin Kahnke, Keenan Collins, Peyton Sommers, Cyrus Wilson, Bryan Dejager, Kallen Glynn, Owen Rupe, Cole Mondahl, Holten Howard, Wyatt Arndt, Nate Engel, Lucas Slethun, Jose Viera, Landan Madsen, Julius Oviedo, Jordan Neidecker, Nathan Kaiser, Wyatt Bartz, Hayden Petersen.

Photo by Eli Lutgens



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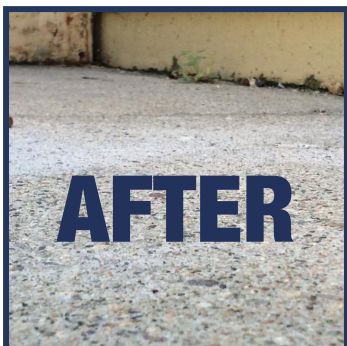
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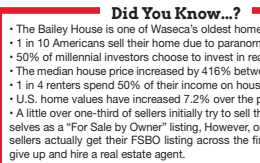
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- 1 in 10 Americans sell their home due to paranormal activity.
- 50% of millennial investors choose to invest in real estate.
- The median house price increased by 416% between 1980 & 2020.
- 1 in 4 renters spend 50% of their income on housing.
- U.S. home values have increased 7.2% over the past three years.
- A little over one-third of sellers initially try to sell their homes themselves as a "For Sale by Owner" listing. However, only about 10% of sellers actually get their FSBO listing across the finish line; the rest give up and hire a real estate agent.



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