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TCF Bank Bound



Members of the Minnesota House Capital Investment Committee listened alongside Waseca Community leaders to a presentation requesting \$8.9 million for inflow and infiltration repairs to infrastructure along with \$1 million toward a water tower.
Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Waseca requests \$8.9 million during committee visit

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

On Wednesday, Nov. 5, members of the House Capital Investment Committee began their fourth regional tour of the fall, visiting communities in southeast Minnesota. Their fourth stop of the day was the city of Waseca where they visited with local community leaders at Clear Lake Park pavilion.

City leaders presented a request supported by the County of Waseca, for \$8.9 million for inflow and infiltration (I & I) repairs to water systems and \$1 million for the water tower.

“This is our number one priority.”
— Senator Jasinski

Visit continued on 5



From left, Waseca County Commissioner Brad Milbrath, County Administrator Michael Johnson and Waseca State Senator John Jasinski attend a meeting between the city of Waseca and the Minnesota Capital Investment Committee.
Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Virtual Author Event: Amanda Peters
Nov. 13

Acclaimed writer Amanda Peters will discuss her bestselling novel, “The Berry Pickers,” as well as her short fiction collection, “Waiting for the Long Night Moon,” at a virtual Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System event at 6 p.m. Thursday, November 13. This event will be recorded and people who register will be emailed a link to the recording. Register at the library or online.

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.

A word from
The Word

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1



GENEROSITY - Waseca Area Foundation leaders pose with representatives from area agencies which received grants this fall. More than \$100,000 was awarded Thursday evening at the Starfire Event Center in Waseca.
Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

WAF awards more than \$100,000

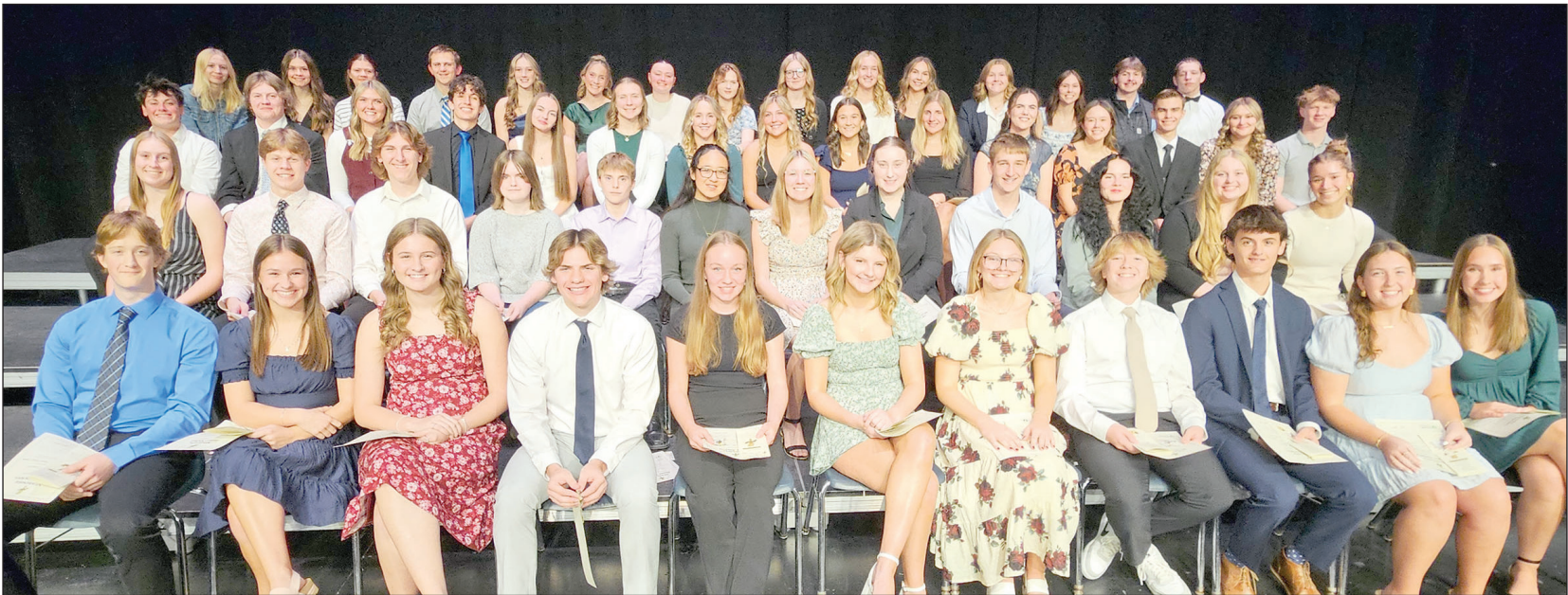
By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The Waseca Area Foundation/EF Johnson Foundation held their annual fall grant awards program at the Starfire Event Center in Waseca on Thursday evening, Nov. 6, 2025.

Though the organization started as a “\$6,000 pipe dream” in the 80s, when it awarded its first grant of \$600, it has now been able to donate more than \$13.5 million to area causes, including well over \$100,000 Thursday evening.

A long list of grant awards was announced. Each recipient organization present offered a quick summary of its mission then explained the project due to be funded thanks to the grant award. They included: Riverland College - \$10,000 for student scholarships; NRHEG High School, \$3,000 for senior scholarships; NRHEG Schools, \$1,500 for interactive display panels; JWP High School, \$3,000 for senior scholarships; Waseca Schools, \$20,000 for senior scholarships; Waseca High School - \$3,060 for AVID (class) project supplies; Waseca Jr. High Band - \$379 for classroom software; Waseca Community Education - \$10,000 for youth development grants in memory of Todd Mann; Waseca Community Education, \$4,000 for youth summer theater; NRHEG Community Education, \$3,000 for youth development grants; Waseca Public Library, \$8,000 for teen classes/workshops, the summer concert series and the waseca water carnival; Big Brothers Big Sisters, \$7,500 for mentoring support; Life Work Planning Center, \$3,000 for workshop/program support; Feeding our Community Partners, \$3,000 for the JWP backpack program; Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center, \$11,483 for

Awards continued on 3



HONOR - A total of 23 Waseca students were inducted into the Waseca Chapter of the Minnesota Honor Society on Wednesday evening, Nov. 5, 2025.
Photo by Paul Marlin

Waseca inducts 23 into Honor Society

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The Waseca chapter of the Minnesota Honor Society (MHS) inducted 23 new members the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2025 in the high school performing arts center.

Waseca principal Justin Johnston welcomed a couple hundred friends, family, and parents to the ceremony, which began at 6 p.m. MHS senior members Layla Keith and Sadie Schimming addressed the assembly regarding leadership, integrity and service.

“When I think of leadership, I don’t picture a specific person or position—I see a community full of people,” Keith said. “Every time I accepted a new leadership role throughout high school—whether that was something big like Student Council President, or something minor like volunteering—I realized something important: your title doesn’t make you a leader; your commitment and effort do.”

“Anyone can sign up, but not everyone can follow through,” Keith concluded.

Schimming spoke about service and what it means to a community.

“Judy Blume once said, ““Our fingerprints don’t fade from the lives we touch.” Schimming began. “We go through life touching other people’s lives in ways we don’t always realize. The things we say, the help we give, the moments we show up for someone else—they don’t just disappear. They leave a mark. Community service is one of the most powerful ways to leave that kind of mark.”

High school teacher John Hanson was then introduced as the keynote speaker by Ella Bulfer; Hanson was selected by current Honor Society members. He said he was directing his speech to the current and new members of the group.

Following Hanson’s comments, students Paige Dufault, Pearl Moore, Mia Mitchell, Andres Vasquez-Neigebauer and Corrick Medina lit candles representing the ideals of Minnesota Honor Society. They included the spirit of the torch, scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

William Mansfield, Ava Bruhn and Ellery Waldron introduced the

Honor continued on 6

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

County address ditches, nuclear power

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

During their Nov. 4 work session and meeting, Waseca County commissioners spent more than an hour discussing the dozens of agricultural drainage “ditches” which are controlled by the county, but technically owned and maintained by property owners whose land benefits from them.

Commissioner De Malterer referred to the ditches as “the largest infrastructure in the county.” The county website states the system includes well over 250 miles of length, roughly half of which is comprised of open ditches and half of underground tile.

Chris Howard, director of the county’s department of land and water resources, offered a brief summary of circumstances he has encountered since acquiring his position in 2022. He mentioned one of the county’s goals for his department is bringing stability to county practices surrounding the ditches; prior to his tenure, oversight of the system had been irregular, sometimes leaving property owners at loose ends when it came to repairs or maintenance.

Howard described some of the steps he has taken and continues to take to keep work and finances “moving in the right direction.”

He mentioned he has frequent conversations with property owners who do not understand why they must pay assessments toward ditch maintenance, or how those assessments are determined. Many county ditches were in place in the early 1900s, he said, with a “heyday” of establishing them in the 1960s.

In order for a system to exist, property owners must have contacted the county to request that a ditch be established: No one landowner could arrange one since they entail channeling water across varied landscapes and over numerous property lines. The “grandparents” who owned the land at the time the ditches were established were well acquainted with the require-

County continued on 2



Compostings

by Al Batt

No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees... November

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

My wife says there are two things wrong with me.

Only two? What are they?

Number one, I don't listen, and I think she said something else, too.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. We're moving into the time of year when we're reminded that we have a state bird, a state flower and a state excuse. The state excuse gains prominence when we say things like, "I'll be there, weather permitting."

We were having a lovely spell of weather, and I took off in a cloud of whale dust. I needed to visit Hardnose's Hardware Store, where "Bolts for all and nuts to you" is the motto, to get something that I wasn't entirely sure what it was. I ran into Crying Charlie, who was limping down an aisle. I asked him what had happened. He told me he'd fallen off a 40-foot ladder. I told him he was lucky he hadn't broken his neck. "I suppose I am," he said, "but I was only on the first rung."

Thanks to a hardware sketch artist, who performed like the finest police artist, and sketched the thing-amajig I needed well enough that Hardnose could find it for me.

I went to the Eat Around It Cafe to celebrate the successful procurement of a thingamajig. I sat at a table with Carl Snarl, a curmudgeon who finds something wrong with everything. Carl ordered the two-egg special—one scrambled and the other egg over easy. The waitress, Surly Temple, soon returned with his order and set the plate in front of Carl.

"Take this back. This isn't what I ordered," snarled Carl Snarl.

"They're exactly what you ordered, you old fool. Two eggs—one scrambled and one over easy," replied Surly Temple.

Carl said, "I can see that, but you scrambled the wrong egg."

I'VE LEARNED

The State of Minnesota recognizes Spring Grove as the state's first Norwegian settlement (1852).

WalletHub <https://wallethub.com/edu/fattest-states/16585> found that the state with the highest percentage of overweight and obese people is West Virginia, followed by Mississippi and Arkansas. Wisconsin ranked 24th, Iowa 26th, Minnesota 46th, and Colorado 51st.

I came across a letter of credit recommendation dated June 8,

1923, from a banker on behalf of partners in a hardware store, which read, "They are hard workers, are not shiftless or careless, but attend to business." In 1923, there were 134.9 cars per 1,000 people in the U.S. I feel sorry for the driver of that .9 car. Because there were few automobiles, I'm guessing the banker meant "careless" and not "carless," but who knows. The main thing was that they weren't shiftless.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

To the person who stole my glasses: I'll find you. I have contacts.

I just bought a reversible jacket. I can't wait to see how it turns out.

Did you hear about the guy who believed only 12.5% of the Bible? He was an eighthiest.

A tub of margarine fell on my foot three weeks ago, and it still hurts. I can't believe it's not better.

I paid \$300 to rent a limo, but that didn't include the driver. All that money and nothing to chauffeur it.

NATURE NOTES

I came out of an early morning meeting, with numbers swing-dancing their way across my brain, when I heard a nuthatch call, and then another nuthatch called. I knew they were two different nuthatches as one was a red-breasted and the other a white-breasted nuthatch. The red-breasted nuthatch is smaller and has a reddish-orange breast, a black eye stripe, and a white eyebrow. The white-breasted nuthatch has a white breast, a black crown without an eye stripe, and a white face. The white-breasted nuthatch has a louder, lower-pitched and more nasal "yank" call than the red-breasted nuthatch's higher-pitched and reedier call, often described as a "tin horn."

In my house's version of the wild kingdom, multicolored Asian lady beetles abound. They eat soybean aphids. I wonder if they ever suffer from aphid reflux?

The cloudiest months in Minnesota are November and December. Iowa's cloudiest month is December, followed by January. Thomas Hood wrote, "No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees, no fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds, November!" I find solace in the fact there is no cloud cover charge.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"He who praises another enriches himself far more than he does the one praised. To praise is an investment in happiness. The poorest human being has something to give that the richest could not buy."—George M. Adams.

Short-lived and downright disappointing

After a recent conversation with one of my adult sons, I was thrown back in time.

The conversation was not particularly momentous. We were talking about the features which make the newer vehicles hubs of comfort, convenience and communication: heated seats and steering wheels, individual temperature controls, automatic synchronization with smartphones for navigation and for phone calls.

As we came to some of the higher-end bells and whistles, I said something like, "Yes, but it's just another thing to go wrong."

My son laughed and said my husband and I are well matched—that we share a pessimistic outlook.

That sent my internal thoughts circling. Though I said none of it aloud, I thought first about how, in my experience, at least half of the "best new things" introduced during my lifetime have not met the manufacturers' claims. Many, in fact, turned out to be short-lived and downright disappointing.

My appreciation for thrift shops may be an outgrowth of that—I usually prefer to go looking for the "old reliable" rather than the "new



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

and improved."

But that first thought was not the time machine, rather only a step in its direction.

Next came the internal question of what it would take to make clear to anyone of my son's generation that my response was not "pessimism" but actually a straightforward expression of lived experience.

And then I pictured a time more than 30 years ago when my husband and I, then about the same age as my son is now, would spend evenings playing cards with my grandmother and grandfather, who still lived on "the home place" and were always excited to host holiday gatherings there.

For a few moments I was at their table with a fan of cards in my hand, acknowledging the irrefutable ev-

idence that the cards would always favor my husband and grandfather, and not feeling any bitterness about the fact. Knowing from the start we would pull in the fewest "tricks" that night only made each small victory a bit sweeter, and the occasional winning game a complete triumph.

There, in my internal time machine, I saw the moment from my grandparents' perspective. My husband and I were two young "kids" full of promise and enthusiasm, intelligent and capable in our way, but with limited understanding of what lay ahead—and no way to make it clear to us, even if one had the inclination to try, because it would be like describing a foreign landscape we had never crossed.

Really, although we spoke the same words, we had differing vocab-

I never used to think about my wedding...

I attended another wedding last weekend. I'm pretty sure it was only my second wedding of the year I've been present at, but they've both been for the same family. First Jack's sister's wedding in April and then now his brother's wedding this past weekend.

This wedding was in Louisville, Colorado, about a half hour north of Denver in a cute little suburb. It was a Friday wedding, and we arrived Wednesday night to help and celebrate the event with family. Except there was nothing for us really to do until after the rehearsal dinner Thursday night when we put together the flower arrangements for the tables.

I realized it had been a long time since I was able to help like that. With me just running around, helping where I saw people needed it or where I knew things needed to be taken care of. The best part, I realized, was that I was letting family members catch up and chat while I helped those involved. I was not part of the family, and happy to give them



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

time and space.

Getting lost in helping people clean up or do chores reminded me of helping my grandma when she would volunteer for funerals at church. Helping out at church always felt so right to me. I loved being able to help people and make their burdens a little lighter in a way that felt I was doing good, and expecting nothing in return.

I signed up to help make toys more accessible during a volunteer day in December, and I'm excited for that for multiple reasons. One being helping people.

Anyway, I was happy to be at the

wedding not only to celebrate the lovely couple, but to help wherever I could. That's what I was there for.

The wedding was beautiful and one of the shortest and smallest I've been to. But the couple glowed and the happiness infected everyone there, celebrating in a gorgeous venue.

I never used to think what my wedding would be like someday. I wasn't one of those little girls who cared to plan her wedding when she was growing up. Only recently have I started to think that maybe I should pay attention at weddings not just for the enjoyment of it, but to remember

ularies. Very likely, for my grandmother, she was "winning" every game, since she was enjoying lively company. My grandfather, who used any excuse to launch into a story from times past, was perhaps doing his best to show how life twists and turns, imposing character and resilience upon us while also providing for some hearty laughs.

The stories often surrounded the technology of his time and what it took to keep it operating to an acceptable level. His stories often included quick repairs needed so some major task—perhaps the harvest—could continue, or the little tricks he had learned along the way to overcome persistent problems. They were told with great energy and humor: From my altered perspective, I can't help thinking the chance to tell them was his biggest "win" each evening, no matter how high the numbers on the score sheets.

I hesitate to call the perspective time has given me "wisdom," since there are still plenty of life's complications I have not yet encountered. But "experienced" is also a heady plateau, the view from which I can only begin to describe.

ideas for my own wedding (however far away).

I might get some ideas about what flowers I would like, how I want my ceremony, and what food I think I'd like to eat and serve. What do I want my colors to be? What type of decorations would I like? What songs do I want the DJ to play?

Jack's sister got married in April, but after the ceremony she signed and said "I want a wedding." Her wedding was also beautiful, set next to a creek in the mountains in Boulder. That makes me think that even after having a wedding, it's fun to plan a wedding. As long as you don't actually have to do any of the planning and can just daydream about it. At least that's where I'm at right now. It might be time to start a Pinterest board.

My Determination: "I understood very well just then, why it is that men measure time. They wish to fix a moment, in the vain hope that doing so will keep it from departing." —Diana Gabaldon, The Fiery Cross.

A slowly recovering patience

Amelia took a vacation week this week so I returned, momentarily, to the role of layout editor. This same week I took on the role of reporter also as I covered three important events alongside an exciting, cold, football game Saturday. I really enjoyed the events I wrote about this week, the conversations which took place and the people I was blessed to spend time alongside.

I admit, these past three and half years of running dual newspapers has/had taken a toll on me. These past few months of Amelia putting the newspaper together have given me perspective I didn't have. My patience was gone and is still recovering. I love people and the business and will continue to do whatever I can to ensure the newspapers keep printing. After three years, though, the strain, combined with a health difficulty, was becoming difficult.

I hurt, both physically and mentally.

Physically my body has punished me for the many, many hours spent leaning over a computer. My hands hurt every day. Tendonitis is the worst in my left thumb which aches daily. My left side, the rib area stretching to my back has not



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

stopped aching every day for nearly three years.

I sent a similar message to the one below to Amelia which I will share with you. The context is she is also working another job while also continuing her roles with the newspaper here.

If I were in your shoes I would be excited for this additional job opportunity. I know I was excited in much the same way when I decided to start the Pioneer.

What I learned after taking on the additional work were:

1. For me, working every day is easier and less stressful than forcing myself to take a day off. I simply do work every day. Some things are required. Other work I do right away or procrastinate to give myself a rest.

2. Burnout looks different for everyone.

I was told by everyone I would

burn out. The only, and I mean only, bit that ever felt draining was the physical pains I've had as a result—back pain and what feels like permanent damage from the infinite amount of bad posture from sitting at a desk.

Tendonitis in both my thumbs from excessive writing and note taking (on my phone) during my years reporting. (Thank you, especially to every group or organization or event planner who provides me with a copy of a speech, program, etc.)

3. Health in all aspects needs to be a priority. This means doing things that are good for oneself. Sleeping enough. Not sacrificing family moments. Don't forget to live life. Being a journalist is a life of sacrifice. We just have to choose where and when we're comfortable with it.

For Deb Bently (News Editor), I make it very clear I never want her

to miss her retirement goals and trips. I allow her to work remotely and when she's gone we cover her stories (or she does them in advance). But she literally has never taken a week off from editing the paper outside of the week we're closed at the end of the year.

My sacrifices have been many but often feel worth it because the Pioneer was born. Every week since I was 19 there has been a paper to edit and print. And it didn't matter if I was sick, or my grandfather died unexpectedly or my best friend took his own life. The paper had to print.

I'm grateful for having the team we do because I and the team are willing and able to fill in and step up for each other so when tragedy or opportunity strikes, the person suffering doesn't also just have to work.

The life of a journalist is one of sacrifice. But I think that might just be life in general. Parents make sacrifices for their kids every day. For work, pleasure, etc. The list goes on.

And for me, I'm grateful my sacrifice is for my community and the news coverage we provide.

"To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift." Steve Prefontaine

Commissioners also chose to have Waseca County join many other Minnesota counties in requesting that a statewide moratorium preventing the construction of any new nuclear power plants in the state be lifted. The ban was enacted by the state legislature in 1994. There are currently two nuclear plants in operation, one near Red Wing, the other near Monticello. In casual conversation, those present at the meeting speculated that, even if the ban should be lifted, it would be 10 years or more before an additional full-sized nuclear plant could be planned, built and operating.

■ County

from Page 1

ments and expectations, since they were usually the ones who requested the construction and worked with the county to get it accomplished. The "parents," that is, the next generation, were aware of the circumstances, but not so well acquainted. By now, Howard suggested, the people who own the benefitted property are two generations removed from the original work, and are

sometimes barely acquainted with the associated expectations.

"I've spent a lot of time explaining it all," said Howard. "So now more people understand why they're being assessed for work done on the system, even though it might not be on their property."

"Can we make everyone happy? Well, that's debatable."

After studying and discussing Howard's summary, county commissioners, acting as the county ditch authority, approved assessments to be levied against property owners in 2026. Assessments are being collected based on needs for each sys-

tem, which might be to pay for repairs or improvements already made, to set aside funds toward expected future work, and to support necessary administrative tasks, including some of the costs of operating the department of land and water resources and hiring professionals such as engineers and surveyors who perform needed tasks.

In other business, commissioners approved "Operation Green Light," a proclamation encouraging area residents to use green lighting to show support for veterans. The county courthouse will be lit in green for a week in observance.



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

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DEADLINES: Pioneer: Noon Monday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

ELI LUTGENS
DEB BENTLY
JIM LUTGENS
JON LUCCA
BEN REVERMANN
TERESA ROSACKER
JESSICA LUTGENS
RACHAEL JAEGER
MELISSA DUNN
AMELIA ROESSLER

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Bran Boys at Indian Island Winery Sat., Nov. 15

The Bran Boys will be performing at the Indian Island Winery from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 15. They play live guitar and vocals, they also play old country.

Paw Patrol Party at Waseca Public Library Monday, Nov. 17

Join us for a pawsitively good time as we celebrate our favorite neighborhood rescue dogs. Kids will play games and make Paw Patrol-inspired crafts. For ages 4-6 at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 17 at Waseca Library.

TBR (TO BE READ) Jars at Waseca Public Library Mon., Nov. 17

Fill a jar with book titles or prompts from specific genres to themes to quirky reading challenges. For ages 18+. Register at the library or at wasecalesueur-libraries.com/getregistered. Two times available, on Nov. 17, 12 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Romp and Rhyme Baby Lapsit Story Times at Waseca Library Tues., Nov. 18

Waseca Public Library will hold baby lapsit story times on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. through the end of November. From puppets to pumping music, from bubble machines to banging bands, these are not your average story time. The Library uses movement, STEAM activities, curiosity, imaginative play, and active learning to keep kids ages 0-3 engaged. Free and open to the public.

CHARLES DUHIGG at Waseca Library Tuesday, Nov. 18

Charles Duhigg, author of the bestselling books “The Power of Habit” and “Smarter Faster Better,” will present his ultimate guide on how to communicate and connect with anyone at work, home, and in life as explained in his latest work, “Supercommunicators” on Nov 18 at 1 p.m. This event will be recorded and people who register will be emailed a link to the recording. Register at the library or at wasecalesueurlibraries.com/getregistered.

Spotify Bookmarks at Waseca Public Library Tuesday, Nov. 18

Obsessed with music as much as books? Create Spotify-style bookmarks to capture your favorite song lyrics or album artwork. For ages 13-18, at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 18 at Waseca Library.

Jigsaw Puzzle Derby at Waseca Library on Wednesday, Nov. 19

Assemble a team of up to 4 players to compete in a jigsaw puzzle competition. The first team to complete the puzzle wins a prize! Registration required. This event takes place at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 19 at Waseca Library.

Embossed Cards Workshop at NR Library Wed., Nov. 19

A simple watercolor wash makes the perfect background for a dreamy embossed card. For ages 18 and up at 10:15 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 19 at New Richland Library.

Drawing Club at Janesville Library Thurs., Nov. 20

Join our drawing club for teen artists! Learn new techniques and practice your drawing skills. We'll sample a variety of drawing styles. Exclusively for ages 12-18. All skill levels welcome at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 20 at Janesville Public Library.

Waseca Public Library Mother-Daughter book club Thursday, Nov. 21

The Waseca Public Library will host a Mother-Daughter book club at 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21. Stop by to pick up this month's book, “Invisible” by Christina Diaz Gonzalez. This is for girls in grades 3-6.

Jeanne Sexton faces two cancers

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

It was definitely a case of one thing after another.

Long-time Waseca resident and Community Education swim coach Jeanne Sexton, 62, was diagnosed with “multiple myeloma,” a cancer of the white blood cells, in October of 2022. Since white blood cells are among the chief warriors of the immune system, efforts to combat it can seem rather extreme.

And that’s without a second cancer diagnosis only about 10 months later. The news in 2022 that Jeanne had myeloma was followed in August of 2023 with the revelation she had breast cancer.

Not only that, but across the time she was receiving treatment and then gradually recovering, Jeanne’s husband of 39 years, Tom, was considering his eventually successful run for seat 19B in the state legislature. The two of them are also at a point in their lives when they want to spend time with their two adult sons and their growing families.

Jeanne reveals there are five Waseca area residents who have been diagnosed with multiple myeloma over the past five years or so, most of them having celebrated at least their second or third “birthday,” a reference to the day they completed an important phase of the treatment. She expresses gratitude for the mutual support and understanding their small group can share.

What she and the others learned after being diagnosed is that the affected white blood cells must be eliminated, then replaced with “baby” cells which are not yet damaged by cancer.

Blood cells are manufactured in the bone marrow, the fluid housed in the hollow areas of the body’s larger bones. Treatment for multiple myeloma begins with the harvesting of just-produced white cells—which requires connecting a needle and tubes to the base of the spine.

Jeanne says the process was perhaps not as bad as it sounds, but remembers a startling “snapping” noise that she hopes never to have to hear again. Depending on how things go, the extraction process is likely to take place at least two or three times over a number of days in order to get a sufficient supply.

With the fresh cells removed and safely stored, chemotherapy is targeted to incapacitate the damaged ones still in circulation in the bloodstream. As with many other types of cancer treatment, the chemotherapy is introduced over a number of weeks. Jeanne remembers feeling nauseous and weak during that time, but also remembers with



RINGING OF THE BELL - RINGING OF THE BELL - Jeanne Sexton, seen here with her husband Tom while ringing the bell which indicates a round of cancer treatment has been completed, has been diagnosed with and treated for two different types of cancer since 2022.
Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

gratitude that this particular set of chemicals did not cause her to lose her hair.

In the case of specifically located cancers, for example in the breasts or in an organ, chemotherapy is often followed by targeted radiation. That is not the case with myeloma, however, because blood circulates to every cell in the body.

Instead, the next step calls for closely monitored care that requires being admitted to a hospital for two to four weeks. The stored white blood cells are reintroduced to the bloodstream and must take up the stalled task of incorporating themselves into the body’s usual operation. It is nowhere near as simple as a typical blood transfusion.

Jeanne describes feeling fatigued, weak, and unable to walk. Even once the critical initial phases are over and patients are released from the hospital stay, they are expected to remain in the vicinity for another ten days or more in case of any emerging problems and for daily treatments and assessments which take at least an hour.

In the parlance of Myeloma, one’s life is considered having started over after the reintroduction of the white blood cells and the associated treatment are completed.

After that, patients are placed in a follow-up regimen of regular testing in the hope of confirming all is well. Tests are scheduled first three months, then six months, and eventually a year apart.

Jeanne was well on her way to her first “birthday” when her routine mammogram revealed she had breast cancer in August of 2023.

After a “lumpectomy” surgery, she again underwent chemotherapy, this time followed by radiation treatments. But she learned she had a choice regarding the radiation doses: “I could either go with 19 less strong treatments or five stronger ones,” she describes. “I chose the five stronger

ones.”

Again, she was grateful she was able to retain most of her hair; she did, however, slightly change the way she arranged her hair in order to conceal it was growing thinner in areas. Probably a more important side effect of the treatments and chemotherapy was months and months of having a compromised immune system. In addition to nausea and discomfort from the treatments, Jeanne experienced both pneumonia and salmonella poisoning. She speculates neither would have been as severe nor lasted as long as they did had her immune system been up to speed.

Jeanne finished her treatment and her health was stabilizing just as a critical time in the election process for Tom was approaching. Jeanne and he decided it would be suitable for Tom to go ahead and throw his long-held hat in the ring just shortly before the endorsement process was ready to begin in June of 2024.

She can’t help observing that the month of September is designated for calling attention to blood cancer and the month of October to breast cancer. “They’re right there next to each other, just like my two diagnoses,” she comments.

“It was a lot to go through, but I’ve come through it.

“I would say anyone who has cancer or who has a loved one with cancer has a lot of reasons to be grateful for all the donations and support that people give to research and to helping people as they seek treatment.

“The whole idea of getting a new birthday because of being treated for cancer goes to show how much it changes your life, and your understanding of who you are and what your place in the world is.

“None of us know where life will take us next, including if it might be up to heaven.”

Brad Donner, Wildlife artist

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

For the next few weeks, visitors stopping by the Waseca Art Center will likely feel as if they are stepping into the great outdoors.

Sculptor in wood Robin Warburton and painter Brad Donner have brought their true-to-life portrayals of natural settings and animals to the Center’s main floor galleries.

Both artists are long-time area residents whose work represents scenes native to Minnesota.

Their displays will be in place through Dec. 20; an artists’ reception will be at the Art Center from 5 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 13.

Donner, 66, says he has been an artist since he was old enough to hold a pencil. He describes a variety of responses shown by his teachers when he was in school, then goes on to praise his high school art teachers who helped steer his inclination and talent toward becoming skill.

He and his wife Melissa have been married 47 years and raised seven children, the oldest of whom is now 46. During the earlier years of their marriage and while they were raising children, Brad says art took something of a back seat in his life. But

since he retired in 2019, he is happy to report he has more time for his artistic inclinations.

An outdoorsman, canoeist and camper, he says he keeps his camera in reach in the hope of capturing elusive moments.

One example is an image of a chipmunk sniffing a peanut butter jar—a photo he snapped at his campsite and then went on to paint in life size. Another accurately sized painting is of a red squirrel perched on its back legs on a branch, looking toward the viewer with what might be interpreted as an unwelcoming expression.

In fact, most of the 26 paintings on display through December are reproductions of pictures Brad has captured, sometimes spontaneously and sometimes after going in search of them—such is the case with an image of an elk whose antlers blend with the branches of nearby trees. Brad mentions having taken the photo at an area elk farm.

He also visits area parks and Moonan Marsh both because he enjoys being there and because he finds sources of inspiration.

On public display for the first time are four paintings Brad has submitted



Waseca artist Brad Donner with one of his favorite paintings now on display at the Waseca Art Center. Photo by Deb Bently

for consideration to become a duck stamp: three have been for the national contest, one for Minnesota’s.

Brad says he purposely challenges himself to create works in a range of sizes, some as small as a sheet of office paper, others three and four feet on a side. His display at the Art Center reflects that variety. He also says he often has three or four paintings in progress at once. “When I get bored or frustrated with one of them,” he says energetically, “I go work on one of the others.”

There are two types of compliments, he mentions, which make him feel he is accomplishing his goal of bringing nature to life on canvas.

One is when people tell him his paintings remind them of pieces done by nationally known artist Robert Bateman, whose work he has al-

sharps for local schools, with the majority going to Waseca. A total of \$20,000 was awarded to Waseca High School seniors; \$3,000 for JWP seniors, \$3,000 for NRHEG seniors; and \$10,000 for “non-traditional scholarships” awarded to Riverland (Austin), and South Central College (Mankato and Faribault).

Nearly two dozen non profit organizations received grants during the awards banquet, with more than \$100,000 given to benefit Waseca

area citizens.

WAF member Amy Potter complimented area organizations for the work they do in support of important causes. “Keep doing what you’re doing,” she said.

The Janesville Area Foundation will have its banquet the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 19.

Looking forward, the spring grant application deadline for New Richland and Waseca will be March 31, 2026.

WASECA SCHOOL BOARD

Board hears from coaches, advisors

By MELISSA DUNN
Staff Writer

During their Nov. 6 work session held at the high school, members of the Waseca school board heard from business teacher Sandy Schumacher who spoke about the Youth Service Learning (YSL) program. Schumacher, who has been leading YSL for eleven years, says this year’s class has 19 students. During the last period of the day the high school students travel to the elementary schools in the community to provide help wherever needed, or to the nursing home to play board games. YSL students are also expected to put in at least eight hours of volunteer time of their own choosing somewhere within the community.

The board next heard from twenty-year veteran head football coach Brad Wendland who reported on the season; the undefeated Bluejays made it to the state tournament this year. Twenty-five year veteran tennis coach Kyle Collins talked about the girls’ season followed by cross country coach of fifteen years Grant Popp reporting on both the boys’ and girls’ seasons. Girls’ soccer coach Phil Bulfer spoke next, followed by three members of the boys’ soccer team who spoke on behalf of Coach JD Delgado, who was unable to attend.

Superintendent Eric Hudspeth is working with district business manager Sarah Brandt to develop a three-part community learning series titled School Finance 101. The purpose of this series is to help residents understand how public schools are funded, how district dollars are used, and how community decisions shape the educational opportunities available to students. These sessions will be open to the public and recorded and posted on the school website for those not able to attend in person.

* * *

Waseca Public Library Thurs. game sessions Oct. 31- Nov. 21

The Waseca Public Library will host a Lego, puzzle, mental challenges and snack session at 3:30 p.m. every Thursday from Oct. 31-Nov. 21. This after school club will be devising plans, detecting problems, improvising alternate routes and building models. Recommended ages 7-12.

Harvest Mission Festival Brunch at Grace Lutheran Church Friday Nov. 21

There will be a Harvest Mission Festival Brunch at the Grace Lutheran Church, 300 East Elm Ave from 10 a.m. till noon on Friday, Nov. 21. Cost is \$9 and will include breakfast bakes, cinnamon rolls, fruit salad, fresh lefse and homemade baked goods. Take out is available.

School play “A Lighter Shade of Noir” Nov. 21 and 23

The Waseca Junior Senior High drama department will present “A Lighter Shade of Noir” in the Waseca High School performing arts center at 7 p.m. Nov. 21 and 2 p.m. Nov. 23. The play is a lighthearted mystery in which “every detective is on the case.” Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for students.

Jack Backbone and TJ Brown at Indian Island Winery Friday, Nov. 21

Music duo Jack Backbone and TJ Brown will perform at the Indian Island Winery from 6-8:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21. Enjoy live music, Americana blues, rock and country.

■ WAF Awards
from Page 1

food shelf support and \$7,500 for the Waseca backpack program; Lutheran Social Services, \$3,000 for foster family events; Exchange Club Center for Family Unity, \$2,000 parent mentor program; A Fresh Start,

\$500 for trailer murals; Waseca Choral, \$2,500 for annual concert support; Waseca County Fair, \$1,000 for holiday light attractions; Waseca Art Council, \$1,336 for downtown holiday lights; Waseca Sleigh and Cutter, \$3,000 for event support; Christmas Time at the Mill, \$2,000 for Christmas Time at the Mill.

It was explained during the event that funds provided by the E.F. Johnson family were set aside with the intent they would provide schol-

OBITUARIES

Terry Gilbertson

TERRY KERMIT GILBERTSON, age 77 of Waseca, died at his home on the morning of Wednesday, November 5, 2025, surrounded by his family.

Terry was born in Albert Lea on March 29, 1948, to parents Kermit and Marie (Bowman) Gilbertson. He went to school in Albert Lea and graduated with the Tiger Class of 1966 after participating in basketball, football, and track. He continued his education at Luther College in Decorah, IA where he studied education and played football. In the years that followed he also attended further training in education at Mankato State University. On June 7, 1969, Terry was married to Carolyn Johnson at Grace Lutheran Church in Albert Lea. In 1970, Terry and Carolyn moved to Waseca and made it their family's permanent home. A true educator to his very core, Terry was passionate about his role as a teacher in the lives of young people. He would often say that the kids he taught, the parents he met, and the other staff-people at school were not only wonderful people but became his true friends. Terry was instrumental in establishing the Isabella Program which later became the Wolf Ridge Program. He was an assistant coach for track and field for over twenty years, but he is probably most widely known for the over twenty-five years that he was Waseca's Head Football Coach. He led his teams to four south-central conference championships and following his retirement from the position in 1996 he remained the Bluejay's #1 Fan. Terry retired from teaching in 2004. He volunteered his time with countless organizations in the community including the Red Cross and the Waseca Area Foundation. He was also the voice of Waseca's "Christmas Times A-Coming" for many years. Terry was a fixture at Grace Lutheran Church in Waseca where he served in many roles including usher and liturgist. He was proud to be involved in Minnesota Coach's Association and the Minnesota Football Coach's Association. Terry will be missed by the countless lives he touched with his positive energy, his genuine warmth and kindness, and his willingness to help those in need. He lived his prayer for love and acceptance, which was always felt in his presence.

Being a Grandpa was Terry's biggest joy. To his Grandchildren, he was a safe place, a warm hug, and their biggest fan. He was present for every milestone, every game, every victory, and every scraped knee. He showed them what unconditional love looks like through everyday moments and left fingerprints on their childhood memories that will carry into adulthood.

Terry is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Carolyn Jean Gilbertson of Waseca; his greatest



Terry Gilbertson

source of pride – three children, Chad James Gilbertson of Waseca, Anne Marie Gilbertson of Waseca, and Jane Lynn (Phillip) Schleicher of Waseca; seven grandchildren that he adored, Ellie, Cora and Lucy Schleicher, and Madison (Grant Huinker) Melcher, Arik Castro, Charley Castro, and Lincoln Castro; three siblings, Steve Gilbertson of Alexandria, Sue (Bill) Barber of Albert Lea, and Lanae (Larry) Thorstad of Albert Lea; two siblings-in-law, Tom Nelsen of St. Peter and Judy Christenson of Albert Lea; and several nieces and nephews and their families. He was preceded in death by his parents; two sisters, Linda Nelsen and Sandra Gilbertson; a brother-in-law Jim Johnson; a sister-in-law, Nancy Gilbertson; and his parents-in-law, Edith and Oscar Olson.

The Gilbertson family extends their heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated staff of Ecumen Hospice for the compassionate and expert care they provided to Terry in his final days. Your care and expertise will not be forgotten.

We are also deeply moved by the overwhelming outpouring of love, support, and prayers from our friends, family, and community. Your presence and comfort during this time have meant more than words can express.

Visitation will be held from 2-5 p.m. on Sunday, November 9, 2025, at Grace Lutheran Church in Waseca, and will continue for one hour before the service at the church on Monday.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, November 10, 2025, at Grace Lutheran Church in Waseca, with Rev. Jil-lene Gallatin officiating. Interment will follow at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are preferred and may be directed to Terry's family. These gifts will support Waseca Athletics, a cause close to his heart.

Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca is handling the arrangements. dsfuneral.com

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

Christine Possin

Christine Ilene Possin, age 71, of New Richland, MN passed away on Nov. 4, 2025. Chris lived a life full of family, service, and love. Chris was born on June 21, 1954 in Long Beach, California to Broadie Firmon Jones and Dorothy Ilene Bliss. She was the second of 10 children: Rochelle (who died in infancy), Laurie (Jay), Janae (Corey), Bonnie (Jeff), Mark (Yoshiko), Jay (Arin), Shauna (Joe), Scott (Rachelle), and Matt (Jen). Chris lived in Long Beach with her family, close to cousins, through her early years. Her impact on her younger siblings was significant as she led them by example. Her relationships with her siblings were some of her most treasured relationships.

At the age of seven, her family moved to Samoa for her Dad's service with the church. She attended school there and learned to love the tropical climate. Once her Dad's work was done in Samoa, her family returned to Long Beach, where they lived for three more years. Afterwards, they relocated to Utah. Chris attended Springville High School and Brigham Young University.

As a young adult, Chris headed off to Minnesota to be a nanny, where she would meet the love of her life, James Craig Possin of New Richland, MN. Before their marriage, Chris served a mission in Rapid City, South Dakota, while Jim served in

Oklahoma. She loved sharing the gospel with those in that area and spoke fondly of her time there.

On April 1, 1977, Chris married Jim in the Manti Utah temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and soon fell in love with life on the farm. She lived on the farm near New Richland where she raised 9 children, homeschooling them while also helping run their family farm.

She was the heart of a home where children were cherished. She has nine children: James Craig Possin (Christine), Thomas William Possin (Jessica), Amy Ilene Possin (Joseph Hansen), Michael Jay Possin (Karma), Janelle Lyn Possin (Richard Warnick), Laura Lee Possin (Alex Wagner), Ashley Elin Possin (Michael Duckworth), Michelle Adele Possin (Curtis Jex), Kristy Marie Possin (Joseph Gerber). She made sure her home ran smoothly, using her skills to create a welcoming home. She learned right alongside her children in homeschooling, picking up skills like ice skating and clogging. Even once her children were grown, she continued to clog with some of her daughters with the Wild Rose Cloggers.

As her children grew and flew the nest, they couldn't help but return again and again, bringing their own children to be cherished and loved by her. She has 44 grandchildren: Matthew, Joshua, Adele, Christian, Enoch, Autumn, Benjamin, Micah,

Jesse, Zachary, Seth, Daniel, Natalia, Levi, Emily, Tauriel, Eviana, Lucy, Brayden, Arianna, Becca, Adaly, Skyla, Preston, Jade, Pyper, Rhett, Van, Mabel, Hunter, Nathan, Alayna, Landen, Ainsley, Kenneth, Brody, Jaxon, Lowen, Rockwell, Elinore, Evelyn, Grace, Otto, with one more boy on the way. Her grandchildren grew up knowing her love for them. They knew they could count on Grandma's house to be full of love, homemade bread, laughter, good food, and, of course, treats from Grandma's treasure box.

Chris's life was one full of service. She was a constant strength to many around her, serving in her church in Austin, Albert Lea, and Waseca, leading children's programs, youth programs, and women's programs. She was also involved in many community organizations like the Garden Club, Quilting Club, and Friends of the Library in New Richland. One of her favorite places to serve was alongside her husband in the temple, where they would go each week. Much of her service was given in quieter ways through countless meals, phone calls, visits, and whatever else she could do to lift the weary heart and soul. Her love for the Savior and love for others shown through in her daily, quiet acts of service.

She is survived by her husband, her nine children, and 42 grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her parents, sister Rochelle, sister Laurie,



Christine Possin

nephew Jesse, granddaughter Autumn, and granddaughter Emily.

Visitation will be held from 4-7 pm on Thursday, November 13, 2025 at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Waseca, MN. Visitation will continue from 9:45 – 10:45 AM on Friday prior to the service.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 AM on Friday, November 14, 2025, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in North Mankato. There will be a graveside service at 4 pm on Friday, November 14, 2025, at St. Peter's Cemetery in New Richland.

DSOFuneral.com

Matthew Connor

Matthew George Connor, a lifelong resident of Waseca, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato at the age of 75.

Matt was born on January 1, 1950, in Waseca to Lee and Mildred (Brooks) Connor. He graduated from Sacred Heart High School in Waseca in 1968 before going on to study accounting at Faribault Vo-Tech School. On July 21, 1973 Matt was united in marriage to Kathleen Grot-sun at the Congregational Church in Freeborn. Together, they made their home in Waseca, where they raised their three children.

Matt was a dedicated employee of the EF Johnson Company for many years until his retirement. Outside of

work, family was the center of his life. He treasured every moment spent with them and his greatest joy was being "grandpa" to his three grandsons. He also loved spending time on the lakes and rivers fishing with his children and brothers-in-law.

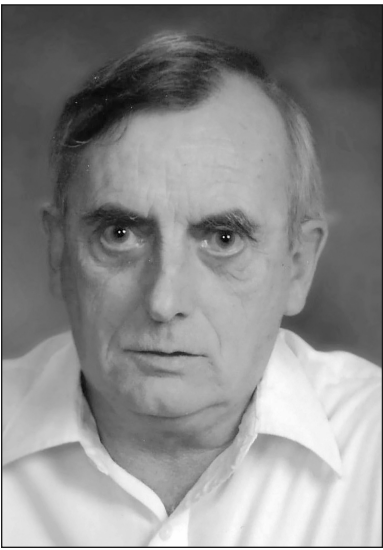
As a devoted member of the First Congregational Church in Waseca, Matt was active throughout the years as a Sunday school teacher, sound-board operator, member of the men's group and through serving on various boards and committees. Matt was proud to have lived his whole life in Waseca and actively used his passion for genealogy and historical research to support the Waseca Historical Society in sharing the area's rich history. Matt will forever be remembered for his love of family and community.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 52 years, Kathy; his children: Brian Connor of Waseca, Kim Schroeder of Zumbrota, and Kevin Connor of Waseca; and his grandsons Ethan, Colby, and Jacob Schroeder along with many other family members and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents: Lee and Mildred Connor; siblings: Pat and Bonnie Connor; and son-in-law Gary Schroeder Jr.

Visitation will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 PM on Tuesday, November 11, 2025, at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca. Visitation will continue one hour prior to the funeral service at the church.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 AM on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at First Congregational



Matthew Connor

Church in Waseca with Pastor Derek Skoglund officiating.

Dorothy Kopischke

DOROTHY LORRAINE KOPISCHKE, age 99, of Waseca, formerly of Janesville, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at Foxdale in Waseca.

Dorothy was born on September 10, 1926, on the family farm in St. Mary Township, Waseca County, to Fred and Malinda (Seewald) Mittelstaedt. She was baptized as an infant and later confirmed in her Lutheran faith at St. John Lutheran Church in Iosco Township, Waseca County. Dorothy received her education through the eighth grade at Waseca County Country School District 64, with the exception of her seventh-grade year, which she attended at Trinity Lutheran School in Janesville.

On October 17, 1945, Dorothy was united in marriage to Alvin Kopischke at St. John Lutheran Church in Iosco Township. Together they made their home on the farm, where they raised three daughters. Dorothy

was deeply rooted in her rural upbringing—she was raised on a farm, became a devoted farm wife, and carried those values throughout her life. She tended gardens both on the farm and in town, preserving the harvest through freezing and canning.

Dorothy and Alvin did everything together. Their marriage was a true partnership, lasting 66 years until Alvin's passing on July 12, 2012. Dorothy cherished her family and instilled in each of them the Christian values that guided her life. She found joy in entertaining, celebrating holidays, and spending time with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

She was a longtime member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Janesville, where she was active in the Ladies Aid and Senior Group. Dorothy will be remembered as a loving mother, devoted grandmother—affectionately known as "Grandma Picky"—and proud great-grandmother.

Dorothy is survived by her daughters:

Linda (Richard) Thesing of Rochester, Norma (Jim) Fury of Janesville, and Diane (Chester) Bilgo of Plymouth, WI; grandchildren: Jason (Stephanie) Thesing, Kristi Mehring, Matt Fury, Jennifer (Chris) Walz, Brent (Jennifer) Fury, Sara (Dan) Smith, and Todd (Chelsey) Bilgo; 12 great-grandchildren; as well as nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Charles and Adeline (Boettcher) Kopischke; husband, Alvin; siblings: Deloris (Leo) Guse, Eldor (Vera) Mittelstaedt, Marvel (Harold) Miller, and Norma in infancy; and brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law: Edward (Agnes) Kopischke, Art (Delilah) Kopischke, Luke (Violet) Kopischke, and Paul (Marcella) Kopischke.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, November 11, 2025, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Janesville with Rev. Jason Wolter officiating. Interment will follow at



Dorothy Kopischke

St. John Trinity Lutheran Cemetery in Iosco Township, Waseca County. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service at the church.

Blessed be her memory. DSOFuneral.com

Waseca County Agricultural Society meeting Tuesday, Nov. 18

The Waseca County Agricultural Society will hold their meeting at the Waseca Fairgrounds at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 18 in the building across from the Sheriff's building. All Ag Society members are welcome.

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Chelsea Schnepf of Midwest Pastures was working the Winter Farmers Market at Farmamerica on Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Midwest Pastures plans to expand menu

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The first installment of a Waseca Winter Farmers Market being held indoors at Farmamerica took place the morning of Saturday, Nov. 8, inside the main building. Parked outside, under the white sky with just a few snowflakes beginning to fall, was a vendor by the name of Lucia's Cocina, ready to serve from either her breakfast or lunch menu.

In the main building's ballroom were nine vendors including Midwest Pastures, Magnetic North, Little Driveway Shed, Phat & Hapi, the Tattooed Baker, With a Smile, McCarty Farm, Loon Lake Co. and Custom Quilts. The large room was pretty full, but there was room for more vendors who may be interested in the event. In the middle of the room were circular tables set up filled with crayons and coloring books, dotted amongst the tables were a few children, keeping quiet while mom and dad shopped.

Chelsea Schnepf, 36, of Midwest Pastures was there, sitting behind her table with a cooler on her left and packaging on her right wearing a pink hoodie. She's originally from Nicollett, her husband,

Brandon, 42, has deep local roots as a third-generation family farmer. They've been married for the past 5 years and live a few miles south of Janesville. Their focus right now is chicken, boneless skinless breasts, leg quarters, wings, chicken feet by the pound, or whole birds. Their animals are all grass fed through a new type of feeding called concentrated feeding/aggressive grazing. They have 30 acres between the two of them, and they've been operating Midwest Pastures for the past couple years now. Said Chelsea, "We wanted to get away from conventional methods and practice farming that gives back a little. We also sell online, we have about 500 chickens currently, 30 of those are egg layers. Next spring we're planning on expanding our menu to include goat and sheep meat. We have 35 goats and 10 sheep, all grass fed." She went on to explain the type of grazing they've been practicing, "By moving our animals intentionally across pastures, we give the land time to recover and thrive, bringing new life to fields that had been worn down over generations."

Midwest Pastures can be found online at www.midwestpastures.com.



Librarian Michelle Hollermann was setting up the 'To Be Read' jars and other items for the adult-oriented instructional class at the Janesville Library on Monday, Nov. 3, 2025. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Janesville Library session focuses on reading for adults

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

During an adult-oriented instructional class at the Janesville Public Library the evening of Monday, Nov. 3, participants created "To Be Read" (TBR) jars, a project intended to encourage reading and to hopefully inspire as many people as possible into literature related topics.

Before the class there had been a group of children with their mother inside the library, four of them, there was a pile of books at least a foot high on the counter being gathered up into reusable bags. Once the children had gotten the books they wanted, momma scooted them outside to the car. After that, the library was empty for a few minutes before 5 p.m., when the class was supposed to begin.

Michelle Hollermann indicated a medium-sized, white cardboard box, the contents of which included pint-sized jars. She described, "We have stencils and paint markers for drawing by hand, whatever decoration you want on your jars we probably have it." The jars had black screw-on lids. There were baggies of stencils with various shapes that

could be applied to the sides of the jars. One image in particular looked like liquid was dripping down; another looked like a heart, another like a bleeding heart.

She explained the intent of the project: Once participants decorate their jars in the desired style, they are invited to fill them with slips of paper naming titles of books, or with prompts or themes or challenges. "Read a book with an animal on the cover" or "Read a book published from the year you were born." There were even some controversial prompts like, "Read a book that's been banned or challenged in the past" or "Read a book about politics." Hollerman explained the prompts give readers an excuse, (if they need it) to read a book they might not otherwise pick up and read. Or if one wanted to use a simpler approach, they could just put the titles of the books themselves in the jar, whatever excuse that is needed to pick up a book, use it!

The next adults only class at the Janesville library will take place on Nov. 25 at 6 p.m. Learn techniques to create beautiful greeting cards. Register at the library or at wasecalesueurlibraries.com/getregistered.

The Redemption Project debuts at the MCA Conference

The Redemption Project proudly marked a milestone this October as it presented for the first time at the Minnesota Corrections Association (MCA) Annual Training Institute, held October 28–30, 2025, at Grand View Lodge in Nisswa, Minnesota.

Founded in 1933, the Minnesota Corrections Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting professionals across all areas of corrections, promoting ethical practice, and advancing innovative approaches that contribute to safer communities. Each year, MCA's conference brings together hundreds of professionals from correctional facilities, probation, parole, reentry, and social service agencies to exchange knowledge and best practices.

The Redemption Project's presentation shared how The Redemption Project is redefining what successful reentry looks like through a model that combines education, partnership, and personal accountability. CEO Dwight Tostenson, Board Chair Mikhail Rostislavovich, volunteer Ann Staloch, and The Redemption Project Associate Dave Snider, who graduated from the organization's Virtues for Success™ program and now works as a Senior Partner for The Redemption Project, all participated in the session.

"Our work begins before they are out of incarceration," said Dwight Tostenson, CEO of The Redemption Project. "We help individuals rebuild their lives through character development, workforce readiness, and partnership. Seeing someone like Dave go from sitting in one of our classes to standing beside us as a colleague demonstrates the power of redemption in action."

The team shared The Redemption Project evidence-based approach, focusing on both prevention and intervention, and emphasized the



From left, Redemption Project CEO Dwight Tostenson, Volunteer Ann Staloch, Chairman of the Board Mikhail Rostislavovich, and Senior Partner Dave Snider.

importance of partnership between corrections professionals and community organizations in helping individuals transition successfully after incarceration. Attendees heard firsthand how The Redemption Project programming, especially Virtues for Success™, equips participants with tools to make better choices, rebuild trust, and contribute positively to their families and communities.

Mikhail Rostislavovich, Chairman of the Board, added, "It was an honor to represent The Redemption Project among Minnesota's corrections professionals. We believe collaboration between institutions and community partners is essential to reducing recidivism. When people are given tools for personal transformation and a network of support, the outcome is not just rehabilitation, it's restoration."

For Dave, the experience was especially mean-

ingful. Having once been an Associate in The Redemption Project's Virtues for Success™ class, his story illustrates how second chances can lead to lifelong purpose. "Dave's journey is proof that when we invest in people, we change futures," said Tostenson.

By taking part in the MCA Annual Conference, The Redemption Project has forged new relationships within Minnesota's correctional community, opening the door for collaboration, research partnerships, and broader advocacy for programs rooted in dignity and accountability.

The Redemption Project extends gratitude to the Minnesota Corrections Association for the opportunity to present and looks forward to continued collaboration in advancing meaningful work within the field.

Ag-focused event Nov. 20 at Farmamerica

WASECA, Minn. (November 5, 2025)— Waseca County runs on ag! GreenSeam, the City of Waseca, Waseca County, and the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, invite ag-sector professionals to food and agribusiness-themed networking reception, made possible by Profinium Bank.

This free social event will take place Thursday, November 20, from 4:00-6:00pm at Farmamerica: Minnesota's Agricultural Interpretive Center (7367 360th Ave, Waseca, MN 56093). Those interested in attending should secure their spot by November 17 by visiting

www.greenseam.org/waseca-mixer

Designed to celebrate and strengthen Waseca County's agricultural business ecosystem, this gathering brings together producers, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and public sector leaders, to connect, share ideas, and explore opportunities for collaboration.

Attendees will enjoy refreshments, a cash bar, and casual networking, along with a brief program at 5:00pm highlighting local initiatives that are growing Waseca's food and ag economy—from developing the area's talent pipeline to supporting local producers and improving access to

local foods.

Event Highlights:

- Build connections across the local agribusiness community
- Access local and regional resources to grow your business
- Hear updates on key local initiatives and how to get involved

Who Should Attend:

Agricultural producers, business service providers, food and ag start-ups, logistics providers, manufacturers, processors, and researchers in Waseca County and surrounding areas are welcome to attend.

GreenSeam is a regional initiative based in southern Minnesota and

northern Iowa dedicated to driving economic growth, innovation, and workforce development in the regional food and agricultural industry ecosystem. By building connections among businesses, education, and communities, GreenSeam works to elevate the region as a global hub for food and ag excellence.

The City of Waseca and Waseca County are investors in GreenSeam's mission and key partners in strengthening the local food and agricultural sectors.

Sheriff spoke to Waseca Exchange on First Responders Appreciation Day

The Waseca Exchange Club proudly hosted Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas as guest speaker in honor of First Responders Appreciation Day. Sheriff Dulas shared valuable insight into the vital work of the Sheriff's Office, the scope of its responsibilities, and the growing challenges faced by law enforcement in today's world.

Sheriff Dulas discussed the significant volume of calls the department responds to each year, highlighting the wide range of incidents, from emergency response to community assistance, that the Sheriff's Office handles daily. He also shed light on the role of the Sheriff's Mounted Posse, a dedicated group of volunteers who provide critical support in search and rescue operations, crowd control, and community outreach.

In addition, Sheriff Dulas issued an important reminder to residents about the increasing prevalence of

cybercrimes targeting individuals through financial scams and fraudulent activity. He encouraged the public to stay vigilant and to report any suspicious activity immediately.

"Our deputies and volunteers work tirelessly to keep this county safe," said Sheriff Jay Dulas. "Whether it's responding to emergencies, helping in a crisis, or protecting residents from evolving threats like cyber-crime, we rely on the strong partnership of our community. It's an honor to be recognized by the Exchange Club for the work first responders do every day."

The Waseca Exchange Club's commitment to recognizing and supporting local first responders reflects one of its core pillars of service, promoting community safety and appreciation for those who protect it.

"Sheriff Dulas' presentation was a powerful reminder of the dedication and sacrifice our first responders demonstrate," said Mikhail Rostislavovich, President of the Waseca Exchange Club. "We are deeply grateful for their continued service and proud to stand behind them as partners in building a safer, stronger Waseca."



From left, Exchange President Mihail Rostislavovich, Sheriff Jay Dulas, and Exchange Member Robin Dulas.

The Waseca Exchange Club continues its mission of serving the community through programs that promote Americanism, community service, youth development, and the prevention of child abuse.

■ Visit

from Page 1

A purpose of the bipartisan tour was to gather information regarding possible infrastructure projects around the state; projects will be considered for inclusion in a 2026 Capital Investment bill.

The week's tours included stops in Apple Valley, Lakeville, Northfield, Faribault, Waseca, Albert Lea, Aus-

tin, Rochester, Forestville, Winona, Wabasha, Hastings, Newport, and South St. Paul. In addition to these stops, the committee heard presentations on projects from the entire region.

Nearly 100 community leaders, along with local State Senator John Jasinski, State House Member Tom Sexton, and elected city and county representatives were on hand to greet committee members and talk about Waseca's need for I & I funds.

"This is our number one priority," Senator Jasinski told the crowd Wednesday. "This has to be the priority.

It is not fair to the residents of Waseca to have raw sewage pumped into their lake. We want to make this a priority and get this done."

"This is personal to me because I've been here since 1980 living the problem and working the problem," said Waseca city manager Carl Sonnenberg said.

Sonnenberg called the need urgent, stating a total of about 8 million gallons of sewage were released at five different locations in 2025. Local residents also experienced contaminated water in their basements.

The other need is funds to either

replace or renovate the 500,000 City Hall water tower, built in 1954.

Also speaking on Wednesday were Waseca Chamber of Commerce and Tourism President Mikhail Rostislavovich, Waseca Mayor Randy Zimmerman, Michael Corchran, incoming Kieler's Campground owner and Waseca Councilwoman Stacey Schroeder.

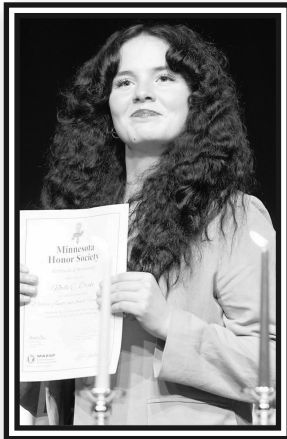
"These are true infrastructure needs," Senator Jasinski concluded. "This is very important this bonding season. A turnout like this, you understand the importance this has to our community."



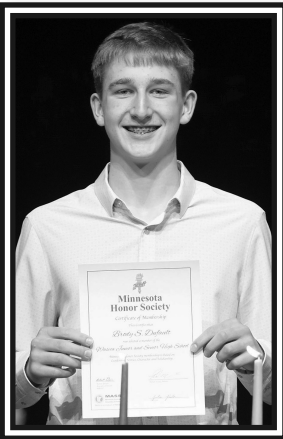
Brooklyn R. Anderson



Madelynn L. Benzick



Noelle C. Drake



Brody S. Dufault



Zoey M. Dunn



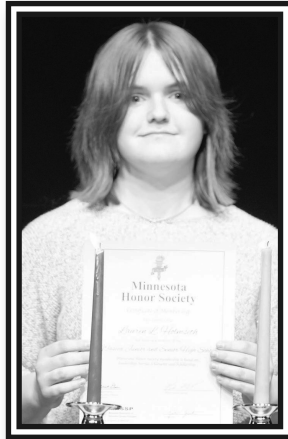
Chelsia J. Eneboe



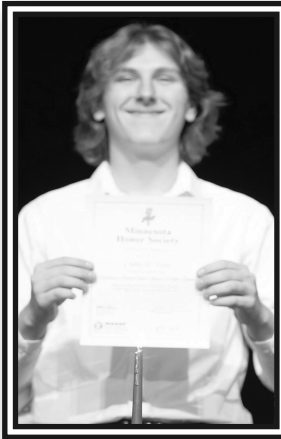
Isabella A. Garza



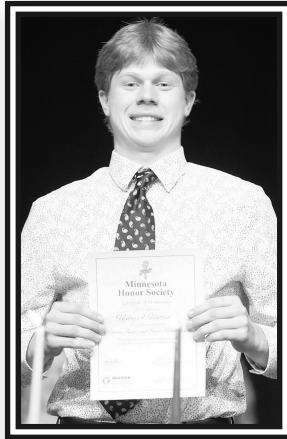
Jacob G. Harguth



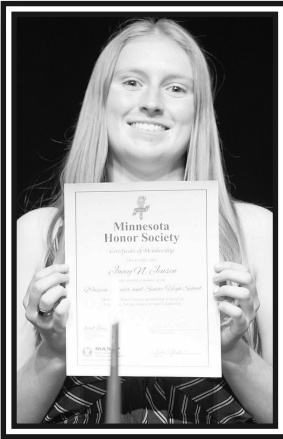
Lauren L. Holmseth



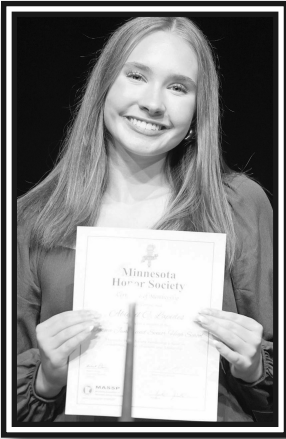
Colby R. Hoof



Henry J. Huttemier



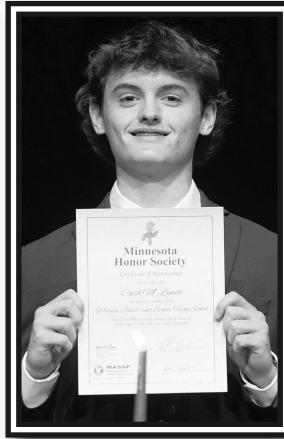
Jacey N. Jensen



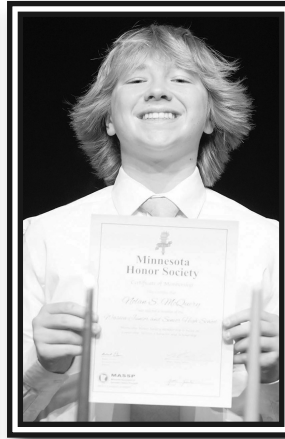
Abigail C. Lapides



Amilya J. Lynch



Cash M. Lynch



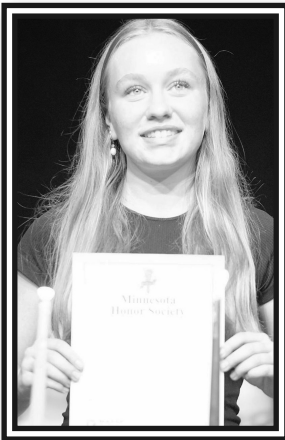
Nolan S. McQuery



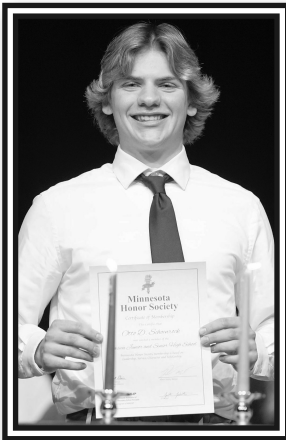
Belle L. Miller



Kaylie A. Morrissey



Violet M. Rohwer



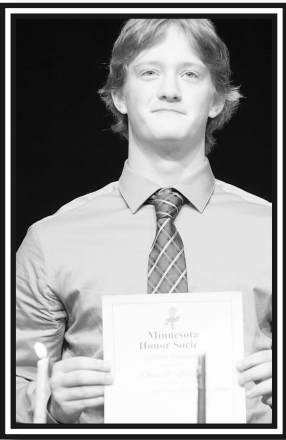
Otto D. Schoenrock



Savanna J. Vagts



Katelyn K. Weber



Owen P. Wieseler



The Pastor's Column

Cremation and resurrection

Pastor's Note: Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?...But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ~ 1 Corinthians 15:12, 20-22

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our resurrected Savior, Sometimes I am asked if there is anything wrong with cremation. This is actually a deeply involved question requiring more than a simple yes or no answer. Faithful Christians throughout time and across cultures have tended to avoid cremation. One reason is that whole body burial is seen as a final Christian witness to God's promise of resurrection. God promises that just as Jesus Christ rose from the grave on the third day, we will be bodily resurrected when Jesus returns on the last day.

Your body is not just a shell for your soul. God created us as fully physical and fully spiritual beings. This means your body IS who you are just as much as your soul is. Moreover, Christians have been blessed through baptism and faith with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are told in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." So, how you treat your body is important. This is true in life and in death. Caring for your body after death is part of how you can "glorify God in your body."

One common concern with traditional burial is cost. Scripture teaches us that it is honorable to spend our time and money on care for the bodies of our deceased loved-ones. For example, we see that the only land that Abraham ever owned within the Promised Land was purchased to bury his wife Sarah (Genesis 23). This is where he,

and his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob and their wives were buried. Jacob was embalmed down in Egypt (taking 40 days!), and after an additional 30 days of mourning, his body was taken up to the family burial place according to his wishes (Genesis 49:29—50:14).

Likewise, when Jacob's son Joseph died he made his family swear that they would take his body with them when they left Egypt to go back up into the Promised Land (Genesis 50:24-26, Hebrews 11:22). Hundreds of years later, Moses kept this promise when he led the Israelites out of captivity (Exodus 13:19). After leaving Egypt, it would take another 70 years before they finally laid Joseph to rest in Shechem, where his father Jacob had purchased land hundreds of years prior (Genesis 33:19, Joshua 24:32). That land became part of the inheritance of Joseph's descendants. Talk about care and concern for the body of a loved one! But why all the fuss over care for the dead? Well, as Christ reminds us when He speaks of the resurrection promise, God is not the God of the dead but of the living (Matthew 22:23-33). Those who die in faith are actually just resting in peace and will rise again unto eternal life.

Great care was also given to the body of our Lord. In the days prior to His crucifixion, expensive ointment (worth nearly a year's wages!) was poured over Jesus' head and feet in preparation of His burial (Mark 14:3 ; John 12:3). Nicodemus brought about 75 pounds worth of myrrh and aloes, along with burial cloths to wrap the body of Jesus in the tomb. Finally, on the morning of His resurrection the women went to the tomb with even more ointment and spices that they had bought and prepared to care for Christ's body (Luke 23:55—24:1). Clearly, Jesus' loved-ones took great care to prepare and tend to His body in death. They spared no expense to care for Him and to reflect their conviction that there would

Pastor continued on 7

Honor

from Page 1

new inductees, who received pins and certificates acknowledging their membership from students Kaiya Stagman and Chloe Roemhildt. The night closed with all the members reciting the MHS Pledge, followed by closing remarks from Waseca school counselor Paul Marlin.

Inducted on Wednesday evening were Brooklyn R. Anderson, daughter of Lori and Michael Anderson; Madelynn L. Benzick, daughter of Nick and Kellie Benzick and Nicki and Cory Stencel; Noelle C. Drake, daughter of Christopher and Laura Drake; Brody S. Dufault, son of Jared and Stacy Dufault; Zoey M. Dunn, daughter of Kimberly Dunn; Chelsia J. Eneboe, daughter of Jen and Eric Cox; Jon Eneboe; Isabella A. Garza, daughter of Anthony and Anastasia Garza; Jacob G. Harguth, son of Adam and Anne Harguth;

Lauren L. Holmseth, daughter of John & Kirsten Holmseth; Colby R. Hoof, son of Dana Hoof; Henry J. Huttemier, son of Kristi Hyink-Huttemier and John Huttemier; Jacey N. Jensen, daughter of Brandon and Anna Jensen and Brittany Cowdin and Luke Burneister; Abigail C. Lapides, daughter of Kristen and Anthony Lapides; Amilya J. Lynch, daughter of Jason and Sara Lynch; Cash M. Lynch, son of Joshua and Megan Lynch; Nolan S. McQuery, son of Mike and Amy McQuery; Belle L. Miller, daughter of Jon and Amy Miller; Kaylie A. Morrissey, daughter of Mike and Laurie Morrissey; Violet M. Rohwer, daughter of Anne Gerber and Charlie Rohwer; Otto D. Schoenrock, son of Marcia and Steve Schoenrock; Savanna J. Vagts, daughter of Mark and Mandy Vagts; Katelyn K. Weber, daughter of Kevin and Melissa Weber; Owen P. Wieseler, son of Tania and Patrick Wieseler.

Waseca seniors inducted in 2024 are Slade O. Barnett, son of Scott Barnett and Stephanie Greenslade;

Natalie G. Berndt, daughter of Heather Bulver and Ralph Berndt; Maximus E. B. Bodenweiser, son of Elizabeth and the late Donald Bodenweiser; Ava M. Bruhn, daughter of Meghan Campbell and the late Ryan Bruhn; Ella R. Bulfer, daughter of Philip and Amber Bulfer;

Alexis M. Claybaugh, daughter of Scott and Becca Frederick; Paige M. Dufault, daughter of Jared and Stacy Dufault; Hannah M. R. Heusinkveld, daughter of Eric and Stacy Heusinkveld;

Sophia H. Hillsman, daughter of Sean and Jennifer Hillsman; Haley M. Kahnke, daughter of Nick Kahnke and Natasha Grunzke; Layla M. Keith, daughter of Muriah Miller Keith and Joe Keith; Alyssa J. Kilmer, daughter of Scott and Jolene Kilmer; Allen J. Kopetzki, son of Craig and Tracy Kopetzki; Madilyn C. Larrabee, daughter of Dana and Jamie Larrabee; Jolee N. Larson, daughter of Mike and Tammi Larson; Vivian D. Mader, daughter of Andrew and Molly Mader; William J. P. Mansfield, son of John and Edita

Mansfield; Dakotah L. Marik, daughter of Matthew Marik, Jackie Janovsky, and Larry LaDonna Marik; Corrick J. Medina, son of Justin and Chantel Medina; Mia Y. Mitchell, daughter of Chris and Bamboo Mitchell; Pearl A. Moore, daughter of Stacy Ewert and Chad Moore; Remy A. Murphy, daughter of Shawn and Tammy Murphy; Catherine S. Olson, daughter of Christopher Olson and Mary Jo Stangler; Chloe L. Roemhildt, daughter of Bill and Stephanie Roemhildt; Madison L. Roessler, daughter of Pete Roessler and

Amy Dillon-Roessler; Sadie R. Schimming, daughter of Chris and Rebecca Schimming; Kaiya L. Stagman, daughter of Jill Stagman; Andres F. Vázquez-Neigebauer, son of Katie and David Vázquez; Ellery A. Waldron, daughter of Chris Waldron and Kara Waldron; Avery A. Wetzel, son of Ashley and Rachael Wetzel; Caleb J. Wulf, son of Rick and Jill Wulf.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

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

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

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

CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH
309 6th St NE, Waseca
507-835-9176
Worship Sundays 9 a.m., 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
507-833-0017

Sunday worship 10 a.m.
* * * * *

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

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
1221 8th St SE, Waseca
507-835-2213
Sunday 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. 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.

Ceremony inducts 16 to National Honor Society

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

Membership in the NRHEG chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) grew by 16 the afternoon of Nov. 5 during a ceremony held near the end of the school day at the NRHEG Secondary school building in New Richland.

High school seniors inducted are Olivia Johnson, Gabrielle Schlaak and Owen Wayne. Juniors are Ariel-Star Anhalt, Jack Bartlett, Finnegan Baumann, Izley Boerner, Clara Buendorf, Brooks Gilliland, Caralee Koopal, John Lynne, Dominic Olson, Kylie Olson, Faith Phillips, Madeline Schaak and Sophia Williams.

Inductees were welcomed by members of the senior class who had been inducted in 2024: Jordan Brouwers, Meela Budach, Kaitlyn Dobberstein, Kyera Eustice, Molly Johnson, Jozie Klimmek, Wyatt Larson, Devon Nelton, Chloe Riewer, Addy Stadheim and Chloe Stork.

Speaker for the ceremony was Onika Peterson, high school health and physical education teacher and coach. Peterson highlighted the four "pillars" of the NHS, providing a personal definition for each.

Among her observations, she shared, "Scholarship reflects your commitment to learning and academic excellence. It's more than grades; it's a mindset, a curiosity to understand the world, to ask questions, and to keep learning long after the bell rings.

"Service is about giving of your-

self for the benefit of others. It's lending a hand not because you have to, but because you want to. It's about making your school and community better without expecting anything in return.

"Leadership goes beyond titles or positions. It's about influence, how you encourage others, how you show up when it's difficult, and how you set an example for those around you.

"Character is the foundation of it all. It's who you are when no one is watching, your honesty, your kindness, your respect for others, and your ability to do the right thing, even when it's hard.

"While all four pillars are essential, I believe leadership ties them all together. True leadership reflects scholarship, service, and character, it's learning with purpose, serving with heart, and acting with integrity."

Peterson went on to say being a member of the National Honor Society is a lifetime commitment. "Your leadership within the walls of NRHEG is vital to the success of our school. The way you treat others, the example you set, and the effort you put into your studies, activities, and commitments, these are what make the greatest impact.

"As you move forward, remember that leadership doesn't stop when you leave NRHEG. The habits you build here—the discipline, compassion, and integrity, will carry you into college, careers, and life. Use your influence to make things better, wherever you go."



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY - In the front two rows are the 16 people who were inducted into the NRHEG chapter of the National Honor Society during the ceremony on Nov. 5, 2025. New members are (front, from left) Madeline Schlaak, Sophia Williams, Olivia Johnson, Gabrielle Schlaak, Faith Phillips, Ariel-Star Anhalt, Clara Buendorf, and Izley Boerner (second row, from left) Brooks Gilliland, John Lynne, Caralee Koopal, Kylie Olson, Owen Wayne, Dominic Olson, Jack Bartlett, and Finnegan Baumann.

In the back two rows are current seniors who were inducted into the NRHEG chapter of the National Honor Society in 2024: (third row, from left) Wyatt Larson, Addy Stadheim, Chloe Stork, Meela Budach, Kyera Eustice and Jordan Brouwers (back, from left) Jozie Klimmek, Kaitlynn Dobberstein, Devon Nelton, Molly Johnson, and Chloe Riewer.



The full current membership of the NRHEG chapter of the National Honor Society includes 27 members of the junior and senior classes.

Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

■ Pastor from Page 6

be a day of resurrection for all people.

While cremation can be cheaper, it is an intentionally destructive process, first incinerating the body, and then grinding and pulverizing the large bones that remain after incineration. It has its origins in pagan burial customs that look at the body as just a shell for the spirit. This custom does not "look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." That being said, most Christians who choose cremation are not aware of this pagan connection, and look at cremation from a purely practical and financial perspective. Many faithful Christians simply do not consider the chief role our faith should have in making these decisions.

On a pastoral note, if a loved-one has chosen cremation, please take heart in knowing God is certainly able to draw back together, re-

form, raise, and glorify those whom He knit together in their mothers' wombs (even from cremated and scattered remains). This article is not meant as an indictment against anyone. Rather, it is a pastoral word of guidance on a topic that can be very sensitive, confusing, and difficult to talk about.

My advice regarding funeral planning is to have an open casket visitation with a Christian funeral service and a traditional burial, all of which act together as a final wit-

ness to our sure resurrection promise in Christ Jesus. It is important that we as Christians make our decisions in light of God's promises to us in Christ. The eternally begotten Son of God, took on flesh to be born, live, die, and rise victorious over death and the grave for everybody. While the wages of sin is death, God's forgiveness delivers us from death via the resurrection of the body, unto eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.

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Pastor Grannis

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Marching Jays give unforgettable Indoor Concert

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

For the 50th time, the Waseca Marching Jays presented a lively indoor marching band concert filled with creativity, energy, and heart-stirring music. The concert was presented at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 7 and 8, and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 9. An estimated total of more than 800 people attended across the three performances.

Titled “Legacy” in honor of the event’s anniversary, performances featured the talent and energy of more than 60 young musicians who not only played their instruments, but also moved fluidly around the floor, creating and recreating patterns, designs and sound effects.

In recognition of the anniversary, current band students reproduced performances done by past bands. For example, the color guard feature titled “Falling Slowly” repeated choreography used in 2010. The percussion feature, “Welcome to the Jungle,” was used in 2021.

The traditional Indoor feature called the “Children’s March” invites children from the audience to come down to the gym floor and navigate a path that represents overcoming peril. This year’s asked

children to elude a dragon, fight evil knights, avoid alligators, and risk molten lava during a trip back in time to allow the first Indoor Concert, which took place in 1975, to take place.

Certain elements of the concert had individuals wearing past uniforms. After dressing formally for the first half of the show, students donned outfits and costumes representing many eras of history, including even one “caveman” among the percussion section for numbers performed after the intermission.

Featured alongside performances was a slide show of this year’s marching season in review which also highlighted seniors Allen Kopetki, Briyghton Rugger, Corric Medina, Daniel Sipe, Jenna Hudak, Kacee Perrizo, Kaden Elias, Lilliana Sanchez, Logan Reger, and Sadie Schimming.

Another video included videos of former band directors sharing their observations and memories; a memoir of Butch Dufault, who founded the Indoor Concert tradition in 1975 was presented by Butch’s son, Todd.

Narrations during the concert also encouraged those in attendance to consider donating to the Waseca Band Boosters organization to support the ongoing legacy.



Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

Janesville

1925

- One of the largest crowds ever entertained in Janesville was that of last Saturday evening when our Halloween Party was staged. The streets in all parts of the village were lined with cars while Main Street was jammed with visitors who entered into the spirit of the occasion and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. During the afternoon a serious of races and a few stunts were on the card with a football game at North Side field between the Mankato Reserves and the Janesville High School providing a feature that many fans called a good contest, though the locals had an easy time running up a 32 to 0 count against the visitors.

- Lester Swanson is chairman of the committee which is sponsoring and putting into effect a Courtesy Contest in the Janesville High School. The other members are Cecelia Volz, Arthur Monthey, Catherine O'Toole, Leona Arnoldt and Eugene Glynn. This contest opened November 2 and ends December 11 when the most courteous boy and girl in high school and the boy and girl in each class whose courtesy is marked will be selected by the committee. Detectives, unknown to the members of the classes will keep wary eyes on the contestants and it will be largely upon the reports turned in by the sleuths that the recommendations are to be made.

- The Waseca County Bankers' Association announces that it has made arrangements to cooperate with "Alfalfa Hutch" so that Waseca County farmers may have the benefit of Farmstead's Alfalfa Campaign. "Alfalfa Hutch" represents Farm, Stock & Home and Northwest Farmstead (Consolidated and during the last three years has personally inspected over 6,000 Alfalfa fields and plots.

1950

- Local musicians, both singers and instrumentalists, are invited to join in the Mankato community presentation of Handel's "The Messiah," according to a letter to the Argus from Mrs. H. R. Strom, director of the production. The oratorio will be presented on December 10 in the Mankato State Teachers College gymnasium, the largest place in Mankato, where seats will be provided for about 2,200 listeners. This year's chorus will number about 400 singers and will be accompanied by an orchestra of 50 pieces. Outstanding soloists have been secured. There is no admission charge; a free will offering is taken to defray expenses.

- After ten years of hard competition, Janesville won back the "Gold Brick" from New Richland Friday afternoon at the local gridiron. The game climaxed a series of games in which Janesville had five wins, four defeats, and one tie. New Richland put up a good fight all the way but after the first quarter victory was never in doubt.

1975

- At a special meeting October 28, the District 830 Board of Education moved to adopt a 1975-76 school district budget of \$1,025,836.00. Of this total budget, \$417,715.60 will be raised from local property taxes. In his transmittal letter to the board of education, Supt. Darwin Lochner stated that there are three major areas of increase on the receipts side of the budget: "They are (1) State Aids - \$34,400.00, (2) Local Taxes - \$31,200.00 and (3) Federal Money - \$20,000.00. Disbursements reflect all the expenditures planned during the year," Lochner said. "In addition to the normal inflationary increases in almost all disbursement categories, salary increases account for the major spending. The teachers' request for early payment of July and August salaries accounts for approximately \$28,000 additional for this fiscal year."

- Dottie Ann Trahms is a member of the Augsburg College Jazz Ensemble which performed for the arrival of Olav V, King of Norway, on October 13, on the Augsburg campus. The Jazz Ensemble's first concert of the season is slated for Thursday, November 6, in the College Center, 8 p.m., on the Augsburg Campus.

- Only .39 inch of moisture was recorded in October 1975. Precipitation for the year to October 31 measures 25.55 inches and 20.69 inches of this moisture fell in the first six months. Only 4.86 inches has been recorded since July 1 to October 31st at this station.

2000

- What does it mean to build character in students? And how do you do that? These are the questions the JanesvilleWaldorf-Pemberton Middle School staff is trying to find answers for. According to Mike Meihak, Dean of Students, they would like the middle school to be a "character rich environment," and they have received a state grant to help them do that. Through the grant, Meihak, Heather Winter, County Family Coordinator, and Jody Hall, Media Specialist, recently attended a workshop in Philadelphia titled "Character Education: The Heart of School Reform." The three-day workshop focused on the premise that, for educators, character development must be an explicit goal, one too important to be overlooked.

- When Donny and Jennifer Owens' second son, Derek, was born, they had no reason to suspect his life would soon be in danger. Up until he was two months old, Derek was healthy and happy, giving his parents no reason for concern. When Derek was two months old, his five year-old brother, Jeremy, was riding in the back seat of the car with him when he noticed something. "Is he supposed to be blue?" Jeremy asked his parents. Derek was diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy, a dilation of the left ventricle. At two months old, Derek had a left ventricle the size of an adult. Derek was put on the waiting list for a new heart on April 28. Forty-nine days later, the Owens were told that a heart had been located and Derek would be receiving a transplant. Jennifer [Derek's mother] said that this experience has made all of them realize the importance of being an organ donor.

- Darcy Ewert-Roll will serve has River Hills Marketing Director. Darcy has been with General Growth Properties since 1998 as the assistant marketing director. Darcy is a 1990 graduate of Janesville-WaldorfPemberton High School and a graduate of Rasmussen College in Mankato with a degree in business management, sales, and marketing.

Waseca

25 Years ago

Jesse Anderson is throwing for Carleton:

Waseca High School graduate, Jesse Anderson, is throwing passes for Carleton College of Northfield this fall. Anderson has taken over the first string duties after an injury sidelined starting quarterback Jon Groteboer. Carelton suffered a 46-8 thumping from Bethel last week. The Royals are undefeated and ranked 20th in the nation. Carleton trailed just 17-8 at the half, thanks to a 28-yard scoring pass from Anderson to Brody Feichle on the final play of the half. Anderson, a junior, completed 16 of 32 passes for 184 yards in the game. He was intercepted three times and threw for a touchdown. Anderson quarterbacked the Bluejays of coach Keith Kottke. He also competed in basketball and track at Waseca.

Kalis is a member of Augsburg linksters:

Travis Kalis of WEM earned a spot on the Augsburg College golf team this fall. He completed the Auggies' fall schedule with an 82.38 average for 18 holes. Kalis was a starting guard on the WEM state runner-up basketball team last winter, and also competed in cross country and track for the Buccaneers. He is the son of Wayne and Tami Kalis of Elysian.

The Chance: a full-service entertainment center

The First & Last Chance Bar & Grill, owned by Matt Sandell and Robin Mysliwicz, is a bar with a fresh new look. It has been recently remodeled, with a new kitchen, a full menu and a banquet room that is ready for parties. They have 10 brands of beer on tap, including the "Chance Brew." The bar has a comfortable, friendly atmosphere. Happy hour is from 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and there is always live music and entertainment every Friday night.

50 Years ago

Lake Shore Inn news: Saturday turned out to be a beautiful day for an outing. Many of the residents jumped at the chance to get outside. The "Waseca Players" invited us to the production of "Mother Goose." This was presented at the Waseca High School. Our friends, the Jaycees came through again for us. Rick Morris, Leo Neva and Jim Christiansen supplied the transportation which included vans. Also, Cindy Rosenau, Lois Dardis, Maxine Klampe, Iva Lee and myself furnished cars.

Lori Esk married Kent Sather Friday: Lori Lynne Esk, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Esk of Waseca became the bride of Kent Allen Sather, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Sather of Elysian Sept. 26 at 8:30 p.m. The double ring ceremony was conducted by candle light by Justice of the Peace, Mrs. Everett Bohn at her home in Morristown. The bride and groom chose Mr. and Mrs. Stanley R. Jacobs of Northfield as matron of honor and best man.

One building, two cars damaged in Tuesday accident: Two totaled out cars and a damaged building were the result of a car accident on West Elm Ave. Tuesday night shortly after 9 p.m. The mishap involved a car driven by Ambrose Francis Wheelock, 60, 800 4th St. SW, a parked car owned by Gary Donald Littrell, 201 Vista Villa and a building housing Littrell's TV repair shop and owned by Dean's Speciality. The accident occurred according to police, when Wheelock apparently lost control of his car, struck the Littrell vehicle and shoved it into the large overhead door of the Dean's Speciality Building.

75 Years old

Southern Minny Directors Complete Plans for 1951: Directors of the Southern Minnesota baseball league completed plans for the 1951 season as the met in an adjourned meeting at Owatonna last night. The directors took final action on by-law changes and voted to retain the Minnesota Wisconsin Umpires association for the 1951 season. Also bidding for the umpiring job were the Northwest and Inter-State Umpires associations but it was generally felt that the MW group should be given another chance.

Genelle Root Becomes Bride of Lawrence Doyle: Sacred Heart church was the scene of a lovely fall wedding at 9 o'clock Tuesday morning, Oct. 24, when Genelle Ann Root became the bride of Lawrence Joseph Doyle. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart J. Root of 308 Fourth St. SE Waseca. The grooms parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Doyle are residents of Waldorf.

Bounty Paid on Green Barberry Bushes in County: Here's a chance for Waseca county folks to earn a few dollars this fall and at the same time do a good turn for small grain producers. This is the time of the year when rust susceptible barberry bushes show up most prominently along fence rows in pastures and heavily wooded areas. As host plant to stem rust, the barberry contributes heavily to destruction of wheat, oats, barley and ryes. The appearance of virulent traces of stem rust this year emphasizes the importance of completely eradicating the barberry bush from Minnesota

100 Years ago

Scouts Start practice: About forty first class Waseca Boy-Scouts greeted Coach Joseph Conway and Athletic Director Herman Peterson Monday evening at the high school gym in the first official basketball practice of the season. A heavy schedule is being arranged which calls for games with the three start quints of Mankato for next month, and this means a lot of hard work preparing the local Scouts for these games, as only three veterans from last year's brilliant five reported for the opening session.

Elk's Halloween Dance: The Waseca Elks were highly pleased with their success with their Halloween party, and dance which was held in the City hall Thursday evening. Witches, black cats and other Halloween ornaments, decorated the hall. Music was furnished by Thon's orchestra of Owatonna and every body enjoyed a good time.

In Honor of Bride Elect: Miss Alice Sheldon, a bride of this week, was given a very delightful surprise Friday evening when the officers of the Ladies Friendly and the ladies of the fourth division of the Congregational church gathered at the home of her parents Mr. and Mrs. L.J. and spent a pleasant social evening. A fine lunch was served at the close of the evening. Miss Sheldon was presented with a beautiful black walnut sewing chair.

New Richland

25 Years Back



- New Richland Police Chief Brad Flor displays the plaque of appreciation he received from the city council last Saturday morning for 20 years of service to the local police department. A celebration was held at Du Drop Inn with doughnuts and coffee served, which really was quite appropriate. One of the members of his force that the Star has not had the opportunity to interview sits at the table beside him.

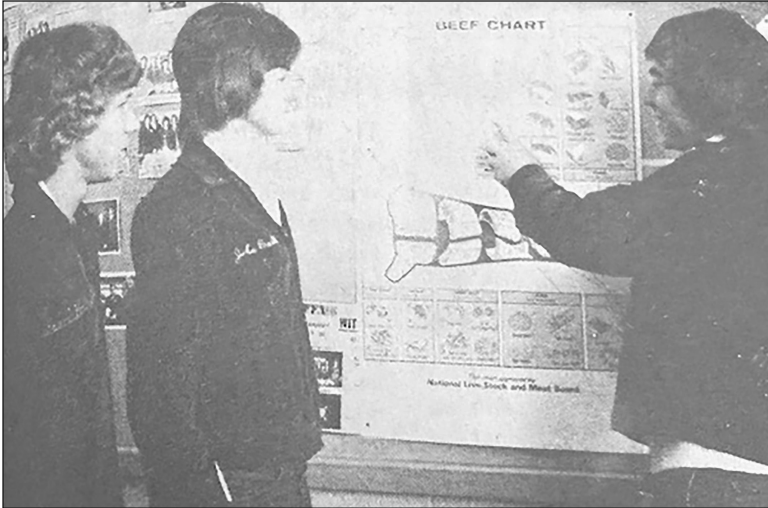


- Tim Stoesz, New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School counselor congratulates Naomi Tukua for being selected local Student of the Month for October by the high school guidance department.

- Olive and Edward Bakke celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary with their five children and spouses. They were married October 18, 1930, at Pelican Rapids.

50 Years Back

- Rev. Charles A. Johnson was installed as Pastor of the Vista Covenant Church, New Richland. The service of installation was Sunday, November 9, during the morning service with the Rev. Carl Janson, Superintendent of the Northwest Covenant Conference presiding. The Johnsons, wife LaVonne, daughter Renee age 7 and son Bret age 4, moved into the church personage on November 3. Pastor Johnson's hometown is Niagara, Wisconsin. Vista Covenant Church, established in 1876 and one of the 98 Covenant Churches in the State of Minnesota, is at present planning for their 100th Anniversary to be held next year.



- The New Richland-Hartland FFA Chapters Meats Team took first in the District - Region Meats judging contest at Hormel's of Austin, Saturday. The three placed, first, second, and third individually. Pictured here looking at a meat chart, they are from the left, Lonnie Kormann, John Proehl and Jim Swenson. The team will enter state competition in May.

75 Years back

- A son weighing 6 ½ pounds was born Tuesday forenoon, December 5 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Almon Miller in Berlin township, Steele county. There are four other children in the family.

- Mr. and Mrs. CLinton Throlson, Albart Lea, announce the engagement of their daughter, Mary Jane, to Richard Arnfelt, New Richland. The wedding will take January 6 in the First Methodist Church at Albert Lea.

- Many Waseca county people had a special surprise in watching TV last Thursday evening. David Clausen, a Waseca county 4-H boy, made a guest appearance on Wayne King's Thursday evening program. David has been in Chicago attending the National 4-H Club Congress. David was awarded the trip on the basis of his long-time and outstanding work in the project.

In brief

Musicians Against Cancer at Eagles Club, Owatonna Sunday, Dec. 7

There will be a concert by Todd Utpadel, "Evening of Giving", Musicians Against Cancer at the Eagles Club in Owatonna starting at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7. There will also be a silent auction and wine pull. All proceeds distributed by Blooming Prairie Cancer Group.

Mariachi Music at Sacred Heart Church, Sat., Dec. 13

Sacred Heart Church in Waseca is featuring Mariachi music from 5 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 13, as part of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration. Mass begins at 5 p.m. Mariachi America will perform during Mass and afterwards in the church hall from 6 to 8 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

Waseca Community

Education Brochure live online Dec. 15

The Waseca Community Education winter brochure will be live online beginning Dec. 15. Area residents can visit <https://waseca.ce.eleyo.com/> to learn about and register for courses, activities, and events. More information is available from the Community Ed office at 507-835-5626.

Waseca County Winter Farmers Market at Farmamerica Dec. 20

There will be a winter farmers market at Farmamerica from 8 a.m. till noon Saturday, Dec. 20. Find locally grown, baked and made while supporting our local producers. Farmamerica is located at 7367 360th Ave., Waseca.

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 8 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.

CredibleMind offers free mental health resources

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

The site offers interactive, evidence-based ways to explore local and national mental well-being resources. Free and anonymous at www.mnprairie.crediblemind.com

Waldorf Veterans Memorial Fund Drive

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

Grizzly CC runners save their best for last

Boys capture elusive conference crown, girls take second in section

The WEM-JWP girls' and boys' cross country teams had an impressive performance at the 2025 Section 2A meet, showcasing determination, teamwork, and true Grizzly grit.

Coaches Skyler Petry and Liz Kvebak motivated the athletes before the race with a special video, encouraging them to "become the Grizzly bear" and compete to the best of their abilities and carry with them every step of the course.

The Grizzly boys had a strong showing at the Section 2A meet while placing 11th.

Leading the way was Wyatt Jans, who ran an impressive 15th-place finish in 17:17 to earn all-section honors.

"Wyatt's performance highlights his dedication and ability to compete at a high level against the best in the section," said Kvebak.

Teagan Mulder followed with a 52nd-place finish in 18:57, Auston Holicky placed 64th in 19:26, and Brennan Welvaert finished 67th in 19:33. Wesley Heinz placed 75th in 19:51, Cash Wenker finished 89th in 20:16, and Parker Smith rounded out the varsity squad in 112th with a time of 22:22.

"The team showed strong depth and effort across the board, with Wyatt's all-section performance leading the way," said Kvebak. "The boys had an overall of five personal records and one course improvement! The Grizzly boys continue to push themselves, improving each race, and demonstrating the same determination and spirit that makes this program competitive and resilient."

The WEM-JWP girls placed seventh as a team in the section meet.

Leading the way was Norah Welvaert, who ran a personal best with a 19th-place finish in 21:12. Lydia Coulesey, Madalyn Miller, and Ellie Schlie all had course personal records, finishing 43rd (22:58), 44th (23:03), and 59th (23:40), respectively. Kwynn Krause added a season-best effort, finishing 54th in 23:30. Rounding out the varsity scoring were MaKenzie Westphal in 61st (23:54) and Emma Huelsnitz in 73rd (24:41).

"The team's performance, with multiple personal and season-best times, reflects the dedication and hard work the athletes have put in all season," said Coach Kvebak. "The Grizzly girls continue to show why they are a force to be reckoned with in the section."

Gopher Conference meet:

For the past three years, the conference title evaded the WEM/JWP boys. They were third in 2024, second in 2023, and fourth in 2022.

The Grizzlies were on the bubble the past few seasons, and they finally put it all together in Hayfield become this year's Gopher Conference champions. The boys' main competition was Randolph, last year's conference champs, and Blooming Prairie, conference champs in 2023. The Grizzlies had beaten both teams at previous meets this season, but lost to Blooming Prairie at the No Frills Meet a week before the conference meet. The Grizzly boys knew it was going to be a battle for the team title. The boys put their best foot forward with eight new all-time personal records and one who had his season's best time at the meet and secured the team title.

The boys were led by Jans, a junior who not only obtained a

"The team's performance, with multiple personal and season-best times, reflects the dedication the athletes have put in all season."

— Coach Liz Kvebak

new PR with a time of 17:25, but also became the individual conference champion. The title narrowly escaped his grasp a season ago where he finished in second to Jacob Karl, who was the 2025 runner-up.

Mulder, a freshman, earned second team all-conference honors with a finish of eighth place and a time of 18:41. Holicky (senior, 16th, 19:37) and Brennan Welvaert (sophomore, 19th, 19:55) earned all-conference honorable mention. To round out the top five scorers was Heinz with a new PR of 20:02 and placing 22nd. The Grizzly boys also had freshman Smith, junior Wenker, sophomore Dalton Ling and freshman Charlie Denis, who all had amazing days with new PRs for themselves too.

Coaches Kvebak and Petry are super proud of their efforts and perseverance for finally getting back to the top of the Gopher Conference.

The coaches had this to say about Jans:

"In cross country, an athlete needs to be hardworking, determined, and have that competitive grit. Wyatt has that and more. He has the heart and mind of a fierce competitor and loves to kick it up a notch when the competition steps up. He is always looking to push himself at practices, improve his times at competitions, and support his teammates. He is an outstanding athlete to work with and has become a great leader for the team. Last season he narrowly missed the conference title by one spot and you could tell he had it on his mind that he believed he could close the gap this season. The coaches believed in him and knew he was more than capable of achieving this goal. Not only did he secure the conference title, but ran his fastest 5K ever in his career. We look forward to what will come next for Wyatt."

The Grizzly girls finished as runners-up in the 2025 conference meet.

The Grizzlies had five personal records and two course improvements from earlier in the season.

Leading the way was Norah Welvaert, who placed sixth in 21:16 to earn all-conference second team honors. She was followed closely by Miller in 10th (22:46), also earning all-conference second team recognition. Coulesey finished 11th (22:50), Schlie 15th (23:33), Krause 16th (23:34), and Jaelyn Wilmes 19th (24:13), all receiving all-conference honorable mention. Rounding out the varsity squad were Anne Adams in 29th (27:22), Abby Crosby in 30th (27:27), and Hailey Heinz in 37th (30:35).

"The team packed up incredibly well with five runners in the top 20, showing tremendous determination, teamwork, and Grizzly grit throughout the race," said Kvebak.

Bluejays earn all-conference honors

The fall sports season brought plenty to celebrate for Waseca High School, as athletes from the girls' soccer, boys' soccer, girls' tennis, and girls' cross country programs earned Big South Conference all-conference and honorable mention recognition for their standout performances.

Girls' Soccer

The Waseca girls' soccer team battled through a strong Black Division schedule, finishing third in the standings and earning multiple postseason honors. Senior goalkeeper Ella Bulfer was named all-conference after an outstanding season between the posts. Bulfer's leadership and quick reactions anchored the Bluejay defense, keeping Waseca competitive in several close matches.

Two additional Bluejays were recognized with Honorable Mention selections — eighth-grader Rachel Mielke, who emerged as an offensive spark with her energy and finishing ability, and sophomore Reese Rodriguez, whose steady defensive play helped limit opponents' scoring chances throughout the season.

Boys' Soccer

On the boys' side, junior defender Tovin Grannis earned all-conference honors for his reliability and toughness in the back line. Despite a rebuilding year for the Bluejays, Grannis consistently drew the assignment of marking the opposition's top scorers, showcasing strong positioning and field awareness. His recognition reflects his effort, leadership, and commitment to the program's continued growth.

Girls' Tennis

The Waseca girls' tennis team continued its tradition of excellence with a 5-1 record in the Black Division, highlighted by three all-conference performers and two honorable mention honorees. Seniors Maddy Benson and Paige Dufault, along with freshman Ava Miller, earned all-conference recognition after consistently delivering key wins in both singles and doubles play.

Senior Vivian Mader and freshman Anna Benson received honorable mention for their strong contributions throughout the conference season. The Bluejays' depth and balanced lineup were key factors in their successful campaign.

Girls' Cross Country

The Waseca girls' cross country team also made its mark at the Big South Conference championships, led by an impressive performance from eighth-grader Ellie Kopschke, who ran a season-best 20:00.97 to

place seventh overall and earn all-conference honors.

Junior Stella Omtvedt (20:52.10, 11th) and sophomore Maren Schimming (21:02.99, 14th) both claimed all-conference honorable mention recognition after strong finishes that helped pace the Bluejay squad in a deep and competitive field.

"Waseca's fall athletes once again demonstrated the talent, teamwork, and sportsmanship that define Bluejay athletics," said WHS Athletic Director Joe Hedervare. "Congratulations to all the all-conference and honorable mention selections for their accomplishments and for representing Waseca with pride."

All-conference selections for volleyball and all-district selections for football will be released at a later date.

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Next stop, U.S. Bank Stadium

Bluejays blank Holy Family 14-0 in state quarterfinals

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The Holy Family Catholic Fire put up a great effort.

The Waseca Bluejays, as they have been all season, were simply too strong.

The Bluejays scored twice in the first half, and the defense made sure it was enough as Waseca prevailed 14-0 in the Class AAA football state quarterfinals last Saturday at Apple Valley High School.

The Bluejays, seeded first in the south half of the state tourney, remained undefeated for the season while improving their win-loss record to 11-0. Holy Family finished 8-3.

“This is the best,” said Bluejays head coach Brad Wendland. “We’re senior-led team, and our defense came through in the second half.”

As has been the case all season, the Bluejays’ defense came up big in resisting another shutout. How strong was the Waseca defensive unit? It held the Fire to 9 yards rushing in the second half and -5 in the fourth quarter while forcing five turnovers on the day.

The defense held Holy Family to a total of 66 yards rushing and 71 passing.

Ethan Hiller had two interceptions, Aydan Kath and Deron Russell one apiece.

“To not allow any points to this team, that’s pretty good. We forced turnovers and we got sacks. The kids made plays and really showed a lot of guts and determination. I’m so proud of them.”

Waseca sophomore quarterback Kellen Klinger finished 9-for-19 for 107 yards and no interceptions. He also ran 10 times for 28 yards.

Russell, the Bluejays’ superstar receiver/defensive back who’s headed to North Dakota State on a football scholarship, caught three passes for 29 yards and ran the ball five times for 68 yards, along with making some great defensive plays.

“Deron had a bruised calf and didn’t practice all week,” said Wendland. “But he was making plays all over the place.”

Jordan Johnston carried the ball 26 times for 143 yards and caught a pass for 17 yards.

“Jordan was a lot of our offense today,” said Wendland. “He’s an example of how you handle adversity, with not just one torn ACL, but two. He’s been a role model of what to do. I’m happy for all the kids, but I’m especially happy for him. And I think Klinger has shown a lot of leadership. The kids believe in him.”

Hiller had two catches for 15 yards, Cyrett long two for 28 and Owen Rupe one for eight.

Leading the defense were William Mansfield and Brady McKenna with five tackles each, followed by Kallen Glynn and Julius Oveido with four apiece. Oveido also had a fumble recovery while Glynn and Jett Roll both forced a fumble. McKenna added a sack.

The Bluejays received the opening kickoff and, despite a 20-yard return by Johnston to Waseca’s 38-yard line and two nice runs by Johnston, a third-down penalty on Waseca led to a fourth-down punt.

The Fire, starting at their own 36, moved the ball effectively on the ground before Kath intercepted a pass, but Waseca was called for a holding penalty, pinning the Bluejays at their own 17.

The Bluejays then proceeded to march 83 yards in seven plays, the final 2 yards covered by Johnston. Rupe kicked the PAT and it was 7-0 with 1:47 left in the first quarter. The drive included a 17-yard pass reception by Johnston and a 42-yard run by Russell to put them on the HFC 2-yard line. The Fire also had a 15-yard pass interference penalty.

After forcing a punt on the five plays, the Bluejays wound up with the ball at their own 10-yard line.

The Jays, with a mixture of runs and passes, engineered a 13-play, 90-yard drive that included a spectacular 16-yard catch by Russell and plenty of Johnston runs. Klinger passed 8 yards to Rupe for the touchdown, Rupe kicked the PAT

and Waseca led 14-0.

The Waseca defense then forced another Fire punt after six plays, but were again pinned at their own 10. The Jays picked up where they left off, driving to the Fire’s 38-yard line on 13 plays before fumbling.

By then there were only 26 seconds left in the second period and Waseca took a 14-0 lead into half-time.

The Fire returned the opening kickoff in the third quarter to their own 33 and, after dropped passes on first and second down, converted on third-and-10. Holy Family converted another third down before facing fourth-and-seven from the Waseca 20. Russell put an end to the scoring threat with a great defensive play.

Waseca was forced to punt after three plays, but Devin Parpart got off a good one and it rolled to the Fire’s 29-yard line.

Again, the Waseca defense did the job, with Hiller intercepting a pass on third and 11. Glynn also turned in a great defensive play with a tackle for loss.

After Russell and Johnston ripped off big runs, a holding penalty sent the Bluejays backward, and a 38-yard field goal attempt fell short.

Holy Family’s drive ended in the opening minutes of the fourth quarter with another interception by Hiller - after 30 yards in penalties on the Bluejays for pass interference and a personal foul.

A few plays later Waseca was penalized for another personal foul and they punted on fourth down.

It was again time for the defense to step up, and they did with an interception by Russell on second and 13.

The Bluejays punted after three plays, which included a dropped third-down pass that would have resulted in a first down.

The Fire got a great return on the punt but fumbled on the Waseca 15 for their fifth turnover of the day. The Bluejays took over from their own 10 and, thanks to runs by Johnston and Klinger, ran out the clock to punch their ticket to U.S. Bank Stadium Saturday, Nov. 15 at 2 p.m., when they’ll face Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton, the No. 3 seed in the north half of the Class AAA state tournament. DGF defeated Pierz 28-7 in the state quarterfinals. Another quarterfinal saw Annandale, the No. 1 seed in the north, defeat Litchfield 19-7.

The winners Saturday advance to the state championship game Saturday, Nov. 22 at 1 p.m. at U.S. Bank Stadium.

What does Wendland expect at U.S. Bank Stadium?

“I got into coaching because I like the sport, but I stay in it because of the impact it has on our kids, our school and our community,” he said. “It’s great to bring everybody to U.S. Bank Stadium. There’s going to be a lot of blue and gold, and we’re excited.”

Waseca 14, Holy Family Catholic 0					
HFC	0	0	0	0	0
WAS	7	7	0	0	14

First Quarter	
WAS	— Johnston 2 run (Rupe kick)
Second Quarter	
WAS	— Rupe 8 pass from Klinger (Rupe kick)
Third Quarter	
No scoring	
Fourth Quarter	
No scoring	

	HFC	WAS
First downs	10	18
Rushing yards	66	253
Passing yards	71	107
Total Yds.	137	360
Turnovers	5	0
Penalties	2-25	8-85

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS	
Rushing — WAS: Johnston 26-143; Russell 5-68; Klinger 10-28; Parpart 3-14; HFC: Tennin-Gray 1-1; Pierce 4-9; Komgani 8-20; Ryan 2 — 13; Galvin 2-9	
Passing — WAS: Klinger 9-19, 107; HFC: Ryan 6-18, 71	
Receiving — WAS: Russell 3-29; Hiller 2-15; Johnston 1-17; Long 2-28; Rupe 1-8; HFC: Tennin-Gray 4-15; Simpson 1-11; Trout 1-7	

Waseca Defense — M.Noble 2T; Hiller 1T, 1A, 2 int.; Mansfield 4T, 1A; Russell 3T, 2Am, 1 int.; Rahe 1T; Glynn 4T, 1 caused fumble; Rohl 3T, 1 caused fumble; Kath 1A 1 int.; Jeske 2T, 1A; Oveido 3T, 1A 1 fumble recovery; Vereeven 2T; Selthun 1A; Garza 2T, 1A; McKenna 5T, 1 sack



DOMINATING DEFENSE — Waseca defenders cause a fumble during last Saturday’s state quarterfinal game against Holy Family Catholic. The Bluejays’ defense forced five turnovers in a 14-0 victory. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



MORE DEFENSE — At left, Ethan Hiller (5) and another Bluejay converge on a Holy Family ball carrier. In the middle, Deron Russell (7) makes a catch. At right, Brady McKenna pressures Holy Family quarterback Ethan Ryan. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



KEY PLAYS — At left, the Bluejays’ Deron Russell (7) halts a Holy Family drive with an interception. At right, Owan Rupe hangs onto a catch for a touchdown. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



ON TO MINNEAPOLIS — At left, the Bluejays’ Deron Russell (7) breaks up a pass. In the middle, Ethan Hiller (5) signals touchdown as Jordan Johnston (2) scores. At right, Brady McKenna pressures the quarterback. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



LOOKING IT IN — The Bluejays’ Cyrett Long awaits a pass. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



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