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WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY

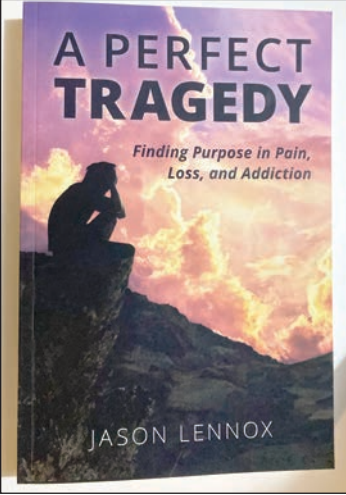
No. 51 Vol. II \$2

Office at 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca

Friday, December 22, 2023

Inside

Letters to Santa



“A perfect tragedy”
by Jason Lennox

Struggle, addiction, challenges

Jason Lennox speaks to 90 NRHEG students

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

“I challenge you to be a decent human being.”

Jason Lennox, a 2005 NRHEG graduate, was invited to speak to students last Friday in the three sections of sophomore health and in a class titled “Relationships, Education, Accountability, Character, and Hard Work,” most commonly referred to as REACH.

Lennox shared the story of his personal struggles with relationships and drug addiction, admitting that, already at the age of 10 he had held a knife to his own chest, wondering how much it would hurt and how long it would take to die.



Lennox

The offspring of a relationship that was badly damaged by alcoholism and drug addiction, he and an older brother began elementary school in Owatonna. His mother remarried and had two children by her new husband.

“I was a straight A student in those lower grades,” he said. “My life at home was miserable. I never knew what I would be shouted at for. I didn’t feel loved or accepted in any way.” Mentioning that young children have their own, almost always inaccurate, perception of reality, Lennox told the high-schoolers his childhood self was ashamed of his life and himself, thinking he was to blame—at least partly because his stepfather told him he was worthless.

“I couldn’t open up and share with another human being what was going on inside my head,” Lennox said. “What I could control was my life in the classroom. Getting good grades was my way of proving I wasn’t worthless.”

Still, he said, that was not enough to make him feel worthwhile. “I was constantly scanning,” he said. “I would look at other people and I would decide their lives were better than mine. “I would tell myself I could be happy if I only had what they

Lennox continued on 13

A word from The Word



He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing.

Job 26:7

Stewardship, Symbolism

Christmas now, then, and way back when

Rostislavovich shares evolution of holiday

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

If a set of American time travelers wanted to take themselves back to the earliest Christmas celebrations, they would need to go to Germany in the early 1800s.

According to Waseca resident Mikhail Rostislavovich, who has devoted a great deal of time studying the topic, the travelers would find, perhaps, two things that seemed familiar: “The bringing in of the greens,” and, as long as they arrived after 1818, the song “Stille Nacht” (“Silent Night”).

Rostislavovich cautions, however, that “the greens” were not yet an entire evergreen tree. They were branches trimmed off various plants and brought inside to bring a fresh scent and a change of scenery in the darkest time of the year.

The branches, he says, were not selected at random.

“A person walking into a house decorated with greens would know the symbolism behind each type of branch and would understand the message the household had chosen,” explains Rostislavovich.

As a group, evergreens were the symbol of life and endurance. Pine branches represented wisdom and longevity. Cedar represented incorruptibility. Spruce spoke of hope in the midst of adversity. Juniper stood for protection, balsam for eager anticipation, and ivy for joy and fidelity.

So, Rostislavovich explains, a family which had experienced some sort of loss or disappointment might send a message of recovery and forward progress by displaying spruce boughs.

A family that was either expecting a child or hoping for children might be sure to display pine cones, seeds and nuts, since they were symbols for new life.



Celebrating in Victorian style - Dwight Thostenson and Mikhail Rostislavovich (back center) with two younger generations of their family around a table set in Victorian fashion.
Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

“I wish people would relearn some of these things,” comments Rostislavovich. “I believe we concentrate too much on the materialistic side of Christmas, now.”

“Decorations, gifts, they’re not meant to be simply for their own shake.”

“They were originally a message about what’s important to us as a household. They were a statement of shared values and they were a source of shared pleasure and fellowship.”

The custom of mistletoe is an extension of the “kissing balls” once hung above a hall, doorway or bench where a young lady might be found unaware. The balls were holly, ivy and mistletoe woven among each other. A potential suitor would approach his chosen one and, rather than kissing her, rub his cheek against hers. He would then pick

“I believe we concentrate too much on the materialistic side of Christmas, now.”
— Mikhail Rostislavovich

a berry from the kissing ball and place it in her palm.

“It was up to the woman to decide whether she

Christmas continued on 7



Waseca’s Hartley Elementary School put on a winter concert for first- and second-graders in the Central Building Auditorium at 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 14. Photo by Rachael Jaeger

‘Lots of fun’ at Hartley concert

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

Waseca’s Hartley Elementary School winter concert for first- and second-graders was held in the Central Building Auditorium at 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 14. Family members and friends had already filled the auditorium by 6:15.

“It was lots of fun, excitement, joy, and creative ideas,” Hartley music teacher David Schmitt said about working with the students. He went on to explain that he directed students with structure in how they wanted to present the concert. De-

scribing them with lots of energy, Schmitt said he provided them with great choices for music direction that they all could rally behind and work together on.

Anais Sanchez, who had a second-grade son Arian in the show, said she remembers being a part of the concert when she was his age. Although she experienced stage fright, she thought it was a good experience.

“He’s shy,” Anais said, after waving at Arian at the beginning of the

Concert continued on 12

A night to remember

‘Together on Memories’ fundraiser

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

“The human experience unavoidably includes grief,” observed therapist Shannon Kuball of Together on Memories (TOM). “We want young people to realize they don’t have to go through hard times alone.”

Kuball and TOM founder Erin Rossow took the stage briefly during the organization’s December 16 fundraiser at the Mill in Waseca to tell those in attendance about the nonprofit’s history and purpose.

Rossow, 30, described her childhood experience in 2009 of discovering her father in the act of attempting suicide, and then learning of his death by suicide in 2010.

“Our natural reaction is to try to

“I hid my grief.”
— Erin Rossow

shield children from grief, from the loss of something important to them,” commented Rossow. “But they feel the loss, and they’re often not sure how to respond.”

“I hid my grief.”

Children need guidance in those difficult times, said Rossow, but they don’t know how to ask for it. That confusion, any feelings of guilt or blame, can lead to a downward spiral.

Knowing the profound impact her father’s suicide had on her life, Rossow told the crowd she decided to



Planning committee members for the “Night to Remember” event were Erin Rossow, pictured here with her husband Matthew, Abby Clemons, Jessica Freitag, Abbe Hoehn, Larry Johnson, Emily Knudsen, Randy Splett and Kylie Wakefield. More photos on Page 2. Photo by Deb Bently

start Together on Memories to help children find healthier ways to deal

with loss. Among the types of loss TOM can help with are the death of

A life saved

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

A packed council chamber listened to Arlin Born and Waseca Police Chief Penny Vought recount the heroic efforts of Detective Jared Chrz, Sergeant Joe Fliflet, and Waseca resident Brian Britton. For their timely actions on August 15, 2023, they were awarded with a “Life Saver Award” during the regular meeting of the Waseca City Council the evening of Tuesday, Dec. 19.

Fifteen minutes after the noon hour on August 15, Born collapsed in the Waseca VFW. Britton immediately called 911 and soon began CPR. Four minutes later Waseca Police Detective Chrz and Waseca County Sheriff’s Sergeant Fliflet applied automatic electronic defibrillator (AED) pads.

At 12:28 p.m. the first AED shock was administered. Two minutes later, a second.

Award continued on 12

From the Publisher

As the year draws to a close, I would like to thank our hundreds of subscribers, thousands of readers and many advertisers for making our newspaper a part of your lives in the year 2023. In recognition of Christmas and the New Year, and the large commitment of our staff, the *Pioneer* does not intend to print a newspaper the final week of 2023. The same will be true for 2024 and forward. The *Pioneer* office will also be closed Dec. 21 through the end of the year, as we allow our staff family time. We will be open our regular hours beginning Jan. 2, 2024.

Merry Christmas, God Bless, and Happy New Year. May we all look forward to a positive and blessed year in 2024.

Eli Lutgens
Pioneer Publisher

Pioneer named legal newspaper of record for City of Waseca

The Waseca City Council designated the *Waseca County Pioneer* as its newspaper of record for city legal publications in 2024. Beginning January 1, all legal notices posted by the City of Waseca will be printed in the *Waseca County Pioneer*. The council’s decision was unanimous.

Briefs continued on 6

Memories continued on 7

A Night to Remember • Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023



Together on Memories (TOM) was founded in 2022 by Morristown area resident Erin Rossow. The organization seeks to help children and youth who have experienced grief find healthy ways to cope with their loss. “A Night to Remember” on Saturday, Dec. 16 at The Mill in Waseca, was the group’s first large-scale fundraiser. It featured elegant dining, auctions, contests and dancing to The Blue Ringers.



Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY HOLIDAYS



FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT

115 North State St,
Waseca, MN 56093
(507) 201-2484

DJ
Daniel J.
Johnson
ACCOUNTING
LLC

Hours:
Mon - Thu
8 am - 4 pm
Fri
8 am - 12 pm

I'm Daniel J. Johnson. For the past 13 years, I've proudly served our community by offering personalized accounting services for you and your small business. From tax preparation and bookkeeping to financial planning, I'm here to provide you with professional, trustworthy, and reliable assistance. Let's work together and make your financial dreams a reality!

- Our Services**
- Tax Planning & Return Preparation Services
 - Estate and Trust Planning & Tax Preparation
 - Financial Planning • Accounting Services
 - Bookkeeping • Payroll Services



LETTERS TO SANTA

What do you want from Santa this year? What is your favorite winter time activity? Second-grade students at Sacred Heart Elementary school speak out in their letters to the Jolly Old Guy.

Dear Santa,

I have been really good this year.
I would like more IVY and Bean books, Bathing Puzzles, hedgehog Pethanie Set. You gave me what I wanted last year thank you so much!

From,
Nora

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. For Christmas I would like a football, and a horse.

From
William

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year.
My elf has been good this year. How many elf do you have?
I will give you a rander, sam caerrits

From,
Ellie

Dear Santa

I have been good this year. I would like a blue 2020 stanly, confetti candy machine. Spris me with the best for christmas.

From
Olivia

dear santa,

pledse make shure every body is on the nke list. if some people are not please make shure they are next christmas.

from EJ

dear santa,

pledse make shure every body is on the nke list. if some people are not please make shure they are next christmas.

from EJ

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. For Christmas I would like a nerf gun, guitar, dog man books, and a clay tent.

From Gavin

Dear Santa,

I have wanted a Kansas City chiefs water bottle and a Kansas City chiefs football jersey and helmet and a Kansas City chiefs sweater.

from
Patrick

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. For Christmas I would like a green Checker skateboard, off road go-kart.

From
Calvin

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. For Christmas I would like a nerf gun, guitar, dog man books, and a clay tent.

From Gavin

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. I want a powerful nerf gun, a lego set, and a Mocketh toy car.

from
Cole

LETTERS TO SANTA

What do you want from Santa this year? What is your favorite winter time activity? Second-grade students at Sacred Heart Elementary school speak out in their letters to the Jolly Old Guy.



Dear Santa

I have been good this year for
christmas I would like
a new gun,

from
LUCAS

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. for Christmas I would like slimes a Sister ~~curator~~ and a hair kit. Do you know Cindy Lou boppy Neffs Has she been good this year? P.S. And a hedgehog P.I.E.O.S.C.I Really want one!

from,
Ollie (Olive)

Dear Santa,

I have been a little good ^{on}
this year. For Christmas because I'm
a little meaner to my sisters, I would
like more Ivy and Bean books, a hedgehog
markers with a hedgehog notebook and a
hedgehog Pet Barbie set.

You are the best, and You've got
me all the stuff I wanted last year,
and I am so happy thank You so much.
Love Pqyton 

Dear Santa

I have been good
this year, may I have
a cotton candy maker

2. A Pugama clechin.
3. A black lab puppy stuff animal.
4. I would like a real black lab puppy.

from
Evelyn

Dear Santa,

I have been good
this year. For Christmas
I would like a soccer
net and a soccer ball all
together and maybe
mine foot ball, big farm
set, christmas paddings

From
Alex

Dear Santa,

I want Nerf guns, and 2,000 fortnite bucks, please and some Nerf huits, and some more bucks, 2,000, and candy!

from,
michel

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. For Christmas

I would need a vise, bracelet kit, dolls, markers, and Playdoh.

From
Stacy

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year for
Xmas I would like a
foot ball, and soccer ball, psckr,
from Angel

Dear Santa,

I have been very good
this year For Christmas
I would like gymnastics
bar, cotin candy, mshen,
From cece

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. For
Christmas I would like Slimes,
a mericin grill ball, Squash melows,
and baby black puppy. did you know that
Big mark this morning he was
on my rainpocer well was rading!
my raindheero
PS. if some how you do not
know Big mark he is my FF
From M

SYDNEY

Dear Santa,

I have been good
this Year. For Christmas
I would like Rainbow high doll,
Barbie doll house, A for adley sweater,
wed hied chag.
fram
vlenha

10



Compostings

by Al Batt

I never get what I want

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING
I want socks or underwear for Christmas.

Why would you want those things?
Because I never get what I want.
Echoes from the Loafers’ Club Meeting redux
I’m afraid I’ll get nothing for Christmas.
That’s great news.
How is that great news?
Nothing lasts forever.

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE
I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. The weather was going through an awkward phase. It snowed a little. My wife is considerably shorter than I am, so it snowed on me but not her. It made sense. The forecast had been for snow at higher elevations.

IT’S NEVER TOO LATE TO PANIC
There is someone in every family who got all his Christmas shopping done early, except for the shopping for others part. How do you know if someone did their Christmas shopping at the last minute or at the last 59 seconds? Here are some signs of someone who tried to do their shopping at a claw machine. He’s wearing an “It’s the thought that counts” sweatshirt. Spray painting makes for quick gift wrapping. He never knows what not to get people, so everyone gets a Slim Jim (nothing says Christmas like a convenience store purchase), gum, a manual nose-hair trimmer (a dollar store scissors), a bank calendar from the current year, a pet rock (a driveway rock with “Pet” written on it with a Sharpie) or bubble-wrapped bubble wrap. His gift-wrapping paper was an airsickness bag.

A SWINGING MERRY CHRISTMAS
The Christmas preparations were in full swing. The toilet had never been cleaner and Mom had spent \$87 on olives. Unopened, jarred olives will stay fresh for up to two years. I aim to educate. She had stocked up on her secret ingredient—butter. We put up a new tire swing for Christmas. That may be an odd time to do that, but the planets had aligned ideally and the perfect tire made itself available. It was a tire, a rope and a bad attitude hanging down from a giant maple tree. I know what you’re thinking. It replaced a flat tire. Well, you’re mistaken. It replaced a gunny sack swing, which was a burlap bag filled with straw. We even replaced the old rope before the tire swing was put in place. The new piece of the poor man’s playground equipment was like the new bull at a rodeo; it had never been ridden before. Yup, pardner, just like that

bull except for the tire and the tree.
In the long line
His doorbell camera worked swell. He was able to watch someone steal it. I learned that while I was waiting in a TSA line at the airport with 41,953 other passengers going through security that day. They were all on my flight. I suggested to those near me that we all chip in and get the TSA guy of our choice something nice. We could find something at a gift shop once we’d cleared the line. There was no second to my motion. Instead, one changed the subject to how much safer it is to fly than to drive. I found little comfort in that. I’d driven to the airport and would have a long drive from it later.

BAD JOKE DEPARTMENT
What has four letters and sometimes nine.
What rhymes with orange? No, it doesn’t.

Crossing out someone else’s name and writing yours in its place on last year’s Christmas card makes it handmade.
My dog ate some Christmas decorations and got tinseltitis.
What comes at the end of Christmas? The letter S.

JOEY BATT
Joey, a point guard for Minnesota State women’s basketball team, is the all-time steals leader and the 4th leading scorer in the school’s history. Her levers are always working. She was named Northern Sun Conference’s preseason player of the year and was the Conference player of the week after returning from an injury. She is the daughter of Brian and Laura Batt of New Ulm.

NATURE NOTES
I fed a handful of peanuts to the blue jays. Vanessa Sorensen wrote, “Though temper and crest may flare Striking beauty.” Feeding the birds is a Christmas gift to me. An ancient Italian proverb said, “A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.” One of the significant benefits of being a birder is that it gives me something to talk about besides the weather.

A kind reader sent this quote from “Red Deer Runs in Darkness,” “It became obvious to me that nature has her own language. She speaks through the animals, the trees and the cool summer breeze. She whispers, ‘Embrace me.’ And I do.”

What should you do if you find an injured bird? Make the bird as comfortable as possible and call the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota, located in Roseville, at 651-486-9453. If you find an injured raptor, contact the University of Minnesota Raptor Center at 612-624-4745.

MEETING ADJOURNED
Be kind and do right by those who call you neighbor. Merry Christmas.

Ordinary or simply overlooked?

Each time I put gas in my car, or sometimes on long drives, I speculate that there are still molecules of gas in the tank from the very first time the vehicle—a 2011 Chevy—was driven. Given the age of the vehicle and the number of miles it’s traveled, that may seem far fetched, but it has more foundation in reality than many might realize.

One nonfiction writer whose work I always enjoy is Sam Kean. Kean loves to give his books intriguing titles: The Disappearing Spoon, The Violinist’s Thumb, and the book I rely on for my speculation, Caesar’s Last Breath.

If you want the full details, I recommend you find a copy of the book, but according to Kean it is a common thought problem in science-based college courses to ask students to determine the statistical likelihood that anyone walking around on the planet right now might be breathing



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

in an atom that was exhaled as Julius Caesar issued his dying question, “Et tu, Brute?” on the Ides of March in 44 B.C.E.

The answer? An absolute certainty. If you don’t believe me, look it up. Kean walks the problem through using physics and math, showing how it all works out.

For me, this fascinating information leads to many further speculations—my gas tank being a case in point. I don’t know how long it takes for the uncountable atoms of air we need for each breath to distribute themselves planet-wide, but I’m

guessing it’s possible your lungs currently hold atoms breathed in by anyone from a hundred or more years ago. Blackbeard the Pirate. Your own great-great-grandparents. Joan of Arc. Not only Jesus Christ, but Herod.

We’re told about the water cycle—how water is constantly circulating from the clouds to the air to the ground to the rivers to the ocean. Sam Kean doesn’t work that problem in his book, but what are the chances the atoms of water currently keeping your body functional once served the same role for others?

There’s the sun that makes all life on the planet possible and which warms us all—while also painting skies full of color for us to appreciate. At any moment, part of the planet is watching the sun set and another is seeing it rise.

Our centrifuge of a planet is spinning—at the equator—at a thousand miles an hour. Our speed through space around the sun is 67,000 miles an hour.

All these wonders, taken for granted. If you’ve ever regarded your life as ordinary, you simply haven’t been paying attention.

In this season of wonder, I hold fast to my belief that the most powerful force in the universe is love. I invite you to speculate on and appreciate the wonders in your life. I encourage you to share the awe and joy you find with someone who has lost, or not yet found it. Share your stories. Share your love.

Our website was in shambles... until Amelia



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

checking things off one by one. This story is done, and this one, and that column is posted - check, check, check.

Sometimes I will stop to read a story or a column and catch up a little from all the Waseca County happenings we wrote about while I was doing other things. Sadly, I never find it a priority to read the news about something that seems so far away at the moment. But I promise, I do care.

Some of the stories that caught my eye while updating all the stories from the last couple months were the cancer survivor stories, the teacher of the year award for my previous teacher, and seeing all the fun homecoming activities with students who

I still recognize from my time in high school, which weirdly already seems so long ago.

And then the columns. I don’t know about other readers, but I enjoy reading the columns of Eli, Deb, and Dave Zika because I know them - I’ve talked with them, worked with them. I know how they sound and sometimes I believe I know how they think, so it’s always fun reading their columns. Except, as expert writers, they make their columns majestic, poetic, like something out of a published book. I do not believe mine are poetic, but that’s fine. My columns are more of a flow of consciousness into text, all my thoughts and worries of the moment put into this column

for anyone who wants to read them.

I am currently writing this in Caribou so I’m going to plug them real quick. I don’t know why, but I love their beverages. My roommate and best friend works at a Caribou, so she knows all the secrets and has put me onto some delicious coffees. Also, we splurged last year and bought a Caribou growler so that we could continually have cold brew in our fridge. I rank that as one of the smartest things we have ever done. For some reason, I find Caribou to be vastly superior to Starbucks. I wonder whether any part of it is the sort of “conceited” attitude I perceive about the store or its customers. But if anyone is ever looking for a delicious coffee place, I highly recommend Caribou and their “nitro turtle mocha.” Or if you prefer caramel, get the “high rise.”

My Determination: “I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading! How much sooner one tires of anything other than of a book! -- When I have a house of my own, I shall be miserable if I have not an excellent library.” — Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice

60,000 words worth of reflection

This year I wrote and published more than 60,000 words in my weekly columns. If you’ve read them all, you can add one more to the number of books you’ve finished, since that’s a typical word count for a full-length publication.

I found out this week the Minnesota Newspaper Association will be handing me an award at its February banquet for this very thing—column writing. In fact, we were delighted to learn this week that we’ll be taking home about a dozen awards, some for the newspaper as a whole and some for individual work created by our writers. We don’t know for sure what place we took in the dozen categories. They’ve told us we’re ranked among the winners—where we ranked will be revealed at the February 1 banquet.

I remember going through the submission process. I had known for months that the deadline was approaching, and that there are 47 categories, ranging from advertisements to websites. Although I knew we didn’t have entries under all 47, there were still many where I felt we had done some truly fine work. It was a time-consuming task. We had to collect a year’s worth of issues and go through them, considering what columns, articles, photos, and sections we regarded as some of our best. There are many, constant demands on my time, and here was one more thing to do.

Still, if we wanted to see how our



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

work stacks up against the other more than 250 newspapers in the state, it had to be done.

With our decisions made, our entries were submitted electronically and it was time to...wait.

I had no idea what to expect. After all, there were more than 4,400 entries submitted in Minnesota’s Better Newspaper writing contest. More about that later, in February, when I know more.

This year has been fulfilling. I’ve learned a lot.

I’m incredibly thankful for a tremendous number of things.

We celebrated another year in business.

I learned that humor may not always come across well, expressed in a column.

Many, many, many people told me how much they value the newspaper.

I had some health scares. My friends had some health scares. Frankly, a few too many scares, if you ask me.

As I prepare for 2024, I can’t help but feel optimistic. I know I still need to slow down and continue recovering, but I’m fighting the urge to run

full speed ahead. All in good time.

This weekend I celebrated the first of a string of Christmas dinners, this one at my grandmother’s house. Thank you Kathy Richardson, and my mother, for a great meal, and even better company.

The biggest lesson I learned this year, I have to say, is that we should simply enjoy the passage of time. However you choose to do so, please do it in a healthy way, that doesn’t harm anyone, and optimally, brings joy to those close to you—including yourself.

I find myself worrying more for those I care about. As the people I care about in the generations ahead of mine grow older, I want to, rather I will, value the quality time I continue to have with them.

My parents first and foremost. Seeing someone lose their parents, quickly, or slowly, is a difficult process. We must all bow to inevitability, so I have been led to realize the importance of appreciating, and enjoying, every day I have my parents.

I love my dad’s late-night phone calls. He likes to find an excuse to call me late at night. I imagine him,

sitting at home, asking himself, “What can I call Eli for?”

Dad, you don’t need a reason to call, ever. Just to see how I’m doing is good enough.

Mom, please just answer your phone a little more often, Will ya?

My sister celebrated the birth of her first child this year. Talk about exciting. My parents were starting to wonder if they would ever have grandchildren. Now they have one. And, Nathan, my oldest brother, is in a serious relationship, too. And she seems pretty cool.

Looking back at 2023 I’m grateful for a great many things. I’m glad the newspaper is doing well. More importantly, I’m blessed with relationships we’ve developed because of the newspaper. I feel very connected with those around me, every day. There’s not much more a person can ask for in life than to be surrounded by people they care about and vice versa.

This week at the paper has been a busy one. We do not print a newspaper the final week of the year, so this will be my final column of the year.

I would like to take this time to thank our many readers, advertisers, staff, and everyone else who makes the paper possible for their tremendous support this year.

Here’s wishing you a blessed, and happy 2024.

“I find my happiness where the sun shines,” unknown.

Briefs

Christmas Day Meal at Christ Community Church Dec. 25

The Greater Waseca Ministerial Association is sponsoring a meal for senior citizens and those who will be alone on Christmas. Diners may join others at noon on at Christ Community Church, 2200 Fourth St NE, in Waseca, or arrange to have their meals delivered. No more than 5 meals will be delivered to any single household. There is no cost for the meals; free will donations will be accepted.

Fun at Farmamerica begins Dec. 29

The following events are taking place at Farmamerica.
December 29, 2023 - blood drive by appointment.
January 12, 2024 - Raise a toast at 6 p.m. A women’s night out Four course meal and entertainment.
January 27, 2024 - Winter Charm on the farm from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Celebrate winter with carriage rides, snowshoeing, s’mores, hot chocolate, snow painting and more.
Tickets can be purchased on Farmamerica’s website.

Waseca Hockey Burger Fry at Waseca V.F.W., 4 to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30

A burger fry to benefit the Waseca High Schools hockey program will be from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30 at the Waseca V.F.W.. Cost will be \$12 for a meal.

Farewell service for Pastor Matthews Jan. 7 in Waldorf

Farewell service for Waldorf Pastor

Michael Matthews January 7, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.

After 24 years, Pastor Matthews has accepted a call to service in Arizona. Following the farewell service will be a potluck dinner. All are invited.

Free throw championship Jan. 7 in Waseca

The Knights of Columbus are sponsoring a free throw and three point contest for boys and girls ages 9-14 on January 7, 2024 at Waseca high school beginning at 3 p.m. Please contact Jeff Kummerfeldt at 507-676-2166 if interested.



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DEADLINES: Pioneer: Noon Tuesday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

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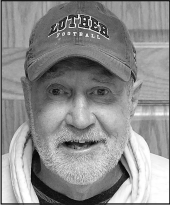
\$55 Per Year, Waseca County Residents
\$65 State of Minnesota • \$75 Outside Minnesota

Waseca County Pioneer (USPS permit #25304) is published weekly on Friday, by Pioneer Publications Inc., 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca, MN, 56093. Periodicals Postage at New Richland, MN. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Waseca County Pioneer, P.O. Box 578, Waseca, MN, 56093.

Food shelf



The Waseca Area Food Shelf distributed Christmas food bundles to 240 families during a drive-through delivery which occurred Saturday, Dec. 16 and Monday, Dec. 18. Volunteering for the Monday drive-through were staff members from Keen Bank, some of whom have been helping with similar deliveries for two decades. Pictured here with Neighborhood Service Center director Cindy Kolander (center) are Rachel Reese, Brianna Worke, Sara Lynch and Alyssa Bowers. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently



Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika



December offerings

Our 2023 is rapidly coming to a close, engaging us all in the best month of the twelve, December. These last 31 days of the year bring joy and wellness to both old and young. The birth of Jesus, festive decorations, mistletoe, Santa Claus, presents and giving, and the approach of New Year's Eve. There's some element of December to lift everyone's hearts.

One feature I enjoy is the array of fantastic television viewing—something for us all to watch and enjoy. Healthy, joyful, family movies run daily to allow us to share time and memories together. For one thing, there are an amazing number of “A Christmas Carol” variations to choose among. The classic Dickens novella that introduced the world to Scrooge, Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim was written in the 1800s, and has been being made into movie adaptations since 1901. A quick online search will find you at least 21 full-length remakes of the story and about 40 “personalized” ones, including *The Muppets*, *My Little Pony*, *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, *Bugs Bunny*, and even *Northern Exposure*. Also available in many places this time of year are *Miracle on 34th Street* and *It's a Wonderful Life*. From the time when we Baby Boomers were raising children come Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, A Charlie Brown Christmas, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *A Christmas Story*: Timeless stories for young(er) and old(er) to enjoy together.

Hallmark and the Lifetime Channel have story after story for those of us who like to tear up as the story comes to its close. The family—Mom, Dad, all the kids—can sit together on the sofa by a warm, toasty fireplace and watch a string of movies every evening.

The Santa Clause with Tim Allen. Elf with Will Ferrell. Fred Claus with Vince Vaughn. The Polar Express with Tom Hanks. All found on numerous channels any night of the week.

For anyone with no children to entertain, you're guaranteed a good laugh if you watch some Saturday Night Live (SNL) sketches that have been put together over the years.

December also offers the best music of the year for listening to. Most of our favorite music artists offer shows with songs bringing on the Christmas Spirit. “Santa Tell Me,” “Baby, It's Cold Outside,” “Silent Night,” “Jingle Bells,” “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” “Silver Bells,” “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” “I'll Be Home for Christmas,” “Deck the Halls.” These are just a few to refresh your memory.

Many of our favorite Christmas songs have been around for years and years. Of course you know the story of “Stille Nacht,” the German song which translates as “Silent Night.” It was performed for the first time in 1818: talk about staying power. “Jingle Bells” is among the most common songs in the entire batch of Christmas movie soundtracks. “White Christmas,” sung by the “voice of Christmas” Bing Crosby, is sung worldwide.

December is also the best month of the year for a family ride together. Unlike the Fourth of July in summertime when everyone feels crowded, sweaty, and surrounded by mosquitoes, the heated car is comfortable and welcoming. Everyone

can nestle into the warmth and go in search of Christmas lights and displays. Available for your viewing pleasure are everything from a serene, lighted nativity scene featuring Baby Jesus, Joseph and Mary, the wise men, angels, and the shepherds with animals to energetic lights zipping on and off at a hip-hop pace. For anyone who wants a sure thing, your quest for a major light show can take you to see what the Kiwanis have put together in Mankato's Sibley Park. Something for everyone, whether all passengers stay in the car or get out and walk—don't forget a food shelf donation!

During December, networks and news stations make a major switch to include heartwarming, joyful news stories. Car dealers giving away 12 new automobiles to 12 needy, single moms in the Twin Cities. The Maple Grove fire department, consisting of five fire stations, carrying on the tradition of giving out food baskets. They give out \$30,000 worth of food to the needy, with the aid of Cub Foods. A heartwarming story about a class of sixth-graders who heard about anonymous individuals giving out \$100 bills to the needy. The class raised \$8,000 and went out distributing \$100 bills to people in need. Tears of joy were shed by the recipients and the students—even the news reporter wrapped up the story with tears rolling down her cheeks. High profile professional athletes are constantly in the news taking a needy young child Christmas shopping.

Stores have enclosures you can fill with toys and gifts for children. People are ringing bells and holding red buckets requesting your donation to help someone. In Waseca, churches are busy with their drives to provide food and clothing for the needy. Members of the Waseca police department took needy children on a shopping spree at Walmart buying gifts for their family. Walter and Cheryl Mishek threw their annual Christmas party. The people invited were asked to bring gifts—gifts for the Waseca area food shelf. Between the guests and the Misheks, a very generous \$18,000 donation resulted.

When we send our emails or messages to others, we all become familiar with abbreviations. MBF (my best friend). LOL (laugh out loud). BTW (by the way). TTYL (talk to you later) are examples.

As for me, the month of December brings on my annual case of EDIAS: every deal is a steal. The major symptom? Telling my wife I'm all done with my Christmas shopping. I've said this at least five times, but continued to shop. I experience sudden episodes of EDIAS in stores like Scheels, Fleet Farm, Cabella's and, as with my most recent case yesterday, in Bomgaars. Everything was 12 percent off, even discounted items. I left the store with four new Carhartt stocking hats for my grandchildren; got lucky, they even had a youth size. A camping jacket for my daughter-in-law, a new Igloo ice fishing chair, and a ton of munchies to be stocking stuffers for Marc and the boys. My son Marc and my wife, Lisa, tell me the cure is simple: Just get rid of my credit cards. That's a negatory; I'll continue to live with the condition!!

To everyone, have a very merry Christmas and a jolly good time with family. TTYL.

Donation



FM BANK SPONSORSHIP - Emily Nelson (left) and David Trcka (right) of FM Bank presented the Waseca Sports Boosters with \$1,500 through a sponsorship that awarded \$20 for each football touchdown and each volleyball ace. Receiving the check are Booster club member Tiffany Lynch, football player Kaeden Johnson, volleyball player Kendall Bowers, and booster club member Andee Hoehn. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

■ Memories

from Page 1

a family member or even moving to a new environment.

The organization's goal is to connect young people with therapy or other resources which will help them respond to loss in a healthy way—including providing time with a therapist at no cost.

Kuball mentioned that the organi-

zation is partnering with local schools to offer grief support “where kids can share their stories in a very safe environment. Doing that will help them see they're not alone.”

“If you know of a child who is coping with a dramatic change in his or her life, please reach out to us,” Rossow said. More information about the organization and its services is available at its website, togetheronmemories.com.

Saturday night's fundraiser at The Mill drew a crowd of about 200. The numerous activities raised a total of \$33,600. Four high-end auction

items—a trip to Mexico, a Vikings game day package, a “wide body” two-player retro arcade game, and a \$2,500 home painting or renovation package from Novak Interior Painting of Waseca—brought energetic bidding and a combined total of \$7,600. A silent auction, along with contests and games carried out during the evening also contributed to the evening's success.

Together on Memories is based out of Morristown, where Rossow has lived for the past decade. The not-for-profit organization was founded in 2022 in memory of Ros-

sow's father. Of the evening, she said, “The event was honestly a dream come true, more than I could have ever imagined.”

Rossow said, “This event is going to grow and I can't wait to see what's to come.” Rossow expressed her thanks to every business that donated, sponsored and helped make the night a success, saying it wouldn't have happened without all of their support.

“It was a perfect night,” she said. “I'm speechless.”

■ Christmas

from Page 1

wanted to keep the berry or not,” Rostislavovich says. “If she returned it before the end of the evening, it was a message she was not interested in a relationship. If she kept it...well, that was good news for the suitor.”

With greens and berries in place, and remembering this was a time before manufacturing and mass transit when only the wealthy could afford things from far away, a next logical decoration was fruits, which are colorful and appealing. But fruit can be short-lived.

It comes as a surprise to modern audiences, Rostislavovich points out, that glass ornaments came about because it was cheaper to make hand-blown glass in this place and time than it would have been to buy fruit; the earliest ornaments were an obvious replacement of the real thing, since they were made in the shapes of fruits, berries and pine cones.

As Christmas traditions evolved, the idea of bringing in an evergreen tree was adopted from ancient pagan customs, although online sources claim the oak was originally the tree revered by druids; St. Boniface, in the eighth century, advocated using an evergreen because its triangular shape represented the holy trinity.

As more and more families adopted the custom of going out to cut down a tree (Christmas tree farms were still centuries in the future), certain traditions developed. It was good luck, for example, to find a bird's nest or a spider's web among the branches.

To symbolize this, birds in nests and spiders became popular shapes for ornaments. So did other shapes, including those of rabbits, a symbol of renewal of faith in others, and of kindness. Blown-glass chimney sweeps were said to bring luck. Baskets of flowers or fruits were symbols of selflessness. Another common image was that of a “weather frog”; across the 1700s and later, people commonly kept a frog in a glass jar that had a layer of water in the bottom and a small ladder leading upward. The understanding of the time was that the frog would climb the ladder if good weather was approaching—a crude barometer. Since “bringing good weather” was a lucky thing, glass images of a weather frog climbing a ladder were hung on Christmas trees. Glass cof-

fee pot ornaments were given as housewarming gifts. A “Christmas carp” symbolized the Christmas dinner.

“As they put the decorations around the house and on the tree,” Rostislavovich says, “they would tell others the stories behind each of them. They would say what each piece symbolized, and would probably say where they had acquired it. They may even have known the glassblower who made it.”

Legend, at least, claims that the custom of lighting the tree began after Martin Luther, who lived in northern Germany around 1500, was inspired by the starlit beauty of a winter night to bring an evergreen into the family home and place candles on it.

By the 1800s, evergreen boughs, Christmas trees, glass ornaments and many symbolic traditions were well established all over Germany and northern Europe. They were not, however, widely used in England or America.

The close association many Americans have between Victorian times and Christmas, Rostislavovich points out, is quite logical. It is rooted in the fact that, after the young queen married German royal Prince Albert in the late 1830s, the couple decorated their home following his lifelong traditions. The “History Extra” website claims that, after a widely published picture showed Victoria, Albert and a few of their children in front of a Christmas tree, the custom burgeoned all across the British empire and the United States.

“They talked about the meaning and symbolism of the decorations, they shared stories. Gifts among family members were only a very small part of the day.”

— Mikhail Rostislavovich

vich states, has obvious roots. “The stockings were hung there to dry,” he says. “When children would find gifts in their stockings, the parents would claim St. Nicholas—known for being loving and giving—must have dropped them down the chimney.”

That gifts were small enough to fit in stockings, Rasistlovovich mentions, is because there has been a radical change in the way society approaches Christmas.

“It used to be about fellowship and stewardship; those who could were supposed to help people who were sick, poor or lonely.

“Any gifts among family members were small tokens of affection or remembrances of the celebration.”

In wealthier homes, it was the cooks' job to decorate the dining room for the Christmas meal. Greens and fruits were used, of course. Another frequent item was feathers. The cooks would have been the ones who butchered various birds—up to and including peacocks—throughout the year. They would have saved some of the finest feathers and peppered them among the other decorations. In the case of peacock tail feathers, the “eye” at the end was said to ward off evil.

Meals in wealthy homes would last for hours as the various courses were prepared using wood- or coal-burning equipment, and without the time-saving benefits of refrigeration and running water.

“When the family came to the dinner table, they would find it set for the first course. On each plate would be a Christmas ‘cracker,’ “ says Rostislavovich.

“Crackers” are long, slender, festive tubes; in Victorian times, each would have a mechanism which made a “cracking” sound and caused items inside to pop out. There would be printed jokes, a small toy, and a paper crown.

According to Rostislavovich, the crowns go all the way back to the Roman festival of Saturnalia, which took place around the winter solstice and, according to one online source, had a “mardi gras like” atmosphere.

At some chosen point during the meal, Victorian diners would stand in a circle and take an end of a Christmas cracker in each hand. After a countdown, everyone would pull in unison and the contents of the crackers would pop out. As the meal continued, diners would put on the paper crowns, read the corny jokes, and enjoy the small toys. Crackers are still a central element of Christmas celebrations in modern Britain.

“The center of the celebration was the fellowship among the family members,” says Rostislavovich. “They talked about the meaning and symbolism of the decorations, they shared stories. Gifts among family members were only a very small part of the day.”

And even there, Rostislavovich mentions, the poor were remembered. He describes the origin of the “Christmas pickle” ornament.

Based on online sources, many modern households continue the tradition of a well-hidden pickle-shaped ornament. A typical practice is that the first person to find it gets to be the first to open a gift. The tradition was much different in Victorian times.

“Among the gifts around the tree would be one marked ‘St. Nicholas.’ The children would all search the tree to find the ornament shaped like a pickle. Whichever child found it now had the responsibility of choosing a poor or underprivileged child and presenting that special gift to him or her,” explains Rostislavovich. “It was true to their ideals of stewardship and kindness.”

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NAILED IT — Waseca High School gymnast Layla Keith raises her arms triumphantly and teammates react after Keith's uneven parallel bars routine last week. Keith, pictured below performing on and dismounting from the bars, captured the all-around crown as the Bluejays defeated St. Peter.



Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

Positive note

Waseca gymnasts head into holidays with win over St. Peter

The Waseca High School gymnastics team completed its pre-holiday schedule on a positive note, upending visiting St. Peter Thursday, Dec. 14. The Bluejays totaled 134.075 points, the Saints 132.450.

Layla Keith continued a standout season for the Bluejays, finishing first in all-around with 34.925 points. She won the vault with a 9.050 and took first in floor exercise at 9.250. Keith finished second on the uneven parallel bars at 8.150 and fourth on the balance beam at 8.475.

Bella Wikan was fourth in all-around at 34.050, followed for Waseca by Hannah Parks, fifth, 32.850; Lindy Caldwell, seventh, 3.575; Katelyn Weber, ninth, 23.85; and Haydn Lynch, 11th, 8.025.

Wikan was the Bluejays' other first-place finisher, winning the balance beam with a score of 9.050. She took second on floor exercise at 8.925, sixth on bars at 7.650 and seventh on vault at 8.425.

Other placewinners, by event:
Vault - Weber, 4th, 8.525; Caldwell, 5th, 8.500; Parks, 8th, 8.400.

Uneven parallel bars - Parkm, 5th, 7.750; Weber, 7th, 7.300.

Balance beam - Parks, 5th, 8.200; Lynch, 6th, 8.02; Caldwell, 8th, 7.150.

Floor exercise - Parks, 4th, 8.500; Caldwell, 6th, 8.300; Weber, 8th, 8.000.

The Waseca junior varsity won 106.035-96.750.

Angelica Lopez was the all-around champion with 27.300 points. Avery Carda was second with 26.800, followed by Macy Anderson, 4th, 25.000; Norah Schimming, 6th, 20.750; Miley Anderson, 11th, 9.500; Weber, 12th, 6.950.

By event:
Vault - Schimming, 1st, 8.250; Carda, 2nd, 7.900; Lopez, 4th, 7.800; Macy Anderson, 7th, 7.300.

Bars - Carda, 1st, 6.100; Lopez, 2nd, 5.900; Macy Anderson, 6th, 3.700; Miley Anderson, 7th, 3.300.

Beam - Macy Anderson, 1st, 7.400; Weber, 2nd, 6.950; Lopez, 3rd, 6.300; Miley Anderson, 5th, 6.200; Carda, 8th, 5.30; Schimming, 9th, 4.700.

Floor - Schimming, 1st, 7.800; Carda, 2nd, 7.550; Lopez, 3rd, 7.300; Macy Anderson, 7th, 6.60.

The Bluejays are off until Jan. 6 when they travel to the Fairmont Invitational.

WHS boys can't catch up at JCC

The Waseca High School boys' basketball team knew it would in for a challenge at Jackson County Central Friday, Dec. 15.

It was made even more difficult when the Bluejays spotted JCC 18 points at the outset. They never could catch up.

The Bluejays, outscored 21-3 to start the game, went on to lose 87-71.

"Jackson pretty much blitzed us from the get-go, and we never got back in the game," said WHS coach Seth Anderson. "We struggled to guard them and had some major turnover troubles. Credit to Jackson. They really played well."

The Bluejays bounced back to win 71-49 Tuesday at Waterville-Elysian-Morristown.

They Waseca boys play twice more before the Christmas break, Thursday at Glencoe-Silver Lake and Friday at home against Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton. They're at Rochester Lourdes Dec. 28 for the Myron Glass Holiday Classic.

The Bluejays, 1-0 in the Big South, improved to 3-2 overall.



LOTS OF SHOTS — The WHS boys' hockey team peppered the Red Wing goal with 70 shots in a 5-1 victory at Waseca Community Center. At left, Hunter Anderson (16) handles the puck, with Brayden Hesch-Priem (33) in the background. At right, Otto Schoenrock (10) puts a shot on goal.



Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

WHS hockey boys rally past Red Wing, 5-1

It was a bit surprising when visiting Red Wing scored just 44 seconds into a nonconference boys' hockey game at Waseca Thursday, Dec. 14.

The Bluejays showed it was an aberration.

Waseca tied it up later in the first period, tacking on three goals in the second and one more in the third for a decisive 5-1 victory. The Bluejays put an impressive 70 shots on goal

to 15 for Red Wing.

A goal by Griffin Storey, assisted by Cash Lynch, tied it for the Bluejays at 10:37 of the opening stanza.

Henry Huttemier scored a power-play goal assisted by Brayden Hesch-Priem at 1:27 of the second period. Hunter Anderson scored on assist from Jackson Dahl at the 8:53 mark, and Keaton Roeker scored on

a Jayden Gehring assist at 16:59.

Storey scored on a power play at 5:21 of the third. Anderson assisted. Red Wing served 19 minutes in the penalty box on nine infractions and went 0-for-4 on the power play. The Bluejays were whistled four times for eight minutes, scoring on two of nine power plays.

Carter Martens was in the net for Waseca, totaling 14 saves.

The Bluejays had their hands full Tuesday, Dec. 12, dropping a 6-1 decision to Big South leader New Ulm at Waseca Community Arena.

The visitors took a 2-0 lead after one period and it was 5-1 after two.

Anderson scored for the Bluejays, who were penalized seven times for 14 minutes. New Ulm was called for one penalty and served two minutes in the box.

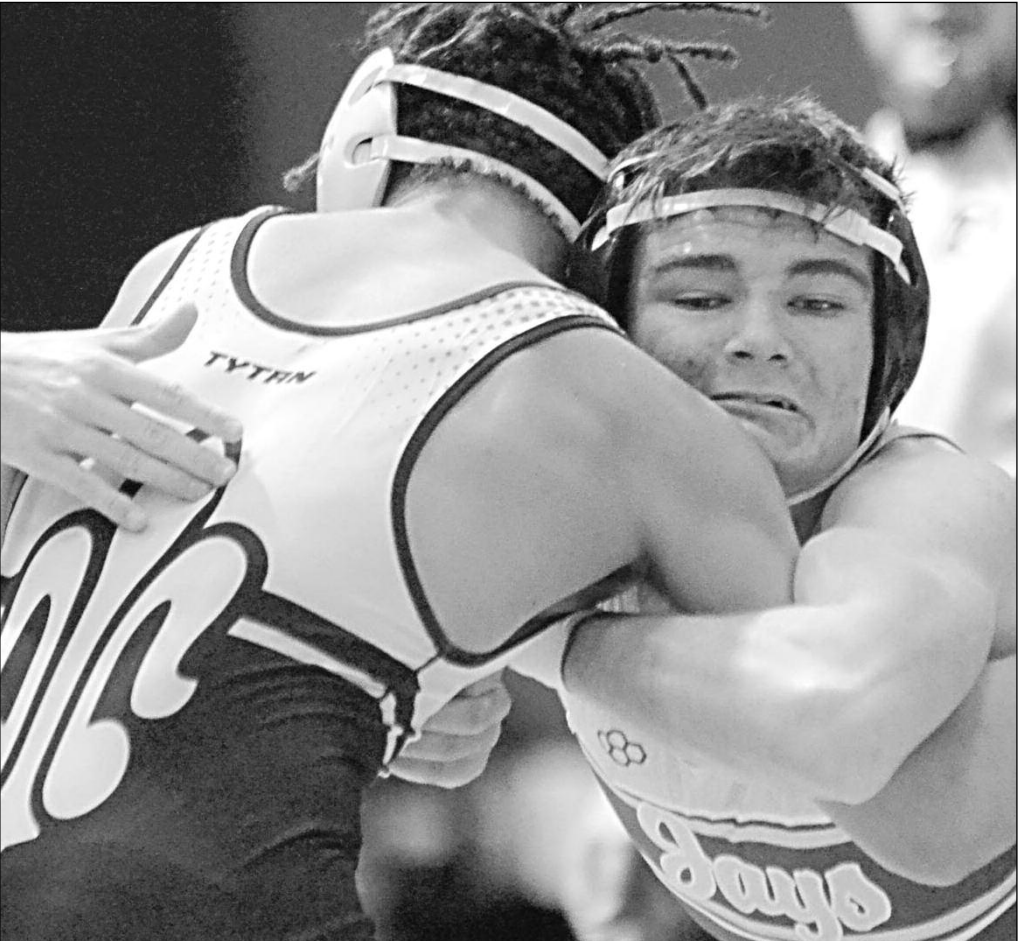
The Eagles outshot the Bluejays 44-26.

Jason Schmidke made 38 saves for Waseca.

The Bluejays, 6-3 overall and 5-2 in the Big South Conference, faced Austin and LaCrescent-Hokah this week. They return to action Jan. 4 against Minnesota River.



WRESTLING ACTION — At left, the Bluejays' Lucas Selthun works on a pin during last week's wrestling triangular at Waseca High School. At right, Jacob Root goes for a takedown.



Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

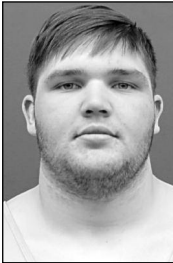
Wrestling team still looking for first victory

The Waseca High School wrestling team hosted a triangular Thursday, Dec. 14 and lost twice, 53-15 to St. Peter and 51-16 to Mankato East.

Winners for the Bluejays against St. Peter were Slade Barnett, 152 pounds; Lucas Selthun, 189; and Ben Hagen, 285. Selthun and Hagen won by fall.

The Bluejays, 0-2 in the Big South Conference East, saw their season record slip to 0-6.

The Bluejays are off until Jan. 6 at the Norwood-Young America Invitational.



Hagen



SECOND-HALF RALLY — The NRHEG girls' basketball team broke open a 26-26 halftime tie and rallied past Randolph 69-43 in New Richland Friday, Dec. 15 as senior Faith Nielsen (2), left, surpassed the career 1,000-point mark. At right, the Panthers' Izley Boerner (5) takes the ball to the basket. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



Nielsen tops 1,000 points as NRHEG girls ground Randolph Panthers improve to 2-0 in conference, 6-1 overall

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The NRHEG High School girls' basketball team started slowly against Randolph Friday, Dec. 15 in New Richland, playing to a 26-26 halftime tie. The second half belonged to the Panthers. The night belonged to senior Faith Nielsen. Nielsen topped the 1,000-point mark for her career as the NRHEG girls cruised to a 69-43 victory. "We started out a little sluggish in the first half," said NRHEG coach Onika Peterson. "Their post player Coonrod gave us a little bit of trouble inside. We had more of a commanding presence in the second half and were able to go on a run. The highlight of the game tonight was Faith Nielsen getting her 1,000 points. I continue to be impressed with the progress that the girls have made." The Panthers improved their record to 6-1 overall, 2-0 in the Gopher Conference.

In addition to her 21 points, Nielsen added three rebounds, five assists, four steals and one blocked shot. Others: Quinn VanMaldeghem 7P, 7R, 5A, 2S; Izley Boerner 3R, 2A; Hallie Schultz 9P, 10R, 3A, 1S; Camryn VanMaldeghem 21P, 11R, 5A, 2S; Chloe Stork 2R; Paige Nielsen 3P, 3R, 2A, 1S; Kylie Olson 8P, 4R. The Panthers hosted Belle Plaine Tuesday, Dec. 12 and won 80-58. Scoring: C. VanMaldeghem 21, F. Nielsen 19, Q. VanMaldeghem 16, Olson 7, P. Nielsen 7, Schultz 6, Boerner 4. The Panthers play Thursday at St. Clair and host USC Friday before traveling to the St. James Holiday Tournament Dec. 27-28.



F. Nielsen



SO FAR, SO GOOD — The Waseca High School girls' hockey team takes a record of 6-3-3 into the Christmas break. Pictured during the Bluejays' 1-0 loss to Winona at Waseca Community Center Saturday, Dec. 16 are, above left, Emily Gordon (10) comes up with the puck along the boards. Above right, Madalyn Benson (5) looks to score with Emma Huelsnitz (12) in the background. Below, Isabela Schlecta (8) gets off a shot with Makayla Forthun (18) and Maizee Storey (26) skating behind. Pioneer photo by Jim Lutgens



Lady Jays drop two to JCC, Lourdes

It has been a season of learning and a season of challenges so far for the Waseca High School girls' basketball team. The young Bluejays dropped a pair of games in the past week, 57-40 to Jackson County Central and 57-18 to Rochester Lourdes. Callie Dufault led Waseca in scoring against JCC with 17 points. Addison Wieseler scored 7, Avery Gaul 6, Ella Krautkremer 4, Mia Kanewischer 3 and Grace Guritz 3. Rylie Cother totaled 31 for JCC, Kylee Wenzel 17.



Gaul



Guritz



WHS hockey girls second in Big South Bluejays' overall record 6-3-3

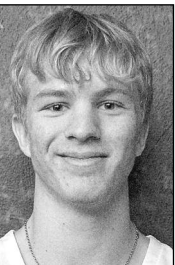
The Waseca High School girls' hockey team has to be pleased with its pre-holiday results. The Bluejays are 4-2-1 in the Big South Conference, just one point behind first-place Minnesota River, and 6-3-3 overall. Last Tuesday, the Jays skated to a 2-2 tie with Rochester Mayo at Graham Arena in Rochester, outshooting the Spartans 39-24 for the game and 20-7 in the third period. Maizee Storey got Waseca on the scoreboard at 9:47 of the first period, assisted by Madalyn Benson. Mayo tied it at the 16:55 mark. The Spartans took a 2-1 lead after two periods. Storey knotted it in the third, scoring a power-play goal assisted by Kaelyn Schlueter. Goaltender Ilamay Draheim totaled 22 saves. Waseca was not penalized in the game while Mayo earned 14 minutes in the penalty box on seven infractions. The Bluejays faced another Big Nine Conference team, Winona, and dropped a 1-0 decision Saturday at Waseca Community Arena. Currently, Storey leads the Big South with 18 goals, 10 more than the second-place scorer, and is first with 25 points. Draheim leads the conference with a .947 save percentage. The Bluejays are in Rochester for a holiday tournament Dec. 28 and 29.

NRHEG boys win at Kenyon-Wanamingo Daxter Lee scores 37 as Panthers fall to Randolph

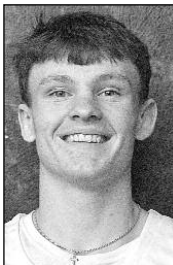
By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

It was a great way for the NRHEG High School boys' basketball team to start a seven-game road trip. The Panthers, according to coach Dan Schmidt, took another step forward defensively while winning 58-52 at Kenyon-Wanamingo Thursday, Dec. 14. It was NRHEG's first win in three tries. "The improvement we've seen in three games is so great," said Schmidt. "Defensively, this was a total team effort. The guys really seem to be taking more and more pride in our defense." Offensively, the Panthers had good balance, with three players reaching double digits in scoring. Jackson Chrz led the way with 25 points, including three three-pointers and a breakaway dunk. Will Tuttle notched a second straight double-double with 13 points and 10 rebounds. Daxter Lee also kicked in a double-double with 10 points and 12 rebounds, to go along with five assists. Greyson Schaefer turned in

another great effort off the bench with five big points in the second half, and seven rebounds. Sam Olson added three points, and Jordan Brouwers rounded out the scoring with two. "I can't say enough about the way these guys have played the last two games," said Schmidt. "We got down by 3-4 points with around eight minutes left in the game, and we never panicked. We regained the lead, and protected the basketball and hit our free throws down the stretch. It feels so good to come out of this game with a win against a good team like Kenyon-Wanamingo. It was a great way to start this stretch of road games!" The Panthers played perhaps their best first half of the season at Randolph Friday, Dec. 15. But things went south in the second half. The Panthers, who led 30-25 at halftime, couldn't keep pace with Randolph and dropped a 77-61 decision. According to Schmidt, the Panthers came out ready to play and led the entire first half behind strong defense. "Randolph is a very athletic team that spreads the floor and likes to shoot the three," said Schmidt. "That strategy got to us in the second half." The Rockets sank eight three-pointers in the second half while outscoring the Panthers 52-31. "We struggled with their pace of play, as well as their spacing, and found ourselves not closing out as strongly as we have this year, or earlier in the game," explained Schmidt. "We just couldn't seem to be consistent with our ball movement and player movement on offense," said Schmidt. NRHEG's Daxter Lee led all scorers with 37 points to go along with 5 rebounds. Chrz had 8 points and 8 rebounds, Tuttle 8 points and 4



Chrz

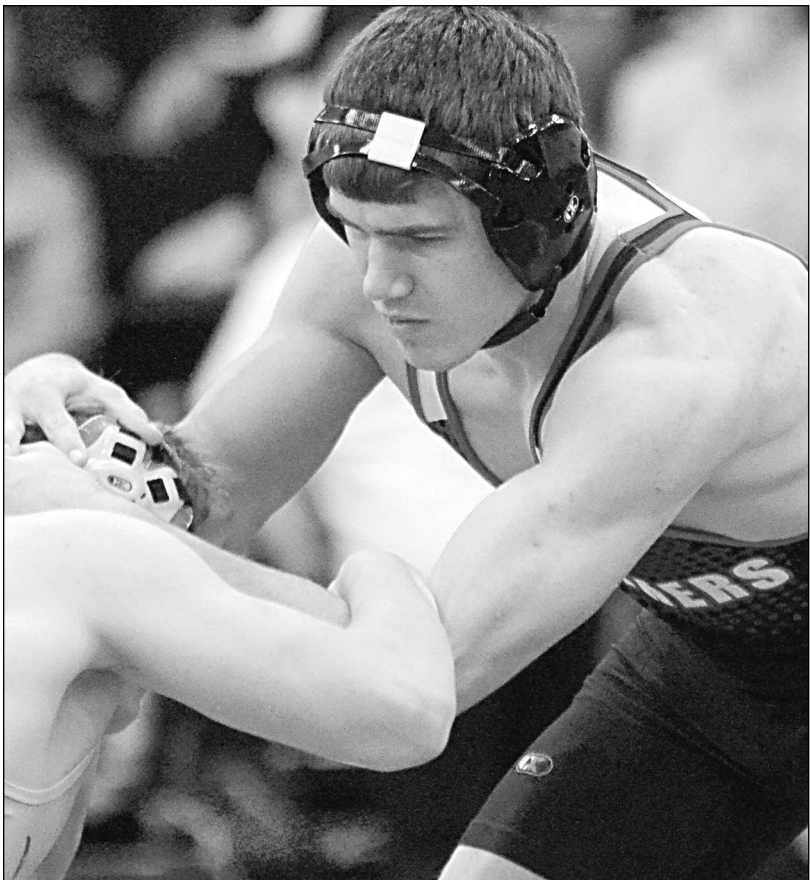


Lee

rebounds. Rounding out the scoring for the Panthers was Olson with 3, before being sidelined with an ankle injury. Schaefer 3, and Jared Lee 2. "We're also hoping to get rid of the injury bug, as we now have three players sidelined with various injuries," said Schmidt. "The timing of Christmas break is welcomed in hopes of getting everyone healthy." The Panthers finish their pre-holiday schedule Friday, Dec. 22 at 7:15 p.m. at United South Central. They play in the Bethany Holiday Tournament in Mankato Dec. 27-29.



BIG NIGHT — Daxter Lee scored 37 points in the Panthers' Dec. 15 game against Randolph. Pioneer photo Jim Lutgens



ON A ROLL — The Panthers' George Roesler, right, won three matches by fall at Lakeville South last Thursday.
Pioneer photo Jim Lutgens

Wrestlers drop three at Lakeville

Roesler gets 3 pins as shorthanded Panthers deal with injury, illness

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Injury and illness.

If you're a high school wrestling coach, they're two words you don't want to hear.

The NRHEG Panthers dealt with both Thursday, Dec. 14 in a quadrangular at Lakeville South, where they lost 52-23 to South St. Paul, 52-19 to Eastview and 55-15 to the host team.

"We were shorthanded due to a combination of injury and illness," said Panthers coach Shawn Larson. "Competing against schools of that size is difficult to begin with, as usually they have more athletes to work with, and without three or four starters it was far too much to overcome."

George Roesler had a great night for NRHEG, going unbeaten while earning three falls at 189 pounds.

"George is wrestling well as of late, and we are very happy to have

him this season after he missed all of last year due to injury," said Larson.

Charlie Tufte got the Panthers off to a strong start against South St. Paul, scoring a first-period fall at 107, but NRHEG dropped three pins and a forfeit before Deven Parpart won by technical fall at 139. The Panthers got pins from Reese Routh at 152 and Roesler at 189.

Victories against Eastview were by Parpart, 139; Routh, 152; Harbor Cromwell, 160; and Roesler, 189. Parpart won by fall.

Winning in the Lakeville South meet were by Seth Staloch, 127; Cromwell, 160; and Roesler, 189.

The Panthers have a triangular at Medford Thursday, Dec. 21, with matches at 5 and 7 p.m.

The Panthers traveled to Redwood Falls for the Redwood Riot Dec. 15-16, finishing 30th out of 36 teams. Roesler placed seventh at 189.

"He is showing great poise, and demonstrating that hard work is the key to success."

— NRHEG wrestling coach Shawn Larson, on 189-pound senior George Roesler

In the girls' division, the Panthers' Annabelle Petsinger finished first at 142, with Josie Bell taking third at 190.

"At Redwood, it was great to have both of the girls competing come back with hardware," said Larson. "Annabelle showed the dominance she had during last season, pinning her way through the bracket to win the championship. Josie is new to the team this season, however, she is learning well. Josie wrestled with great intensity, and it was clear that she was having fun getting two wins

on her way to a third-place finish."

Larson also had praise for Roesler.

"George also wrestled well," said Larson. "He is really a good leader for this team right now. He is showing great poise, and demonstrating that hard work is the key to success."

The Panthers wrestle Thursday, December 21 with a triangular in Medford, with matches set for 5 and 7 p.m. Then they're off until hosting Westfield Jan. 12.

Standings

Boys' Basketball			
Big South Conference East			
	Conf.	Div.	Ov.
Blue Earth Area	2-0	1-0	4-1
Jackson Co. Central	1-1	1-0	3-1
Waseca	1-1	1-1	2-2
Fairmont	0-2	0-2	1-2

Big South Conference West			
Redwood Valley	3-0	3-0	5-1
Pipestone Area	2-0	2-0	4-0
Luverne	1-1	0-1	1-4
St. James Area	0-1	0-1	1-2
Windom Area	0-3	0-1	4-3

Big South Conference Big			
New Ulm	2-0	2-0	3-2
Worthington	1-1	0-1	4-1
Marshall	1-1	1-1	3-2
St. Peter	0-1	0-1	1-5

Gopher Conference East			
Blooming Prairie	2-0	0-0	3-0
Randolph	2-0	1-0	2-1
Triton	2-0	0-0	3-3
Kenyon-Wanamingo	1-1	0-0	3-4
Bethlehem Academy	1-2	1-0	1-5
Hayfield	0-4	0-2	2-5

Gopher Conference West			
United South Central	1-1	0-0	4-1
Janesville-WP.	1-10-0	3-2	
Waterville-EM	1-1	0-0	2-3
Maple River	1-1	0-0	2-4
New Richland-H-E-G	1-2	0-0	2-3
Medford	0-0	0-0	0-0

Girls' Basketball			
Big South East			
Jackson County Central	6-0	2-0	6-1
Fairmont	2-1	1-0	4-1
Waseca	0-1	0-1	2-7
Blue Earth Area	0-3	0-2	1-6

Big South West			
Windom Area	4-2	1-0	6-2
Redwood Valley	2-1	2-1	4-2
Luverne	1-2	1-1	3-3
St. James Area	1-3	1-1	1-5
Pipestone Area	0-3	0-2	1-5

Big South Big			
St. Peter	2-0	1-0	8-0
Marshall	1-0	1-0	6-1
New Ulm	1-1	0-1	6-2
Worthington	0-3	0-1	1-6

Gopher Conference West			
New Richland-H-E-G	2-0	1-0	6-1
Waterville-EM	2-1	1-0	4-4
Maple River	2-2	1-1	5-3
Janesville-WP	2-2	1-1	6-4
United South Central	0-2	0-1	1-4
Medford	0-3	0-1	0-9

Gopher Conference East			
Blooming Prairie	4-0	1-0	6-1
Hayfield	2-0	1-0	8-0
Triton	1-1	0-0	4-3
Kenyon-Wanamingo	1-2	0-1	3-3
Randolph	0-1	0-0	1-2
Bethlehem Academy	0-2	0-1	3-4

Boys' Hockey Big South Conference			
	Conf.	Ov.	
Luverne	5-0	6-0	
New Ulm	6-1	7-2	
Minnesota River	4-1	5-2	
Waseca	5-2	6-3	
Marshall	3-4	5-5	
Windom Area	1-3	1-5	
Fairmont	1-4	1-7	
Worthington	0-4	0-6	
Redwood Valley	0-5	0-7	

Girls' Hockey Big South Conference			
	Conf.	Ov.	
Luverne	4-1	6-4	
Minnesota River	5-2	7-7	
New Ulm	4-2	5-5	
Waseca	4-2	6-3	
Marshall	4-2	6-7	
Windom Area	2-4	4-8	
Fairmont	1-6	2-9	
Worthington/Fulda	0-5	0-11	

Wrestling Big South Conference East			
St. Peter	2-0	6-5	
New Ulm	1-0	4-0	
Blue Earth Area	0-0	1-3	
Fairmont/MCW	0-0	0-0	
St. James Area	0-1	3-3	
Waseca	0-2	0-6	

Big South Conference West			
Jackson County Central	2-0	2-0	
Marshall/Lakeview	1-0	9-2	
Pipestone Area	1-0	5-3	
Redwood Valley	1-1	1-1	
Worthington	0-1	0-1	
Windom/Mountain Lake	0-1	0-5	
Luverne	0-2	5-2	

Grizzlies stay busy with six dual meets

Kuball reaches 100 career victories

The WEM-JWP High School wrestling team has been busy, with six dual meets in the past week.

The run started Dec. 12 at Blue Earth Area, where the Bulldogs prevailed 39-34. Winners for the Grizzlies were Brenden Masso, 107 pounds; Carson Petry, 127; Carson James, 133; Trenton Huber, 139; Lucas Morsching, 152; Gavin Krause, 160; Keegan Kuball, 285.

The Grizzlies wrestled three times Feb. 14, dropping the first dual meet 44-29 to Woodbury. WEM-JWP winners: Masso, Parker James, Petry, Isaac Quast and Kuball.

The Grizzlies were upended 60-

12 by Forest Lake, with wins from James and Petry.

Irondale defeated the Grizzlies 42-36 with WEM-JWP wins by Masso, Petry, Huber, Zach Quast, Krause, Maddox Moreno and Kuball.

Finally, the Bulldogs hosted Fairmont/Martin County West Dec. 18 and won 41-27. Victories came from Masso, Isaac Miller, Petry, James, Zach Quast, Isaac Quast, Moreno and Kuball.

After wrestling Dec. 21 at Westfield, the Bulldogs are off until the Norwood-Young America Invitational Jan. 6.



100-WIN MILESTONE — WEM-JWP wrestler Keegan Kuball was celebrated by the cheerleaders after recently topping the 100 career win mark.
Photo by LeAnn Kavitz



Austin Carda, left, brings the ball up the court in a recent game for the JWP boys' basketball team.
Photo by LeAnn Kavitz

JWP boys break even

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School boys' basketball team broke even in a pair of games last week, defeating LeSueur-Henderson 69-55 at Janesville while falling short 57-54 at Blooming Prairie.

Individually for the Bulldogs vs. LSH: Daulton Bauer 8 points, 2 rebounds, 7 assists, 5 steals; Gavin Bauer 10P, 1R, 1A, 2S, 1 block; Landon Johnson 2P, 2R, 2A, 2S; Caleb Quast 4P, 2A; Steven Dimmel 3P, 1R, 1A; Ryan Kronbach 9P, 7R, 3A, 3S; Memphis James 22P, 3R, 4S; Ethan Born 4R, 1A; Austin Quast 4P, 2R, 1A; Cole Schluter 7P, 8R, 3A, 1B.

Grant Adams scored 28 for the Giants.

JWP was outrebounded by LSH 39-32 but the Bulldogs limited their

turnovers to 12, eight fewer than the Giants.

The Bulldogs outscored Blooming Prairie 32-28 in the second half, but could not overcome a halftime deficit of 29-22.

Individually: D.Bauer 11P, 7R, 6A, 2S; G.Bauer 4R, 2S, 1B; Johnson 6P, 2R, 1A; C.Quast 5R, 3S; Kronbach 2P, 5R, 1A, 3S; James 28P, 4R, 2A, 3S; Born 3R; A.Quast 2R; Schluter 6P, 10R, 1A, 1S.

The Bulldogs had 11 turnovers, the Blossoms six. JWP held a 44-39 edge in rebounding.

JWP defeated Maple River 74-46 Tuesday.

The Bulldogs, 4-2 overall, sit atop the Gopher Conference (East or West) at 1-0. They play Friday at Waseca and Dec. 29 at Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's.

JWP girls drop 3 of 4

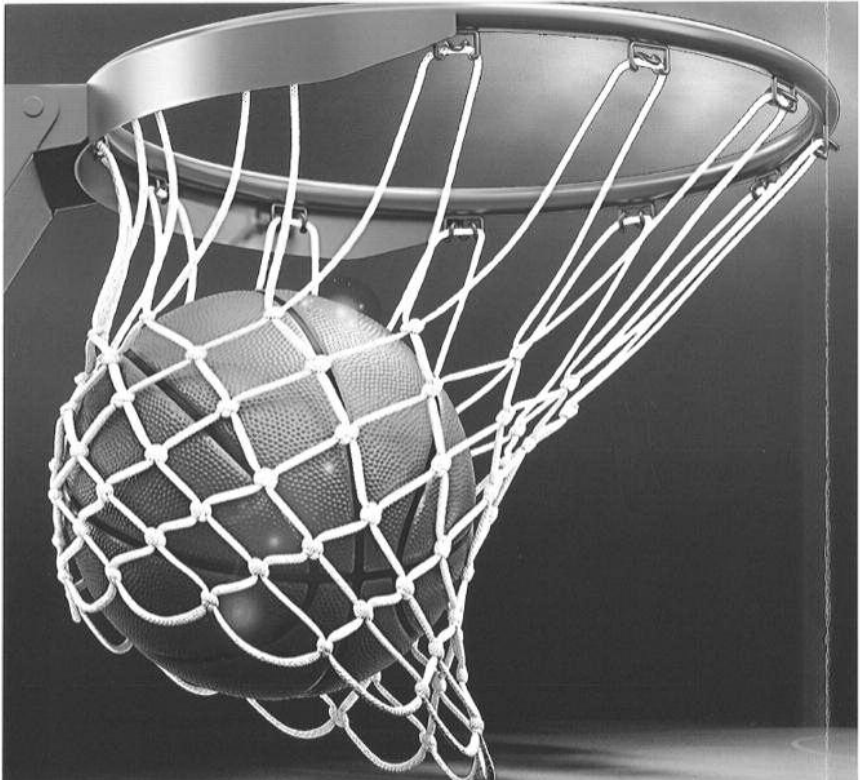
The JWP girls' basketball team ran into a recent tough stretch in the schedule and dropped three of four games.

The Bulldogs fell 61-53 to Lester Prairie in Janesville Dec. 12, defeated LeSueur-Henderson Dec. 14 at home, lost 49-34 to Blooming Prairie Dec. 15 and 61-50 at Maple River this past Tuesday.

The Bulldogs, 1-1 in the Gopher Conference and 6-4 overall, are off until Jan. 2 when they host Sibley East.

Get your sports in the Pioneer

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Those wishing to file must do so with:

Filing must be done prior to the close date and
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Wilton Township
Filing Notice

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year term and Supervisor for a
three year term. Filing closes at
8:00 PM January 16, 2024.

Filing to be done with
the Clerk. Annual meeting
to be held on March 12, 2024.
Norman Gehring
Clerk

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NOTICE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND AND BUILDING SITE SALE
WASECA COUNTY
NEW RICHLAND TOWNSHIP
40 DEEDED ACRES
MARK QUERNA FARM

BRIEF TAX DESCRIPTION
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PARCEL ID: 07.0160710

TERMS:

The land consists of 38.2 acres of tillable land CPI is 91. The farm has been certified organic since 2005. The land is located 1/3 mile east of State Highway 13 on quiet blacktop road. This parcel is a buildable site.

1.

Potential Buyers shall submit a sealed bid to Molly Byron, Attorney, Byron Law Office, PLLC, 122 North State Street, Waseca, MN 56093. The sealed bid shall be received by 9:30 a.m. on January 24, 2024.

2.

The bids shall be opened at Byron Law Office, PLLC at 10:00 a.m. on January 24, 2024. All persons submitting a written bid will be allowed to raise their bid, by phone, after the bids have been opened. Phone calls to bidders will be placed by Byron Law Office, phone number 507-835-3355. Bidders must be available by phone at that time.

3.

The successful bidder will be required to execute a purchase agreement and pay 10% of the purchase price as earnest money by 5:00 pm on January 24, 2024 at Byron Law Office. The entire remaining balance of the purchase price, without interest, will be due on or before February 24, 2024 at which time title will be conveyed by Warranty Deed. Possession of the real estate will be delivered at the time of closing.

4.

Real estate taxes of \$ 1,096.00 for 2023 are paid in full. Real estate taxes and special assessments due and payable in 2024 shall be paid by the Buyer.

5.

This property is being sold in “AS IS” condition and Sellers make no representation as to acreage, tiling or condition.

6.

An abstract of title indicating marketable title in Seller’s name shall be furnished. Title shall be transferred by Warranty Deed. Possession shall be given to the successful bidder upon receipt of payment in full.

7.

The owners specifically reserve the right to reject any and all bids and waive irregularities in the bidding process. Any verbal announcement information given the day of sale takes precedence over print.

Information concerning this land sale may be obtained at Byron Law Office, PLLC, 122 North State Street, Waseca, MN 56093, phone 507.835.3355

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December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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3	4	5 Burger nite 5-7pm	6 6pm BAR Bingo	7 7pm BINGO NATIONAL PEARL HARBOR DAY	8 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	9
10 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am -Noon Your Host	11 7 PM POST & AUX MEETING	12 Burger nite 5-7pm	13 6pm BAR Bingo U.S. NATIONAL GUARD BIRTH- DAY	14 7pm BINGO	15 WALLEYE or SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 to 7pm	16
17	18	19 Burger nite 5-7pm	20 6pm BAR Bingo	21 7pm BINGO	22 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	23 TOM and JERRY'S 4pm
24 OPEN 11:00- 5:00 VIKINGS -LIONS	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Burger nite 5-7pm	27 6pm BAR Bingo	28 7pm BINGO	29 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	30 New Year SUPER BINGO 7pm Hocky Burger Night 5pm-7
31						

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OBITUARIES

Dolores Sommers

DOLORES LOUISE SOMMERS, age 101 of Waseca, died on the morning of Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at Colony Court Assisted Living in Waseca.

Dolores was born in Otisco Township on August 2, 1922 to parents Earl W. and Alma L. (Reitforts) Winegar. She attended school in Waseca until 1938, and was both baptized and confirmed at St. John Lutheran Church in Waseca. On June 1, 1949, she was married to Marvin Edwin Sommers at St. John Lutheran Church in Waseca. They shared fifty years of marriage before Marvin's passing in the fall of 1999. Over the years she worked mainly as a homemaker and helped out on the family farm. Their family also operated an egg route, delivering fresh eggs on Sunday afternoons. She held various roles at Bird's Eye Foods, at Winegar, Inc, and finally at the Waseca Senior Citizen's Center. She and Marvin left their farm and moved into town in 1987. Dolores was a lifelong member of St. John Lutheran Church, and she enjoyed traveling, gardening, playing cards, volunteering with Meals on Wheels, and spending time with her extension group, the Wilton Township Ladies. She was also talented in embroidery and quilting, having made quilts for each of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Dolores loved spending time with her family, and her incredible impact on each of them will be felt for generations to come.

Dolores is survived by four children, Marsha (Keith) Vollbrecht of rural Meriden, Debbie (Roger) Supalla of Shakopee, Dennis (Diane) Sommers of Waseca, and Mark Sommers of Waseca; eight grandchildren; twelve great-grandchildren; and one brother, George (Sharlene) Winegar of Waseca.



Dolores Sommers

She was preceded in death by both of her parents; her husband; a brother, Don (Mary) Winegar; a brother-in-law, Melvin (Dorothia) Sommers; two sisters-in-law, Evelyn (John) Kujath, and Carol (Delmar) Oltman; and two beloved "granddogs", Gracie and Missy.

Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Sunday, December 17, 2023 at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca, and will continue for one hour before the service at the church on Monday. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be directed to St. John Lutheran Building Fund or to a recipient of the donor's choice.

Funeral services were held at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, December 18, 2023 at St. John Lutheran Church in Waseca. Rev. Kristen Venne officiated. Interment followed at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca. The family would like to offer a special thank you to the staff at Colony Court and Hospice for the loving care they provided to Dolores.

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

James Cassem

JAMES PALMER CASSEM, age 78, of Waseca, died on Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at United Hospital in St. Paul.

Born on May 2, 1945 in Waseca, he was the son of Palmer and Hazel (Cutler) Cassem. Jim received his education at New Richland Public School. Although he never graduated, Jim received his GED while serving in the United States Marine Corps where Jim served two tours in Vietnam from 1965 until his honorable discharge in 1969. On November 27, 1971, Jim was united in marriage to Zona Olson at Trinity Lutheran Church in Osage, Iowa. Jim and Zona began their life together on the farm before moving to New Richland where they resided for many years and in 1987, they moved to Waseca.

Throughout his life, Jim worked in various career fields. As a young man he drove milk truck while working alongside his dad on the family farm before farming on his own for 13 years. Jim then went on to be a TV Repair Man as well as working at Scotsman Ice Machines in Albert Lea for 19 years. Jim finished his working career at Birdseye where he became a Master Electrician and retired in 2012. Jim always found time to hunt and fish or just be outside amongst nature. He also enjoyed remodeling his home in Waseca doing all of the work himself including two garages and an addition for a new kitchen. Jim will be remembered as a kind, generous man who would regularly engage in random acts of kindness. He was a member of the American Legion in Waseca



James Cassem

and Vista Covenant Church in rural New Richland.

Jim is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Zona; children: Jeremy Cassem, Nicole Cassem and Michelle Ferch, all of Waseca; grandchildren: Kamerin Ferch and Makenzi Ferch; sisters: Thelma Kormann of Waseca and Norma Fullerton of Des Moines, Iowa; brother-in-law: Marlyn Carlson of Clear Lake, Iowa; good friend, Brad Field; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents; and siblings: Loren (Barb) Cassem, Martha (Frank) Mary, and Joyce Carlson.

Funeral Service was 2:00 PM on Monday, December 18, 2023 at Vista Covenant Church in rural New Richland. Interment followed with Military Honors in the church cemetery. Visitation was for one hour prior to the service at the church on Monday.

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

Council approves levy increase of .8%

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

A split council approved a City of Waseca 2024 tax levy of \$5.5 million, a 0.8% increase from 2023, during the city's regular council meeting the evening of Tuesday, Dec. 19. The final vote fell 4-3, with Mayor Randy Zimmerman, Councilman John Mansfield, and Councilman Jeremy Conrath in the minority.

"We can't just increase the budget and not increase the tax base," Zimmerman said. "It's not fair to the community."

"I agree we need to grow our tax base," Councilwoman Stacy Schroeder said. "I don't want to be in a position where next year we come to the table and it's an 11% or even a 5% increase... Most people think it's commendable to stay 0% or even negative. I think we've gone backwards far too long. Personally I don't want to tell people their level of service is going down."

Zimmerman said he is ready to cut the budget 5% in 2025.

Mansfield suggested eliminating the Economic Development Authority (EDA), a move that would cut

\$90,000 from the budget, approximately 2%.

This caused a stir among council members. Councilman Mark Christiansen reminded those in attendance that, if the EDA were to be removed, it's "impossible to get back," due to state statutes.

Moments prior to approving the 2024 budget, the council had unanimously approved the EDA budget, a move which Mansfield was criticized for given his comments.

As a board member of the EDA, Mansfield said he feels the board doesn't do enough and that the city shouldn't be spending \$100,000 a year on it.

Mayor Zimmerman said he hopes budget cuts, and ways to grow the tax base, will be talked about during a "council retreat" in early 2024.

A summary of the 2024 levy and general fund budget was also provided:

- Funding for capital improvement for streets, storm water, parks, and city facilities improvements
- Funding for an equipment replacement plan
- Funding for employee compen-

ished at about noon and decided they would visit nearby Keen Bank, which was holding an open house. "I told these guys, 'Let's go across the street and I'll buy you dinner.' I thought I could get by cheap..."

"We didn't make it," Born continued. "And the lights went out for me."

Britton was in the VFW remodeling the bathrooms when he heard a call for help.

"Brian came running," Born said. "Jared and Joe came to my rescue. Thanks to those guys... They saved my life."

Born thanked the first responders on the scene, his nurses, his loving wife, and his family and friends.

Born also thanked Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas. When Dulas received the call Born had collapsed, he went to Born's house immediately. When he found no one home, he looked in the front and back yards to check on him.

"I've got a lot of people to be thankful for," Born concluded.

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

- sation and benefits
- 1 New full-time patrol officer position
 - Minor adjustments for department needs
 - New tax abatement agreements
- One other large point of interest on the agenda was a "perpetual agreement made in 1975 with Waseca Public Schools."

The agreement obliges the City of Waseca to contribute about \$100,000 annually to "provide recreational services and activities, to work collaboratively to avoid the duplication of recreational services, to maximize the efficiency of City and School District personnel and to cooperate in the operation of integrated city and school recreation sites and facilities."

The council agreed 6-1 to give the school district 12 months advance notice that it wishes to withdraw from the 1975 agreement, and to offer its interest in negotiating a new one.

■ Award

from Page 1

"It was because of the immediate actions of Brian that Arlin is alive today," chief Vought said. "He is a hero."

"The detectives would say they were just doing their jobs," Vought continued. "But they are heroes too."

In the moments following the emergency response actions, Born was transported to the local Waseca Mayo Clinic where he made a full recovery.

"I'm very fortunate to live in a community where strangers help each other," Born told those in attendance.

Born recounted the day of August 15 from his perspective.

Born, along with friends, was doing volunteer work in the morning, cleaning at the VFW. The group fin-



In observance of their heroism resuscitating Arlin Born (in short sleeves), Waseca police officer Jared Chrz, area resident Brian Britton, and Waseca County sergeant Joe Fliflet received a "life saver" award. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

"Someone's not done with you yet," Waseca Mayor Randy Zimmerman told Born, pointing out the co-incidence that Born's son and Brian had been classmates.

More than 50 people listened to

the harrowing story. After the award was presented, photos were taken. Members of the police department, friends, and family, withdrew to the nearby lobby and talked for almost an hour.

2024 levy increase approved at 1.82%

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The NRHEG School board approved a \$2.4 million tax levy, an increase of 1.82% from last year, for 2024-25 tax levy Monday night. Prior to the regular meeting, the annual "Truth in Taxation" meeting was held. No members of the public were in attendance. This came as a little bit of a surprise to District Business Manager Karla Christopherson who said she expected some members of the public might attend because of the tax increase due to classification changes for agriculture land.

Christopherson proceeded to present a detailed, 30-minute report summarizing the distribution of local tax levies used to support the district.

While significant portions of the district's \$13 million annual budget are covered by state aid and federal

money, the rest is collected as local tax revenue.

Of that amount, slightly more than half comes from taxing residential property. The next largest contributors, about 30%, are commercial and industrial properties. Although farmland comprises more than 17% of the property value in the school district, farm owners pay less than 7% of the taxes because of a "school to ag" credit under which the state protects farmers by paying much more than half of their "share."

An interesting element of Christopherson's report is that, although the JWP and WEM school districts are comparable in size and services, a typical NRHEG residential taxpayer (classified as a property owner of a \$200,000 home) provides the school district with just short of \$450 in tax support, while typical homeowners in the other two districts pay nearly

School Board NRHEG

\$700. Waseca district homeowners also pay about \$700 in property taxes to support their schools.

As the truth in taxation session closed, the monthly school board meeting began.

Community education director Macy Whiteside requested increased funding to her department, explaining the number of children enrolled in childhood care programs provided by the district has almost doubled over the past two years. Referred to as School Age Care (SAC), one program takes children who are attending school up to fifth grade. They are supervised on those weekdays when

school is not held and for an hour or more prior to the start and following the end of the school day. There is also a "wrap-around" care program for children in preschool, aged 3 to 5. Because preschoolers do not attend classes daily, supervision is available from 6:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. every day. Both programs also continue into the summer.

Board chair Rick Schultz was happy to report negotiations to renew superintendent Michael Meihak's contract are looking promising. Schultz expects to have a new three-year contract to present to the board in January. Meihak's initial three-year contract expires in June of 2024.

The school board is scheduled to hold an organization meeting Tuesday, January 2, 2024 in the high School media center at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

■ Concert

from Page 1

show. "But he enjoys this." Then she gave a smile that reflected how proud she was of him.

During the show, the students changed positions so they all got a chance to be part of the choir and play the drums or xylophones. They showed their enthusiasm by waving and gesturing with their hands, swinging their bodies, and singing at the top of their lungs. It was evident they enjoyed every moment of their performance onstage.

A handful of girls wore bright black, green, or colorful sparkly dresses. One dressed up in Mrs. Claus style with a red velvet dress and white cuffs. The boys paraded in ties and vests or jackets with black jeans. Some also wore "ugly" sweaters featuring the Grinch or a reindeer.

Opening with "These are Mothers' Knives and Folks," the first-grade students also performed other folk songs like "Muffin Man" and "The

Littlest Worm." Second-graders' songs included "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," "Here Comes a Bluebird" and "Star Light, Star Bright."

Short video clips shown between songs added personal touches—interviews of students. Responses to questions ranged from witty to serious. When it came to their wishes:

"I wish everyone could be happy at school," said one little girl.

"I wish for thousands and thousands of ramen," said a boy.

The evening closed with the second-graders singing and performing Owl City's "Fireflies." The whole auditorium darkened, allowing students' flashlights and coordinated movements to mimic a summer evening highlighted by fireflies. The audience exploded in applause when the song finished.

Alexa Vasser, a second grader, shared that her favorite song was "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," but she enjoyed all the motions involved with "Fireflies" at the end. "It was all fun," she said.

It was also clear how much of an effect Schmitt's passion and guidance for his students had on them. After the concert, first-grader Char-



After the concert, first-grader Charlotte Anderson approaches Hartley music teacher David Schmitt. Photo by Rachael Jaeger

lotte Anderson approached Schmitt who asked her how she was. She responded she was good.

"Are you happy about how you did?" he asked her.

She gave him an enthusiastic nod and expressed her excitement about

an upcoming dance recital. "Making music is a great way to keep them motivated," Schmitt said after the uplifting interaction. "Because music is social."

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Live Nativity



“I want to help spread the good news,” said St. Paul Lutheran Church member and Waseca resident Rebecca Mueller. “This is a way that can reach a lot of people.”

According to organizers, the fourth annual live nativity performance set up at the church’s location along Fourth Avenue Northeast drew nearly 300 vehicles. Across the two evenings of the presentation Dec. 15 and 16, donors contributed 244 pounds of food which was delivered to the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center. From serving warm snacks and delivering handwarmers to taking roles as characters, about 45 volunteers made the panorama possible.

A highlight was Christmas caroling performed by the church’s 30 Sunday School students on Saturday evening. As they entered the drive-through display, viewers began early in the nativity story, seeing Mary visited by an angel to let her know she would be the mother of the Messiah and finishing as they came to the Christmas night scene at the manger where Mueller and her companions took the roles of Mary, Joseph, a shepherd and the wise men. Some are veterans going back to the first panorama, and remember biting cold temperatures. All expressed gratitude for the mild weather.

Among the first vehicles to drive through is one where 9-year-old Ashton is leaning out the backseat window; by his side is his puppy, Copper. Parents Chelsea and Andrew mention their son was highly enthusiastic about returning after last year’s experience. “The animals are cool,” Ashton explains. “I wanted to see it all again.” Photos by Deb Bently

2024 levy approved

By JESSICA LUTGENS
Staff Writer

The final tax levy increase for 2024 was set at 8.73% during the New Richland City Council’s last meeting of the year on Monday, Dec. 11. The tax levy and 2024 budget were approved via Resolution 23-20, with council member Jason Casey voting against the resolution.

Also approved were Resolution 23-21 accepting a donation from the Fire Relief Association and Resolution 23-22 adopting an updated city fee schedule.

The ambulance report, submitted in writing, was approved before Fire Chief Josh Moen presented the fire department report. The report stated that the department had two fire calls in the month of November and was approved.

Police Chief Tanyce Bruegger presented the police department report, stating that the NRPD responded to 171 calls in November, bringing the total number of calls for the year to 1,121. Six letters were sent out for unregistered vehicles and junk violations, of which three had been resolved at the time of the meeting. Residents are reminded that during winter months, any snowfall of two inches or more activates a requirement that vehicles be moved off the streets to allow for snow removal. The report was approved.

Bob Johannsen presented the Care Center report, noting that the average census for the center was 34 in November. The lower-than-typical count, he said, was due to a Covid outbreak between mid-October through the week of Thanksgiving, during which time 21 residents and 25 staff tested positive for Covid. The center had become free of Covid at the time of the meeting; Johannsen noted that staff and residents are hoping for a normal Christmas holiday.

It was noted that the state survey was conducted in mid November; five deficiencies were received which have since been resolved. The Fire Marshal survey was also conducted, and no deficiencies

NEW RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL

were found.

While the center continues to use agency staffing to cover shifts, new applicants have been seen so far in December. Openings at the center include laundry and dietary aide workers, CNAs, and RN or LPN. The report was approved.

Shell Johnson presented the PeopleService report, and it was noted that cleaning and televising has been completed in areas of town with known issues. A purchase request for lighting at the sewer plant at a cost of \$7,022.60 was approved along with the report.

Eric Hendrickson presented the Streets and Water report, which stated that 33 blue cards were issued in November resulting in seven shutoffs due to lack of payment. Purchase requests for a salt spreader at a cost of \$942 and a pump for backwash at the water plant at a cost of \$2,768 plus the cost of the electrician were approved, along with the report.

In unfinished business, utility billing was discussed, and the council agreed to switch from the current payment company to Paya, a company that “gives utility customers a lot more control over their account,” according to City Administrator Tony Martens. The new system will go into effect in March following a required 90-day notice with the current utility billing company.

In new business, the following items were approved: Martens signing the annual audit agreement with Abdo, the water and sewer enterprise fund, updated personnel policy following a requirement by the state beginning Jan. 1, 2024 requiring all part-time and temporary employees to receive earned sick and save time, city fund policy, drug and alcohol-free workplace policy, and a three-year contract with DocuWare.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Board rules out \$36 million referendum

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

At their Dec. 7 evening work sessions, members of the Waseca School Board examined a big question from many angles.

How should the district respond to the many structural difficulties in the Hartley Elementary building?

School superintendent Eric Hudspith suggested there are three options: Expand the Waseca Intermediate School and move all K-6 operations there at a cost of about \$36 million; spend \$8 million or less to “bridge” the Hartley building through the next 15 to 20 years; or send the school’s administrative team in search of other possible plans.

Board members appear to be in agreement with board chair Julie Anderson’s statement, “Doing nothing at this point is not an option.”

School board members were encouraged to speak their minds.

More than one of them, including Dave Dunn and Charlie Priebe,

stated that consolidating all younger students into a single location would allow more efficient use of staff time, facility resources, and special programming. “It could save us a lot of money in the long term,” said Priebe.

It was admitted repeatedly that there is “no appetite for a \$36 million project,” which would have to be supported by a referendum vote. School board members cited community uncertainty surrounding whether the county will carry out a major construction project for a new jail or justice center, and strong public feeling regarding additional taxes.

A number of circumstances were mentioned, including that agricultural land would be shielded from some of the tax increase for a school referendum by a state alleviation program. Board members also considered using “long term facility maintenance” (LTFM) money: the district receives roughly \$700,000 each year to spend or accrue toward long-term, major costs. Hudspith

WASECA SCHOOL BOARD

mentioned upcoming regularly scheduled work on the roofs at the Waseca Junior Senior High School (WJSHS) and the Central building as examples. Also on the list for future upgrades are improving the track and perhaps replacing the grass field at the football field with turf.

Still, he postulated, it is permissible for the district to use part of the LTFM money and then “pay itself back.” The advantage is that no referendum vote is needed; the disadvantage is that probably no more than \$1.5 Million could be acquired that way—nowhere near the \$6 to \$8 million needed for priority projects—among them replacing the outdated water pipes at Hartley.

After extensive discussion, school board members seemed to concur that performing repairs and possible additional construction at Hartley is

the option community members are most likely to support. Further discussion will occur regarding which projects will receive priority and whether the referendum sent to voters in fall of 2024 will be for \$6 or \$8 million.

Also addressed at the Dec. 7 meeting was an upcoming trip to Peru proposed by the World Language department. Spanish teachers Nancy Kaplan and Mary Gilson described a trip which would take students to the historic sites in the capital city of Lima; to Machu Picchu, the Incan ceremonial center located in the country’s mountains; the historic city center of Cusco, and more.

Students would be expected to commit to taking part in the trip early in 2024. The eight-night trip will take place in 2025, giving participants time to set money aside and make the needed payments on the \$3,850 cost. Adults can also take part; their cost would be \$4,290.

County reduces levy to .5%

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

The Waseca County board of commissioners held a pair of meetings the evening of Dec. 19.

During the “Budget hearing presentation,” county administrator Michael Johnson walked those in attendance through a 22-slide presentation which summarized the steps taken to arrive at a levy amount.

As commissioners had requested during a prior meeting, Johnson’s summary included numbers which would result if, rather than the “preliminary” 1.5 percent levy specified in September, the county were to apply a levy increase of 0, .5, or 1 percent.

After examining the alternate numbers, commissioners voted to change the “payable 2024” county tax levy rate from 1.5 to .5 percent. According to Johnson’s calculations, the decrease will mean \$17.8 million of the county’s \$39.4 million budget will come from property taxes, rather than \$18 million. The change, Johnson said, might lead to some reductions or changes in services, but he felt it could be managed or might be balanced out by possible increases in money from other sources.

Commissioner Doug Christopher-

son, whose motion led to the eventually-unanimous vote, explained, “It’s well known that people [on the board] own ag land,” he observed. “But this [reduction] isn’t just because of pressure on ag land.

“I’m suggesting it because it’s the right thing to do.” Making reference to how much money the county chooses to place in “reserve” accounts, he continued, “We’ve got to not fear tomorrow and do what we can today.”

About 20 members of the public arrived prior to the budget hearing, which was also serving as the “truth in taxation” session publicized in advance and listed on their property tax notifications. After the announcement that individual taxes would not be addressed as part of the meeting’s agenda, but that county assessor Brock Nelson was available in a nearby conference room, nearly all met with Nelson and left.

Action taken during the regular county board meeting which occurred at 5:30 on Dec. 19 included following the recommendations of the county human resources office in finalizing the 2024 salaries of a number of elected officials. Waseca County Sheriff Jay Dulas is set to receive \$127,000 (up from \$122,362 in

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2023); county attorney Rachel Cornelius’ pay will be \$138,875 (up from \$137,500 in 2023); county commissioners will have a salary of \$29,777, the same amount as they were paid in 2023. Conversation surrounding the salaries revealed that numbers were derived by comparing pay levels for the positions in other counties with demographics similar to Waseca’s.

Although she proposed no change to the commissioners’ salary amount, board member DeAnne Malterer observed, “We have to keep our eyes on this so that those who are elected after us can afford to meet the demands of this job.” Board member Krause agreed, making reference to the “constant balancing act” required for commissioners to be able to look after their own business and complete the many county leadership tasks.

The longest discussion of the regular meeting surrounded the “rent to own” arrangement requested by Chris Howard of the county’s land and water resources department.

Howard was seeking authorization to purchase a portable “televized” inspection device capable of being fed through long sections of county tile.

The agreement would entail six yearly payments of \$28,000 each, a total of \$168,000; according to administrator Johnson, this would equal about a seven-percent interest rate for equipment that would cost roughly \$140,000 if purchased outright.

Howard was granted approval for the purchase; he told commissioners its first use would be to carry out the required inspections on about 120 miles of tile supervised by the county. He said it would also be useful when an unexpected blockage occurs. The current system, he said, is to “dig where we think the problem might be,” but by feeding a camera down the line, workers could “save a lot of time and trouble spent digging, and go right to the problem.” Howard also stated the camera would be useful for confirming on-going work was proceeding successfully. He mentioned a recent tree root removal project as an example, saying the camera would allow staff to see whether roots were withdrawing as intended.

■ Lennox from Page 1

had—sports, sleepovers—I was looking outward my entire childhood. There was nowhere I could just retreat into myself and be a little boy. There was nowhere I felt I was accepted.”

By age 12, though, he had found a group that would let him in. “They were a bit older than I was, and they were doing things they probably shouldn’t, but they were willing to accept me.”

Among the “probably shouldn’t’s” were drugs and alcohol. Lennox remembers he experimented with substances at the encouragement of this group. “The first time I tried alcohol, the first time I used pot, I was violently sick.” Though he admits it was completely illogical, he continued to use for the sake of fitting in.

“I was no longer scanning,” he described. “My anxiety, my depression started to fall away; I no longer felt

worthless.” His grades, however, dropped precipitously, and he began to be marked as a troublemaker.

When Lennox was beginning eighth grade, his mother and stepfather divorced. His mother decided to move to New Richland, at least partly to get Lennox and his brother away from the negative influences in their lives.

“But now I was an outsider, I had a low self image, and I was the new kid,” Lennox observed.

Another hole in his life, he said, was the absence of his biological father, who had remained in Massachusetts where Lennox and his brother had been born.

At one point, his mother sent him and his brother to visit their father.

When the two of them arrived, their aunts had not heard from their father in some time—but they knew where to look. “He would be in one detox center or another. They called around the state and they found him, and we were able to go for a visit.”

Lennox described his father as “drizzling, and crusted over all over his face. It was about as disturbing a

picture as you would ever expect to see.”

Despite seeing the effects of addiction Lennox continued down the same path. His attendance at school was sporadic and “I failed every class but gym.” After numerous opportunities to straighten up, including being allowed to live rent-free in a house owned by his mother, he continued to “blow every opportunity.”

One positive element was his participation in football. An uncle offered to pay some of the costs so that Lennox could begin playing during his freshman year. “I was pretty good,” he says. “I was finally finding a place in the popular crowd.”

The four years of his career were peppered with penalties. After getting a DUI, rules required that he sit out a significant part of his sophomore season. Failing grades also affected his playing time.

“By my junior year, I was one of those people I always used to be jealous of.” But then, he says, he became greedy. He treated those close to him rudely; “I pushed them away,” he

said.

“Unbelievably, even though I had once been someone who was looked down on, who was called names, I now began to do that to others.” The backlash from those choices put him back where he had once been—lonely, and looking for anyone willing to accept him.

“I came back for my senior year of football,” he remembers. “I wanted to do one season right—and we had a great record—maybe one of the best ever here at NRHEG.”

But when the football season ended he drew away from school almost completely. Having destroyed his mother’s trust, he had nowhere to live.

“I was homeless,” he said. “I would wander around town begging for drugs from people who might give them to me and looking for loose change to buy something to eat.” He describes eating crumbled-up dry ramen noodles as a meal.

“I slept just about anywhere you can imagine,” he said. “On park benches, in the back seats of people’s cars.

Donation

Todd Schmidt presents Cindy Kolander of the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center with the \$30,385 raised from the Santa Anonymous auction. A total of 265 kids will benefit from this year’s donation.

Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

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The Waseca Vocal Music Department put on a winter concert performance for the high school students at the WJSHS Performing Arts Center on Monday, December 18. Photos by Rachael Jaeger

Concert brings harmonic delight

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

The Waseca Vocal Music Department put on a winter concert performance for the high school students at the WJSHS Performing Arts Center on Monday, December 18. Before the concert started, the energy from the students and audience tingled throughout the auditorium, then remained in the air for the duration of the program.

The State Street Singers opened the program, vocalizing various themes on “Fa La La.” Beginning with the traditional phrase from “Deck the Halls,” the number cast the words from many different angles, in one case even using it as a playful argument between sections. The group’s elegant matching wardrobe, rich intermingling of voices and obvious pleasure in performing gave them a quick connection with all members of the audience. The State Street Singers finished their introductory segment with Winter Wonderland and Carol of the Bells.

The second set of performances came from the male and female sextets. Numbers included “What Child is This,” “Winter Song,” and “White Winter Hymnal.” Violet Rohwer played solo violin for “Winter Song,” something that added nostalgia to the sound and deepened the musical diversity.

“White Winter Hymnal” became a quick, clear favorite for the audience. Students sang a capella while not only harmonizing their voices but also adding rhythm by snapping their fingers, clapping their hands and tapping their chests. As the number ended, there was an instant of pleased silence before the audience broke into thunderous applause.

Classic favorites followed in the Concert Choir section of the program, including “A Wreath of Carols,” “One Candle,” “Thar’s Christmas to Me,” and “The Polar Express: A Choral Medley.” Numerous short solos peppered the

performances as individuals stepped forward from the group, performed, and returned to the ranks.

Mr. Lawrence, Hannah La-Croix, and Collin Dettmer added another layer to the musical diversity with drums, tambourines, and a trumpet in “Hope for Resolution” and “Hydom, Tiddlydom.”

Select Choir, the last section to perform for the evening, brought another audience favorite in the form of a duet: Layla Keith and Andres Vasquez-Neigebauer’s performed “Carry the Light.” As the duo finished and stepped away from the lights, the audience whistled and applauded. Keith and Vasquez-Neigebauer’s voices complemented each other’s while they performed, delighting the audience with perfect harmony.

George Frideric Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” from Messiah was the last song of the evening. Megan Kreinbring, the choir director, invited family members or friends of the students to join them on stage to participate. A good number accepted the invitation, adding to the smiles of both audience members and the students.

“They’ve been awesome and very receptive,” Kreinbring said about her experience preparing her students for the show. “I can already tell from our concert tonight that they’re starting to watch me and learn how I work.”

Soloists Trista Stinehart, Collin Dettmer, and Eli Miller held candles as they began “Stille Nacht” (“Silent Night”) in German, then invited the audience to join them singing verses in English. Other group members lined the right side of the stage holding candles.

Kreinbring said that every year she chooses a theme and selects songs which center around it. This year’s central idea was “light,” which is why students also held candles during certain songs and times.

Handmade, home goods



ST. PAUL’S - Serving food and selling handmade home goods from members of their church, the ladies of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church raised money for various ministries at their annual Christmas Bazaar last Saturday. Serving, from left are Lila Schaal, Laurie Lemmon, Cheri Brummund, Judie Waters, and Megan Johanneck. Serving pie are, from left: Pam Rudolf, Jeannette Williams, Cindy Wood, Linda Seifert and Rhonda Christianson. Pioneer photos by Tristan Gehring

I cannot put off Christmas shopping

By PASTOR KEN ANDRS

I am going to the mall tonight. I have put it off long enough, I cannot do any more online shopping, stores won’t deliver in time for me to get the presents anyways. So, I will go to the mall to get presents that aren’t perfect but fulfill the social norm of demonstrating love to others. I just hope that the people that get the gifts know that I tried to find something perfect.

I think that is why I have put this off for so long. I want the gift to be perfect. Something that they can use, something that I can encourage them with, and something that they will be excited to receive. Unfortunately, I have no control over their response.

If I had control over their response then everything would be great, I would get the squealing excitement and the genuine look of joy in their



eyes with the heartfelt thanks. I don’t have control though, I have my purposeful gift, my intentional hunt, and my focused love. The gifts I give come from my heart to their perceived need.

Throughout the history of the world gifts have been given, sometimes with much thought, others with more sarcasm or disregard, still more to garner favor or from people forced to give them. These gifts had a secondary purpose, a purpose to gain an advantage of some time over others. The purpose was not for the benefit of

The gift of God is salvation, accomplished by His work, not our own. This is the gift we have been given, a gift that we have done nothing to deserve, a part of what God has given us. He also gave us life and the opportunity to do good, it is now time for our response. We have a choice of how we will respond to the gift offered to us.

We have been offered a gift that we did not know we needed, but it was the perfect gift for us given at just the right time and in just the right way. Now, how will we respond? Will you accept the gift of salvation? Will your heart be transformed to do good?

May this Christmas season remind you of all God has done for you in the gift He gave you and that your response to that gift gives Him great joy.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-835-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m. * * *	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 1221 8th St SE, Waseca 507-835-2213 Sunday worship 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m. * * *	ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Father Brian Mulligan Saturday - 5 p.m. Mass * * *	JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 401 N. West St., Janesville Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship * * *
4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m. * * *	CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY 900 14th Ave SE, Waseca 507-833-1082 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m. * * *	FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Rev. Michael Mathews, pastor Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class * * *	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) * * *
FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.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 * * *	IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship * * *	ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH 307 W. 2nd St, Janesville 10 a.m. - Mass * * *
CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH 309 6th St NE, Waseca 507-835-9176 Worship Sundays traditional 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Sunday School/Fellowship; 10:45 a.m. contemporary service * * *	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Otisoc, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship * * *	ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Pastor Ava Adams-Morris Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship * * *	FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 Owen St., Janesville Pastor Sarah Krolak * * *
ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH 401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca 507-833-1703 Sundays 9:00 a.m. * * *	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 * * *	ST. JOSEPH’S CATHOLIC Waldorf, Minnesota Father Brian Mulligan Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship * * *	ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH Alma City, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * *
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH 314 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-2647 Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m. * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN Wilton Township Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship * * *	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 EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Smiths Mill, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship * * *
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-4548 (office email: 1cwaseca@hickorytech.net) Worship Sunday 10 a.m. * * *	FIRST CONGREGATIONAL New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Pamela Jensen Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * *	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 * * *	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 * * *
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m. * * *	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 * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 412 N. Main Street, Janesville Interim Pastor Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:15 a.m. Worship * * *	NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca 507-835-1222 Worship Saturday 5:15 p.m., Sundays 8:00 and 10:00 a.m., weekdays 8:30 a.m. Tues., Wed. and Fri., 7:00 a.m. Thurs. * * *	VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship * * *		
REAL LIFE CHURCH 620 W Elm Ave, Waseca 507-607-8245 Sunday worship 10 a.m. * * *	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 * * *		
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS 1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca 507-835-4640 Sacrament meeting 10:00 a.m. * * *			

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Argus Archives

100 years ago

-Congressman Anderson has been notified by the postoffice department that three names eligible to appointment as postmaster of Janesville have been certified to by the civil service commission - Mathew W. Keeley, the present postmaster, Fred B. Volz and Fred G. Fratzke. The examination was held last June. A selection will be made within the next two or three weeks. In the meantime, the supporters of the respective eligibles are putting in their work.

-Several towns along the line of the Northwestern road affected by the train service have taken up the matter of restoring the trains suspended last July. It is not overstating the fact when we say that Janesville is probably interested to a greater degree than any other town. The two trains referred to are No. 6 that passed this point at 1:54 p.m. and No. 507 due here at 7:00 p.m. these two trains more than all others combined gave to Janesville and its people opportunities unexcelled in getting to Mankato and return and to Waseca and return.

-Thursday afternoon the Town Hall was completely filled by an audience, some of whom came from as far as Pemberton, to hear Colonel Dan Morgan Smith, commander of the "Battalion of Death" in the great war. The speech had been extensively advertised through posters sent out by the National Anti-Saloon League from its headquarters in Ohio. Letters to many people from the same source also heralded the event. This was supplemented by readers and display advertising in the local paper, contributed for the good of the cause.

-The editor does not want anyone to send him any more copies of his paper in which they find mistakes. If they find a perfect copy, however, he will pay a big price for it. If the fool critic who hunts for mistakes in the newspapers would find them all, he would be kept busy. We will be pleased to buy copies of any paper which can be proven entirely free from errors, either typographically or in statements of fact.

-Like all its preceding events, the supper and bazaar given by the ladies of St. Ann's congregation held on Wednesday, the 6th, at the Town Hall, was a great success. Hundreds availed themselves of the privilege and opportunity to partake of the supper served from five o'clock. Later the various articles upon which chances had been sold were disposed of. It was as genuinely a happy even in this respect as it was alluring and enjoyable.

75 years ago

-Lads were "hot" - Waterville defeated by score of 41-27 - after losing to New Richland High School in basketball, the Golden Bears jumped right back into the win column Tuesday night by trouncing the fast Buccaneers of Waterville High School by a good point margin, the score reading 41-27 when the final whistle sounded. Coach Chiodo's lads showed a marked improvement over the ragged play displayed at New Richland when they lost 26-19.

-The Janesville Water and Light Board is offering \$50.00 in prizes for a combination of outside and inside Christmas lighting of Janesville homes over the Christmas season as follows: 1st prize, \$20.00; 2nd prize, \$15; 3rd prize, \$10; and 4th prize \$5. The contest will be open to all residents of the community except members of the Water and Light Board, their families, and employees of the local Municipal Utilities.

Back in the day (Waseca)



25 Years Back - 1998

The Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center's Santa Anonymous distribution is being held this week. More than 10,000 items were collected and will be distributed to more than 300 children in Waseca County. Sarah Madsen (left), Nicholas Madsen, Adam Madsen and Amanda Madsen were some of the many local residents who bought items this year.

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Back in the day (Waseca)

100 Years - 1923

• The Brown boys finished grading the east road to Janesville and it is a good job. They got in a full season with three crews, laying up only six days during eight months of road construction this year.

• New Low Prices on Studebaker Closed Cars: Light-Six two-pass. Coupe-Roadster, \$1,195; Light-Six five-pass. Coupe, \$1,395; Light-Six five-pass. Sedan, \$1,485; Special-Six five-pass. Coupe, \$1,895; Special-Six five-pass. Sedan, \$1,985; Bix-Six five-pass. Coupe, \$2,495; Big-Six seven-pass. Sedan, \$2,685--Lewer, Woodhall, Cunningham Co., Inc.

• J.W. Hollmichel of Elysian called the Herald office this morning and informed us that farmers were plowing in several fields as he came to town. Weather which permits of fall plowing on Dec. 20 is something unusual for Minnesota. Old settlers, however, report similar weather once or twice in the last 50 years. The ice man need not worry, however, as Minnesota's ice crop has never failed.

• Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Smith were passengers to Minneapolis Thursday to be in attendance at the annual meeting of the Hotel and Restaurant Men's Association, which was held at the Radisson hotel.

• Mrs. Frank Moshier, Mrs. Tony McDonald and Mrs. John Harmer were among those who spent Saturday business visitors in Mankato.

• Mrs. George Laudert and Mr. and Mrs. Ross Marple and family of New Richland drove over Sunday afternoon and visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H.F. Laudert.

• Mr. and Mrs. Barney Harguth arrived home Monday evening from Duluth, where they had been visiting Mrs. Harguth's parents and other relatives and friends in the northern part of the state.

75 Years Back - 1948

• Over 1,000 children from Waseca and surrounding territory roared their approval of the Shriner's first annual Christmas party Monday at the State Theater. The top attraction, of course, was Santa Claus who handed out bags of candy, nuts and popcorn balls.

• Curt Schultz took a 1,000 to 1 chance with his life and won. Schultz is back home today after undergoing the only operation of its kind ever attempted at Minneapolis Veterans' hospital. He had an enlargement of the large artery in his abdomen and chose to undergo surgery with the 1,000 to 1 chance of coming through alive.

• Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Lewison and family and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Connelly of Owatonna spent the week end at the home of Mrs. Lewison's and Mrs. Connelly's mother, Mrs. Ernest Boje, who is improving from an illness.

• Robert Carlin, who is attending St. John's seminary at Collegeville, arrived Saturday to spend his Christmas vacation with his mother and other relatives.

• John Patton, who is attending the Washington University at St. Louis, Mo., arrived at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. B.F. Patton on Sunday evening for the holiday season.

• Eight "smart-alek" teen agers were taken before Judge Leon J. B. Sexton this morning on charges of being a general nuisance at the Trowbridge Park skating rink. "They throw snow balls, push the young kids around and are constant trouble makers," park board supervisors John Scholer and Alfred Wetzstein charged. When the park board employees tried to keep the troublemakers off the rink, they scuffled with them. The judge will talk to the group this afternoon and take some action.

50 Years Back - 1973

• Another four accidents were reported on Waseca streets Wednesday. Chief of Police Earl Halleck said that brings the number of accidents which have occurred since last Friday up to 15.

• Owatonna will have a new 200,000 square foot shopping center by spring of 1975 it was announced Wednesday. The new center will be built adjacent to South Cedar Street and County Road 45 South in Southeast Owatonna.

• Matawan-Mr. and Mrs. David Ratigan entertained their 500 Card Club at their home Saturday evening. Those attending were Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Crumb, Albert Lea; Mr. and Mrs. Orland Hagen, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Corvell, Mr. and Mrs. John Crumb and Mr. and Mr. and Mrs. Curt Krause, Waseca.



Verses of "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" drifted through the empty Trinity Lutheran Church in North Morristown Friday afternoon as children prepared for their Christmas Eve Church Service program. Singing carols in front of a 16-foot pine tree were: Kevin Kuball, Brenda Schulz, Dale Johnson and Sandy Schmidtke.

25 Years Back - 1998

The Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center's Santa Anonymous distribution is being held this week. More than 10,000 items were collected and will be distributed to more than 300 children in Waseca County. Sarah Madsen (left), Nicholas Madsen, Adam Madsen and Amanda Madsen were some of the many local residents who bought items this year.

• Winners in the Waseca Holiday Lighting contest were: traditional - first, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Miller; second, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ferry; third, Trevor Kanewischer; religious - first, Mr. and Mrs. James Rohde; second, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Harguth; third, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Zimmerman; business - Apple Annie's; block party - Caroler's Lane.

Looking Back (New Richland)

100 Years Back - 1923

• The stores which provide heavy winter clothing are not the only ones to have their business calculations upset by the unprecedented continuance of warm weather. The state highway department did not bargain for soft surfaces, requiring continual repair, at a season when Jack Frost should have made a solid roadway of water and soil, and is gazing ruefully at a growing deficit.--Ellendale Eagle

• The following families spent Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Will Schue: Mr. and Mrs. John Boettger and family, Mr. and Mrs. John Greenwood and family, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Schue and son, Roger, Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Thatcher and Ed. Young.

• For the first time in the history of the local rural mail service, the carriers are to be given a holiday on Christmas day. The Postmaster General has approved an amendment to the Postal Laws and Regulations which gives the rural carriers Christmas day off.

• George Engel disposed of his resident property in New Richland last week to Tim Linnihan and the latter family expect to occupy the house soon. The present Linnihan residence will be occupied by the Arthur Madden family.

• Siegfried Herbst is expected to arrive today from the University at Iowa City, Iowa, where he is a junior in the college of medicine. He will spend his vacation with his parents, Rev. and Mrs. John Herbst.

• According to the report issued by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, there were shipped into New Richland and sold during the year 1922, 122,000 gallons of gasoline. Figuring the gasoline consumption at 20c a gallon the New Richland community paid the oil companies during last year \$24,000 for gasoline alone.

77 Years Back - 1946

• Gerald Johnson has been released from the army and reached home with his discharge Tuesday. He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Johnson. When he left Florida the mercury stood at 80 degrees. He was welcomed with near zero temperature.

• Mr. and Mrs. Ben Woolworth attended a Christmas party given by the railroad Christmas club at the Albert Lea armory Thursday evening.

• Several girl friends were entertained at the S.J. Root home Wednesday evening at a birthday party given in honor of Marlene Root.

• Albert Verplank tells us that the Gerald Bolemans have rented his farm, occupied this year by the Sylvan Bergs who purchased a farm, and feels fortunate.

• Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kopischke, Mr. and Mrs. Edison Oftedahl of Alma City, Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Kopischke of Waseca, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Schlaak and son, Wayne, and Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Wood and daughter, Sharlene, were visitors Sunday evening at the Ben Schlaak home.

• Mr. and Mrs. Lars Paulson were host and hostess to a dinner party at their home Saturday evening. Guests were Mrs. Phoebe Mae Boyce of Waseca, Lyle Alexander, Mr. and Mrs. H.A. Anderson and Mr. and Mrs. Dean Schweers and family.

50 Years Back - 1973

• Over 450 persons attended the annual meeting of the Richland Coop Service last Thursday evening and listened to an annual report which showed a total sales volume of \$1,224,336 in their last year of business. This was the largest the cooperative has ever had at an annual meeting.



Big folk and little folk alike enjoyed sitting on Santa's knee and telling him their heart's desires. At the top Jackie Entwisle must be wishing for a dolly. In the lower photo Floyd Routh finds Santa's knee comfortable as he tells him he wishes he could be back on the grader plowing snow down New Richland's main street.

25 Years Back - 1998



Santa and Mrs. Claus visited New Richland on the first cold day of winter, last Saturday, courtesy of the New Richland Commercial Club. Here Mrs. Claus hands a bag of candy to Santa to give to Thomas Wacholz. Thomas claimed he had been very good, had a list of requests and added that he had some little siblings waiting in the car for their bags of candy!

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LETTERS TO SANTA

What do you want from Santa this year? What is your favorite winter time activity?
Second-grade students at Team Academy speak out in their letters to the Jolly Old Guy.

LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa,

I am 7 years old.
I have been good this year.
I love you Santa.
I would like my pappies
Home, tiny squishmallow,
a watch, a unicorn
with rainbow hair,
elf pajamas, unicorn
pajamas, unicorn bedding,
a giant snowman, a christmas
dollhouse with dolls, stuffed santa.

FROM Zabella W

LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa,

I am seven years old.
I would like some slime.
I would also like a stuffed
animal.
For my mom, a hand
warmer, dad would like
baseball stuff, Zayla would
like a chew toy, for Rocky a
stuffed animal too. Does
Rudolph like anything other
than carrots? How many
elves are there? I would
also like a squishie. How do
you get in to the houses
without a chimney? Do
you like anything other
than milk? What is your
favorite cookie?

FROM Eve

LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa,

I am eight years old. I like
been good this year. I like you Santa.
This year I would like guitars, cars,
milkshakes, trucks, footballs, kites, a watch.

FROM John

LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa,

I am 7 years old.
I have been good this
year.
I love you Santa.
This year I would
like a monster truck,
squishmallows, phone,
guitar, stuffed animals,
build a doll house
with a stuffed in the
house, skateboard, dog
house and helmet.
How tall are you?
What is your
favorite cookie?

FROM Jayson

LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa, I am seven years old.
I have on the Extra Nite,
Nico and Dancer on the
Nico Meter and the FEs
have been busy this year.
I want a new Harry
Stick for Christmas.
Do all of your riders like
cookies? Yes or no and can you
ship to bring me better stuff?

FROM Ridley Duane Perce

LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa,

I am eight years old.
I have been good this year.
I love you Santa. This year
I would like for Dale, football,
legos, video games, Nerf guns,
skateboard, board games, how many
miles do you travel? Am I on the nice
list? What does Rudolph do in the
North Pole?

FROM Anthony

LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa,

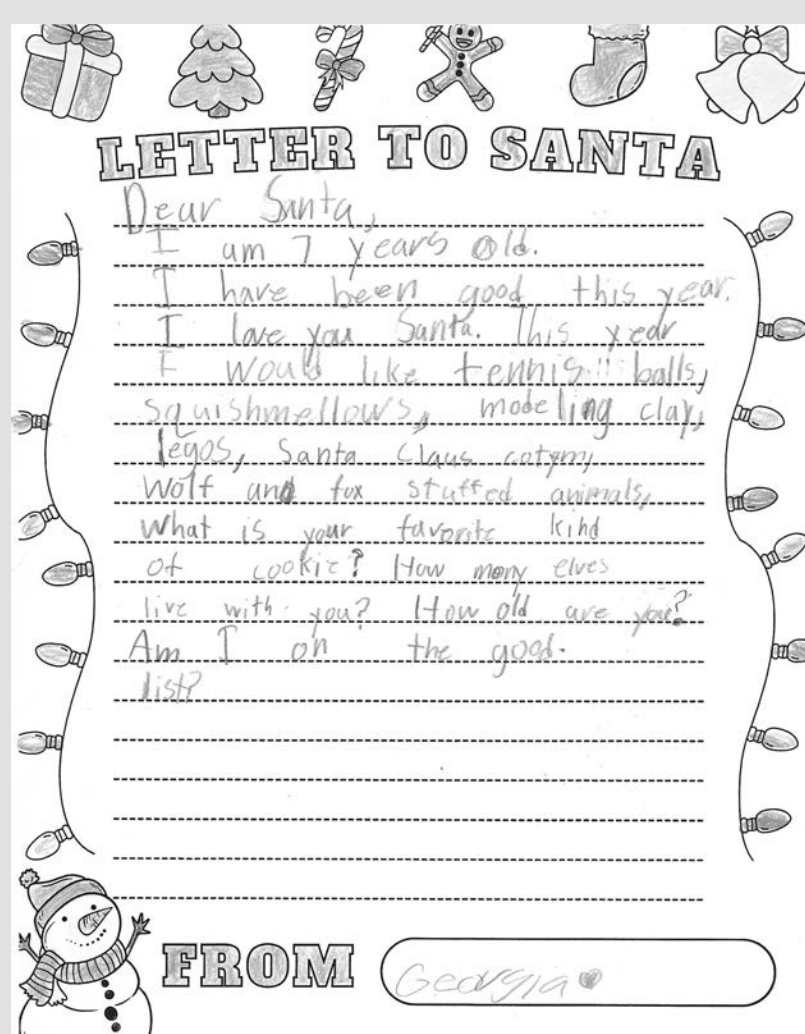
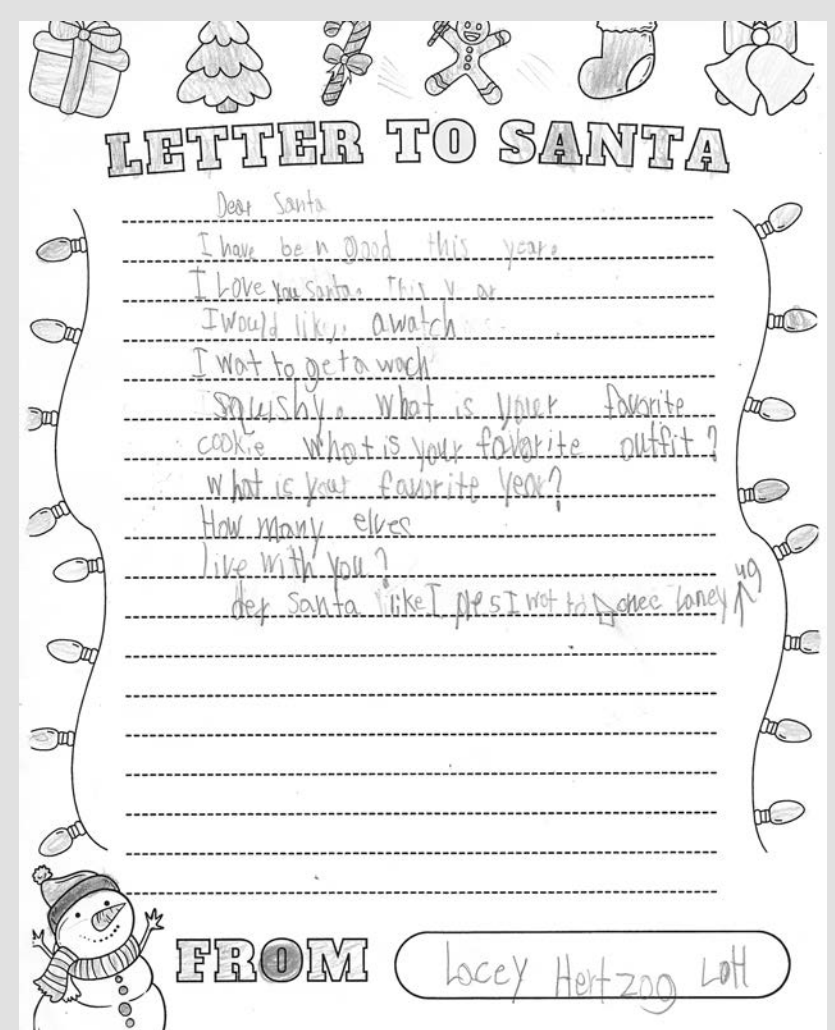
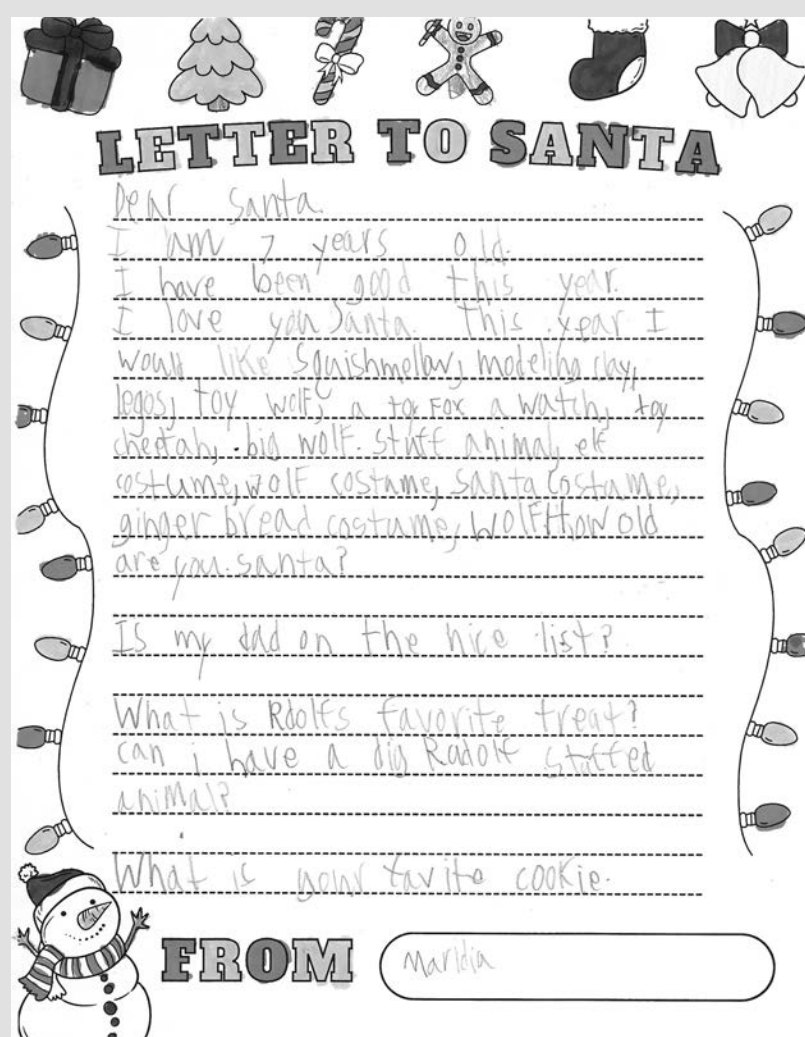
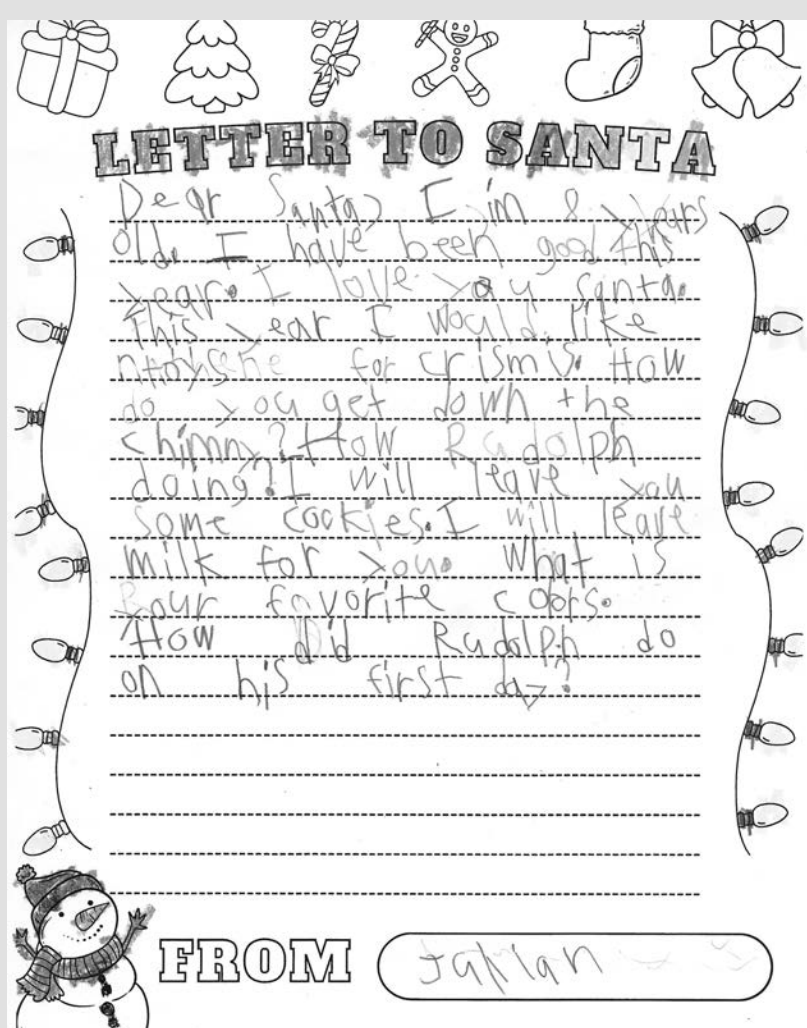
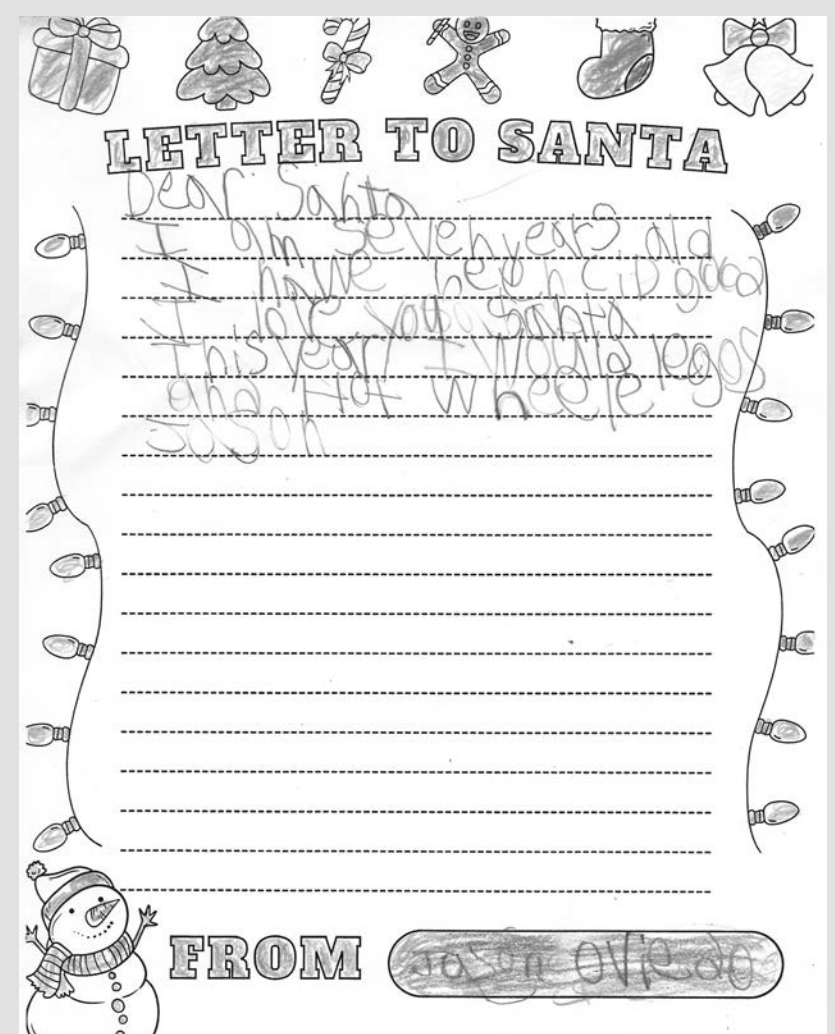
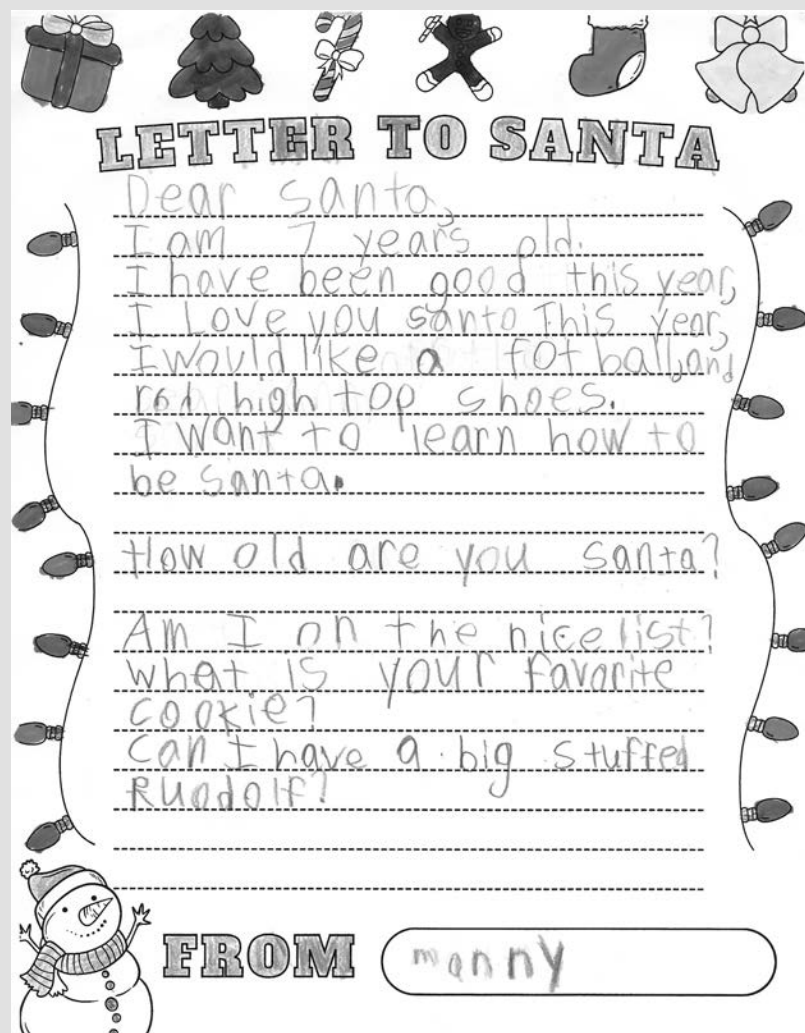
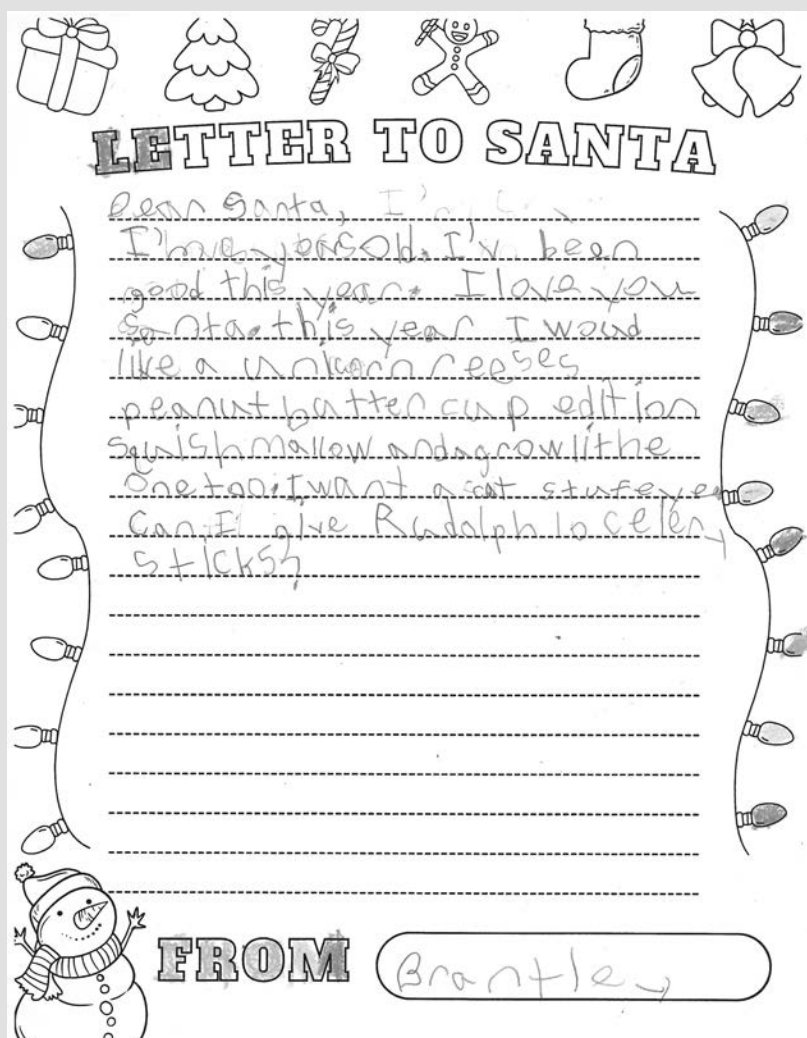
I am 7 years old.
I have been good this year.
I love you Santa. This year
I would like squishmallows,
modeling clay.
What is your favorite cookie?
What is Rudolph's favorite
treat? Am I on the naughty
or nice list?
I want a squishie.
DUN.

FROM Laney



LETTERS TO SANTA

What do you want from Santa this year? What is your favorite winter time activity? Second-grade students at Team Academy speak out in their letters to the Jolly Old Guy.



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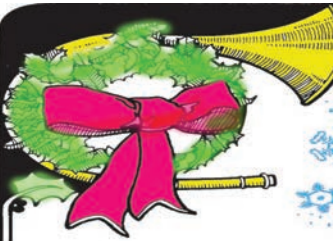
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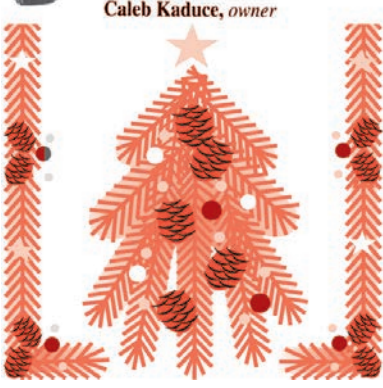
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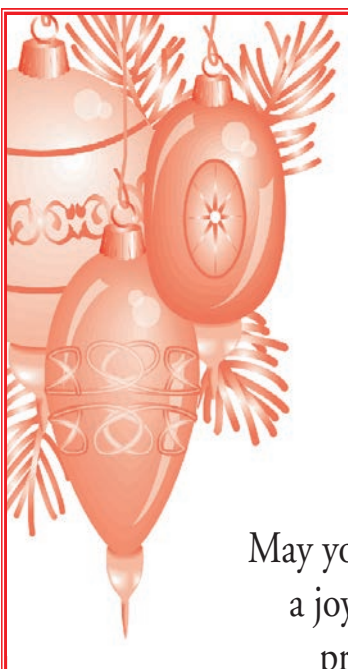
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GREETINGS**



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Christmas is filled
with love, warmth
and happiness. Your
continuing patron-
age has made this
Christmas a wonder-
ful one for us.

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**Wishing You
and Yours
the Happiest
of Holidays**



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a joyous Christmas and a
prosperous New Year.

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With Glad Tidings
At Year's End

...And many thanks for your kind and loyal support.
Have a wonderful holiday!

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ALL THE
BEST TO OUR
CUSTOMERS
AND FRIENDS
AT THIS
HOLIDAY SEASON

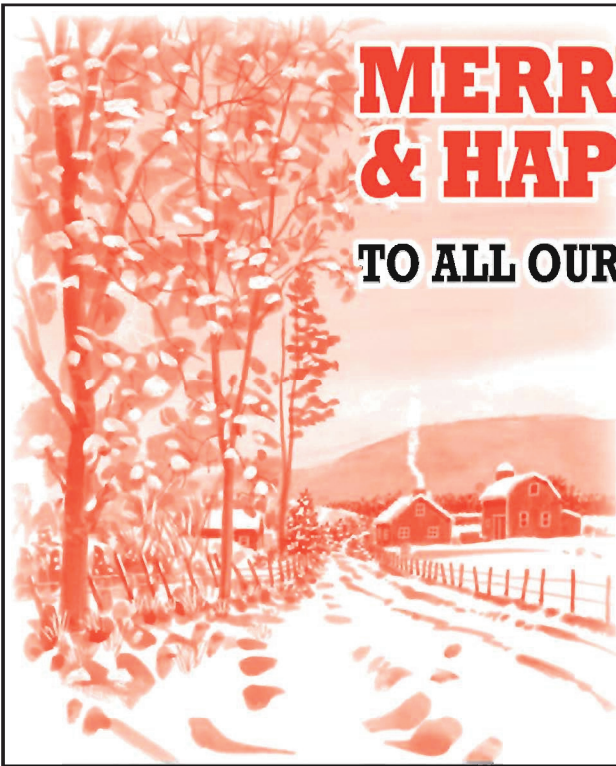
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Christmas!



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Thinking Of You At The Holidays

With thoughts of you at Christmastime,
We'd like to take the latitude --
To offer you our very best
And to give you our gratitude!



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Merry Christmas

& HAPPY NEW YEAR



WISHING YOU & YOURS A VERY HAPPY
HOLIDAY SEASON!



Merry Christmas

to all from Blain Nelson at

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Merry Christmas



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