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WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY

No. 23 Vol. III \$2

Office at 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca

Friday, June 7, 2024



Inside



Graduation

Fantastic Creatures of the World at Waseca Library June 10

Learn about fantasy creatures from around the world at Waseca Public Library on Monday, June 10th at 10 am. Create playdough golems, find leprechaun gold, dance in a fairy ring, figure out Sphinx riddles, and more. Ages 7-12.

Level Up: Paper Plane Science at Janesville Library June 10

Kids can build different kinds of paper airplanes and test them scientifically to see which one is the best at Janesville Public Library on Monday, June 10th at 2 pm. This free event is geared for ages 7-12.

Friendship Bracelets at Waseca Library June 11

Make a friendship bracelet with your favorite song, phrase, or book title at Waseca Public Library on Tuesday, June 11th at 1 pm. Then swap bracelets—collect ‘em all. Ages 13-18.

Farm Bureau taste of the farm event June 11

Join Waseca County Farm Bureau at the Waseca County Fair Grounds on June 11 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Join this family-friendly event! A free meal will be served (until gone), farm animals, farm equipment, and other fun activities will be on site.

Pepito’s Pizza/Ward House hosting fundraiser for Waseca Area Caregivers June 11

Funds raised from a June 11 fundraiser at Pepito’s Pizzeria and Ward House Brewery, from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. will go towards continuing the mission of the WACS to provide a holistic approach in supporting aging adults and their family caregivers. A special that night will be one pizza, and two home made root beers at a cost of \$35.

Janesville Hay Daze Fun Run June 12

Early sign up is available for those interested in participating in the June 12 Hay Daze Fun Run. Event begins with a kids race at 6:30 p.m., followed by a 5k at 7 p.m. Signup online at: janesvillemnhaydaze.weebly.com/fun-run.

Chip in Farm to Fork Dinner June 13

FarmAmerica is hosting “Chip In,” a golf-centered dinner and fundraiser at 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 13. The evening will include a “chipping” competition with farm equipment as the target. Costs are \$100 a person with group rates available. Visit the FarmAmerica website for more information.

Jedi Adventure Begins at Waseca Library June 13

Kids will be boggled as the Jedi Master demonstrates unimaginable feats showing the power of the force at Waseca Public Library on Thursday, June 13th at 10 am. It's all MAGIC! Kids are invited to become padawans and learn how to fight the dark side. Ages 5-12.

*A word from
The Word*

*I can do all things
through him who
strengthens me..*

Philippians 4:13



Waseca graduation held Sunday

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

They stood together for the final time. One by one, they walked out into the world. The 120 members of the Waseca High School class of 2024 graduated Sunday afternoon, June 2, 2024 in a packed gymnasium in Waseca.

The seniors walked solemnly into the gym to the tune of “Pomp and Circumstance.” The graduating class and audience were welcomed by Senior Class President Evelyn O’Brien.

“The milestone of graduating high school signifies over thirteen years of daily education,” O’Brien said. “It feels like a very long time, but it’s hard to believe that it’s already over.

“We began high school with one of the biggest obstacles of our lives, a global pandemic,” O’Brien continued. “Nevertheless, we made it through, and we are now at the opening of a new adventure. Our path was closed off and seemed to be limited, but now our options are endless.”

The class’s motto, “Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory,” was quite fitting for the class speakers who spoke next: Tricia Cox, Emma Keith, and Addison Wieseler. They each touched on important aspects needed in life.

Cox compared the first steps after high school to her move to Waseca. Her family traveled 1,806 miles from Oregon to Waseca.

“The Chinese Philosopher Lao Tzu once said, ‘The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,’” she said. “Now, when Lao Tzu said it begins with a single step, he failed to mention where that first step is taken. Maybe he left it unknown because it doesn’t quite matter where you start, but that you’re going. My journey in Waseca started when we moved here from Oregon, and



Waseca High School held its graduation ceremony in the school gymnasium on Sunday, June 2, 2024
Pioneer photos by Amelia Roessler



now that we’re all here today, we’re beginning a new journey. One beyond Waseca High School.

“From the unwavering support of our teachers and staff, our participation in school activities, and Mr. Nelson and Mr. Hedevare’s reminders to make ‘good choices’ and ‘be loud, be proud, be Blue-jays,’ we have gained knowledge, fulfillment, and belonging. Those are things that don’t go unno-

ticed, and what make the Waseca community so strong.”

“Once again, congratulations to the Class of 2024,” Cox concluded. “Here’s to the next 999 miles of our journey—as we leave here and lead

Waseca continued on 4



Annabelle hugs her mom, Lynette Petsinger, during the parent appreciation. Below, Payton Bunn.



Above right, Faith Nielsen. Below, class officer Jaylin Raab presents a posthumous diploma to the family of classmate Samuel Houle.
Photos by Eli Lutgens



NRHEG ceremony presents 57 diplomas

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The 57 members of the NRHEG class of 2024 graduated Sunday afternoon in a packed high school gymnasium in New Richland.

Principal Grant Berg got the show rolling as he lightheartedly welcomed and thanked NRHEG board members, faculty, staff, parents, guardians, and all those who made graduation possible.

Berg said he wanted to keep the introduction short and sweet, and he did.

Berg introduced the NRHEG

band, which played the traditional “last song together,” a composition played sometime during the seniors’ career, and one they selected as a favorite. This year’s choice was “Glorious” by composer Masa Fukada.

Class speakers Brenna Sommer, Jaylin Raab and Hallie Schultz, elected by their peers, addressed the group’s shared experiences in elementary grades, secondary school, and looking toward the future.

“Since that first day of kindergarten, through middle school, and even high school, we have had students move away, new students join

us, and our class has adapted and developed in several ways,” Sommer said. “One of the things I love most about being a part of this class is how close we are and how many memories we will be taking with us as we part ways.

“We learned about kindness, compassion, empathy, forgiveness, and responsibility among many others,” Sommer continued. “We were given the foundation to grow in who we are and who we could be. We gained support systems and relationships that will last a lifetime and carry us through any circumstance. So yes,

the NRHEG elementary school provided us with the necessities to be successful in middle school and high school, and even beyond that. But the most important things it gave us were the friendships and memories we will cherish for the rest of our lives.”

Raab was the second speaker and talked about his personal transition to NRHEG from a large school during his eighth-grade year. He talked about the present, “today.”

“As you all may know, today is the day we graduate,” Raab said. “It’s a

NRHEG continued on 4

Waseca community education summer guide

By TRISTAN GEHRING
Staff Writer

Waseca Community Education has released its 2024 summer activity guide. The office, often referred to as “Community Ed,” seeks to offer a variety of skill development, enrichment and entertainment opportunities across many disciplines while serving community members of all ages. “You build friendships, you build relationships, you build a community and purpose,” describes Director Nikki Benson. “I don’t think many people get the opportunity to work in programs that touch such a variety of people.

“We have the rare opportunity to work with young families all the way up to adults.”

Waseca Community Education divides its services into six programs: enrichment, a family education center, school age care, recreation, gymnastics, and aquatics. Each program features numerous classes and activities for a wide range of ages. Programs are not limited to Waseca residents, Benson stressed. Anyone from any city or school district is welcome to participate. Further information on each program and its offerings is available in the summer activity guide, as well as online at waseca.ce.eleyo.com.

Summer activity guide booklets can be found at the Waseca Public Library, South Central Human Relations Center at 204 Second Street Northwest, all of Waseca’s schools, Camp Canine, and the Community Ed office in the Central Education building, among other places. Waseca Community Education is always looking to expand its offerings. Benson encourages anyone with a hobby or skill they would like to teach to start the process by reaching out to her office.

Fees for participation are the primary way Waseca Community Education is funded - in fact, all money that goes into Waseca Community Education benefits the community directly through its programs. The department also receives support from the Waseca Area Foundation. Scholarship options are available for those who cannot pay the full price for classes. The Youth Development Grant can cover up to 50% of a class fee with a maximum of \$75 per person each year. South Country Health Alliance offers all insurance members \$15 each year toward classes. More information is available from the office at 507-835-5626.

Nikki Benson has been director of Waseca Community Education since March 2024. Prior to that, she spent ten years working with the department’s payroll and financial elements. She is a Waseca native and graduate of Waseca High School. Following high school she attended the University of Wisconsin - Stout. She moved back to Waseca in 2008. She is married to Chaz Benson, and the two have two daughters.

“Every single staff member that works for us is important,” Benson stressed when asked about the others involved in making Waseca Community Education work. She then mentioned several by name who play especially large roles including

Community continued on 5



Compostings

by Al Batt

‘You’ve got to know when to fold em’

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING

It’s like my father always said. Which was?
I don’t remember, but he always said it.

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Deep thoughts occur as I drive past his drive. I bought a squirrel baffle. The label proclaimed, “Stops squirrels when installed.”

It wasn’t exactly what I wanted. I wanted a baffle that began working the minute I purchased it, with no installation required to make it functional. The baffle was cone-shaped like a volcano and wrapped around a feeder pole or shepherd’s hook to restrict squirrel access from below. When a squirrel climbed the pole and got to the baffle, it couldn’t find its way past it. A steel baffle prevents squirrels from chewing through it. I used to create temporary baffles out of large plastic pop bottles. They worked for a short time before the squirrels chewed them away.

Why did I need to baffle a squirrel? I told everyone I wanted to keep the squirrels from damaging my birdfeeders. But I needed a baffle because I didn’t want a squirrel to summit a birdfeeder only to slip and fall. I didn’t want a squirrel’s voice saying, “I’ve fallen, and I can’t get up!” haunting my dreams.

WEARING A BELT WITH SUSPENDERS

I led a walk in a park far from home. One of my fellow walkers, who wasn’t far from his home, wore both a belt and suspenders. He erred on the side of caution. In the movie “Once Upon a Time in the West,” Frank, a ruthless gunslinger played by Henry Fonda, said to a fellow named Wobbles, “Wobbles, how can you trust a man that wears both a belt and suspenders? Man can’t even trust his own pants.”

The man I walked with was a swell fellow. He wanted a backup plan, but a visit to a restroom needed to be planned well ahead of time to allow dealing with belt and suspenders. He might have worn both a belt and suspenders because someone told him that the combination looked good on him. Perhaps he wore a belt and suspenders out of habit. Maybe he wore that duo on a day that had been a memorable one. We are all creatures of habit.

When my father-in-law died, it left empty spaces in many places. One thing he’d always been in charge of was putting gas into their

car. My mother-in-law had never pumped gas. Her kids showed her how to fuel the car. She was hesitant but did fine. But being a creature of habit, she’d fill the car only at that same pump at the same gas station where she’d learned to perform the task.

I’VE LEARNED

When Kenny Rogers sang, “You’ve got to know when to hold ‘em. Know when to fold ‘em. Know when to walk away. And know when to run,” he was singing about folding fitted sheets.

The small town had a couple of cemeteries. The sparsely populated city had an extremely high mortality rate. Probably 100%.

I enjoy the instant messaging called turn signals.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

Entomologists and etymologists both like spelling bees.

In the English language, nothing begins with N and ends with G.

Why was it called the Dark Ages? Because there were so many knights.

What do you get when you cross a wolverine with a cottontail rabbit? A wolverine.

What has three arms and four legs? A terrible drawing of a snake.

NATURE NOTES

I saw so many deer that I expected to see one at the gas pump. Karl Miller, Professor of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Georgia School of Forest Resources and a foremost authority on whitetail deer, estimates the U.S. deer population was 25-30 million in Christopher Columbus’ time. Hunting and habitat loss reduced deer populations through the years. By 1900, the numbers had declined to 350,000. Since then, deer populations have surged to 30-35 million as a result of the elimination of predators (like wolves), wildlife conservation efforts and controls on hunting.

I heard a barred owl call, “Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?” Harriet Tubman gained recognition for her work on the Underground Railroad and as a scout, spy, guerrilla soldier and nurse for the Union Army during the Civil War. She was also a naturalist who used the call of an owl to alert refugees and freedom seekers to come out of hiding and continue their journey of escape from slavery. The call was believed to have been that of the barred owl, sometimes called a hoot-owl.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Be kind when it’s needed. It’s always needed.

‘Not out of denial, but ignorance’

I appreciated the eye-opening wording Mikhail Rostislavovich used as he spoke about the founding documents of our nation now on display in the county courthouse.

As an article in this paper describes, the Waseca Exchange Club dedicated a “Freedom Shrine” at the courthouse last week. On display are photograph-level reproductions of the Mayflower Compact, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

Mikhail was as much a storyteller as a speechmaker.

He used words like “half-starved,” “snarling” and “storm-tossed” to describe the individuals and groups who brought the documents into existence. He spoke of bickering, mud-throwing, and manipulation on the one hand, contrasting them with the determination and idealism needed to continue on the path of freedom and human dignity.

He reminded everyone there that Americans are doing more than living our daily lives; we are the example of freedom and justice many nations look to. Mikhail made it clear that what seems like a simple progression from pilgrims seeking religious freedom to a nation whose ideal is to establish and maintain the “inalienable rights” of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” was in fact an uphill climb to rival scaling



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

Mt. Everest. To make his point clear, he referred to it as the “making of a miracle” that the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence were able to continue.

He stated his hope that after taking a few minutes to genuinely consider even one of the documents on display, youth and adults alike would feel inspired to read more. His narrative made it clear that, however you may have felt about studying history, the stories of the fundamental documents would read more like thrillers, with threats and danger on every hand.

As I said, Mikhail’s choice of words and stories made his own convictions clear. That, too, was a powerfully persuasive element of the dedication.

I was impressed. I was also led to agree with his suggestion: we should all become better acquainted with the half-starved or snarling circumstances that led to our founding documents.

On a completely different note, a

work I have in progress right now is about a “community outreach” social worker at the Minnesota Prairie Health Alliance, commonly referred to as MNPrairie. Amanda Zwart is her name. It’s her job to interact gently with people who need support but either don’t realize it or don’t want to accept it. More about that in the article, but the part of the story I found personally profound was the change in perspective I acquired.

I was a teacher at NRHEG for more than 20 years. It’s perhaps embarrassing to admit that, except for the final few years, if you had asked me, I would have replied, “No. We don’t have any homeless students in our communities.” Not out of denial, you understand, but ignorance.

There are people living lives of quiet desperation—and others in the midst of noisy conflict—that those of us with stable circumstances simply never learn about.

In a report given this week to the county board of commissioners,

county attorney Rachel Cornelius referred to untreated mental health disorders as “a major element” of law enforcement and court proceedings.

In an interview, Waseca Police Captain Kris Markeson and County Sheriff Jay Dulas shared some of the ways this “major element” complicates the work of all law enforcement officers.

Captain Markeson suggested the word “mental” should be left off, and that everyone should recognize “health is health.”

Here, too, those of us who live stable lives may get only an occasional glimpse of the mental health crisis we hear about. Perhaps that, too, is something we might want to learn more about.

Just in case you’re interested, the Southeast Minnesota Crisis Response Team will provide assistance over the phone, or might send someone out for anyone in a crisis. The organization suggests it is appropriate to contact them if you or someone close to you is experiencing an inability to cope with daily stressors, feelings of wanting to harm themselves or others, rapid mood swings, or seems to have lost touch with reality.

The number to call is 1-844-274-7472. The phone call and many elements of the assistance provided by the team are at no charge.

Graduation parties are not so common



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

don’t have grad parties there, so now I’m trying to figure out whether the custom is limited to the midwest, or if there are grad parties in other parts of the country. I think they’re nice. It’s a chance to celebrate hard-earned achievements and visit with relatives or friends we may not have seen in a long time. It’s also a great excuse to eat a lot of good food—for example our pulled pork nachos, which were a hit. My family commented that more food was eaten at my sister’s grad party than at mine three years ago, where I had pulled pork sandwiches. I guess the thing to take away from this is, people really like nachos rather than sandwiches: I

can’t blame them. I’m also thankful the rain held off Sunday afternoon/early evening so we all weren’t stuck inside the shed for Lizzie’s grad party. Speaking of rain, this weather has got me all messed up. First I’m told it’s supposed to rain, then it doesn’t or it gets pushed back. Oh well, it’s not that big of a deal, I guess.

Another fun thing about being home for things like grad parties is that people talk to me about my column. I don’t think I will ever get over how initially weird it is to know someone I know has read my column. One example is our almost-neighbors Joleen and Slip, people whose house I used to trick-

or-treat at when I was little; I remember I used to always ask to ride their horses. Joleen talked to me about my column, and I’m always flattered (and very surprised) to hear people actually don’t mind reading my ramblings. Or when I work the bar with my cousin and he will randomly ask me about a very specific part of my life. I’ll ask him, “How do you know that??” and he will respond by saying he reads my column. But it always takes me a second to adjust and realize I do publish information about my daily life that anyone can read. So if you read it, good luck and I hope you continue to enjoy my ramblings and ruminations.

My Determination: “It may help to understand human affairs to be clear that most of the great triumphs and tragedies of history are caused, not by people being fundamentally good or fundamentally bad, but by people being fundamentally people.” - Neil Gaiman, Good Omens



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

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DEADLINES: Pioneer: Noon Tuesday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

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

Publisher
Ad Design
News Editor
Sports Editor/Dad
Editorial Assistant
Advertising Sales
Staff Writer
Staff writer
Staff Writer
Staff Writer

Contributing writers/photographers: Dave Zika, Al Batt, Pastor Ken Andrs

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Letter to the editor:

It was my pleasure to be chairman of the Waseca Memorial Day Association the last 19 years.

A few people I’d like to mention are as follows:

Richard and Bev Holtz began by putting flags out at Woodville Cemetery 20-plus years ago. They then started at Calvary Cemetery and started the Avenue of Flags, which is now run by Kevin Dickie and the Waseca Sons of American Legion (SAL).

Robert Sleen, for his great care of getting the more than 900 graves located for the placement of the 12-by-18-inch American Flags at Woodville Cemetery. This year the 170 VFW Auxiliary flags were added to Robert’s list and he did them all. Robert took over from Lyle Cromer several years ago.

Tim Muotka, for doing the treasurer’s duties for the Waseca Memorial Day Assn. Tim also leads Knights of Columbus in placing the 200 flags at Calvary, and more at St. Mary’s and Isosco, and St. Jarlath’s Cemeteries.

Shawn Pomeroy, for his efforts in getting his Scouts-BSA and the other leaders for putting out the flags at Woodville Cemetery. There are many other volunteers but without the Scouts it would not get done. They have been doing this for several years. They also help with taking down the equipment for the Memorial Day program and handing out



flags and booklets for the program.

Kevin Dickie, for his leadership with the SAL and help for the American Legion Auxiliary for putting out the very large flags at Woodville and Calvary Cemeteries. Kevin has been a great help with the small flags and in setting up and taking down all the equipment for the program.

Bridget Southwick of the county VSO office and her supervisor (Chris Hinton) for getting the names of the deceased veterans sent to Nikki Gil-

Briefs

Waseca Art Center Art on the Avenue June 22

On June 22 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in downtown Waseca will be the innagural Art on the Avenue art fair.

Waseca Hockey Summer Bingo June 29 at Boat House

The Waseca Hockey Association is sponsoring a summer Bingo event at the Boat House in Waseca on Saturday June 29 beginning at 1 p.m. Eight games at \$2 per sheet. Various prizes available.

Waseca County Free Fair July 10-14

The annual Waseca County Free

Fair is scheduled to be at the county fairgrounds on July 10 to 14.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes Junior Sports Camp July 30-August 1

Young athletes in grades 3 to 8 can take part in a Christian-centered camp which has them concentrate on one sport each of the three days of the camp, Tuesday through Thursday, July 30 to August 1. Registration is \$60 per camper, with scholarships and generous family discounts available. More information and registration are at minnesotafca.org/waseca-jsc.

Waseca Farmers Market Saturdays from 8

a.m. until noon

Every Saturday until the fall season the Waseca County Fair Grounds will be hosting a farmers market from 8 a.m. until noon.

Happy Days in Waseca 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. August 10

Happy Days in Waseca, an event aiming to bring more community to Waseca is taking place August 10 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

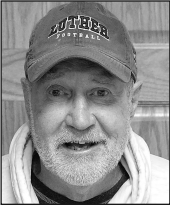
There will be a car roll-in, live music, vendors, and food trucks. The event will take place in the lot downtown behind Refinery 507.

Waldorf Veterans Memorial Fund Drive

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

Shepherd’s Robe Free store Tuesdays from 1-3 and 5-7 p.m.

The Shepherd’s Robe free store offers clothing, supplies, and much more for free to all interested parties. The store is located at Vista Covenant Church, 14679 275th Avenue, New Richland.



Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika



Dangerous rescue ruffles feathers

Every morning, I wake up with Sammy the wonderdog at 6:30 a.m. As I seat myself comfortably in my recliner with a freshly-brewed cup of Folger’s coffee in my hands, Sammy jumps into my lap. I grab the television remote, hit the power button, and gradually come awake to the morning news on Fox Channel 9. Sammy and I watch until 8 a.m.; I always wonder how the Channel 9 news team can so consistently present themselves as being full of energy, enthusiasm, and goodwill as they share their knowledge and skills. They must all really love broadcasting and be grateful to have their jobs. Bill Keller is always somewhere out on the beat with hews; he’s a teddy bear. You could hug him. Hannah Flood is always happy, and somehow never finishes a story leaving you sad and depressed. Shane Wells has a story ready for you in the Twin Cities. He might be at a restaurant, Como Park, Mall of America, the new zoo, Target Center, or any of dozens of other places. The weather team is fantastic, providing a detailed weather report every 15 minutes. Kendall Marx chimes in with traffic updates. AND I get all of the sports scores because they run across a tape at the bottom of the screen during every broadcast.

Today’s news closes with the most expensive ice cubes in the U.S. You can buy a dozen round cocktail ice cubes from a specialty store in California for a mere \$32. Need to get out of town? Princeton is having a celebration featuring the tallest inflatable rubber ducky: It’s six stories high!

After the news, it’s time to go outside. Sammy has been fed and it’s time for her to go “poopoo” and “peepee”...in that order. As Sammy sniffs the grass and procrastinates, I get a chance to observe nature. We have several nice trees on our twin home property. This season is a bonanza for nesting birds. Robins, grackles, sparrows, doves—they’re all settled in very close by. I sit in a folding chair on my front driveway as Sammy sniffs the grass and goes about her business. Something catches my eye...

I have noticed a small, baby robin huddled in the wet grass right next to me. The bird looks small and helpless, not ready to leave the nest. How can I help this fledgling survive? As I contemplate my options and continue to observe, ten minutes or so pass. The mother bird flies in and feeds the youngster a huge insect. The bird is fine, no rescue required.

As the day warms, I continue to watch the youngster. It hops and bob, bob, bobs into the backyard.

I love to watch robins. They don’t walk, they bob, bob, bob across the grass, stop, listen for

worms or bugs, and then bob, bob, bob along.

We have an “arborvitae” evergreen in our front yard. The tree is right up against the house and has grown tall enough to touch the eaves. Its shape resembles the high, rounded shape of Marge Simpson’s hair. Marge is a character on the Simpsons cartoon; her hair spirals upward. In the arborvitae, black birds, grackles, have built their nests. This morning, like every other recently, the adults are busy hunting for insects, then bringing them back to their babies for breakfast. I’m not a big fan of grackles, but I decide to walk over to the tree and take a peek.

Big mistake!

As I part the needles to glance in among the branches, four startled baby blackbirds fly into my face, part around me, and end up among the grass on my front yard.

Just as I taught all my students and team members, I now realize I must face the consequences of my actions. It is my duty to put the birds back in the tree where I found them. The babies are ugly little creatures, not fully fledged or ready to fly, but their legs are long and well developed. Two of them are squawking energetically. The other two are more subdued, looking silently afraid: one of them seems undersized, something of a runt.

As I observe them, I can’t help thinking if they were children, I know which two I would pick to be in my classroom.

Resigned to my task, I fetch a net and pail out of the garage. I chase the little athletes around the front yard, eventually catching each one and returning it to the nest. While I am at my work, the adult birds become very upset. They call in friends from all over the area and dive bomb me as though I were Godzilla tromping through the streets of a city. They scream and chatter with sharp displeasure all the while I am trying to rescue their unknowing little escapees. There are even red-winged blackbirds from across the street joining in on the protest. No exaggeration, there are at least 30 birds chattering and chastising me in my own front yard.

Sammy has long ago disappeared into the garage, shaking and afraid.

Once I have returned the orphans, the birds finally leave and go back to their daily business.

Back inside, I pour the last cup of coffee and sit at the kitchen table. For some reason, Alfred Hitchcock’s timeless thriller “The Birds” keeps coming to mind.

I take a deep breath and let the terrors of the film slip from my mind. All is well. Time to start another day.

Tara Reich is executive director at MNPrairie

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

Tara Reich, appointed executive director of MNPrairie this past March, has a number of goals she is working toward in her new position.

One of them, she says, is to reduce the number of people who ask her what “MNPrairie” is. With offices in Steele, Dodge, and Waseca counties, the Minnesota Prairie County Alliance (commonly shortened to MNPrairie) is a human services agency that provides a wide array of programs for the 77,000 or so residents living in their combined borders.

According to information from the agency, it results from a 2015 merging of three human services departments, as agreed upon by the leadership of the three counties. The philosophy behind the merger is that, faced with increasing needs and decreasing state and federal funding, all three counties could deliver services more cost effectively by centralizing some of the tasks, especially administrative ones.

There are still offices in each of the three counties where residents can go for guidance and assistance. In Waseca’s case, the office is at 1000 West Elm Avenue, where about 40 people work to deliver services.

MNPrairie is governed by a joint powers board which consists of two commissioners from each county, with Waseca’s Doug Christopherson as the current chair.

Reich’s office is in the Dodge County location. As executive director, it is her job to oversee all the departments in all three locations, looking for ways to keep the necessary balance between the types and numbers of services people need and the staff and funding needed to provide them.

At its simplest, Reich says her job as executive director is to run MNPrairie as the six county commissioners on the agency’s joint powers board direct her to. She describes this as “a combination of keeping us moving forward internally while also expanding our paths into the communities.”

She mentions that her two highest personal values are integrity and humility.

Reich says that, working in the human services field, she has learned “You aren’t going to please everybody, but there are those times when you are part of something so rewarding, it makes up for those other times.”

Reich began her career as a case worker in the area of adult and disability social services, joining Steele County’s staff in 2006. She received consistent promotions so that, in 2023 when former executive director Jane Hardwick left to take a state-level position, she was appointed to serve as interim director and then, recently, executive director.



Tara Reich has been leading the MNPrairie human services agency, which includes offices in Dodge, Steele, and Waseca counties, since 2023, and was named its executive director in March. She describes her job as “a combination of keeping us moving forward internally while also expanding our paths into the communities.”

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

working with human services departments.

“Sometimes the general public has a negative perception about people who come to agencies like MNPrairie,” Reich observes.

“Occasionally people hesitate to come to us because they don’t want to be ‘one of those people’ who need our help.

“I hope everyone can recognize that sometimes just one unfortunate experience—an accident, a medical emergency, a fall—can change the whole trajectory of our lives.

“Any of us could be ‘one of those people’ at almost any time.

“I want people to begin thinking about our agency in terms of what they hope will be available for their loved ones if they should encounter a life-changing incident beyond their control,” says Reich.

In keeping with the idea of working cost effectively, Reich says she sees it as her job to find ways to “streamline” people’s experience as they seek assistance. She points out, for example, that many private agencies provide programs similar to those managed through MNPrairie. Local food shelves and emergency housing shelters are examples. Reich says it would be beneficial if there were a “one-stop” venue where people could learn about all the services available to them in their time of need, rather than having to search them out individually.

Since she is relatively new to her position, and since needs and trends in the public are always shifting, Reich says she sees it as a goal to remain responsive, to do what she can to guide MNPrairie so that it not only meets current needs, but it is in place to support needs in the future.

Fortunately, she does not feel alone in this endeavor.

“We have a wonderful staff,” she says. “We have compassionate people who also have the knowledge and experience they need to do their jobs well.

“I feel honored to work with them.”

Reich is responsible for overseeing four departments, three of which involve direct delivery of services.

“Income and Health Care Assistance” manages program areas including child support, emergency health care assistance, and the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

“Child and Family Social Services” oversees child protection, child welfare, adoption and truancy, and licensing of child care and foster care providers.

“Adult and Disability Social Services” has program areas including adult mental health, substance use, services for individuals who are elderly or have disabilities, licensing of adult foster care facilities, and more.

Another type of “balance” she must work toward is between mandates imposed on human services departments and what it takes to comply with those mandates. As a member of the Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA) she stays up to date with discussions within the legislature; the organization often rallies to help inform legislators about needs and trends within the human services field.

Another goal Reich has in mind is doing what she can to reduce any stigma attached to



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June 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 6pm BAR Bingo	6 7pm HALL BINGO	7 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	8
9	10 7 pm Post & AUX. Meeting	11	12 6pm BAR Bingo	13 7pm HALL BINGO	14 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	15
16	17	18	19 6pm BAR Bingo	20 7pm HALL BINGO	21 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	22
23	24	25	26 6pm BAR Bingo	27 7pm HALL BINGO	28 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	29
30						

HOURS OF OPERATION
SUN.– MON. CLOSED
TUE.– WED.– 3pm to 11pm Tue. Is Lady’s nite 2 for one–Men Busch light \$2.50 from 4 to 6pm.
THUR.– 1pm to 11pm
FRI.– SAT.– 11am to 1 am
POST & AUX MEETING 7pm club open 6pm MEMBERS only. Mn. Gambling license number 00385

OBITUARIES

Shirley Riegert

SHIRLEY ANN RIEGERT, age 92 of Waseca, died at her Colony Court home on Sunday, June 2, 2024.

Shirley was born in Shakopee on October 23, 1931 to parents Alois and Ottilia (Deustch) Hennen. She attended St. Mark's Catholic School in Shakopee before her marriage to William P. Riegert at St. Mark's Catholic Church on June 16, 1951. She and her husband established and operated the Little Red Store in Eden Prairie for many years. After the sale of the store they went on to recognize the need for affordable housing and developed mobile home parks in Mankato and Waseca. In their retirement Shirley and Bill summered in Hackensack and wintered in Florida. Shirley loved crafting and enjoyed China painting, embroidery, knitting, and sewing. She and her husband were members of Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Shirley is survived by her devoted husband of 72 years, William "Bill" Riegert of Waseca; five children, Mary (David Lobb) Hudson of Waseca, Monica (Charles) Priebe of Waseca, Steven (Janice) Riegert of Eagle Lake, Michael (Brenda) Riegert of Deadwood, SD, and Madonna (Donald) Dobberstein of Waseca; thirteen grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; two siblings, Marlin (Phyllis) Hennen of Shakopee and Judith (William) Turek of St. Paul; and three sisters-in-law, Judy Job of Winona, Diane Riegert of St. Bonifacius, and Bonita Riegert of Eden Prairie. She was preceded in death



Shirley Riegert

by both of her parents; her parents-in-law, Wilbur and Elizabeth Riegert; brother, Kenneth Hennen; siblings-in-law, Stanley Riegert, Richard Riegert, Richard Job, Nancy Nielsen, Kenneth Riegert, and John Riegert; grandson Brian Dobberstein; sons-in-law, Dennis Eustice and Chester Hudson; and daughter-in-law, Jane Riegert.

Funeral Mass began at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 5, 2024 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca, with Fr. Glenn Frerichs officiating. Visitation was held from 11:00 a.m. until the time of the service at the church. A private family interment of Shirley's cremated remains took place at St. Mark's Catholic Cemetery in Shakopee. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca is handling the arrangements. dsfuneral.com
Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service
Waseca ~ Janesville ~ Waterville



Waseca High School held its graduation ceremony Sunday, June 2, in the high school gymnasium.

Pioneer photo by Amelia Roessler

Waseca

from Page 1

fulfilling lives, may we never forget the community that raised us."

With the culmination of her speech, the Senior Choir and Select Choir performed, "Oread Farewell," and "Cornerstone."

Emma Keith was next to speak. "Today marks one of the most significant milestones of our entire lives," Keith began. "The feelings I have today are unexplainable, but I'm sure that many of my fellow classmates are feeling the same way."

Keith spoke about the transition through high school, and how "high school is an extremely small fraction" of a person's life.

"Senior year," Keith explained. "Wow how it flew. It truly feels like only a few weeks ago we walked into the school, fresh faced and filled with excitement about starting our final year at Waseca High School. All of the 'lasts' really snuck up on us. The last football game, cheering on our boys at state. The last school dances, our final sporting events with our high school teams, band and choir concerts, robotics competitions, drama performances, and so on. Even that last time roaming the halls, waving to our friends and hearing the familiar sounds of chatter and

laughter. Each 'last' was bittersweet, of course, but filled us with feelings of nostalgia and anticipation for our next stage of life.

"At Waseca we were given a community that will back us in every stride we take toward our idea of success," Keith concluded. "As you leave today, take with you what Waseca has given us. Take with you a sense of pride, a sense of purpose, and a sense of possibility. The power is in your hands, and now that our time in Waseca has come to an end, it is our turn to be a guiding light for future generations."

Student council president Addison Wieseler was introduced as the final speaker from the class of '24.

"The one thing that continually stands out to me about our class is that we are all so different," Wieseler said. "We are all involved in so many different arrays of activities. So what can I say to relate to every single one of you? What can I say to encapsulate what the class of 2024 is all about?"

"We are a class that I believe cannot be summed up in one group alone—in one or four speeches alone," Wieseler continued. "So in an attempt to combat this problem, I will be attempting to address a couple of the different groups our grade is involved in, hopefully every one of you can find your voice in one of these next messages."

Wieseler shared a message for the "Band Kids," the "Athletes," the "Robotics Team," the "Art Club

Kids", the "Choir Kids" and finally the entire class of 2024.

"Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened. Don't forget to live it up, it goes by faster than you think," she told those groups. "And finally to the entire class of 2024 and what I want y'all to remember when leaving this place. My final words of wisdom to all of you: Don't be afraid to change the world. Don't be afraid to attempt to save the world. It is a big world in need of a lot of saving. So just remember, every day that you take your own steps into the world you're taking the steps to change it."

"Finally, thank you class of 2024 for joining me in the last 18 years of our lives. Congratulations Graduates, we did it!"

Following the student speeches, principal Dr. Jason Miller presented the class of '24.

He started by providing a long list of 'thanks' including: the student speeches, the school board, the superintendent, the two foreign exchange students Jade Dauchel from France and Aurora Cacchione from Italy. Miller listed many other thank you statements too numerous to list.

Miller shared some details about the class of '24: 73.5% are enrolled in post-secondary education programs; 14.5% plan to go directly into the workforce; 10.3% are undecided; 1.7% are enlisted in the military.

Of the 120 graduates, 78 graduated with honors, and 7 with a GPA of 4.0 or higher.

Following these facts, Miller

shared a special message with the class

"None of you are exempt from the hardships ahead," Miller said. "Life is messy and you're going to mess it up. But give yourself the grace you need - you are human - and take small steps to keep you on the path to happiness. Never give up on yourself. Never."

"My sincere hope and wish for you, Class of 2024, is that as you pursue happiness," Miller concluded, "it will provide you with a sense of direction. A purpose. Motivation. Happiness is not about feeling pleasure or avoiding pain; it's about being wholeheartedly engaged in your life. And when you are, it liberates you to enjoy life and be happier. We will be cheering for you all along the way because once a Bluejay, always a Bluejay."

After his message was the presentation of diplomas by Superintendent Dr. Eric Hudspith and Board of Education members Dr. Julie Anderson, Mr. Dave Dunn, and Mr. Charlie Priebe. Miller read the graduates' names as they received their diplomas.

As the program came to a close, graduates tossed their caps into the air. Confetti flew, while parents, friends, teachers, and all those in attendance celebrated the accomplishments of the class of '24 as they embark on the next chapter in their lives.

A rose and letter were then delivered to the family of Samuel Houle.

Following the parent appreciation, a compilation of videos and photos from the class of '24 was shared.

Berg introduced co-salutatorians Erin Peterson and McKenzie Mueller, each of whom had earned a grade point average of 3.99. Three co-valedictorians, Payton Bunn, Hallie Schultz and Brenna Summer, had all earned a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Short biographies of all five of these honored students appear in this week's Star Eagle.

School board members Rich Mueller and Rick Schultz, alongside superintendent Michael Meihak, presented diplomas to the graduates.

When finished, Berg told graduates, "It's time," and asked the graduates to stand and move the tassels on their caps.

"You are now officially graduated," said Berg. "I want to congratulate all of the graduates and thank everyone for their attendance. I wish you all the best."

Farmamerica adds special twist to dinner

Get ready for an unforgettable evening on the farm! On June 13, Farmamerica's newest and tastiest fundraiser will make its debut. CHIP IN to strengthen Farmamerica's educational programs while enjoying locally sourced food and drinks.

This unique event is designed around food and fun. Between enjoying locally sourced chips & salsa, a fresh pork chop dinner grilled by the Nicollet County Pork Producers, and drinks, attendees will have the opportunity to stroll around the farm and test their skills at a unique golf challenge. They'll have the chance to chip into farm equipment for the chance to win \$500! No prior golf experience is

necessary to partake in this fun-filled evening. If you're not confident in your golf skills, you'll have the opportunity to buy your way into the \$500 cash prize.

"We're excited to continue our Farm to Fork Dinner series with Chip In. Not only is this a night filled with food, drinks, and fun, but it's also an opportunity for the community to support Farmamerica's year-round educational programming," said Jessica Rollins, Farmamerica's Executive Director.

Tickets for this event are only \$75 if you preorder for a group of 4 or more. Otherwise, they're \$100 in advance and \$125 at the door. Head to farmamerica.org/events for tickets and more information.

Farm Bureau's free "Taste of the Farm" dinner set for June 11

Join Waseca County Farm Bureau at a new location to celebrate agriculture in Waseca County. Waseca County Farm Bureau will host Taste of the Farm on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at the Waseca County Fairgrounds, which is located at 409 8th Avenue in Waseca. The family friendly event will be from 5 - 7:30 p.m. and is free of charge to attend. Please use the east and west entrances to the fairgrounds.

The event will feature:
Farm Animals
Farm equipment and technology

Activities for children
Free meal (served until gone), including hamburgers and pork sandwiches

Members of Waseca County Farm Bureau Board of Directors look forward to Taste of the Farm as it gives local residents a chance to learn about all that is going on in agriculture in Waseca County. Agriculture is such a vital contributor to our local communities and economies.

For more information about the event, please call Mary Jo Schoenfeld at 507-455-0745.

NRHEG

from Page 1

day full of tears and joy as we walk across the stage and accomplish one of the biggest goals in life.

"This year has been filled with so many ups and downs and went by pretty fast," he continued. "In junior high we all thought graduation was so far away, but here it is... We learned to grow connections with the staff at NRHEG, who followed us and watched us grow throughout all these years. And now we sit here as seniors, or as I should say, twelfth-graders. We really did it, guys."

Raab talked about the difficult passing of classmate Samuel Houle.

"He (Samuel) brought smiles to our faces and was a very kind kid who always wanted to play chess. He was never shy and would always be the first one to raise his hand when the teacher asked a question, or

would always volunteer to take the attendance list to Teri when there was a sub. He loved giving high fives to everyone he saw and always had a smile. Sam will never be forgotten. He taught us to always be the light in someone else's life because he brought so much light to those in our school. One thing to remember is never take things for granted; we don't know what tomorrow will bring."

The final class speaker was Hallie Schultz.

"Throughout our time at NRHEG we all have found what we love and are good at," Schultz said. "We often take for granted what we have. We take for granted the town we live in, the teachers who put countless hours into our education, and the people we have grown up with for the last 18 years."

Schultz, too, had words to remember Samuel Houle.

"We are also sad that one classmate couldn't be here with us today, Samuel. We learned how precious the time we have with one another is.

He taught us how much light can be brought to this world from one soul. We truly do not know what we have until it's gone."

Schultz, who intends to become an architect, said the Architect of our lives has a plan for us all.

"Different decisions or choices we make build our story," she concluded. "I would like to say thank you to my classmates for the last 13 years. I wouldn't want to grow up or experience life up to this point with anyone else."

"I know many teachers can attest to this statement. The Class of 2024 is the best class to come from NRHEG. I love you all and for the final time of our high school career, Go Panthers!"

The band followed the student speakers with a rendition of "How to Train Your Dragon," arranged by Sean O'Loughlin.

Taylor Schmidt and Daxter Lee led the parent appreciation statement, after which graduates came down off the stage and delivered flowers to the parent figures in their lives.

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Memorial bench dedicated at WJSHS

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

All seventh-graders at the Waseca Junior/Senior High School attended the May 23 dedication of a memorial bench for classmate Jocelynn Passon, who died in a vehicle accident last August. Jocelynn's parents, siblings, and grandparents were also in attendance. The family acquired the bench, which is now mounted near the west entrance to the building.

Principal Jason Miller began the dedication saying "Moments like this are important. We hold Jocelynn in our hearts, and sharing this time together helps with our healing."

Seventh-graders Zoey Gibson, Maddie Halla, Ahva Maas, Jayda Asmussen and Tyler Stagman—special friends to Jocelynn—shared brief statements or readings.

Ahva Maas included the statement, "We honor you and the effect you had on us." Jayda Asmussen said, "Time passes, but I will never be past losing you. I wish I had known to say good-bye." Tyler Stagman's statement included that losing Jocelynn "makes my heart hurt." She went on to say she wished Jocelynn could have lived on "to go to prom, and later get married and have kids" as she had often talked about.

Also part of the ceremony was the seventh-grade choir performing "Dancing in the Sky."



Family members and friends of Jocelynn Passon with the bench dedicated in her memory on May 23. The bench is located near the west entrance to the Junior/Senior High School. Below, a photo of Jocelynn next to the memorial text. Photos by Deb Bently



Miller told seventh-graders the memorial bench will serve as a "lasting tribute to Jocelyn, for her family, and for you as you continue your time here at our school." He also told the five students who took part that he was proud of them for being will-

ing to speak.

Jessica Passon, Jocelyn's mother, expressed gratitude for the ceremony and for the effort made by school staff to arrange it. "It was really meaningful to our whole family," she said.

Incredible Readers



JWP celebrated their 6th grade readers for their outstanding achievements in the Accelerated Reader (AR) program this school year.

Recognized, were, by category:

Quarterly AR Point Goal Achievers: Holden Bowens, Alexis Rider, Maya Olson, Emmett Cowdin, Macey Golombiecki, Nathaniel Adams, Landon Morgan, Ryan Eder, Ayden Pingel, Erika Eilertson, Ava Place, Sophia Donovan and Nick Storjohann.

100 Point Club: Macey Golombiecki, Anna Aasen, Elayna Kruger, Genna Mueller, Noah Santo, Maya Olson, Bryon Olson, Charlie Keech, Holden Bowens, Demian Reyes, Landon Morgan, Zanieah Smith, Ayden Roeker, Viktor Paxson, and Aubrey Anderson.

200 Point Club: Nick Storjohann, Erika Eilertson, Nathaniel Adams, Sophia Donovan, Emmett Cowdin, Ava Place and Alexis Rider

300 Point Club: Ryan Eder and Ayden Pingel.

Waseca

25 Years Ago

-First, it was field corn. Now, it is soybeans. What were once thought to be only field crops are now being used for a variety of things including gasoline and diesel duel additives. Ethanol was developed from corn and now Koch Petroleum is introducing U.S. Soy Field Diesel, the country's first ever pre-mixed precision-blended premium diesel fuel made in part with 100 percent soybean oil. (photo attached).

-The Waseca teachers are preparing for an opportunity of a lifetime. Vicki Bertam, Kathryn Larson, Steve Burnett, Sue Erdman, and Rob Williams are making final preparations for the trip to Neuhaus, Germany, as part of Waseca's partnership with Neuhaus though the German American Partnership Program (GAPP). (photo attached).

-Bruce Boyd, county coordinator, told the County Board of Commissioners last week that they had concluded the hiring process for a new fiscal officer for the Human Resources Department. The position became vacant earlier this year following the dismissal of Joyce Wobbrock for inadequate job performance.

50 Years Ago

-THESE SIX employees of Birds Eye, who are retiring, represent 101 years of working for the Waseca firm. Birds Eye is honoring them with special recognition. Pictured left to right and the number of years they have been out with the company are: Elsie Klinger, 21; Grace Steffen, 19; Kei Gehring, 12; Adeline Johnson, 21; Louise Weckwerth, 20 and Edna Westphal, 8. (101 years photo)

-A WEEKEND WORKSHOP is planned by the Rochester Center of the University of Minnesota on June 28, 29, and 30 on how to apply energy saving devices for homes. The workshop will cover the use of solar collectors and windmills, sod roof construction, and the use of planting to minimize heat loss in winter and help cooling in summer.

-Mrs. Lee Gilchrist, 1001 2ND St. N.W., Waseca, was the lucky winner of a \$100 Savings Bond in the Waseca Shopper giveaway. The number stamped on Mrs. Gilchrist's shopper last week matched with the one posted in local stores. Mrs. Gilchrist attributed her winning to "Norwegian luck."

75 Years Ago

- Charles Spaulding Jr. received a thanks badge for 13 years of girl scout work in Waseca at the court of aware festivity last week at the Community Building. The badge was given by the scouts, two associate members and the girl scout council. Left to right are Joanne Sommers, Jamiee Didra, Mary Gunderson, Nancy Brune, Mary Ann Coyle, Susan Stucky, Myrtice Jostad, Mts. Spaulding, and Janice Manke. The girls on the far right are unidentified.

-If in the past three weeks you've heard remarks such as "I'm saving my money to go to St. Paul" or "I'm taking my brother's job of cleaning the porch to get money for the bus trip," it must've been a fourth grader talking. We conceived the idea for the trip while driving to Minneapolis last February. We consulted with Supt. Dahlager who have us the go-ahead. The tentative date was to be late in May when Como park would be open.

-Mrs. Emmons Smith received word last week of the birth of twin granddaughters. They are the children of Mr. and Mrs. Billie Smith of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

-A NEW THRILL was given spectators when the Waseca Horse Show added a hunter class this year. Here Jim Maxwell's Plainburr clears the top rung of one of several barricades set up within the show ring.

-Dr. Chiang and his wife, Zohling, and 23-months-old daughter, Jeanie, arrived in Waseca this week to remain at Southeast Experiment station until November. The Chinese family is in this country to study agriculture and American farming methods. Dr. Chiang is an enologist and will devote his time in Waseca to the study of corn borer.

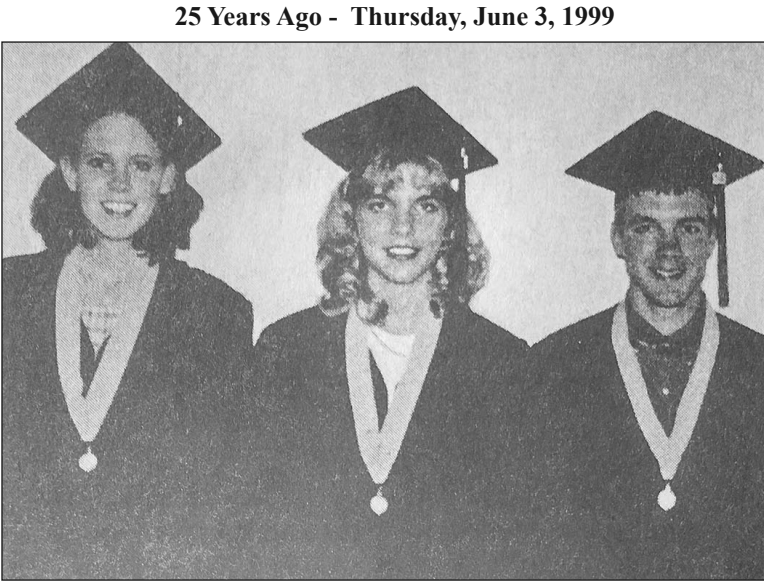
100 Years Ago

-Miss Helen Gallagher, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. E. Gallagher, has been commissioned by the American Board of Foreign Missions for life service at the North China Mission at Fenchow. Miss Gallagher is a graduate of Carleton College, taking her degree in 1922 with hours that gave her membership in Phi Beta Kappa. During the past two years she has served as principal of the high school at Sauk Centre.

-According to the fines assessed against five persons for violations of the fishing laws, the price of fish in Clear Lake is estimated at about \$10 a pound. Last Saturday and Sunday, Game Warden Gish of Waterville, visited Clear Lake and arrested five persons for infractions of the rules prescribed. Four were arrested for taking black bass out of season and another was pinched for fishing with more than one line. They were fined in municipal court, the average assessment totaling \$12.50.

-Undaunted by the trimming administered the Barbers a week or so ago, the professional men have organized to go after the scalps of the retailers who turned in the sensational win against the tonsorial artists. The game will be played at the fair grounds next Friday evening at six o'clock sharp. Seven innings will be played. No admission will be charged, thank goodness.

New Richland



- Honor Students Faith VanBockern, Katie Recknor, and Cheston Field spoke at Commencement on Sunday.



- It's all smiles for graduates Tim Coyer, Breanna Schimek, Leah Schoenrock, and Faith VanBockern before Commencement on Sunday.

- The City of Ellendale and cities across Minnesota have worked hard to improve employee safety. The payoff has come not only in the wellness of city employees, but also in the form of a dividend check. This dividend is the city's share of a \$5 million dividend returned to members of the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT). 85 percent of Minnesota cities participate in the LMCIT workers' compensation program, including the City of Ellendale. LMCIT is a cooperative, self-insurance risk pool through which cities combine their funds in a joint pool and use those pooled funds to cover their losses. If the funds aren't needed to cover losses, the excess funds are returned to cities as a dividend.

37 Years Ago - Wednesday, June 3, 1987

- Twenty-six members of the Ellendale-Geneva High School Class of 1987 will receive diplomas at the traditional commencement program to be held in the high school gym at Ellendale Thursday evening June 4. The program will get underway at 8 p.m. with the processional played by the Ellendale-Geneva High School Band under the direction of Mark Skroch. The Rev. James Arends, pastor of Geneva Community Lutheran Church, will give the invocation and benediction. Martin Avelsgaard, Superintendent, will present the class of 1987 and Board Chairman John Hanson will present the diplomas. Ten of the twenty-six students are honor students.

- The Bid Red baseball team took the District 2A Championship title the second time in three years. They won the championship May 26 at Hayek Field with a 3-0 triumph over Emmons. Scoring for Big Red were Fox in the second inning, Mike Roesler stealing second and scoring on Peterson's single up the middle in the third inning, and Travis Massey scoring on a single by Rugroden in the sixth. The winning pitchers were Tomm Richards, giving good, strong defense until the top of the seventh, and Massey, who finished out the seventh inning.

Community

from Page 1

Carrie Morris, who Benson says keeps the preschool programs running efficiently; Katie Staloch and Bianca Kohnert from the school age care division, and Jessica Sten-

son from recreation.

"In all honesty," said Benson with gravity, asked about the advice she'd most like to give, "I feel like I've especially learned in the last year is how important it is to invest in your community. In the good, the bad, your community shows up for you. And what you put into it, you get out. Get involved."

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Daniel Kohler
Parents: Toni Kohler and Agnieszka Sucharska
Future plans:
College of Science & Engineering
at the University of Minnesota

‘Difficult and stressful’

Daniel Kohler earns 4.0 GPA

By **RACHAEL JAEGER**
Staff Writer

Graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA, Daniel Kohler is one of seven students Waseca High School is acknowledging this year with “highest honor.” Daniel is the son of Toni Kohler and Agnieszka Sucharska and lives in Waseca. As a student, Kohler volunteered at the Waseca County Historical Society and was a member of the robotics team, Business Professionals of America, and Science Olympics.

Kohler stated he was really hop-

ing to achieve a perfect GPA, given that he put a lot of time and effort into making it happen. “I’m happy and relieved. Getting it was difficult and stressful.”

When asked what tips he had for younger students looking to excel in school, Kohler said: “It sounds cliché, but try hard and study.”

What he said he’ll miss most about high school is competing in vex robotics with his friends.

He plans to attend the University of Minnesota for computer science.

‘It goes too fast’

Ella Krautkremer earns 4.0 GPA

By **RACHAEL JAEGER**
Staff Writer

Graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA, Ella Krautkremer is one of seven students being acknowledged with “highest honors” at Waseca High School. Ella is the daughter of Amy Krautkremer of Waseca; she has two brothers, Griffin and Ty. As a student, Krautkremer stayed active in soccer, basketball, Business Professionals of America, Spanish, and band. She works as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Lakeshore in Waseca, attends Grace Lutheran Church, and is involved in 4-H and Storm Quarter Houses.

Of her academic accomplishments, Krautkremer said: “This was always a goal of mine throughout high school, so I’m excited I reached it.” She also said how much of an honor it is to be recognized for all the work she put in over the years.

Her family also expressed they are equally excited for her. Krautkremer said they always encouraged her to work hard.

Of the many things she enjoyed about high school, Krautkremer said she will most miss seeing her classmates—many of whom she has been

with since kindergarten.

Her favorite memories include when she went with her Spanish class to Costa Rica, Spain, and France as well as attending football and basketball games.

Her favorite subject in school was math. She named Mr. Engesether, Ms Conway, and Ms. Gilson as her favorite teachers because she said “they always put 100 percent into every student and wanted that student to succeed.” She said she got to have each of them for several years and thought that was “Super cool.”

If she could give herself advice as a freshman, Krautkremer said she would tell herself to have fun, not to let others dictate her choices, and to make the most of every experience because the four years go by so quickly.

As far as the future goes, Krautkremer plans to attend St. Mary’s University and Mayo Clinic School of Medicine in an accelerated 3 + 2 physician’s assistant (PA) program. She’s also looking forward to traveling and getting to experience the world. In ten years, she sees herself as a physician’s assistant, hopeful in general surgery at a Mayo hospital.



Ella Krautkremer
Parents: Amy Krautkremer
Future plans:
Attending the Mayo PA Program at St. Mary’s University



Norah Schimming
Parents: Chris and Rebecca Schimming
Future plans:
Attending the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire

‘Be yourself’

Norah Schimming earns 4.0 GPA

By **RACHAEL JAEGER**
Staff Writer

Graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA, Norah Schimming is one of seven students from the class of 2024 being acknowledged with “highest honor.” Norah is the daughter of Chris and Rebecca Schimming of Waseca. As a student, Schimming was an active member in Sextet Choir, Jazz One, Jazz Combo, marching band, Minnesota Honor Society, symphonic band, select choir, cross country, gymnastics, the speech team, and the spring musical pit band. She also volunteered at Hartley Elementary and the Waseca Art Center; she had summer jobs at Camp Singing Hills. Her favorite subjects in school were English, statistics, band, and choir; her least favorite was history.

Three of Schimming’s favorite teachers were Mr. Davis, Mr. Lawrence, and Ms. Kreinbring. Of these teachers, Schimming said she is grateful for them and added, “Mr. Davis is incredibly kind, helpful, and funny. Mr. Lawrence is the high school band director and his dedication to the program and his students is admirable. Ms. Kreinbring is the new Waseca choir director and

her ability to completely transform our program in just one year is astounding.”

On being acknowledged for her academic achievement, Schimming said she didn’t expect it. “I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to represent Waseca Public Schools,” she added. She said her family has always been proud of the hard work and dedication she has put into her activities and her schoolwork.

“I will miss the supportive community and the wide variety of opportunities that are available for students,” Schimming said about leaving the Waseca school system.

Her favorite and funniest moments during her time in high school include tripping and falling over during the Grand March for Waseca’s 2024 Prom.

Her future plans include attending the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and, if everything goes according to plan, she will be on her way to a doctorate to become a psychiatrist. If she could give advice to herself as a freshman, Schimming said she would say, “Be yourself and don’t worry about what other people are thinking.”



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'I can't wait to see where life takes me'

Trista Stinehart earns 4.0 GPA

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

Graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA, Trista Stinehart is one of this year's honored graduates at Waseca High School. Trista is the daughter of Todd and Heather Stinehart and is from the hometown of the Bluejays. During her high school career, joined the tennis and golf teams. Stinehart was part of the Minnesota Honors Society and student council in her junior and senior years; Business Professionals of America during her sophomore, junior, and senior years; and marching band and show choir for all four years.

Stinehart says her parents are "excited and proud," about her achievements. "They have loved watching me grow over the years."

English, political science, and band and choir were among her favorite subjects; she says she liked math the least because she struggled so much with it. She mentions many of her favorite and funniest high school moments occurred when she was in her English classes, her sophomore year of marching band, and her senior year of choir.

Her advice to younger students includes "Be friends with people that make

school fun," and "Stay involved in activities because the opportunities they provide and the friendships they form are priceless." She also advises everyone to "have fun in the moment" since each moment occurs only once. As she leaves Waseca High School, she expects she will miss her amazing and kind teachers and getting to see her friends every day. While she said she had many impactful teachers, her most memorable ones were: Mr. Engesether, Mr. Hanson, Ms. Schumacher, Ms. Kreinbring, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Dettmer, Ms. Harris, Ms. Kestel and Mr. and Ms. Nelson. She said she will forever remember their passion for teaching and the helpful life knowledge they passed along.

Stinehart has volunteered at her church's food shelf for a few years and worked at the Waseca Water Park for three years; she currently works at Target. This fall she will be attending the University of Northern Iowa to major in economics.

"I'm looking forward to going to new places and experiencing new things," she said. "I can't wait to see where life takes me." She added that despite not knowing where she expects to find herself in ten years, the sky's the limit so she's looking forward to finding out. She expressed being thankful for a community like Waseca to support her, encourage her through school, and provide her with many wonderful opportunities.



Trista Stinehart
Parents: Heather and Todd Stinehart
Future plans:
Attending the University of Northern Iowa



Oliver Rohwer

'Put your best effort into everything'

Oliver Rohwer earns 4.0 GPA

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

Graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA, Oliver Rohwer is one of seven members of the WHS class of 2024 who is being acknowledged with "highest honor." Rohwer is the son of Charlie Rohwer and Anne Gerber and hails from the town of the Bluejays. As a student, Rohwer was part of the robotics and math teams, Science Olympiad, tennis, and the marching band. He also works part-time for

Climate by Design in Owatonna.

Rohwer stated he has been confident in his abilities, so he wasn't surprised when he was acknowledged for his academic achievement. "It makes me excited for the challenges college will bring," he said. "I'm sure my parents are very proud of all the hard work I've put into school."

When asked to offer suggestions for younger students who wish to do well in school, Rohwer said: "You get what you put

in. Put your best effort into everything and you will be rewarded in the end." On a similar note, if he could give himself any advice as a freshman, he said it would be, "Don't be afraid to take risks. School will go by faster than you think, so have fun while it lasts."

Rohwer said all of his teachers at Waseca High School were fantastic, but he said his favorite one would have to be Mr. Kuschel because he shows support for all of his students. "He cultivated my interests in engineering and fabrication," Rohwer added.

As the things he will miss most about high school, Rohwer named his robotics team and marching band section, adding that he hopes

he will find just as amazing people at college. His favorite memories in high school include winning the State Excellence Award and winning second place in the Minnesota Chapter of the Percussive Arts Society competition. Math and physics were his favorite subjects; he said there were none he disliked.

As far as the future goes, Rohwer plans to attend the Milwaukee School of Engineering to acquire a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. He is looking forward to being part of the VexU robotics team in college. In ten years, he hopes to be living in the Pacific Northwest, but other than that is looking forward to seeing where life takes him.

'Have confidence in yourself'

Lylah Bauman earns 4.0 GPA

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

Graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA, Lylah is one of the seven students being acknowledged "with highest honor" from Waseca High School. Lylah is the daughter of Polly and Tim Klampe of Waseca; she has two older brothers, Leonard and Rick, and one older sister, Samatha. As a student, Bauman was a member of the Spanish Club and of the Minnesota Honor Society. She works at Monarch Assisted Living Center on Mondays and Wednesdays, and at the public li-

brary Thursday to Saturday every week; she also volunteered at the Hartley book fairs, Vista Covenant Church, and Monarch Assisted Living Center on her days off.

"I'm shocked that I was picked out of my class and I feel proud and grateful," said Bauman, who says she wasn't expecting this acknowledgment.

"We are very proud," Bauman's parents added. "School has always been a number one priority to her. In her 18 years, she has overcome a lot of obstacles and has shown everyone who has ever doubted her that she

could do it on her own--and she did."

What she expects to miss most about high school are the teachers. She says she could always tell they really cared about her, and she appreciated their hard work.

Bauman's favorite memory during high school was when she had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica with her Spanish class. Her favorite subjects in school included science, math, and English, with Geometry being her least favorite.

She named Mr. Engesether as one of her favorite teachers because "he made class enjoyable by being his goofy self." She said she also liked Mr. Sharpsten because he was the kindest and most empathetic teacher she had, as well as Ms Conway because she put

in the effort to help students.

Her future plans include going to college and becoming a veterinarian for large and small animals. When she's 28, she envisions herself being an established veterinarian and still reading books. She's also looking forward to traveling and discovering what she's capable of.

If she were a freshman, the advice she would give herself is, "Have confidence in yourself because it will work out in the end."

"I never believed people when they would say high school flies by," Bauman admits. But "now I'm graduating and it doesn't feel real."



Lylah Bauman
Parents: Polly & Timothy Klampe
Future plans:
Going to college to become a veterinarian



Evelyn O'Brien
Parents: Ben & Ria O'Brien
Future plans:
Attending the University of Minnesota Rochester

'These years are so special'

Evelyn O'Brien earns 4.0 GPA

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

Graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA, Evelyn O'Brien is one of the seven students being acknowledged for earning "highest honors" in the Waseca High School class of 2024. Evelyn is the daughter of Ben and Ria O'Brien of Waseca. As a student, O'Brien enjoyed volleyball, track, choir, vocal sextets, Community Grounds Club and serving on the student council. She served as the Class of 2024 class president. She also previously participated in marching band and cross country.

Her community activities include singing with the Sacred Heart church choir and being part of the Minnwest Junior Board.

"It is so nice to be recognized for the time and effort I have put into my academics throughout high school," O'Brien said about her feelings on being acknowledged with honors. As far as what her parents and brothers thought about her accomplishment, she remarked about how proud and supportive they've been of her.

For younger students who are looking to excel in school, she suggested that they acquire an understanding of their own learning style, including how they learn best, then focus on that. She also recommends surrounding themselves with people who encourage and help them.

"Always remember to have fun, too,"

O'Brien added.

If she could give advice to herself as a freshman, O'Brien said she would tell herself to find the right balance between family, friends, and education.

"Don't burn yourself out," O'Brien said. "Take breaks and enjoy it. These years are so special."

What she will miss about high school is seeing her best friends every day and watching them excel.

Her favorite and funniest memories during her time in high school include participating in sports and supporting other sports; she mentioned how much she enjoyed choir concerts and the variety show. She listed variety shows and homecoming week as her highlights.

Her favorite subjects in school were polit-

ical science and math; her least favorite were Spanish and science. She named Mr. Engesether as one of her favorite teachers, citing his passion for education. She also stated she grew to be a much better student because of him. She named Mr. Hanson as another favorite because he never failed to put a smile on her face every day and because of his understanding for balance between having fun but also accomplishing assignments.

As far as her future goes, she plans to attend the University of Rochester to take part in the early assurance nursing program. In ten years, she hopes to be working as a nurse or nurse practitioner at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. She's also looking forward to enjoying "these younger years" with family and friends.

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‘Freedom Shrine’ dedicated May 28 at courthouse

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

“Thank you to the Waseca Exchange Club for this attractive Freedom Shrine,” stated Waseca County Commissioner DeAnne Malterer. “These documents illustrate the founding and ongoing history of our democracy.”

Malterer was among the local dignitaries who spoke during a dedication ceremony at the Waseca County Courthouse the evening of Tuesday, May 28. About 60 people lined the hallway inside the main entrance where the display is mounted. Exact photographic reproductions of numerous historic documents from United States history are permanently exhibited there: among them are the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, and the Mayflower Compact.

Waseca Mayor Randy Zimmer-

man referred to them as “living documents” which are “as relevant today as they were when they were written.”

The main speaker, Exchange Club president Mikhail Rostislavovich, thanked Caryn Wendt, club member and owner of Waseca Secretarial Service, for sponsoring the display. He then referred to the documents as “wondrous windows through which we can see back into history.” He made reference to the “half-starved pilgrims on a storm-tossed ship” who nonetheless made it their priority to create a document stating their purpose and intent as they moved toward a promising, but unknowable, new beginning. He spoke of the U.S. Constitution which kept the newly independent 13 original colonies from becoming, instead, “13 separate, snarling countries.”

Referring to the documents on display as being of worldwide impor-

tance because they led to the creation of a nation which is both an example of democracy and an inspiration to other countries, he called them “a collection of the most important words ever penned.”

He encouraged everyone to consider what a miraculous accomplishment it has been to build and maintain a form of government in which “the people tell the government what to do.” He expressed the wish that everyone who comes to the courthouse will find a few minutes to study the documents on display, and said he hoped doing so would inspire people to “go to the library. Read the stories behind each of them.”

Knowing those stories, he said, will help build an appreciation of the rights and privileges Americans cherish because it will help them see how often they have been threatened and defended.

“Freedom is among the most



Exchange Club leaders from around the area attended the dedication of a “Freedom Shrine” now in place at the Waseca County Courthouse. In the photo, from left, are Caryn Wendt, Waseca Exchange Club member and sponsor of the display. Katie Smith, Exchange District Vice President; Mikhail Rostislavovich, Waseca Exchange Club president; Sharon Kline, Exchange District President; Jean Sexton, Waseca Exchange Club treasurer; and Annette Duncan, Exchange Regional Vice President.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

sought-after privileges humans hope for,” he said. “But it is also fragile.” He expressed gratitude for the sacrifices of those “for whom there has been a price,” calling attention to the members of the military who were in

attendance.

The Exchange Club is a national organization which has as its mission, “inspiring communities to be better places to live.” The Waseca Club works actively to support the

four “pillars” of the group, “Americanism,” supporting and encouraging youth, community service, and the prevention of child abuse.



On Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at the Character Recognition Awards the Waseca Area Learning Center was presented with a Promising Practices award for their program “Theatre for Social Justice.” From left: Dr. Arthur Schwartz, Dawn Skinner, Natalia Pitts, Stephanie Graff, and Wanda Sommers Wall, Executive Director of Synergy and Leadership Exchange. Not pictured: Robb Winterfeld.

WALC receives Promising Practice award

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

MINNEAPOLIS—Waseca Area Learning Center was one of 11 honorees celebrated for excellence by Synergy & Leadership Exchange and Saint Mary’s University at the Character Recognition Awards on May 22. The event brought together educators and leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors to recognize the exemplary achievements of the honorees.

Waseca Area Learning Center received a Minnesota Promising Practices Award for “Theatre for Social Justice.” Promising Practices are unique and successful practices that promote character development in Pre-K–grade 12 students. Students at the ALC study social justice, art as

activism, and theatrical performance and then choose, rehearse, and perform a play with one or more social justice themes as a public service presentation for their communities. “Students use artistic expression and performance to communicate what might be too difficult to speak about personally,” said Language Arts and Theatre teacher Dawn Skinner.

Key highlights of the event included a welcome from Minnesota Department of Education deputy commissioner Stephanie Graff along with a presentation of the “Character Recognition Day” governor’s proclamation, an inspiring keynote from Character.org president Dr. Arthur Schwartz, and an awards presentation highlighting innovative and successful practices, programs, and

outcomes in character and ethical leadership development.

“Character development is important because we need to equip our students with the skills to face the tests of life, not just a life of tests,” said Schwartz.

“The Character Recognition Awards is a great event to spotlight character as a measure of success and to celebrate the remarkable work being done by schools, community programs and individual leaders,” said Wanda Sommers Wall, executive director of Synergy & Leadership Exchange. “A sincere thank you to our 2024 event sponsors Blaze Credit Union, FranklinCovey Education and Sourcewell.”

Through events like the Character Recognition Awards, Synergy &

Leadership Exchange aims to motivate honorees for continued success, inspire others with exemplary examples and promising practices, and celebrate the transformative impact of character formation in schools and community programs.

###

Synergy & Leadership Exchange is a nonprofit organization and program of the South Central Service Cooperative. It is dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities. For more information visit www.synergyexchange.org.

Generational veterans honored

Uhlenkamp family remembers family on Memorial Day

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

Alivia Uhlenkamp, 15, and a member of the V.F.W.’s Junior Veterans of Foreign Wars in Waldorf, traveled with her family from Green Isle to attend the Memorial Day service at the Community Center. Following the program, she laid a wreath she made at the grave of her great-grandfather Gerald Kipp, who is buried at the First Lutheran Cemetery.

Every year, the Legion arranges to lay a wreath at one grave in the community cemetery and one in First Lutheran’s; the two cemeteries are next to each other with only a road between them. The wreath at the grave is symbolic of laying one at all veterans’ graves.

This year Gerald, buried in First Lutheran, and Jerry Treynor, buried at Waldorf Community Cemetery, were selected as recipients for the wreaths; last year Robert Kipp, Alivia’s grandfather, and Jerry Stencil were the recipients. Since Alivia is a junior auxiliary member at the Legion, she’s been able to participate in laying these wreaths for the last two years.

Three years ago, Alivia designed ceremonial wreaths for a 4-H project to honor grandfather Robert and his service after the second world war with the fifty-sixth armored infantry battalion.

Pam Uhlenkamp, Robert’s daughter and Alivia’s mother, once lived just south of Waldorf, and faithfully attended the community’s Memorial Day service for many years. She moved away in 2000 when she went to the University of Minnesota to study agricultural education. Since her job took her to Sibley County following her graduation, she has lived elsewhere ever since.

Gerald died when Pam was a

senior in high school. She described, however, that he stressed the importance of Memorial Day all through her childhood. In observance of his feelings, she played Taps during his funeral.

During the 2021 Memorial Day program, Pam and her cousin Julie Tesch noted how tattered and worn the memorial wreaths looked; the two speculated they were probably around fifty years old. Together they came up with the idea that replacing the wreaths would be a good 4-H project for Alivia.

“She talked to my mom, who is an auxiliary member, about what should be in [the wreaths],” Pam continued. Artificial blue roses and red poppies were selected as decoration.

Robert was drafted at the tail end of World War II and never served in battle. Instead he was sent to Giessen, Germany, where he was part of the communications team and also trained as an artillery specialist. He spent most of his time rebuilding the community electrical infrastructure, including tasks like putting up telephone poles.

Pam remembered that during her childhood, her father seldom took any days off from his job as a milkman delivery driver, but was always sure to have Memorial Day set aside to remember, honor, and give back to the veterans who sacrificed for their families.

Growing up with that example never left Pam, so although she never served in the military herself, her children participated in the Memorial Day program with their grandfather until he died on January 1, 2023. The family has continued their Memorial Day program tradition. This year her son Oliver read the tribute dedicated to Prisoners of War (POW) and those Missing in Action

“My dad had a big personality and knew everybody. He was a social butterfly and he was kind of a goofball. We miss him.” — Pam Uhlenkamp

(MIA).

Just in the last three courses of her recent history in school, Alivia learned about wars and their significance. Knowing that she had great-uncles and grandfathers who served in these wars prompted her interest in her own history. Based on information she was able to gather from official scanned documents which described Gerald and Robert’s services, Alivia was able to put together a short memory book about them.

Although Gerald died before Alivia was born, Alivia became interested in her history when Robert shared his military experience with her.

“He was only in training and reserves, so he never had to serve in action as the war ended,” Pam said, speaking of Gerald’s service and adding that he played a part in the cleanup of the war efforts at the military base in Texas.

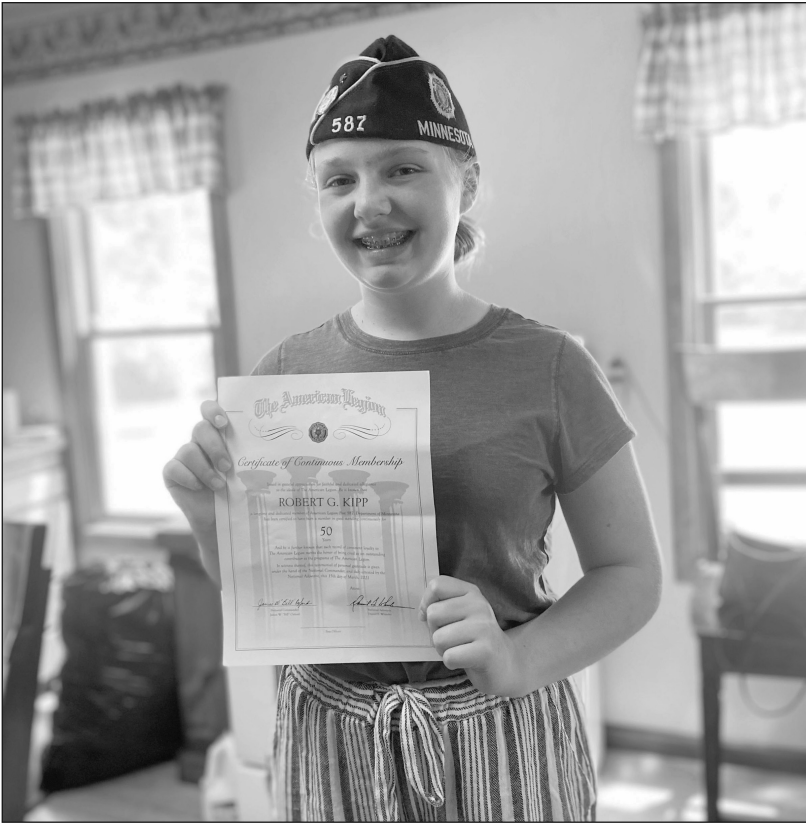
When Alivia created the memorial wreaths identical to each other she intended to give one to Robert, who didn’t know what she was doing at the time. She took it as a 4-H project to the Sibley County Fair in August 2021. When she presented the wreaths and her memory book to Robert, he found it deeply meaningful.

“He was always a marcher, a gunman, and he would do funeral services,” Pam said.

Pam and her children fondly recall what a character Robert was, doing their best to keep his mem-

ory alive. Robert had one-liners he liked to use that now they sometimes take turns surprising each other with. Robert also had some plastic pink flamingos in his yard that he moved around the yard whenever he mowed.

“My dad had a big personality and knew everybody,” Pam said. “He was a social butterfly and he was kind of a goofball. We miss him.”



Alivia Uhlenkamp proudly shows off the American Legion membership certificate which acknowledges Robert Kipp, her grandfather, as a member for fifty years.



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Steve Simon

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Work Item 1476074000027

Original File Number 1476074000027

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

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Sealed electronic bids will be received by the Waseca County Board of Commissioners until 10:00 AM on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, through Waseca County's online electronic bid system (bidVAULT). At that time, the bids will be electronically opened, read publicly at the Waseca County Public Works building, 1495 5th Street SE, Waseca, MN 56093, and results posted online at <https://mn-co-waseca.app.rtvision.com/oneoffice/bidding> for the following project:

Contract # 812409

CP 2024-081-001

WILTON TOWNSHIP PLSS REMONUMENTATION

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RECOVER & RE-ESTABLISH PLSS CORNERS

133

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Complete digital project documents are available at <https://mn-co-waseca.app.rtvision.com/oneoffice/public/bidding>. To become a registered plan holder and to bid electronically, bidders must create an account at: <https://connex.uccs.com>. There is no cost to register or download the project documents. Project documents may be viewed at the County Highway Engineer's office located at 1495 5th Street SE, Waseca, MN 56093.

Bids will only be accepted by submitting an electronic bid using bidVAULT at <https://bidvault.mn.uccs.com>. No hard copies will be accepted. Instructions on submitting a bid electronically can be found on the bidVAULT website. The cost to submit a bid is \$25.

A Performance Bond payable to Waseca County, in the full amount of the bid, shall be furnished by the successful bidder.

The Waseca County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to waive defects.

Jim Kollar, PE

Public Works Director/County Engineer

Published in Waseca County Pioneer:

Friday, May 31, 2024

Friday, June 7, 2024

Friday, June 14, 2024

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The Pastor's Column

Are you listening?

By PASTOR KEN ANDRS

There has been a trend in the younger generations these past few years to always have at least one headphone in. I know it began with my generation trying to listen to their cassette walkman in class while the teacher was talking. As phones and headphones have become more available and in better quality you see people using them more and more to entertain themselves or manage the noise they feel is assaulting them.

We do face busy-ness and distraction more than ever in our lives. We rush from one project to the next at work, from one activity to the next at home, dishes need to get done, the garden needs to get planted and weeded, but wait the lawn needs to be mowed before the rain and it just goes on and on. In the stress of life we look for a distraction and there can be things that help us manage our emotions, but more often than not we are just avoiding how we feel by adding more noise to our life.

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah had just done great things for the Lord. God proved Himself in front of the prophets of Baal, Elijah had confronted King Ahab and God restored rain to Israel, He then miraculously ran faster than a chariot to reveal God to Ahab again. Then His life was threatened by Ahab's wife and Elijah became distraught.

Elijah went into the desert, without water, without food and emotionally distraught. Elijah went into the desert to seek protec-

tion from all His stress and frustration, He would have died had not God met him there. God sent angels to minister to him and food to sustain him. After he had rested, been fed and refreshed, God spoke to Elijah.

1 Kings 19:11-13 reveals to us God's still small voice:

1 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah needed to know that God cared about His situation, that God loved Him, and God had a plan for Him. God spoke to Elijah in a way that he knew it was God, Elijah just needed to discern it through all the noise he was hearing. Elijah had to slow down and listen for the voice of God.

We have that same need, to silence the noise and listen for God. His still, small voice calls to us to be obedient and do His will. God's plans for us are great and He speaks to us to be obedient, are you listening?



The senior graduates sing "Amazing Grace" while Deb Wantoch-Yess accompanies on piano during the Baccalaureate service on Wednesday, May 29 at the Waseca High School. Pioneer photo by Rachael Jaeger

Wulf offers message to guide graduates

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

A Baccalaureate service for 2024 graduates of Waseca High School took place at the school the evening of Wednesday, May 29. Teacher John Hanson and Jake Nelson escorted the graduates while Deb Wantoch-Yess played the processional on the piano.

To begin the program, Pastor Ken Andrs from the First Congregational Church greeted the graduate families before he led them and the seniors in a prayer. In the prayer, he addressed God as Lord and Savior, then expressed thankfulness for the guidance graduates had been receiving from the time they began kindergarten. Andrs also thanked the teachers who instructed them and the parents who nurtured them and finished by asking God for his continued presence in the graduates' lives.

Next, graduates Tricia Cox, McKyla Hasselquist, Hannah La-Croix, and Addison Wiesler took turns reading from Proverbs 3:3-8.

Then Evelyn O'Brien gave a prayer for the graduates: "Dear God, we ask you as graduating seniors to help us to walk in your wisdom and grace. We pray for spiritual eyes in discernment in all things. Help us to be wise leaders and influencers in this generation,

not conforming to the world but transformed through your power."

Choir teacher Megan Kreinbring directed the senior choir in "Amazing Grace" while Yess accompanied on piano.

This was followed by Ella Krautkramer who presented the seniors with another prayer after she read Jeremiah 29:11 – "Dear God, as graduating seniors, we thank you that you have given us hope and a future. We ask you to fill us with your spirit and power as we live out your purpose. We ask you to inspire us not to be afraid to dream big, grow strong, and soar high..."

Pastor Rick Wulf from Christ Community Church expressed his gratitude for getting to know some of the graduating seniors through his daughter Lily, his church, helping coach football, and Club 180/2020. He gave a message about "How to Wreck Your Life in Three Easy Steps" using props that included a hammer, flathead screwdriver, and a c-clamp.

He demonstrated that each of these items have a specific purpose just like people do and discussed three basic points about how people can forget their purpose.

The first was to forget that they have one.

"We're like these tools; if we

don't try things we were never meant to do, it ends up wrecking our lives," Wulf said. "Just like how we can end up in the comparison trap... if we only had the resources that that family had, if I was good with my hands or if I could sing really well, if I was only smart like them."

He inserted a quote from Theodore Roosevelt: "Comparison is the thief of joy." He then reminded the graduates what God said in the Bible about that people were made for a purpose because he knew them before they were born.

The second way Wulf named that people wreck their lives is to make excuses about why they're not enough.

"I don't know about you, but I think we're great at making excuses," he added. "That's what Jeremiah said. He said he was only a child and he was dumb." With that, Wulf also pointed out the examples of Moses and Gideon who believed they weren't good enough.

Earlier, Wulf had said that a hammer is the tool that he commonly uses, but then he came back to that point. "But how effective is a hammer when a screwdriver is the right tool?"

On that note, he quoted Proverbs 3:5-6 which cautions against someone using their own knowledge in-

stead of trusting in God for strength. He also reminded everyone there that God is all they would ever need.

The final way Wulf said individuals can wreck their lives is when they try to do everything on their own without God or dependable friends.

"The Bible is filled with promises and reminders of who he is and how good he is," Wulf said. "He says 'I am with you.' He says whatever you go through, I will give you the strength you need to go through it. I believe that when God brings you to it, he will bring you through it."

Wulf also went on to talk about developing and maintaining healthy habits and showing others you care when everyone else might look the other way. He finished by saying that it's much easier to wreck your life than it is to live it and do it God's way. How one can do that, Wulf said, is to seek him.

The Baccalaureate service ended with the Gideon representatives encouraging the graduates to take a Bible from them as they left the auditorium. Pastor Jillene Gallatin from Grace Lutheran Church closed with one final prayer for the graduates. As the graduates exited, Yess performed a recessional.

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Utility billing service replaced

By JESSICA LUTGENS
Staff Writer

New Richland Care Center (NRCC) Administrator Bob Johansen reported during the New Richland City Council's second meeting of the month on Monday, May 28, that the center's average census continues to rise. April's average was 39.2, up from 36 in March and 33 in February. April financial balances for the center were also positive despite continued agency staffing, which is expected to be reduced from June to August due to college and high school staff returning to work.

A Department of Human Services (DHS) grant totaling \$200,000 received by the center last August was discussed; so far, funds have been used to replace air conditioning units in resident rooms and air handling units in hallways. Upcoming projects funded by the grant include new sidewalks, a patio on the north side of the building, an air unit in the kitchen, a walk-in cooler, sewer line upgrades and windows in the sun-room.

The NRCC still has staff openings for full and part-time CNAs and LPNs for days, evenings, overnights, and every other weekend. The report was approved.

Shell Johnson presented the PeopleService report, stating that a gas leak on April 11 was inspected and repaired by MN energy. Lift pump issues at the wastewater treatment plant resulted in a call to MN Pump Works, and it was noted that inflow and infiltration problems are getting worse with each rainfall. Residents and businesses are reminded that sump pumps and roof drain downspouts cannot be hooked to the city sanitary sewer, as it is illegal. Sanitary sewer valves on private services can be installed to stop the backflow of sewer water into homes and businesses. The report was approved.

The maintenance and utilities report stated that 30 blue cards were issued in April, resulting in two shut-offs due to lack of payment. A water main break on May 9 has been addressed, hydrants were flushed on April 25, and a new flow meter was

NEW RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL

put in on April 29. A total of 65 people participated in the citywide cleanup on May 18, and a water blowout on the west side of the school has been repaired.

The following purchases were approved: seal coating on South Balsam, South Cedar, First St. NW, Second St. NW, North Cedar, North Ash, Third St. NW, and North Ash at a cost of \$33,995.43; GIS system at a cost of \$1,247; rollover curb replacement at Cedar Pointe and Sixth at a cost of \$1,585. The report was approved.

In unfinished business, the final presentation of the Classification and Compensation Study was presented, and the plan was approved. In new business, the council approved lifeguard wages for three guards, with the head lifeguard receiving a pay increase of \$0.25 to total \$15.25/hour and two second-year lifeguards approved at \$12.25/hour.

Ordinance 205.01, which will refine language regarding the city clerk and city administrator, was discussed, and the council approved a first reading of the ordinance during the next regular meeting on June 10 followed by a public hearing on June 24. Liquor license renewals for The Willows and New Richland Liquor Company were approved, along with a new computer and docking station for a New Richland Police Department squad car at a cost of up to \$5,000 and a \$25 rent increase at Cedar Pointe, which was approved by the economic development authority (EDA) prior to the meeting. Resolution 24-12, ordering preparation of a feasibility report, was approved.

The administrator's report stated that the city's former utility payment company, PSN, has been replaced by PAYA effective May 12. A solar refund from Xcel Energy of just over \$20,000 was received, and a Hydrology Study Meeting has been scheduled for May 29. The report was approved, and the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Waseca wells undergoing maintenance

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

Imagine a hole two feet across and so cavernous it creates resounding echoes. Now multiply that by five.

The city of Waseca is served by five wells, ranging from about 700-1,000 feet deep. Each of them is capable of delivering more than 1,000 gallons of water a minute, according to Waseca Deputy Public Works Director Tim Roessler. Performing straightforward math, that means each well can produce nearly 1.5 million gallons in a 24-hour period—the volume of two olympic-sized swimming pools.

The oldest of Waseca's wells was dug in 1949 and had its casing replaced in 1982. The others date from the 1960s and '70s, with well number 5 having been dug in 1979.

Roessler explains only two wells are usually delivering water on any given day. The five wells are in a "rotation" which has one of them supplying water city-wide, with a second slated for backup if demand should become unusually high. "Almost always, one well at a time is enough," he says. "Only in high demand do we have to go to backup."

To create the pressure needed to deliver water city-wide, the active well pumps water into the city water towers, each of which holds up to 500,000 gallons. Water inside the towers, he mentions, is roughly 30 feet deep. The supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system controls the wells and tower levels. The same system monitors and helps control the sanitary sewer lift stations and the wastewater treatment plant.

About every five years, the city contracts with a company to "maintain" the wells; that process has been ongoing since January. According to Roessler, the low bid for this year's work was \$600,000. Roessler says the maintenance is very important to ensure the wells will all continue to function reliably. Tasks performed for each well in turn include pulling the many sections of pipe from the shaft and checking them for structural integrity; any which do not meet standards are repaired or replaced.

The pump for each well is located hundreds of feet down, while the motor which drives it is above ground. Both the pump and motor are removed and checked; here, too, any problems are fixed.

The mine shaft itself is also

visually inspected using specialized cameras. The objective, according to a geologist who helps with the task, is to confirm the walls of the well are retaining their shape and integrity. He commented during an inspection that Waseca is fortunate in being located above reliable aquifers and sturdy bedrock. He pointed out that wells which are dug in areas with more loose sand and sediment often must include sand removal as part of their maintenance work; that is seldom the case in Waseca.

As the inspection camera is lowered, resulting video is viewed at the time, then reviewed later. Occasionally visible in the limestone sides of the shaft are the fossils of aquatic creatures which lived in the ancient lakes that deposited substances that, over centuries, became stone.

Given all the steps taken to fully "maintain" a well, and given the specialized nature of the work, Roessler explains each well is typically out of service for about six weeks. Three of the five have been serviced so far this year; work on the other two will likely wait until fall.

During normal operations, functions at each well are checked daily by technician Brian Helleveick. His tasks include general inspections and record keeping. He not only looks at the pumping mechanisms, but also at equipment in place to "dose" city water with needed additives. Fluoride, for example, is required by state law. As most people know, fluoride is an important protective substance for people's teeth. Also added to water are sodium silicate, which serves to reduce corrosion, and chlorine, which inhibits bacterial growth, Roessler explains.

Well water is tested periodically for contaminants; according to the "City of Waseca 2023 Drinking Water Report," available on the city website, tests have found no levels of contaminants which exceed—or even come close to exceeding—safety guidelines.

The impressive numbers do not stop at the wells.

Roessler says there are 61 miles of water mains under the city. Buried below the frost line, the oldest are made of iron; those installed or replaced more recently are thick-walled pvc. Their diameters vary depending on the number of customers they deliver water to.

He mentions that his department fixes roughly 12 broken mains in a



The start of the maintenance process for each of the city's wells is to remove the metal shaft which houses the pump. Here, two workmen have finished using a derrick to remove hundreds of feet of pipe and are next to the open well, which extends nearly 1,000 feet underground.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

year. Sometimes they simply fail, sometimes they break when the ground around them shifts. Much of the time, the break is self-evident, with water rising to the surface. Repairs must be performed promptly, he points out, or a great deal of water will be wasted and damage may occur where the water pools or flows. Even more complications are likely if the break occurs in winter and the water begins to freeze.

At strategic locations throughout the system, about 1,500 valves are installed so that sections of the pipe can be isolated—not only to facilitate repairs when necessary, but to add new lines or for other tasks.

Thanks to the flexibility of routing made possible by the valves, Roessler says even when there is a break, customers are unlikely to lose service completely, although they may have to endure reduced water pressure for a time.

Also part of the municipal water system are more than 500 fire hydrants. As their name makes clear, the hydrants are in place so firefighters can access large amounts of water rapidly in case of a house fire or other emergency requiring water. Roessler reveals that hydrants throughout the city are also opened twice a year to "flush" the system; allowing large amounts of water to flow rapidly through the pipes can help remove iron or other sediments which may have settled to the bottom or adhered to the interior.

Perhaps surprisingly, Roessler says the amount of water used by most residents and businesses is quite consistent; looking at usage city-wide, he says numbers do not vary much across all four seasons. One exception is "corn pack," when Conagra/Bird's Eye is processing corn. For those months in the late summer, consumption is much higher. This has been known for decades, of course. In fact, one of the five wells operated by the city is owned by Conagra. But even during that time of year, Roessler states, two wells are almost always suffi-

cient to supply the needed amount of water.

According to Roessler, 3,400 connections are served by the city water system. Each connection has a meter which keeps track of how much water is delivered.

Roessler says he has worked for the city more than 20 years. He recalls working, for a time, with Donny Allen, who had once been the city's meter reader. Roessler recalls Allen and others once had the job of physically visiting each connection to read the meter and report the number.

For decades now, that physical visit has not been necessary. Equipment at each water meter communicates electronically with the billing software system used by the city. This means a technician can simply drive down a street; the system receives the meter reading from each connection and enters it into a database.

The electronics of the system must also be monitored and maintained to assure accuracy, he points out. This, too, is among the duties performed by the 2.5 city employees whose time is devoted to the water pumping and distribution system.

Water department employees must also respond within 48 hours whenever someone contacts the statewide "Call before you dig" hotline. Whenever a worksite is located within city boundaries, Roessler says utility staff members are sent to the location to mark all electric and water lines with flags or paint; doing so helps prevent the many complications which might occur if a power line, water pipes, or sanitary or storm sewer line were broken during construction.

"So you can see," says Roessler, "we have a wide range of responsibilities."

"Waseca has good water," he says of the five deep wells and the aquifer they reach. "We're glad to do everything we can to get it where people need it."

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A Graduation Open House

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EXCEPTIONAL EFFORTS — From left, Quinn VanMaldeghem, Evelyn Nydegger and Kylie Olson compete during last Saturday's Section 2A track and field meet at Mankato. VanMaldeghem, Nydegger and Wilson advanced to state this Thursday, Friday and Saturday at St. Michael-Albertville High School. Photos by Larry Nydegger

A section meet to savor

Nydegger, VanMaldeghem, Wilson advance to state

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The 34th and final season for Duey Ferber as a head track and field coach is not quite finished.

Three NRHEG High School girls extended their season for another week, qualifying for the state meet out of Saturday's Section 2A competition at Mankato.

While state qualifiers Evelyn Nydegger, Quinn VanMaldeghem and Malonna Wilson provided the biggest highlights, the entire NRHEG girls' contingent shined, finishing a strong third with 56 points. River Valley won with 87 and JWP was second with 67.

Twenty-three teams competed. "Holy smokes," said Ferber. "What a great meet!"

Nydegger, a recent graduate, secured her state berth with a second-place finish in the 300-meter intermediate hurdles, in which she clocked 47.48 seconds.

Another graduate, Wilson, finished first in the shot put with a mark of 35 feet, 6 inches.

VanMaldeghem, who recently completed her sophomore year, placed second in the 400 with a time of 1:00.11.

"To send three girls to state is quite a feat," said Ferber. "This is a tough section!"

Kylie Olson came oh so close to

advancing, taking third in the shot put at 34-11.5. Wilson tossed the discus 104-5 for third place. Nydegger was fourth in the 100 hurdles in 16.37.

Quinn and Camryn VanMeldghem teamed with Sierra Misgen and Clara Buendorf for sixth in the 4x400 relay in 4:24.75. Chloe Riewer, Buendorf, Misgen and Ellie Clark took sixth in the 4x200 in 1:52.21. Riewer, Anika Ladlie, Gabby Schlaak and C.VanMeldghem were seventh in the 4x100, clocking 53.72.

Also placing for the girls: Anika Ladlie, 7th, high jump, 4-9; Julieann Wobbrock, 7th, 3200, 13:08.4; Schlaak, 9th, high jump, 4-9;

Riewer, 9th, long jump, 15-2.5; Camryn VanMaldeghem, 8th, 100, 13.5.

"I'm very proud of these young ladies," said Ferber.

The NRHEG boys tied for 21st among 23 teams with nine points.

The biggest disappointment for the Panthers was the absence of their top entrant, senior hurdler Will Tuttle, who was injured in the subsection meet and was unable to compete.

The top finisher for NRHEG was senior Jaylin Raab, who went 19-8 for fourth in the long jump.

Harbor Cromwell, Levin Kitzer, Parker Bunn and Raab took sixth in the 4x100 in 46.8. Kitzer was eighth



THROWERS — NRHEG shot putters Malonna Wilson, left, and Kylie Olson await their turn during the Section 2A track and field meet Saturday at Mankato.

in the 110 high hurdles in 21.88, and Parker Bunn finished ninth in the 300 hurdles in 45.5.

LCWM-Nicollet won the boys' division with 75 points. Windom Area was next with 67.

"Our boys had a tough day with stiff competition," said Ferber.

WHS boys' tennis awards



The Waseca High School boys' tennis team presented awards at its annual season-ending banquet last week. From left: Tyler Jellum, Most Dedicated and Hardest Worker; Lucas McQuery, Most Improved, second year in a row; Henry Huttemier, Hardest Worker (tie with Jellum), Armann Bhatti, Best Sportsmanship and Best Attitude; Oliver Rohwer, Highest GPA.



2024 Waseca boys' tennis Most Valuable Player Henry Huttemier, who was 13-6 at No. 2 singles.



WHS boys' tennis players earning the Bluejay Brick Award are, from left, Tyler Jellum, Dominic Grunzke and Oliver Rohwer. "Their foundation was the key to our success," said coach Kyle Collins. "Without them, we would not have accomplish so many wins and had the best setason in 10 years, 13-4." The three also served as team captains this past season.



Academic All-State selections for the 2024 WSHS boys' tennis team are, from left, Eddy Gallegos, Dominic Grunzke, Oliver Rohwer. To qualify, athletes must be a senior with a grade oint average of 3.7 or better.

Shorthanded Braves win at Lake Crystal

The Waseca Braves were concerned they may not have enough players for Sunday's game at Lake Crystal.

They had plenty.

The Braves, according to coach Tink Larson, patch-worked together a lineup and wound up coasting to a 17-1 triumph.

"We really hit the ball well," said Larson, whose squad totaled 17 hits.

Seth Larson was 4-for-5 and also got hit by a pitch. Kyle Waugh had three hits and five RBIs, Jimmy Loonan three hits and three RBIs. Alex Feeney had three hits and drove in two runs. Loonan scored four runs, Anderson and Kelvin Nelson three each.

Blake Nelson, a Braves stand-out decades ago, showed he still has it, stroking a clean single in his first at-bat and flawlessly handling several ground balls at second base.

Jason Reger replaced Blake in the infield the last two innings and made a great defensive play.

The Braves used three pitchers, with Kelvin Nelson going five innings to pick up the win. Ironically, Lake Crystal did not strike out until the final out of the game.

"Hopefully, we will start getting our full squad together," said Larson.

The Braves hosted Rochester May 29 and lost 9-4 at Tink Larson Community Field.

Both teams had 11 hits. The difference was that Waseca gave up 10 walks while Rochester allowed just two. The Braves also had four fielding miscues, two more than the visitors.

"We'll get better," said Larson. "We have been missing a lot of players the last couple games. As soon as we get everyone here, we'll do well."

The Braves host the Austin Bluejays Friday.



SET FOR STATE — JWP's state-qualifying 4x100 relay team, from left, Katelyn Olson, Nevaeh Weimert, Brielle Bure and Lilly Strauss.



SET FOR STATE — JWP's state-qualifying 4x200 relay team, from left, Lilly Strauss, Nevaeh Weimert, Katelyn Olson and MaKenzie Westphal.



SET FOR STATE — JWP's state-qualifying 4x800 relay team, from left, Lilly Strauss, Ashlynn Wolff, MaKenzie Westphal and Nevaeh Wiemert.

A record-setting section

Kronbach, Westphal, Strauss, four relays reach state

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The JWP High School track and field teams had a motto for the season and the section meet, a quote from Henry Ford: "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right."

Obviously, their thoughts have been in the right place.

The Bulldogs shined in last week's Section 2A meet at Mankato, breaking several school records and qualifying athletes for state in nine events.

"The section meet went great!" said JWP coach Sam Schruin. "Our athletes performed extremely well and the coaching staff and myself are extremely proud of them."

State qualifiers for the girls and their showing at section:

4x200 relay, first place, school record of 1:47.74, comprised of Nevaeh Weimert, Katelyn Olson, Lilly Strauss and MaKenzie Westphal.

4x400 relay, first, school record 4:10.66 (Strauss, Ashlynn Wolf, Weimert, Westphal).

"Our athletes performed extremely well and the coaching staff and myself are extremely proud of them."
— JWP track coach Sam Schruin

4x100 relay, second, school record 51.07 (Brielle Bure, Weimert, Olson, Strauss).
Makenzie Westphal, first, 800, school record 2:22.35.
Strauss, third, long jump, 16-10.
Ryan Kronbach led the boys, advancing to state in three individual events and a relay.
Dylan McWaters, Isaiah Berndt, Daulton Bauer and Kronbach combined to win the 4x200 in a school-record 1:32.0.
Kronbach, a senior, finished first in the high jump, second in the long jump and third in the triple jump, qualifying for state in all three.
Just missing state was the boys' 4x100 meter relay team of McWaters, Berndt, Bauer and Ethan Born, which finished third in a

school-record 44.47.
Presley James missed state by one place in the girls' triple jump, finishing third.
To top it off, the JWP girls finished second as a team, totaling 67 points to first-place River Valley's 87. Twenty-three teams scored. The JWP boys finished seventh as a team.
"It was a beautiful day and there was great competition from all teams there," said Schruin. "We are looking forward to another week of practice to compete at the state meet!"
Also placing but not advancing for the girls were Onikia Herme, 4th, 300 hurdles; Lauren White, 5th, 1600; 4x800 relay, 6th (Ava Krause, Madeline Hoehn, Madilyn

Gustafson, Kwynn Krause); Weimert, 5th, triple jump; Aubrey Weedman, 6th, shot put.
For the boys: 4x800, 7th (Memphis James, Derek Gustafson, Tyson Kronbach, Alex Kleve); Kleve, 9th, 800.
Schruin said his athletes had the right mindset all season.
"The entire team has embodied (the Henry Ford quote) all season, putting in the work necessary for overall growth and staying dedicated to achieving their personal and team goals," said Schruin.
JWP's John Kaplan was voted Assistant Coach of the Year by the head coaches of the section.
"A special shoutout needs to go to him," said Schruin. "He has gone above and beyond his title of assistant coach and we wouldn't have the team or culture that we do without him and all of our coaching staff to include volunteers."
The state meet began Thursday and ends Saturday at St. Michael-Albertville High School.



LEAP OF FAITH — Ryan Kronbach of JWP advanced to state in the triple jump, long jump and high jump while anchoring the state-qualifying 4x100-meter relay.

NRHEG golfers eliminated in opening round of section

The NRHEG High School golf teams finished the season with the first round of sectional play May 28 at New Prague.

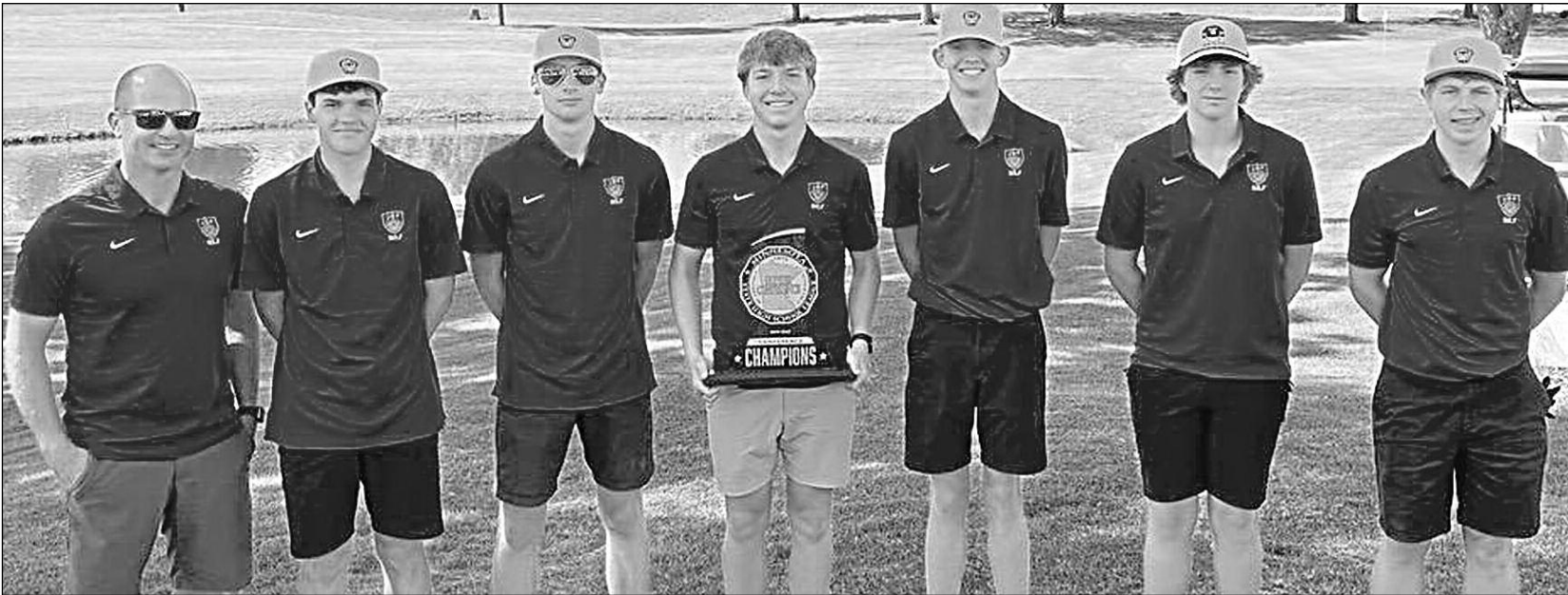
The boys placed 14th for 18 holes. Scores: Matt Williams 111, Hudson Chrz 111, Braydon Rollag 122, Carter Schlaak 127.

The NRHEG girls placed ninth. Scores: Meela Budach 101, Alexis Olson 130, Olivia Wilkenson 130, Gabby Nelson 154.

None of the NRHEG boys or girls made the day-two cut in the tournament, ending their season.

WASECA AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL — 2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPP.	SITE	TIME
Tuesday	June 4	Janesville	Away 6:15
Monday	June 10	Jackson	Home 7:30
Tuesday	June 11	Kasson	Home 7:00
Thursday	June 13	Mankato Nat.	Away 7:30
Monday	June 17	Sleepy Eye	Away 7:30
Tuesday	June 18	New Ulm	Away 7:00
Monday	June 24	Albert Lea	Home 7:00
Tuesday	June 25	Wanamingo	Away 6:30
Thursday	June 27	Mankato Am.	Home 7:00
Monday	July 1	Kasson	Away 7:00
Friday	July 5	New Ulm Tourney	Away
Saturday	July 6	New Ulm Tourney	Away
Sunday	July 7	New Ulm Tourney	Away
Tuesday	July 9	Sleepy Eye	Home 7:30
Thursday	July 11	Owatonna	Away 7:00
Monday	July 15	Wanamingo	Home 7:00
Tuesday	July 16	New Ulm	Home 7:00
Thursday	July 18	Janesville	Home 7:00
Wednesday	July 24	Sub-State	New Ulm
Thursday	July 25	Sub-State	New Ulm
Friday	July 26	Sub-State	New Ulm
Saturday	July 27	Sub-State	New Ulm
Thursday	August 1	State Tournament	Osseo
Friday	August 2	State Tournament	Osseo
Saturday	August 3	State Tournament	Osseo
Sunday	August 4	State Tournament	Osseo



SUPERB SEASON — Coach Tim Burke, left, and members of the JWP High School boys' golf team pose for a photo after winning the Gopher Conference championship. The Bulldogs' Steve Dimmel was named conference player of the year. Alex James placed third in conference, Logan Thell fourth, Jeffrey Simonson sixth, Carter Miller 10th and Ryan Kronbach 17th. The Bulldogs dominated at the section level, advancing to state tournament June 11 and 12 at Pebble Creek in Becker.

JWP golf boys advance to state

Bulldogs dominate section tourney after winning Gopher Conference

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

May was a busy and triumphant month for the JWP High School boys' golf team.

June could be even better.

The Bulldogs won the section championship and advanced to state Tuesday, totaling 638 strokes for 36 holes in the two-day tournament at North Links in Mankato. New Ulm Cathedral was second with 674.

For the Bulldogs, Logan Thell tied for second among individuals with a two-day total of 154. Steve Dimmel was fourth at 157, Jeffrey Simonson sixth with 162 and Alex James eighth at 165.

The Bulldogs will play in the state tournament June 11 and 12 at Pebble Creek in Becker.

The boys claimed the first-day lead in the section meet at North Links, compiling a 35-stroke lead over the second-place squad. Thell and Simonson tied for second individually, while James and Dimmel tied for fifth. Carter Miller was seventh.

The Bulldogs won the Gopher Conference championship May 23 with the third and final conference meet at Lakeside Golf Course in Waseca. They finished 49 strokes better than the runner-up.

Steve Dimmel finished first overall and was named Gopher Conference Player of the Year. Thell, who finished third, also earned all-conference recognition, as did Simonson and James, who tied for fifth. Miller received honorable mention all-conference, finishing 10th.

Hope Dimmel finished fourth among the girls, tying her personal-best 94 for 18 holes, earning all-conference honors.

In the second conference meet May 13 at Austin Country Club, the boys finished with a 14-stroke victory, taking five of the top 10 spots. Steve Dimmel tied for second, Thell and James fourth. Simonson was sixth, Miller ninth and Ryan Kronbach 14th.

Hope Dimmel tied for sixth place with a 96.

The Bulldogs hosted a 12-team meet at Lakeside May 20, taking first by eight strokes. Steve Dimmel was medalist with a 73. James took fourth.

Hope Dimmel finished 15th.

The Bulldogs faced three other schools in a nine-hole match at Terrace View May 14. Steve Dimmel fired a season-best 34 for first. Simonson was second, Thell third, Kronbach fourth.

Hope Dimmel took fourth.

Keith, Rasche advance to second round of section

The Waseca High School girls' golf team placed seventh at the first round of the Section 2AA golf tournament held in New Prague last Wednesday.

The top four teams advanced to the second round. They are Holy Family Catholic, Southwest Christian, Jordan and Blue Earth.

Two Waseca players advanced in

the individual competition to the second round. Senior Emma Keith and Sophomore Madison Rasche have a chance at making the date tournament with a solid round.

The rest of this years team consisted of juniors Mia and Lexi Kanewischer and freshmen Elli Hoban.

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e-mail sportswriter79@yahoo.com



STATE QUALIFIERS — The Bluejays’ Damarius Russell, third from left in photo at left, and Brooklyn Flatau, right, building a big lead in the 100-meter high hurdles, were among the locals advancing to state from last week’s Section 1AA meet at Faribault.



STATE QUALIFIERS — The Bluejays’ Damarius Russell, third from left in photo at left, and Brooklyn Flatau, right, building a big lead in the 100-meter high hurdles, were among the locals advancing to state from last week’s Section 1AA meet at Faribault.

On to state

Bluejays’ Russell, Flatau, others qualify in track & field

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

It wasn't like last year, but it was still a solid showing for Waseca High School in the Section 1AA track and field meet last Thursday and Saturday at Faribault.

The Bluejays qualified for state in six events, Damarius Russell in the 100-meter dash and the long jump, the 4x100 relay team of Russell, Carson Ohnstad, Jordan Johnston and Bennett Ludwig, Brooklyn Flatau in the 100 hurdles and long jump, and Kalea Sartori in the girls' shot put.

"We had a very good section meet," said Waseca coach David Abel. "I was impressed with how many of our athletes hit their best marks and times at the big meet. It is always great to hit full stride at the section meet. Both 4x800 relay groups were impressive. The boys' 4x100m group was really fun to watch. Overall, we were pleased with how things turned out. We are always grateful to coach another week and represent at the state level."

Russell, a junior returning state

"It is always great to hit full stride at the section meet."
— Coach David Abel

entrant, was the first Bluejay to qualify, beating the standard in Thursday's 100 preliminaries. He finished third in the finals, clocking 11.12 seconds. He won the long jump at 21 feet, 4.75 inches. Russell just missed state in the 200, where he finished third in 22.56.

The boys finished fourth in the 4x100 relay, but advanced to state with a qualifying time of 43.33.

Flatau, a junior, was the first-place finisher in the girls' 100 hurdles with a time of 14.99. She beat the qualifying standard in the long jump, sailing 16-8 for fifth place.

Sartori, a junior, reached state in the shot put, placing third with a toss of 36-8.

Other places for the Bluejay boys: William Mansfield, 6th, pole vault, 12-0; Wyatt Hager, 6th, discus, 136-



SECTION PERFORMERS — Competing at last week’s Section 1AA meet at Faribault were Colton Schroeder, left, in the 1600, and Bella Wikan, right, in the 100.

10; Johnston, 8th, 100, 11.67; Isaac Feldkamp, 8th, 800, 2:06.96; Brandon Jascha, 11th, shot put, 43-6.25; Ethan Stenzel, 12th, discus, 131-5 and 12th shot put, 42-6.5; Tristan Godwin, 12th, 3200, 11:07.3 and 17th, pole vault, 10-0; Javonn Rodney, 13th, discus, 126-10 and 9th, shot put, 44-03; Jonah Worke, 16th, long jump, 17-10.75; Owen Rupe, 17th, high jump, 5-4; Tovinn Grannis, 18th, high jump, 5-4; Colton Schroeder, 24th, 1600, 5:23.8 and 23rd, 3200, 12:54.27; 4x200, 8th, 1:36.01 (Ludwig, Brady

Tloughan, Jett Rohl, Micah Allen-Haas); 4x400 relay, 10th, 3:42.37 (Grannis, Hager, Tloughan, Ohnstad); 4x800, 4th, 8:31.03 (Godwin, Feldkamp, Grannis, Hager).

Ohnstad was disqualified in the 300 hurdles.

For the girls: Callie Dufault, 4th, 3200, 12:04.38; Bella Wikan, 8th, 100, 13.5 and 4th, 300 hurdles, 47.99; Flatau, 5th, 300 hurdles, 48.18; Sartori, 6th, discus, 107-10; Stella Omtvedt, 7th, 3200, 12:30.39; Savanna Vagts, 17th, high jump, 4-8; Sierra Krause, 18th, discus, 90-2



SECTION PERFORMERS — Competing at last week’s Section 1AA meet at Faribault were Colton Schroeder, left, in the 1600, and Bella Wikan, right, in the 100.

and 24th, shot put, 27-6.6; Camila Marquez, 21st, high jump, 4-6; Nevaeh Sampson, 22nd, discus, 84-09 and 31st, shot put, 25-03; 4x100 relay, 9th, 54.3 (Gabby Lopez, Marquez, N.Williams, Katelyn Weber); 4x200, 9th, 1:54.15 (Krause, Reese Rodriguez, Lopez, Vivian Mader); 4x400, 6th, 4:16.05 (Omtvedt, Maren Schimming, Wikan, Evelyn O'Brien); 4x800, 6th, 9:57.4 (Omtvedt, O'Brien, Schimming, Dufault).

Stewartville won the boys team title with 190 points, with Winona

second at 164. The Bluejays totaled 54.5 points for seventh among 12 teams.

The girls' team title went to Winona with 145 points. Northfield was second with 141. Waseca scored 59 for ninth place.

The state meet runs Thursday through Saturday at St. Michael-Albertville High School.

The Class AA preliminaries and girls' long jump will be held Friday. The running event finals and boys' long jump are Saturday.



THE FINAL HURRAH — The WHS baseball team saw its season end Monday with a loss to Maple River in the section tournament, but the Bluejays kept their season alive last Friday with an 8-6 victory at Tri-City United. At left, Shane Engel-Mueller passes his batting gloves to first base coach Austin Naegle. In the middle, Colton Ruedy makes a diving catch in the outfield. At right, Keaton Roeker comes up throwing from his shortstop position.



WHS baseball team doubles win total in section tourney

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The Waseca Bluejays, winners of only two games in the regular season, were apparently intent on convincing folks they were a better baseball team than their win-loss record indicated.

A strong showing in section play did just that, winning two games to double the season's victory total.

The Bluejays were impressive last Friday

while topping Tri-City United on the Titans' field at Montgomery, leading from start to finish in an 8-6 victory.

The season ended, however, with a 13-3, five inning loss to Maple River Monday at LeSueur.

The Bluejays got off to a great start at TCU, capitalizing on a Titan error to ignite a five-run inning that included hits by Nate Engel-Mueller, Carter Ellis, Sebastian Teague and Colton Ruedy.

TCU cut into the lead with a run in the bottom of the fourth, but the Bluejays plated two men in the fifth and one more in the seventh.

The bottom of the inning saw TCU score three times, but reliever Shane Engel-Mueller finally slammed the door.

Teague was the winning pitcher, allowing four hits through six innings.

The Bluejays totaled 11 hits.

"We came up with our highest hit total of

the season," said Braves assistant coach Tink Larson. "Teague gave up a few walks, but not many hits."

Shane Engel-Mueller had a big day at the plate, going 3-for-3, with Ellis going 2-for-4 with three runs. Also hitting safely were Keaton Roeker, Nate Engel-Mueller, Teague, Noah Thompson, Ruedy and Titus Mokoff.

"After winning only two regular-season games, it was nice, though, to win two tour-

namment games," said Larson.

The Bluejays were in it early against Maple River, taking a 2-0 advantage, but the bottom fell out in the third inning as the Eagles scored nine unearned runs. Maple River ended it with four runs in the fifth, two of which were unearned.

"We did not have a good day defensively as we committed seven errors," said Larson. "It's tough to win with that many errors."

The Bluejays finished 4-16.