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WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY

No. 5 Vol. IV \$2 Office at 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca Thursday, January 30, 2025



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Snow week

Minnesota Beauties



A Southern Minnesota Pageant Competition was held Saturday night, January 25 at the Waseca High School Performing Arts Center. The following ladies were crowned: Miss Owatonna Teen: Kaylee Smith; Miss South Central Teen: Amaya Rathes; Miss Waseca County Sleigh & Cutter Teen: Paige Johnson; Miss Owatonna: Jasmin Kotek; Miss South central: Lainey Donahue; Miss Waseca County Sleigh & Cutter: May Diddy.



Kim Harty, Barbara Baeur artist reception January 30 at Waseca Art Center

A reception for exhibiting artists Kim Harty and Barbara Baeur will be from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30 at the Waseca Art Center, 200 North State St.

“Adult Carnival” at Waseca American Legion Jan. 31

The Waseca American Legion’s annual “adult carnival” will begin at 5 p.m. Friday, January 31. The evening will include adult-themed games and activities, both silent and live (9 p.m.) auctions, and food for sale including coney dogs, onion rings, and more.

One-Act Play competition all day Feb. 1 at WHS Performing Arts Center

The Waseca Junior Senior High School performing arts center will be the location of section competition for regional one act play productions. Six 30-minute plays will be presented; doors open at 9:30, plays begin at 10 a.m. Start times for the remainder of the day are 10:55, 11:50, 1:00, 1:55 and 2:55. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for students; enter through the west doors. Anyone interested in volunteering is invited to contact Anna Pollack at pola@Waseca.k12.mn.us.

Cookie Decorating Class with Sweet Q’s Cookie Co. at WJSH room 327 Sat., Feb. 1

There will be a cookie decorating class at the Waseca Junior Senior High School room 327 from 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 1. Price is \$50, no baking or icing prep included.

DIY Doormat class at the Indian Island Winery Sat., Feb. 1

There will be a do-it-yourself doormat class at the Indian Island Winery at 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 1.

A word from The Word

He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!

Psalms 111:9



Snow Week



Candidates for Waseca Snow King, back from left: Brayden Hesch-Priem, David Hodgkins, Hunter Anderson, Jackson Tesch, Lucas Groll and Adian Androli. For Queen: Front Row:Sierra Krause, Siri Kuhns, Callie Dufault, Gracie Morgan, Takara Slattery and Elizabeth Manthe.

Waseca snow week at a glance

It’s snow week at Waseca High School from Feb. 3-7. Coronation and a pepfest will be on Thursday Feb. 6, at 9:32 a.m., in the Waseca Performing Arts Center (PAC), followed by pictures. A semi-formal snow dance for students will cap off Thursday evening from 8 to 10:30 p.m. in the high school commons.

Candidates for queen are: Callie Dufault, daughter of Barry and Stacey Dufault; Sierra Krause, daughter of Tom and Chris Krause; Siri Kuhns, daughter of Dan Kuhns and

Nicole Wangen; Lizzy Manthe, daughter of Justin and Cindy Manthe; Gracie Morgan, daughter of Dean and Barb Morgan; Takara Slattery, daughter of Jude and Krystal Slattery.

For king: Hunter Anderson, son of Allen and Heidi Anderson; Adian Androli, son of Jason and Danielle Androli; Lucas Groll, son of Jason Groll and Patty Smith; Brayden Hesch-Priem, son of Nick and Molly Ulschmid, and the late Billy Hesch-Priem; David Hodgkins son of Troy

and Donna Hodgkins; Jackson Tesch, son of Bert and Stephanie Tesch.

The week is kicked off with a student pepfest on Friday morning January 31.

Dress up days are scheduled for students throughout the week beginning on Monday, with Monochromatic Monday (dress in a single color), followed by: WRONG EVENT, Dress to UNimpress, Teachers vs. Students, and Team Theme or School Spirit.

Friday, students are encouraged to show their school spirit and wear student colors and/or colors representing their dodgeball team in preparation for an afternoon pep rally and student dodgeball tournament. A senior social will take place at 12:25 p.m. Afterwards, at 1:05 p.m. there will be a “Geography Bee.”

Windows, doors, and signs throughout the school will be colorfully decorated by students for the week-long celebration.

Suspect arrested after Waldorf break-in

On Thursday morning, January 23 the Waseca County 911 Dispatch Center received notification that someone appeared to have broken into Papa Olie’s Bar and Grill on South Main Street in Waldorf and caused damage inside. Law Enforcement responded and found an unlocked door. The business was checked and found to be unoccupied. There was heavy interior damage to the business and items had been stolen. The subsequent investigation identified the suspect as 30 year old female Ashley Rocheford of Crosby, MN. She was arrested without incident and charged in Waseca District Court with multiple felony crimes including burglary, theft, possession of burglary tools, and criminal



Rocheford

Waldorf continued on 12



Under plans for expansion and improvement, the Waterville Fish Hatchery’s original block structure will remain and be remodeled. Another building will be added to the grounds.

Waterville fish hatchery due for significant upgrades, expansion, in 2026

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

Though the project is working its way through some extensive planning stages, excitement runs high at the Waterville State Fish Hatchery for some long-awaited upgrades due to enter the construction phase in the spring of 2026.

Waterville Area Fisheries Office and State Fish Hatchery Supervisor

Craig Soupir points out the 120-acre facility located along Lake Tetonka was constructed in the 1950s and, more importantly, with very different work in mind than it has come to be used for.

According to Soupir, the 10 members of the office and hatchery staff take on the task of managing about 120 lakes as well as many rivers located in Blue Earth, Dodge,

Faribault, Freeborn, LeSueur, Mower, Rice, Steele and Waseca counties. This includes monitoring water quality elements which affect fish and—most important to area anglers—adjusting fish populations in a number of ways, most notably by stocking popular game fish.

He goes on to note that, in the

Hatchery continued on 5



The DNR counts fishing pressure on Waseca’s Clear Lake as “moderate” compared to prior years. Nearly 200 fishing structures were counted during a recent survey of the lake.

Loon, Clear Lakes play role in area fish management plan

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

According to Craig Soupir, supervisor of the Department of Natural Resources Waterville area fishery, Waseca’s two lakes have major roles in the regional fish management plan. At this time of year, Soupir says, it has been standard practice for decades to send fishery staff to measure oxygen levels, ice thickness and “fishing pressure”—also known as the

number of fishhouses—on about 70 lakes in the nine-county area the facility serves.

Soupir wants area anglers to know that, while no ice is ever 100-percent safe, the 12 to 14 inches of ice currently covering area bodies of water is probably acceptable for four-wheelers and snowmobiles, but it is still marginal for full-sized vehicles. He

Lake continued on 6



Compostings

by Al Batt

The best kind of people

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING
That movie I saw last week was excellent. I wanted to read the book, too, but I couldn’t. Why not? It was too dark in the theater.

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE
I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. Everything was nearly copacetic when my phone vibrated. The caller was from the south. He asked me where I was from. I told him I was from Minnesota. His follow-up question was, “Why?” His comments concluded with, “The weather there.” A couple of weeks later, his address was dumped on by more snow than the snow-removal folks, if there were any, knew what to do with. Winter weather in the south should eliminate many of those kinds of questions for the rest of the winter. No matter where they live, people have their own winter miseries to deal with.

The day hadn’t greeted me warmly. I went for a walk when it was -20 on my local path. By itself, that was an order to cease and desist, but there was also enough of a wind to make my nose want to run back home. I finished the walk slightly chilled. Once in the friendly confines of my humble abode, I opened the freezer to warm the house.

It was the kind of day that made my neighbor Crandall find cheerfulness hard to take. Crandall likes to waddle away from his ingrown La-Z-Boy just long enough to peek out the window to see if there might be a Bigfoot doing the hokey pokey in his yard.

I grew up in a cold bedroom. How cold was it? I needed to scrape the thick frost off my windows to see out of them in June. I kept a chair close to the bed so I could put on a T-shirt and jeans before heading down to the shower in the basement.

I’VE LEARNED
Every shopping cart is an autobiography.
On the TV show “Lassie,” Timmy never once, in the show’s 571 episodes, fell into a well.
I visited Harvey Benson of Harmony at his rural home, which has a lovely and lengthy driveway. That means when Harvey turns into his drive, it’s still a long journey to get home.
According to Climate Zone, Des Moines gets 134 days a year where the minimum temperature is below freezing temperatures,

Rochester gets 134, Minneapolis receives 156, Duluth 184 and International Falls is blessed with 197 days.
WalletHub compared all 50 states across 31 key indicators of a positive commute with data set ranging from average gas prices to rush-hour traffic congestion to road quality. Kansas was the best state to drive in and Hawaii the worst. Iowa ranked 4th and Minnesota 12th.
<https://wallethub.com/edu/best-worst-states-to-drive-in/43012>

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT
How do nudists clean their eyeglasses?
The city of Two Bits has recycling bins labeled: Woulda bin, Coulda bin and Shoulda bin.
My neighbor Cruella said: “My husband thinks he’s a lawn mower. I’m taking him to a doctor just as soon as the neighbor returns him.”

NATURE NOTES
“Why is an oak tree keeping its leaves in the winter?” It’s called marcescence and is a juvenile trait. Theories abound as to what benefit a tree derives from persistent leaves. The dead, dry leaves might make the tree unpalatable to deer. The living snow fence of leaves might trap moisture for a tree to use. Marcescence could preserve leaves for mulch in the spring. Or it might be just to give us something to wonder about. Nonnative buckthorn leafs out early and retains its leaves late into the fall, creating dense shade that helps it outcompete many native plants.
“Did Ben Franklin really want the turkey to be our national bird?” The story about Benjamin Franklin wanting the national bird to be a turkey is a popular myth. Franklin wrote a letter to his daughter criticizing the original eagle design for the Great Seal, saying that it looked like a turkey. In that letter, Franklin wrote that the “Bald Eagle...is a Bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his Living honestly...[he] is too lazy to fish for himself.” Franklin noted that compared to a bald eagle, a turkey is “a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America...He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage.” Ben defended the honor of the turkey versus the bald eagle, but he didn’t propose it become one of America’s most important symbols.

MEETING ADJOURNED
Kind people are the best kind of people.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

A skill I acquired along the way

Across a lifetime, one picks up a skill or two.
I previously wrote a column about how I learned to juggle thanks to a (youthful, unrealistic) attraction to someone who knew how.
Another skill I acquired along the way is cutting snowflakes. Set me down in the company of some scissors and undefended paper sometime, and watch what happens. I can make that piece of paper into lace.
I also learned, somewhere along the way, to fold a remarkably graceful traditional German paper ornament—the sort they made back in the time before family heirloom pieces were made out of blown glass. Rather than being fragile and stored away carefully for 11 months of the year, this “heirloom” lived from generation to generation in the memories and skills they led people to acquire.
Another thing I am exceptionally skilled at is—for lack of a better word—braiding. I am not talking about the familiar three-strand braid commonly used for long hair, nor about “French braiding.” The braids I hope you can call to mind are commonly put on keychains. Young children often learn to make them “at camp,” where they are a typical craft.
Nearly everyone learns to make the “square” braid, but just like with making snowflakes, this is a craft I

have experimented with over time until—I do not believe I am overstating when I say—I have become a positive master at it.
When I name these various skills, I do not mean to brag. I am sure we all carry our own collection of acquired, incidental abilities. They are the enjoyable little novelties of life that we pull out and dust off every once in a while.
No, I mention these skills because I can name something even better than having them.
Teaching them.
Over time, I have taught all the skills mentioned in this column—and a couple more—to others. I have watched as they acquired an understanding of the needed dexterity, often after facing frustration or even overcoming the belief they cannot learn it. I have seen them go on to become capable, then skilled, and, in some cases, to “exceed their teacher” by becoming better at it than I am.
Until they are in my place someday, I believe those learners will be unable to understand the pleasure it brought me to see them learn.
To be truthful, I’m not even sure I can explain it. Why is it more valuable to me to know I taught others how to do something than it is simply to know the skill?
The impetus behind this particular



These samples represent “craft” braiding. The two left and right are made with string rather than the plastic lace. The center example is a “triple twist,” one of the more challenging forms of the craft.

topic is that I recently volunteered to teach braiding to an NRHEG community education class aimed at upper elementary students. I had several spools of the flat braiding “lace” typically used for the craft, and thought maybe I could get them used up and gone. But as soon as the class was arranged for, guess what I did? I acquired more colors of “lace” so braiding would be more fun for my students: So much for “used up and gone.”
The first group was small, but oh it was a pleasure to work with them. They were delighted with the con-

cept and excited about acquiring the skill. With only a brief explanation, they got to work quickly, and the inches of keychain braid started to build up.
Yes, those first products were a bit uneven and lumpy, but they showed impressive promise for the braids to follow. I have no doubt those fleet-fingered little apprentices will someday become masters of the craft.
But for now, I still have the privilege of teaching them: I can’t wait until the session when I get to show them the triple-string twist.

What job will I have? Where will I live? How will I survive?



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

I have been thinking about my future a lot lately, perhaps mostly because it’s currently the thing giving me the most anxiety. So much change, so many unknowns, most of them positive (I hope).
It feels as though I am at a point in my life where things are good, things are great, but they have an expiration date. I will finish college in about three to four months and all the norms I have been living with for the past four years will change. And first there are a lot of things I need to do in order to prepare.
High on the list is looking for a new place to live. As much as I love the apartment I have been at for three years, it’s time to move on. My plants need a new house where they can expand.
Just as important is finding a job. The options are almost limitless, but I’m scared I am going to have to settle for a “lukewarm” position—one that won’t advance my learning, skills, and knowledge.
Or, if I get a job that steers away from the tasks and expectations of journalism that I’ve been used to, will I ever be able to go back if I want to? Besides, it’s stressful looking for a job. It turns

out that scouring LinkedIn, Google, or whatever place I think of to see what’s out there is a lot more work than I originally thought it was going to be.
I thought about how many decisions in life have powerful impact on who we are, who we become. If I hadn’t decided to go to the University of Minnesota, I would not have acquired the friends I have, the opportunities I have gotten, or the experience and skill I have gained: All those have worked together to build the boundaries of who I have become. So many factors work together: If I had not attended the U of M AND chosen to live in my current apartment, I might never have met my boyfriend.
If I had not decided to work at the Pioneer, I would not have learned more about Waseca, and probably would not have gotten my current job as managing editor at the Daily. I would not have learned how much I love journalism.
If I had not decided to fill in for my mom working at the bar, I probably wouldn’t have learned to stand up for myself the way I can now...would have let more people push me around.
Those are just things I think about as I try to make life-changing decisions. Life being what it is, I will look back at this new set of decisions and see how they will have contributed to that future life I am working to build.
I don’t know, maybe some people

will say I am just overthinking things. That may be true, since fixating on detail is a tendency of mine.
But you’re probably super curious about my classes and life as a penniless college student, right? (You can say no, just not to my face, please.)
I am taking two legit classes, Mass Media in the U.S. and Community Journalism Practicum, and then also my thesis class and pep band class, which I actually get credit for. But this light coursework means my days are mostly spent trying to figure out what to do with myself, going to the gym, doing the little bit of homework I have, and sleeping. It’s quite a drastic change of pace from last semester, but one I like. I find myself thinking, though, since it’s my last semester, I might as well relax and appreciate the gentle pace.
My Determination: “Knowing is better than wondering. Waking is better than sleeping, and even the biggest failure, even the worst, beats the hell out of never trying.” -Meredith Grey, Grey’s Anatomy

Briefs

Pickleball Classic Tournament at the Mill Thursday, Feb. 6
There will be a Pickleball Classic Tournament at the Mill event center from 8:30 a.m. till 5 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 6. A day of exciting matches and friendly rivalry.

Daddy Daughter Dance at the Central Building Friday, Feb. 7
The central building in Waseca is hosting a Daddy Daughter Dance from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7. Cost is \$22, additional daughters are \$12, enter door #15. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Rotary Pickleball Classic Tournament at The Mill Saturday, Feb. 8
The Waseca Rotary Club will be putting on a Pickleball Classic Tournament on Saturday, Feb. 8 at The Mill. 8:30 - 9:15 a.m. signup. Gameplay from 9:15 a.m. till 5 p.m. Ages 16 and up. \$100 entry fee, 2 person teams, double elimination with 25 minute games. Waseca Area Foundation.

Toners Lake Vintage Ride Saturday, Feb. 15
Toners Lake Vintage Snowmobile Ride will be from 11 a.m. through 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 15. Registration is from 9 a.m. through 10:30

a.m. The starting point will be 8747 415 Ave. Janesville, MN 56048. For more information contact either Marissa at 507-461-4501 or Mark at 507-835-5480.

Jamboys at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Feb. 8
The Jamboys will be playing at the Indian Island Winery from 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 8. They perform upbeat music acoustically.

Valentines’ Dinner at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Feb. 15
There will be a Valentine’s Dinner at the Indian Island Winery at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 15. Cost is \$150 per couple and includes two glasses of wine, two, three course dinners catered by Oscar’s, entertainment by Generation Gap, a rose and multiple gifts.

Snowmobile Safety Riding Course at Lakeview Park, Janesville, Sat., Feb. 16
There will be a Snowmobile Safety and Riding Course at Lakeview Park on the south end of Lake Elysian in Janesville at 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 16. Contact Marty Erdman at 507-420-1109 with questions.

Drawing Club at

Janesville Public Library on Thursday, Feb. 20
There will be a Drawing Club at the Janesville Public Library at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 20. This is for children ages 10-18. This month the focus will be how to draw different types of mushrooms.

Chris Brooks Band will perform at Starfire Event Center Friday, Feb. 21
The Starfire Event Center will host the Chris Brooks Band from 7-10 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 21. They perform a combination of danceable, current and classic country radio hits. This is part of the Sleigh and Cutter Festival.

Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Parade at noon in downtown Waseca Saturday, Feb. 22
The Waseca Sleigh and Cutter parade route begins at the county fairgrounds at about noon, circles through downtown and returns to the fairgrounds. Spectators can either stay in the shelter of their vehicles parked along residential streets on the route, or watch from the sidewalks along State Street. More information about the route is available online.

Waseca Vintage

Snowmobile Ice Drags at Clear Lake Sat., Feb. 22
Waseca Vintage Snowmobile Ice Drags will be at Clear Lake Saturday, Feb. 22. Registration is at the Boathouse from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Races start at noon. Questions call 715-556-6345 or 612-296-2043.

Vintage Snowmobile Show/Ride at Clear Lake on Sat., Feb. 22
The Annual Vintage Snowmobile Show/Ride will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22. Registration is from 9 to 11 a.m., with show from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Clear Lake near the Boathouse. Contact Seth at 507-837-9230 or Marissa at 507-451-4501 with questions.

Waseca Sleigh and Cutter fireworks display on Clear Lake after dark Saturday, Feb. 22
The Sleigh and Cutter festival is sponsoring its largest fireworks display ever. The show will be fired at about 7:30 p.m. from the ice on Clear Lake.

In a Bind at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Feb. 22
Music group In a Bind will be performing at the Indian Island Winery from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22. They play a variety of hit music.



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

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GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

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There was one ferocious battle after another at the Pinnacle Pro Wrestling event at the Mill on Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025.

Pinnacle Pro wrestling strikes Waseca again

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Anyone who happened by the Mill on Saturday night, may have heard some disturbing sounds, including the hoots and hollers of spectators and the sound of faces slamming into floors. Pinnacle Pro Wrestling was back in town.

On its website, Pinnacle Pro Wrestling claims, “We are Minnesota’s newest premier pro wrestling promotion.”

At the Mill, wrestlers in the ring appeared to be fighting for their lives to the ongoing cheers of a house full of enthusiastic spectators. Only a few seats in the back row were open when the matches began at 7 p.m., but those could be counted on one hand. Kody Cunningham, who somehow scored a front row seat said, “We came here to have fun and enjoy it...and make fun of it a little.”

Pinnacle continued on 7



Pinnacle Pro Wrestling's co-owner Emmitt Culver said matches like Saturday, Jan. 25 at the Mill are, "Proving grounds for the pros."

Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann

Six-play contest open to public

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

Six area schools will be performing brief “one-act” plays at the Waseca Senior Junior High School this Saturday as part of Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) competition. The competing productions have advanced to “section” level; one play from Saturday’s event will advance to the state tournament scheduled at St. Catherine University’s O’Shaughnessy Auditorium on Feb. 6 (Class A) and 7 (Class AA).

The schools competing this Saturday are Belle Plaine, Mountain Lake, St. Clair, Sleepy Eye United, Tri-City United (TCU), and Waseca.

Anyone attending this weekend is encouraged to enter through the school building’s west doors, which will open at 9:30 a.m. The first performance is at 10 a.m.; the last play of the day should finish around 3:30 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for students. Members of the public are invited to attend one or more of the productions. The admission cost is the same regardless of how many productions ticket buyers attend. Paying audience members will have their hands stamped, making it possible to leave the grounds and return without having to pay admission a second time. Concessions will be available on site all day, but food and drink are not permitted in the auditorium, so attendees will be expected to eat at tables provided in the nearby commons area.

It is important that audience members obey signs instructing them not to take videos during any performance; doing so could result in disqualification for a team.

Performances are presented without announcing which school produced them; the intent is to avoid any bias on the part of the judges. “Dark Road,” by writer Laura Lundgren Smith will be performed at 10 a.m. It will be followed by “Check Please Take 3” by Jonathan Rand at 10:55. The third play, at 11:50 a.m. is “Queen of the Silent Scream” by Craig Sodaro. After a lunch break, “A Murder of Crows” by Mike Kenny will be presented beginning at 1 p.m. “The Drowsy Professor” by B. Dwayne Craft will start at 1:55. Beginning at 2:50 p.m., another school’s production of “Dark Road” will finish the day’s performances. An award ceremony will take place at about 4 p.m.

Organizer Karen Pfarr Anderson mentions that as many as 300 audience members attended a similar event last year, although she observes many stayed for only or two productions—most likely those performed by students from their own districts.

Under the MSHSL rules for one-act competition, plays can have no more than 20 student participants and no more than two adult directors. Action of the play cannot be longer than 35 minutes, and only 10 minutes are allowed for stage set-up prior to the performance.

A set of three judges will view and independently rank each play; the combined scores from all three judges are used to determine the contest winner.

Gaiter Lake officially renamed

By JESSICA LUTGENS
Staff Writer

The area formerly referred to as “Gaiter Lake” - among other names - was officially named Clearwater Preserve by the Waseca City Council via Resolution 25-11 during its second meeting of the month on Tuesday, Jan. 21. The move, required for an upcoming plat application regarding plans to develop a residential subdivision in the area, follows the council’s approval of a resolution of support last fall to hire an engineering service for the development project.

The council also approved a public

hearing date for the Gaiter Lake Land Development Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the next regular council meeting, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m. The public will have the opportunity to comment on the information contained within the EAW, which can be found on the city website, at that time.

In addition, the appointment of Dr. Joyce Thompson to a vacant seat on the EDA was approved, along with the remaining consent agenda items.

Present for two public hearings regarding upcoming street projects was Nathan Willey, Waseca City Engineer. The first, for which there was

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

no public comment, was for the 2nd St. NW Improvement Project, which will include replacement of a sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer, and an ADA sidewalk and ramp and cost a total of roughly \$5.8 million. Two grants will assist in funding the project.

The second hearing addressed the 4th St. SW Rehabilitation Project. One local resident inquired as to why the project entailed rehabilitation versus reconstruction, and it was ex-

plained that evaluations of the area concluded that rehabilitation is currently the best option and is expected to postpone the need for reconstruction by 15-20 years.

Both projects were approved by the council via Resolutions 25-08 and 25-09.

In Commission Reports, council member Mark Christiansen discussed tree planting and maintenance efforts that will be taking place prior to a June deadline for a grant received for such purposes. Also dis-

Waseca continued on 6



Snow week candidates are, front, from left: Aspy Stenzel, Jozlyn Johnson, Ava Cummins, Josie Bell, and Aryanna Howe. Back row: Carter Martens, Talon Smith-Vulcan, Aidan Schlaak, Bo McCamish, and Brady Koopal.

NRHEG snow week at a glance

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

Candidates for NRHEG snow week set for February 3 through February 8 are, for queen: Josie Bell, daughter of Zechary and Melissa Bell; Ava Cummins, daughter of Sheila Wenzel and Jason Cummins; Aryanna Howe, daughter of Angela and Jeff Howe; Jozlyn Johnson, daughter of Steph and Luke Andersen; Aspy Stenzel, daughter of Doug and Amy Stenzel.

Candidates for king: Brady Koopal, son of Jason and Lacey Koopal; Carter Martens, son of Anthony and Kelly Martens; Bo McCamish, son of Chanelle McCamish; Aidan Schlaak, son of Lindsey and Nathan Schlaak; Talon Smith-Vulcan, son of Tracy Smith and Jon Hansen, and Troy Vulcan.

Coronation will be Tuesday, February 4 at 1:45 p.m. in the high school gymnasium in New Richland. The event will be open to the public,

as well as 6th grade through 12th.

Winter coaches and others will speak, followed by the crowning of this year’s king and queen.

Different dress-up themes for students will take place beginning on the 3rd with

Jersey Out, followed by: Winter White Out; Pajama Day; USA Day.

On Wednesday a student bean bag tournament will be held throughout the day. During the school day Friday, students will take part in a talent

show.

Events conclude with a student dance Saturday from 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. in the high school gym. Attire is “semi-formal” and students should enter through door 17E. Cost is \$5 per couple or \$3 individually. For guests from another school, they must complete paperwork picked up in the school office and turned in by the Friday before the dance.

Enrollment stays steady through 2024-25 school year

By MELISSA DUNN
Staff Writer

After the approval of payment of claims and the consent agenda, Superintendent Eric Hudspeth provided an update of his strategic plan and vision cards. Hudspeth summarized the “refresh” of the plan done in 2023 for the new board members. Elements include “learning for all,” “community engagement,” “efficient and effective use of resources,” and “ensuring a safe and welcoming environment.” A more detailed strategic plan can be found on the school website.

“I feel very comfortable and confident with where the goals are,” Hudspeth said. “I think overall that presents a very stable spot for where the district is at with the board three-year plan, the district operational plan, and my goals.”

Business Director Sarah Cramblit offered financial and enrollment updates; board chair Dave Dunn noted that enrollment has remained steady this year, which is different from in the past.

Grant Scheffert gave a report re-

WASECA SCHOOL BOARD

garding his attendance at the previous week’s Minnesota School Board Association’s leadership conference. “I found it very valuable to immerse myself in that for two days,” Scheffert told the rest of the board. “You meet people from throughout the state, you hear what other districts are doing. It’s not ‘here’s an idea,’ it’s actually ‘here’s

how we’ve implemented this, here’s how we made this change, here’s the positive outcome,’ so it’s very valuable.” Scheffert encouraged board members to attend next year’s conference scheduled for January 15 to 16, 2026.

Action items for the meeting included approving the spring 2025 lane change list and receipt of final 2023-24 audited financial statements. The next work session on Feb. 6 will be at the intermediate school and will not be available for online viewing.



Identify Frosty for share of \$1,500

It’s time again for the annual Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Identify Frosty event. This year’s event is the 27th installment of the annual contest.

Who is Frosty?

Identify FROSTY and win some cash! Prize money totaling \$1,500.00 is waiting to be won. FROSTY is a Waseca County resident chosen to be an ambassador for the Waseca Sleigh & Cutter Festival. Follow the clues and guess FROSTY’S name.

Grand prize is \$300.00. If you are at the official unmasking at the Star Fire Event Center @8:30 p.m., on Friday, February 21, 2025, you will win an additional \$50.00. First correct guess from Janesville, New Richland and Waseca wins \$150.00; and if you are at the unmasking, you will win an additional \$50.00. Only five names will be drawn for \$100 – must be present. Five names win \$50.00 – attendance is not necessary.

Contest rules

1. Clues are published by the Waseca County News and Facebook; Waseca County Pioneer; NRHEG Star Eagle; Waseca Chamber of Commerce; and KOWZ/KRUE radio.

2. One guess allowed each week.

3. Each entry must have a name and complete address. Entries without complete information will not be entered.

4. Entrants must live in Waseca County and be over 18 years of age.

5. If there are multiple correct guesses, a drawing will be made to determine the winner.

6. If there are no correct guesses, a drawing will be made from all entries received.

7. Entries must be received before 3:00 p.m. on Friday, February 21, 2025.

8. Submit entries to:

A. WASECA: Submit entry at Waseca Music; 111 South State, Waseca, MN 56093; or via mail.

B. JANESVILLE: Mail or drop off at Waseca Music; mark your entry as Janesville.

C. NEW RICHLAND: Drop off at NRHEG STAR EAGLE NEWS; or mail to Waseca Music - mark your entry as New Richland.

Frosty sponsors: CULLIGAN,

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OBITUARIES

Beatrice O'Brien

BEATRICE ELAINE (MAASS) O'BRIEN, age 81, of Waseca passed away peacefully on January 23, 2025 after a 3 year battle with stage 4 breast cancer. Up until the end Bea maintained her love for everyday life. Despite frequent trips to the doctor, she continued to stay active visiting and talking with her siblings, attending to her family, following grandkids and great grandkids, and working full time.

Bea's life can broadly be defined by her two loves: Family and "work". Work is in quotes as she always answered inquiries about her longevity at work with "I don't think of it as work, I love to do it." During her life she had a major impact on all those she encountered doing what she loved.

Bea was born on April 10, 1943, on the farm in Waldorf, MN to parents Elmer and Ruth (Allen) Maass. She spent her early years there, graduating from Waldorf High School in 1960. The oldest of 5 children, she was fiercely proud of her Maass heritage, her parents, her siblings, and their families. She spent major holidays with them for most of her life, only stopping when COVID interrupted the traditions. Bea communicated with her siblings and extended "Maass" family frequently and valued the proximity in which they all lived. Until recently she continued to meet for birthday lunches with siblings and cousins. Bea met Mike O'Brien in 1966 and they were married at Sacred Heart Catholic Church on June 10, 1967. She spent the next 58 years as a faithful member of the church. Together they had 9 children, and Bea's 15 minutes of local fame came with the birth of her first girl after 7 boys in a row. She would add another girl two years later to complete the family. You could always find her at mass early on Sunday morning with all 9 kids in tow. Her and Mike raised their family with faith as their guide. Bea was always willing to give her time, be it as a Eucharistic Minister, counting offertory or volunteering for the Fall Festival. She was also active in Catholic Daughters, worked at the Food Shelf and would lend a hand to anyone in need, grateful that she had time to do it. Her family sparked a journey that would take her and Mike to gyms, ball fields and other activities across southern Minnesota and surrounding states. Bea was always front and center cheering and clapping but was back to just "Mom" by the time she arrived home. Preferring to just watch, she never lost sight of the true value of it all which was growth through the losses and the victories. Once her kids were done, she continued with the same spirit chasing her grandkids and checking in on her great grandkids. Her grandkids adored her as she made them all feel special, always acknowledging birthdays and messaging them all during life's special events. Bea and Mike would have celebrated 58 years of marriage on June 10, 2025. Her identity tied together by the thing she held most dear, her extensive family.

After graduating from Waldorf High School Bea landed a job as a legal secretary with Iversen Law Firm at the age of 18. Bea occupied



Beatrice O'Brien

a seat on main street Waseca for 64 years. She truly loved her job and received great joy helping people navigate the legal obstacle course they faced. Known for her strong memory, efficiency, and quick appointments, clients came from near and far to see her. As her career developed, she was a trusted advisor to many, and her presence was a great marketing tool for the 3 lawyers that hired her. In several instances, she assisted grandparents, parents, kids, and grandkids of the same family. She found energy and strength in her many friends and loved to connect the dots of who is related to whom that left all of us with a smile. Her joy of friendships and relationships was always present, her identity tied together by the many people she helped during happy and difficult life events.

Bea is survived by her husband, Mike; children, John (Jane), Jason (Chelsea), Tony (Tami), Andy (Courtney), Joel (Jen), Matt, Ben (Ria), Katie, and Kari (Greg) Huber; grandchildren, Kelvin (Melissa), Ashley, Jack, Meg, Mallory, Henry, Sally (JP) Eykyn, Sydney (Al) Solheid, Sarah, Sam, Alix, Joe, Lauren, Lilly, Gavin, Oliver, Evelyn, Archer(O'Brien), Lucy and Macy Huber; great-grandchildren, Owen O'Brien and Grace Solheid; siblings, Carol McCoy, Marvin (Bev), Merlin (Kathy); many nieces, nephews, and cousins. She was preceded in death by her parents; brother, Dewey; and nephew, Shaun.

Of course, none of this happens without our dad- Her one true love through it all. Mom was a giver, in life and in death, she led by example. Recently reassuring us all that she was good and that we'd be fine. "Life will change a bit", she said "but it will go on." Giving once again, giving us permission to move forward, permission to let her go as that huge heart and unbelievable motor went quiet. We love you mom.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the O'Brien Family charity, 712 Giving.

Visitation was from 3 – 7 PM on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca. A rosary for Bea was at 2:30 PM prior to the visitation at the church. Visitation continued one hour prior to the service at the church on Wednesday.

Mass of Christian Burial was at noon on Wednesday, January 29, 2025 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. A private family burial followed at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery.

Dsofuneral.com

James Byron

JAMES FRANCIS BYRON, 103-year-old resident of Waseca, passed away at his home on Wednesday, January 22, 2025.

Born on October 17, 1921, in St. Mary Township, Waseca County, he was the son of William E. and Elmira (Conway) Byron. Jim was baptized and confirmed at St. Mary's Catholic Church in St. Mary Township. He began his education at the Gallagher country school and graduated from Sacred Heart Catholic School in 1938. He furthered his studies at the School of Agriculture in St. Paul and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He wrestled and lettered at both the Agricultural School and the University of Minnesota (1943) and was a lifelong member of the Gopher M Club.

On August 30, 1950, Jim married Rita Marie Jewison at the Church of St. Ann in Janesville. Together they made their home on their farm in St. Mary Township and raised 11 children. Jim and Rita enjoyed 68 years of marriage until Rita's passing on July 24, 2019. A lifelong farmer, Jim

raised various crops and livestock. He especially enjoyed his registered Black Angus Cattle, and passed on his passion for farming to his children.

Jim's quick Irish wit, wisdom and humor, love of lifelong learning, and genuine interest in everyone he met sustained him throughout his life and final days. He was a charter member of the Bells of St. Mary's 4-H Club and the Irish American Club of Southern Minnesota, being crowned Mr. and Mrs. Emerald Isle with his wife in 1998. He enjoyed his trips to Ireland. He was involved with Farmers Union, HOPE (Help Our People Endure) during the farm crisis and Make Today Count, a cancer family support group. Jim enjoyed driving ponies and refurbishing buggies and harnesses. He continued to drive and ride horses into his 90s. He loved to drive the gator into the pasture to check the cows and the fence line as recently as this fall.

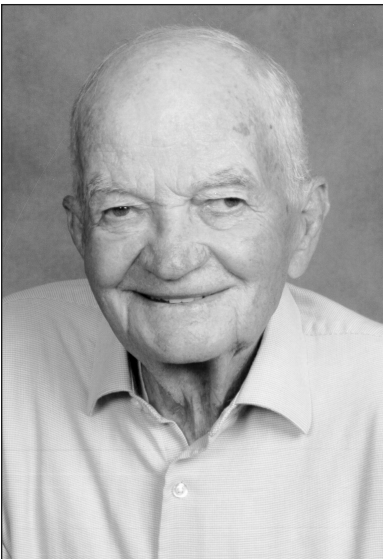
Jim is survived by his children: Tom (Patty) Byron of Ellendale, Helen (Juan) Valencia of Waseca, Jim (Brenda) Byron of Waseca, Karen (Tom) Pathoulas of Mantor-

ville, Rita (Roger) Liddell of Eau Claire, WI, Dr. David (Lisa) Byron of Hutchinson, Chris Byron of Waseca, Donna (Dr. Jeff) Alto of Mankato, Martha (James) Buntrock of Rochester, and Joe Byron of Hutchinson; brother, Paul Byron, many grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

He is preceded in death by his wife, son, Daniel, siblings: Mildred Marple, George (Mary Jane) Byron, Helen (Raymond) Curran, Sister Colleen Byron OSF, Bill (Mary Ann) Byron; brothers and sisters-in-law, Mayone Byron, Ellen (Joe) Tetzloff, Elaine (Frank) Sheeran, Faye (Art) Groh, and Grace (Rudy) Kopischke; brothers-in-law: Artie (Rita) Jewison, Bill (Anita) Jewison, Fr. Harry Jewison, Joe (Rose) Jewison.

Visitation will be from 4:00 – 7:00 pm on Friday, January 31, 2025, followed by a prayer service beginning at 7:00 pm, at the State Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral Home in Waseca. Visitation will continue for one hour prior to the service at the church on Saturday.

Mass of Christian Burial will be



James Byron

10:30 am on Saturday, February 1, 2025, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca. Interment will be in Calvary Cemetery.

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Mahlon Grubish

MAHLON CHARLES GRUBISH, age 95, of Waterville, died peacefully on Friday, January 24, 2025, in Faribault

Born to Charles Stephen and Marie Clare (Stangler) Grubish on August 24, 1929, at Waseca Hospital, he was the oldest of 8 children. Mahlon attended a one-room country school south of Waterville which was on his home farmland. He farmed with his father and eventually took over the family farm, delivering canned milk to the creamery, and later trucking seed corn. He first had dairy cows, then raised corn, soybeans, cattle, pigs, and chickens. He truly loved the land and farming.

Mahlon was a member of the National Guard unit of Mankato, MN, and was activated in 1951 during the Korean Conflict to Alabama where he served as a me-

chanic in the US Army for 2 years. He was a life-long member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Waterville and served as the trustee for the church council, was a member of the Knights of Columbus, serving as Grand Knight. He served on the Blooming Grove Township Board for 32 years. Mahlon enjoyed playing cards, John Deere antique tractors at Pioneer Power, traveling to Rome, Alaska, and Hawaii, visiting with friends and family, and watching Westerns. Even at the age of 90 he still drove across the state of SD. He actively worked on the 3rd-generation farm with his son Jim until his mid-80's. He was always the first to help a family member or friend in need.

He was married to Gertrude Furr on November 26, 1955, at Sacred Heart Church in Waseca. They raised 3 children, Rose Marie (Jerry) Thiedich, of Nicholasville, KY, James Charles of Waterville,

and Catherine Ann Wilson, of Rapid City, SD. He is survived by his 3 children and 5 grandchildren: Eric Thiedich, Cristian Grubish, and Avery, Reece, and Ty Wilson; sister, Charollette Kaiser; brothers: Paul Grubish, Peter Grubish, Stan (Marilyn) Grubish; brother-in-law, Jim Rooney; many nieces, nephews other relatives and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents; his wife; sister Mary Rooney; and brothers: Norbert and Merle (Phyllis) Grubish; daughter-in-law, Rita Grubish.

Visitation will be from 4:00 – 7:00 PM on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at the Waterville Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral Homes. Visitation will be for one hour prior to the service at the church on Friday.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:30 AM on Friday, January 31, 2025, at Holy Trinity Catholic



Mahlon Grubish

Church in Waterville. Interment will be at Calvary Cemetery in Waterville.

Dsofuneral.com

Edward Kubat

EDWARD FELIX KUBAT, age 81, of Waseca passed away surrounded by family on Saturday, January 25, 2025 at Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato after a silent two-year battle with cancer.

Born on October 11, 1943, in Owatonna, Ed was the son of Edward and Elizabeth (Kubichek) Kubat. He graduated from Marian High School with the class of 1961. Following high school, Ed worked at the Hy-Line Hatchery in Owatonna before meeting the love of his life, Gail Billiar, on a double date in 1963. They were married on May 30, 1964, at Sacred Heart Church in Owatonna and celebrated sixty beautiful years of marriage this past May.

In 1969, Ed and Gail moved to Waseca, which became their beloved home. Ed pursued police training in Arden Hills in Roseville, later joining the Waseca Po-

lice Department where he served as a dedicated officer for fourteen years. In 1983, he was elected Waseca County Sheriff, a position he held for sixteen years. After his retirement from law enforcement, Ed spent his time helping with carpet installation, always finding ways to stay busy and contribute to his community.

Ed's life was defined by his faith, his love for his family, and his unwavering commitment to serving his community. He was a devoted member of Sacred Heart Church, where he volunteered for many years, helping with dishes, fish fries, and ushering. He was a proud member of the Knights of Columbus. Ed also found immense joy in supporting his children and grandchildren at various events, always putting his family first.

Ed cherished the outdoors—especially hunting, fishing, and boating. His cabin in Big Fork was his happy place, where he could relax with his loved ones,

sharing treasured moments. Ed was a humble, kind-hearted man, always thinking of others and putting their happiness before his own. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Ed is survived by his wife, Gail Kubat of Waseca; children, Tami Heagy of Waseca, Robert (Jodi) Kubat of New Prague, Michael (Kasondra) Kubat of Waseca; grandchildren, Jacob (Lexi) Heagy, Jessica Heagy, Kalli (Jesse Behr) Heagy, Johnathan Heagy, Kailea Kubat, Kristin Kubat, Kaleb Kubat, Kendra Kubat, Kaitlyn Kubat, Kyle Kubat, Keith (Kim Izaguirre) Kubat; great-grandchildren, Carson and Grayson Heagy; siblings, Betty Bennett of Zumbrota, Lorraine Jirele of Owatonna, Margaret (Jim) Deml of Ellendale; and many other relatives. He was preceded in death by his parents; siblings, George Kubat and Julie Spinler.

Mass of Christian Burial will be at 12:00 PM on Thursday,



Edward Kubat

January 30, 2025 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca. A private family burial will follow at Calvary Cemetery in Waseca.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to Sacred Heart Endowment Fund.

Dsofuneral.com

Douglas Sasse

DOUGLAS JEFFERY SASSE, age 80, of Waseca died on Saturday, January 18, 2025 at Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

Born on September 16, 1944 in Anoka, Doug was the son of Daniel and Valeera (Moll) Sasse. He grew up on a turkey farm north of Sleepy Eye and attended Sleepy Eye Public Schools. Doug proudly served in the United States Army and was honorably discharged after his service. He lived in Mankato before settling in Waseca.

Doug had a deep passion for electronics, enjoying both collecting and working on various devices throughout his life.

Doug is survived by his cousins, Charles Sasse, Carol (Steve) Rose, Jane Ruitter, Neoma Peterson, Donn (Gail) Moll, Dean (Carla) Moll; and many other relatives. He was preceded in death by his parents and special friend, Mary Rudabeck.

A graveside service for Doug will be held in the spring at Home Cemetery in Sleepy Eye, MN.

Michael Collins

MICHAEL GERARD COLLINS, Age 67, of Waseca passed away on January 25, 2025, at Hillcrest Rehabilitation Center in Mankato.

Michael was born on October 6, 1957, in Waseca, MN, to Joseph M. Collins and Maureen A. (Connors) Collins. Michael attended Sacred Heart School, graduated from Waseca High School in 1976, and went on to St. Cloud Vocational Technical College in 1977. Throughout his life, Michael was deeply connected to his community, growing up as a member of Sacred Heart Church and living and working around Waseca, except for a brief period in California from 1985 to 1992.

He worked in a variety of jobs but particularly enjoyed his time at the Waseca Neighborhood Service Center. His caring and

compassionate nature led him to volunteer at the Waseca Food Shelf and assist with VFW dinners whenever possible. Mike's good heart and dedication to helping others made a lasting impact on all who knew him.

A lover of animals, Mike was known for rescuing injured and unwanted animals, especially dogs. His beloved dog "Precious" was his loyal companion, and Mike considered his dogs his best friends.

Growing up, Mike loved the outdoors and spent his free time hunting, snowmobiling, and riding dirt bikes in the California deserts. He also enjoyed fishing, listening to music, and playing his guitar. Mike had a passion for cars and motorcycles, especially watching the Motor Trend channel, and he was known for his love of tinkering and trying to fix anything that was broken.

In 2000, Mike suffered a cata-

strophic head injury while working construction. He fought valiantly through surgeries, infections, and rehabilitation, showing incredible strength and resilience. This same courage and determination carried him through his brief battle with cancer in recent months. He remained hopeful and inspired all who knew him with his strength and perseverance.

Mike is survived by his siblings, Darcy (Keith) Barnes, Jody (Timothy) O'Connell, Timothy (Ruth) Collins, Thomas (Dina) Collins, Christopher Collins; aunts and uncles, Eugene and Sandy Matz, Russell and Terri Ingram, Millie Szyzkska; and many other relatives. He was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

In lieu of flowers, Memorials may be directed to the Waseca Food Shelf.

Mass of Christian Burial will



Michael Collins

be at 12:00 PM on Friday, January 31, 2025 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service at the church. Burial will follow at Calvary Cemetery in Waseca.



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Janesville
reviews first
reading of
cannabis code

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

Recently elected members were sworn in during Janesville’s first city council meeting of the year the evening of January 13. New member Kyle Luitjens and continuing members Sarah Johnson and Andy Ahlman took the oath of office.

“As the only person who wasn’t elected this year, I want to congratulate you all on your victories and thank you for being here,” said Ivan Maas, whose term continues through December 2026.

The evening’s longest discussion regarded a draft of a new law relating to cannabis businesses within city limits. City attorney Jason Moran created the draft, noting its elements rely heavily on state statute. Under the proposed ordinance, no business growing, selling or processing cannabis products can be located within 1,000 feet of a school or 500 feet of a park, daycare, or residential treatment facility.

After City Administrator Clinton Rogers reviewed the city map, he concluded the only area which meets those requirements is on the east end of town including East First Street and South Main Street.

Rogers noted that, when it convenes in a few weeks, the city planning commission will also examine the proposed law, since its elements intertwine with the city’s zoning laws. He went on to say if no one on either the city council or the planning commission expresses concerns about the draft, a public hearing could be scheduled during the February city council meeting. If leaders wanted more time, Rogers said a second “reading” could be scheduled.

“I report to you that I have not received any requests for licensure or questions from individuals,” Rogers stated. Despite the apparent lack of local interest, however, he continued, “We do need to have [the law] in place.”

“Our moratorium was lifted last December at the end of 2024,” Rogers reported. “I honestly will report to you that I have not received any requests for licensure or any questions from individuals. However, we do need to have it in place.”

City Clerk Sarah Jo Vulcan asked what would be done if, after a cannabis business was established in town, someone wanted to open a licensed daycare facility within the prohibited distance.

“I would say we would have to go by what was there first,” Ahlman said. “Good question.” Rogers mentioned that city attorney Moran stated the cannabis business could only be expected to comply with the city’s ordinance at the time it was established.

Vulcan speculated that, since the state is behind schedule from its original timeline, it doesn’t seem likely state approvals for businesses will begin being issued until 2026, and encouraged council members to take their time and consider a wide range of factors before establishing the drafted ordinance into law.

In other business, city council members approved nearly \$44,000 for the purchase and installation of a pump for the city well system. The new equipment will replace a pump which public works director Joe Ziemke estimated to be “at least a few decades old.”

City council members approved bringing Cole Schluter on as a full-time staff member with the city public works department. “Performance has been outstanding, attendance outstanding,” Ziemke told the City Council.

In the other matters, council members voted to keep the fee for setting up a mobile food vending station unchanged at \$25 a day or \$300 for the entire summer. The animal impoundment fee was raised from \$25 to \$45. For any animals discovered roaming for the second time within a year, the fee will be \$125.



From left: Bill Oliver, Amanda Slaughter, Jerry Huckfeldt, Jim Britton, Linda Karst and Dennis Paulson were volunteering for the Relay for Life’s all-you-can-eat breakfast at the Sweet-Sommers VFW post on Sunday, Jan. 26, 2025.

Relay for Life hosts all-you-can-eat breakfast

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Owatonna branch of the Relay for Life held an all-you-can-eat breakfast in Waseca on Sunday, Jan. 26. The weather was cold but the sun was out, and despite the chill the parking lot was full to capacity at the Sweet Sommers VFW.

Linda Karst was there helping to organize the event; she wasn’t cooking, but she was helping to clean tables and socializing. When asked

why she was helping with the event, she replied, “My dad had cancer and then I had cancer. If I was lucky enough to have it caught, then I need to participate for the cure. It’s the least I can do.” According to their website, Relay For Life is organized by the American Cancer Society. It raises funds to improve cancer survival rates, decrease cancer incidence, and enhance the quality of life for cancer patients and their caretakers.

Volunteering for the Jan. 26 event were 15 Relay for Life volunteers and six from the VFW post. The biscuits and gravy had a note attached: “Until it runs out.” As of 11:25 a.m. there was still some left. Karst counted the tickets to confirm, “This morning we had 120 customers coming through our lines.” Terry Kunze, who says he attends nearly every VFW breakfast said, “This morning I ate French toast, eggs and bacon. I had biscuits and gravy, then went

back for seconds on that.” When asked if he would change anything he replied, “Absolutely not.”

On the menu were pancakes, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits and gravy (until it runs out). Beverages included coffee, orange juice or milk. The next breakfast at Sweet Sommers will be Sunday, Feb. 9 and will be for the St. Paul’s Lutheran Church Youth Mission.



From left: Lead guitarist Devon, guitar and vocals Johnny Frost, drums Greg and bassist David Howard from Johnny Frost and the Heatseekers at the Indian Island Winery Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025.

Johnny Frost and the Heatseekers perform locally

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

An interesting group played at the Indian Island Winery on Saturday, Jan. 26. Four men, two with guitars, one with a base guitar and another on drums. Johnny Frost and the Heatseekers were temporarily on loan to Waseca County.

Take a dash of east coast New York’s, 1950s ingenuity, (who were so cool they didn’t even know it), add a touch of California 50s beach rock, mix them both with some fly-over country’s rock hard attitude and there may be something close to Johnny Frost and the Heatseekers. Online they describe themselves as: “We are a roots rock/Rockabilly/blues band. We

cover standards such as Rock Around the Clock to Blue Suede Shoes and yet have some originals with a classic feel.” With influences such as the Reverend Horton Heat, Johnny Cash, Elvis, Stray Cats, Mojo Nixon, Randy Houser, Jerrod Neiman and the Hillbilly Hellcats.

As a group they were all wearing button-up shirts, that 50s look was not only on their clothes, but in their hair. That same look extended down into their polished guitars. It wouldn’t be a surprise if while driving on Route 66 in 1955 to hear their guitar picking along the way on the radio. Or to hear Richard Nixon complaining about them the day after.

Paul Knudson aka Johnny Frost said, “We get together about once a

week to play and run through our stuff. We also do a music review, whoever finds something cool, a new song or something music related to discuss or that we can play, we’re always on the lookout for new sound.” Other than a few early Beatles songs the vast majority of their music, their style, their look has something to do with Elvis. Even the lighting was specifically picked, notice the harsh blue color, it looks that way to imitate the neon blues or the neon pinks that were popular in bars and taverns from that era.

The lead guitarist is Devon Quiram from Pemberton. Bass guitar is David Howard who is originally from Kentucky. Greg Reeves is on drums and lives in Minnesota Lake. Paul Knudson is on guitar and is the

lead singer, he’s originally from International Falls. Before they became the band they are now they were originally called Bad Habits till 2012, but when the drummer from that band retired they took a year sabbatical before, in Knudson’s words, “The stars aligned and we found Greg after a year off and things started up again. Since I’m from way up north, that’s where we got the ‘frost’ part from in Johnny Frost and the Heatseekers. When we practice we go to Greg’s basement and we never practice right before a gig, it helps us to listen to each other better, just works out that way.” They’ve been a four-man band since 2013 and it sounds and looks like they know what they are doing.

■ Hatchery
from Page 1

1950s, conservationists believed removing common carp was the best way to improve water quality and encourage increases in desirable fish populations. Thus, crews of DNR workers based out of the Waterville facility would travel to area bodies of water, net carp, and bring them back for short-term storage in a long, low structure which still stands on the modern site. Soupir says that, to the best of his knowledge, the fish were given away to interested residents and sometimes shipped away in large quantities, often in wooden crates. The workers bunked on site; there was even a staff cook who ensured they received meals. Noting that many spaces in the hatchery building have been repurposed, he comments, “We’ve come a long way since those days.”

Thanks to that evolution, the indoor and outdoor spaces at the hatchery have continued to be adjusted as the modern focus on collecting fish eggs and hatching them under controlled conditions evolved.

“Our staff, past and present, has really done an amazing job of finding ways to modify this hatchery space and get the job done,” observes Soupir. “Still, the limitations of the 1950s construction make our work much more complicated than it needs to be and make certain tasks simply

“The limitations of the 1950s construction make our work much more complicated than it needs to be and make certain tasks simply impossible.”
— Craig Soupir

impossible.” Those limits, he says, create concerns when it comes to “biosecurity,” water temperature control, water quality and staff safety.

Water used in tanks inside the building is pumped from a well into a 10-acre drainable pond converted to a storage reservoir. Water for the 53 acres of drainable outdoor ponds comes directly from Lake Tetonka. There is no option in the aging plumbing system to install any type of filtration, so impurities and biological elements such as small plant matter, seeds, eggs from any type of water dweller, and even small fish cannot be removed from water brought in to support the development of eggs and mosquito-sized hatchlings, known as “fry.”

The fact that spaces and equipment are used for so many different tasks also causes concern about whether contaminants could migrate within the facility. Staff takes all possible precautions when it comes to biosecurity, Soupir points out, but wishes it were feasible to incorporate more.

There is also no production-scale

system to manipulate water temperature. If there were, Soupir suggests, the work done there now would be more efficient, and the facility would be able to expand to raising not only more fish, but more types of fish. At this time, he says, the facility hatches the majority of the walleye stocked in lakes statewide. He shares that it’s been discovered a genetically distinct strain of the fish lives naturally in the Cannon River watershed system; particularly resilient and with many desirable qualities, walleye from the strain are now stocked throughout southern Minnesota and in the Lower Mississippi River watershed that extends below St. Anthony Falls in St. Paul.

Northern pike and muskies are also hatched and raised to various stages of growth, then released in lakes scattered all over the state. In some cases, the stocked fish are already up to 17 inches long.

That information leads Soupir to yet another shortcoming of the hatchery’s current facilities. The outdoor ponds which range in size from one to ten acres have aging water control and drain structures. The 10 smallest,

the one-acre excavations, weren’t even built for rearing fish for production, but were created for hatchery research. Because they cannot be drained into some sort of central catch basin, workers must lower the water level and, as they do, wade in the pond carrying buckets to grab those “fall fingerlings” by hand, then deliver them to shore one bucketful at a time. Soupir points out the facility raises roughly 10,000 Muskies in ponds to the 11-inch length each year.

With a better-designed facility with temperature controls, Soupir thinks enthusiastically of a day when various fish species will be raised to desirable sizes all year around.

A space designed for all those processes would not only be more productive, diversified and efficient, he enthuses, but also much safer for fishery staff. Based on elements of the update plan currently being refined, he says he expects at least 1.5 times more fish production than is being accomplished now: Soupir names increased output as a primary goal of the improvements. He says he also looks forward to how responsive the facility can become, potentially using the updated equipment and spaces in new ways as new challenges arise.

Also, since there is considerable public interest in the hatchery and its work, he says he looks forward to a more accommodating space which allows visitors to see the processes in use and better understand what’s being accomplished.

School Board
NRHEG

Board
hears
district
updates

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

Administrative reports constituted the majority of the Jan. 21 NRHEG school board meeting. Elementary principal Craig Kopetzki and high school principal Grant Berg shared highlights of activities at their sites, both mentioning that the first semester ended on Jan. 17 and the first day of the second semester was set for Jan. 22, after some staff development work time on Jan. 20 and 21.

Kopetzki mentioned elementary-level parent teacher conferences on Jan. 28 and 30. He also announced the annual “Read Across America” celebration, centered around the works of Dr. Seuss, will be March 3 through 7, with the popular “Green Eggs and Ham” breakfast scheduled for March 7.

Berg told board members Snow Week will be Feb. 3 through 8, and will include numerous special events. He also told of the Gopher Conference honor band and choir events set for Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. During a recent DECA event, 10 of NRHEG’s 16 participants qualified to continue on to state-level competition, scheduled for March 2 to 5.

Community Education director Macy Whiteside reported that early childhood screening continues, 29 pairs of grandparents had registered for “Grandparents’ Night” the evening of Jan. 29, and that the community education painting class taught by high school junior Brady Koopal had proven to be a positive experience for all participants, including Whiteside herself. She mentioned that high school band instructor Seth Schaeffer is teaching community education music lessons. “We’ve got all kinds of exciting things going on in community ed,” said Whiteside. “I really encourage people to read our registration materials and see whether they find something that interests them.”

During his report, district superintendent Michael Meihak mentioned the district had had some recent activities in celebration of Education Paraprofessionals week from Jan. 20 to 25. He complimented building and grounds supervisor Scott Schuller for his efforts ensuring recent work in the high school band room could continue smoothly.

Meihak also congratulated school board chair Rick Schultz and board member Aaron Phillips for recent acknowledgments from the Minnesota State School Board Association (MSBA). Schultz was one of 13 people statewide recognized for completing 300 “training hours.” Phillips was noted for completing a specific training program.

Based on a recommendation from school district transportation coordinator Dan Schmidt, Meihak also mentioned the status of the NRHEG school bus fleet. Two buses were ordered during 2024 with a 9-month production time which will have them delivered sometime this summer. “If we’re going to have a true rotation of regularly replacing buses,” Meihak stated, “Dan suggests we might want to order a bus in the near future for delivery next year.” The suggestion was an outgrowth of discussions which took place during the acquisition process for the first two buses. At that time, board members had suggested a “rotation” would be helpful in preventing any future need to acquire more than one bus at a time.

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The Pastor's Column

Let's take a break from politics

By PASTOR MIKE COGLAN

“Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.” Mark 3:6

After the recent presidential inauguration, I let myself feel hopeful. I'm not hopeful in politics or politicians. I'm hopeful that our country might be ready to set aside our political differences to some degree.

I may be naïve about this. I remember a time when Inauguration Day was a big day, but it was just a day. The next day, we all got on with our lives. The President was not in the headlines every week, let alone every single day. I'm hoping for something like the days of my youth when we all had strong opinions, but those opinions were secondary to family, friendship and community.

I think a break from politics would do us all some good. Our country and our churches have some healing to do. We are a bitterly divided people, and our divisions have affected our churches.

There have always been a lot of opinions floating around the church. We don't always agree with each other. But we have never had opinions so magnified by divisive web sites and toxic commentators. Today it is easy to forget that Christians don't follow a donkey or an elephant. We follow a lamb. Bad things happen when lose sight of our highest allegiance.

Jesus lived during a time of culture war. Mark 2:6 speaks of two of the opposing factions: the Pharisees and the Herodians. They didn't often cooperate. One group was conservative, the other liberal.

On the left were the Herodians, a political party associated first with Herod the Great, and later with his descendants. Herod was a ruthless, corrupt murderer who did anything to stay in power. He was friendly toward Rome and tolerant of racy Greek culture. The Herodians disliked the traditional values and viewed themselves to be worldly and sophisticated and progressive.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, were fiercely conservative. They preserved the ancient laws of Israel and resisted diversity and pluralism. Pharisees predicted a moral collapse of society. They wanted to take their country back. They wore hats that said, “Make Israel Great Again.”

Jesus brought these two factions together. Finally, they could agree on something: Jesus had to die. Jesus is and always has been a threat to those whose ideologies have become their spiritual devotion.

Jesus came to announce God's rule on earth. It is good news to know that by grace we can be citizens of God's Kingdom. But it is only good news to those ready to leave earthly kingdoms behind. Our political parties are temporary, but the Kingdom goes on forever.

God wants us to give each other the same grace we have received. Living in grace means acknowledging our own imperfections and humbly accepting the love and forgiveness that is offered to us through Christ. It calls us to extend that same grace to others, recognizing that we are all in need of redemption and healing. By embracing this grace, we can move beyond culture warfare and truly understand the depth of God's compassion and mercy.

SWCD receives \$76,500 grant from BWSR

Waseca, MN – The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) approved \$9.5 million in Clean Water Fund grants at its December board meeting for projects designed to improve water quality in lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater across the state. Waseca Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) received a \$76,500 grant to protect and improve the water quality in Reeds Lake. This grant is one of 34 awards BWSR approved this year to fund voluntary conservation projects, including those focused specifically on improving and protecting drinking water.

“This project on Reeds Lake is a good fit for the MN Clean Water Fund for several reasons” said Mark Schaeetzke, District Manager for Waseca SWCD. “Landowners approached us with a ravine erosion problem right next to two houses, utilities, and a road. Complex engineering is required for a problem like this to find a solution that will

stabilize this for years to come. Reeds Lake is a priority watershed for us because it is one of the few area lakes that meets water quality standards for water clarity, nutrients, and recreation and we want to keep it in good shape.

Reeds also has an active Lake Association that can be a good partner in this effort.”

Waseca SWCD will use the

grant funding to find an engineered solution to stabilize the ravine erosion, identify possible voluntary projects around the lake to protect the water quality of the lake, and work with landowners to get the projects installed. Work on the grant is expected to begin in the spring of 2025 and be completed within a year. Required matching funds for the grant are anticipated to come from the landowners, Reeds Lake Association, and Waseca SWCD.

“Local governments are ready to work with private landowners across Minnesota to implement projects that will make meaningful progress toward improving water quality,” said BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke. “These grants are a key component in ongoing efforts to keep our water clean and our lakes, rivers and groundwater healthy.”

BWSR awards competitive CWF grants annually. The state is shifting to a Watershed-Based Implementation Funding model, which offers consistent, noncompetitive funding to planning partnerships with approved watershed management plans. This helps partnerships focus on the highest priority projects within a specific watershed.

Competitive CWF grants remain an important part of conservation delivery despite this shift, offering funding to individual districts for project implementation.

■ Waseca from Page 3

cussed was Oak Park, which contains the local skate park, as well

as efforts for maintenance and upkeep of the area. Christiansen noted that public feedback regarding the park and its future use by the community is encouraged and will assist with future investment in the park.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Jasinski to serve as co-chair of Transportation

Minnesota State Senator John Jasinski (R-Faribault) returned to the capitol on January 14 for the beginning of the 2025 session of the Minnesota

Legislature. The Senate begins in a 33-33 tie, as leaders from the Senate Republicans and Democrats announced a power-sharing agreement that will allow the Senate to govern as long as the Senate remains tied. Senator Jasinski was a core part of the negotiating team that brokered the agreement.

“I was proud to be one of the 12 negotiators tasked with coming to this agreement,” Senator Jasinski said. “It was a lot of hours, many late nights, and we had a lot of tough conversations to get to this point, but the end result is a good one for Min-

nesotans. I'm optimistic for the future – the Senate is starting off with both parties sharing power, which is a dramatic improvement from the last two years. The ugliness of one-party control fractured relationships, broke trust, crushed school and family budgets, and put Minnesota into a looming \$5.1 billion deficit.

“It'll take time to rebuild trust and relationships, but we have a real shot at working together and putting Minnesotans first,” Senator Jasinski added. “It's great to be back in St. Paul serving the people of Goodhue, Rice, Steele, and Waseca Counties. I am excited to get to work.”

The situation is much different in the House, where the entire House Democrat caucus decided to stay home to prevent Republicans from



Jasinski

gaining power. House Republicans pushed forward and organized the House, electing Rep. Lisa Demuth as Speaker.

The top issue for the legislature is the construction of a new state budget. After Democrats used their one-party control in 2023 and 2024 to raise spending by 40%, spend the entirety of the \$19 billion surplus, and raise another \$10 billion taxes, a report issued by the office of Minnesota Management and Budget last December projected a looming \$5.1 billion deficit. Under the terms of the power-shar-

ing agreement, Senator Jasinski will serve as the co-chair of the Transportation Committee, and as a member of the Finance and

Capital Investment Committees. Key items in the power-sharing agreement include:

Each caucus leader will appoint a co-presiding officer; caucus leaders will agree who will convene each day.

Each committee has joint chairs, with gavel sharing determined by the chairs.

Equal representation of DFL and GOP members on committees.

No changes to Senate rules through 2025.

Agreement is in place until there are 34 votes to end the agreement.

Southeast Partnership now accepting proposals for community-led sustainability projects

ROCHESTER, Minn. — Southeast Minnesota residents with an idea to strengthen sustainability in their community can now apply for partnership support from the University of Minnesota Extension Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (Southeast RSDP).

Southeast RSDP supports local innovation by connecting community ideas to University of Minnesota resources. Community members work on diverse project teams that research, design and plan local sustainability projects with University students, faculty and staff.

Southeast RSDP seeks ideas from diverse populations and those who have not previously partnered with the University. In 2025, priorities identified by the Southeast RSDP board and work groups include fostering a resilient food system, ad-

ressing climate change and other ecological impacts, increasing opportunities around energy efficiency and renewable energy and encouraging local community action that welcomes all residents and celebrates the region's rich cultural traditions, natural assets and vibrant local economies.

“We are seeking ideas and expertise from Southeast Minnesota residents that help shape resilient communities where all people have the opportunity to thrive,” said Southeast RSDP Executive Director Andi Sutton. “I encourage people to get in touch with me to talk about their ideas for making our communities more sustainable places.”

Applications for all funds are being accepted through February 14. Visit the link z.umn.edu/RSDP Idea Brief to read more about the pro-

grams and download application forms. Community members are encouraged to contact Sutton at sutto364@umn.edu or 857-928-4196 or Danielle Piraino at pirai006@umn.edu or 630-797-8862 to discuss their ideas and ask questions. Successful projects are selected by the Southeast RSDP community-University governing board through a competitive process.

Examples of projects recently supported by the Southeast RSDP include working with local entrepreneurs in St. Peter, advancing clean energy solutions for affordable housing and researching the economic impact of farmers markets. For more examples of projects supported by the Southeast RSDP, visit z.umn.edu/RSDPProjectExamples.

The Southeast RSDP serves Blue Earth, Faribault, Dodge, Freeborn,

Goodhue, Houston, LeSueur, Mower, Nicollet, Olmsted, Fillmore, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca and Winona counties and the sovereign Native Nation of Prairie Island Indian Community.

Southeast RSDP is one of five regions of the University of Minnesota Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP). For more information on RSDP, visit RSDP.umn.edu.

For more news from U of M Extension, visit www.extension.umn.edu/news or contact Extension Communications at extdigest@umn.edu. University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

■ Lake

from Page 1

stresses that caution is warranted, commenting “Regardless of the recent cold weather, many area lakes have open water near aeration systems, in shallow areas over points, and beneath ice ridges.” Soupir recommends extreme caution when driving on any body of water in the

area.

He rates fishing pressure as moderate compared to historical counts, with about 197 houses currently in place on Waseca's Clear Lake.

Clear, he mentions, is one of 16 “tier one” lakes in the Waterville Area; he calls it “one of the more stable” in the habitat it provides for naturally occurring and stocked fish, saying walleye fingerlings and pike are stocked there. Counts indicate bass, bluegill and crappie are abundant naturally.

The bass are something of a spe-

cial case in Clear Lake. Soupir says they appear in relatively high numbers and many have grown to nearly 20 inches, but a special regulation means bass are “catch and release” only.

Loon Lake's role in the area plan is quite different from Clear's: It is actually used as a rearing pond for walleye fry. A few days after hatching, the mosquito-sized fish are released in Loon Lake, usually in early May. In fall, after fish have reached “fall fingerling” size of about 4 to 6 inches in length, fishery staff returns

and harvests them; they are stocked in selected lakes, including Clear.

Soupir explains a fair number of shallow lakes and ponds in the region are used this way, some providing excellent Walleye angling in subsequent winters. He also points out any walleye which don't happen to be harvested are fair game for anglers. The lake was most recently stocked with fry in May 2024, so he suggests there may be walleye as large as 6 to 8 inches in the lake, on top of any even larger fish carried over from previous years' stockings.

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CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-835-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m.	CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS 1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca 507-835-4640 Sacrament meeting 10:00 a.m.	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 1221 8th St SE, Waseca 507-835-2213 Sunday worship 10:45 a.m.; 6:00 p.m.	CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY 900 14th Ave SE, Waseca 507-833-1082 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m.	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School, Choir and Choir; 10:30 a.m. Worship Monday - 1 p.m. Quilters Wednesday - 7 p.m. Worship	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Otiso, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Mary Iverson Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting	LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting	VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl
4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m.	FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m.	CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH 309 6th St NE, Waseca 507-835-9176 Worship Sundays traditional 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Sunday School/Fellowship; 10:45 a.m. contemporary service	ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH 401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca 507-833-1703 Sundays 9:00 a.m.	ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH 314 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-2647 Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m.	FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-4548 (office email: 1cwaseca@hickory-tech.net) Worship Sunday 10 a.m.	GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m.	SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca Father Glenn Ferichs 507-835-1222 Worship Sundays 10:00 a.m., Tues. and Wed. at 8:30 a.m. and Thurs. at 7 a.m.; Saturdays at 5 p.m.	REAL LIFE CHURCH 620 W Elm Ave, Waseca 507-607-8245 Sunday worship 10 a.m.

VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Brian Schandl Pastor Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship; 9 a.m. Sunday School Tuesdays: The Shepherd's Robe Ministry, 1-3 p.m., 6-8 p.m.; Bonfires and Yard Games, 6 p.m. until dark	ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Father Glenn Ferichs Friday - 10 a.m. on 1st, 3rd and 4th Fridays p.m. Mass Sunday - Mass at 8 a.m.	FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Larry Sipe Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class	IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship	ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Pastor Ava Adams-Morris Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship	ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC Waldorf, Minnesota Father Brian Mulligan Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship	TRINITY LUTHERAN Wilton Township Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor Sunday - 8 a.m. summer worship; 10:45 a.m. Worship starting Sept. 1	THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS Brad Donner, Branch President Waseca, Minnesota www.lds.org Sunday — 10 a.m. Sacrament Mtg.; 11:20 a.m. Sunday School Wednesday — 7 p.m. Youth Activities, ages 12-18
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TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 412 N. Main Street, Janesville Pastor Jason Wolter Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:15 a.m. Worship	JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 401 N. West St., Janesville Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship	BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 43089 180th St., Morristown Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Summer worship hours, (10:45 a.m. Worship, winter)	ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH 307 W. 2nd St. Janesville 10 a.m. - Mass	FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 Owen St., Janesville Pastor Sarah Krolak	ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH Alma City, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Smiths Mill, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship	NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA 404 30 120th St. Waseca Pastor Sarah Krolak 507-234-6463 Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship; Second sunday "Young at heart" Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. confirmation	NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.
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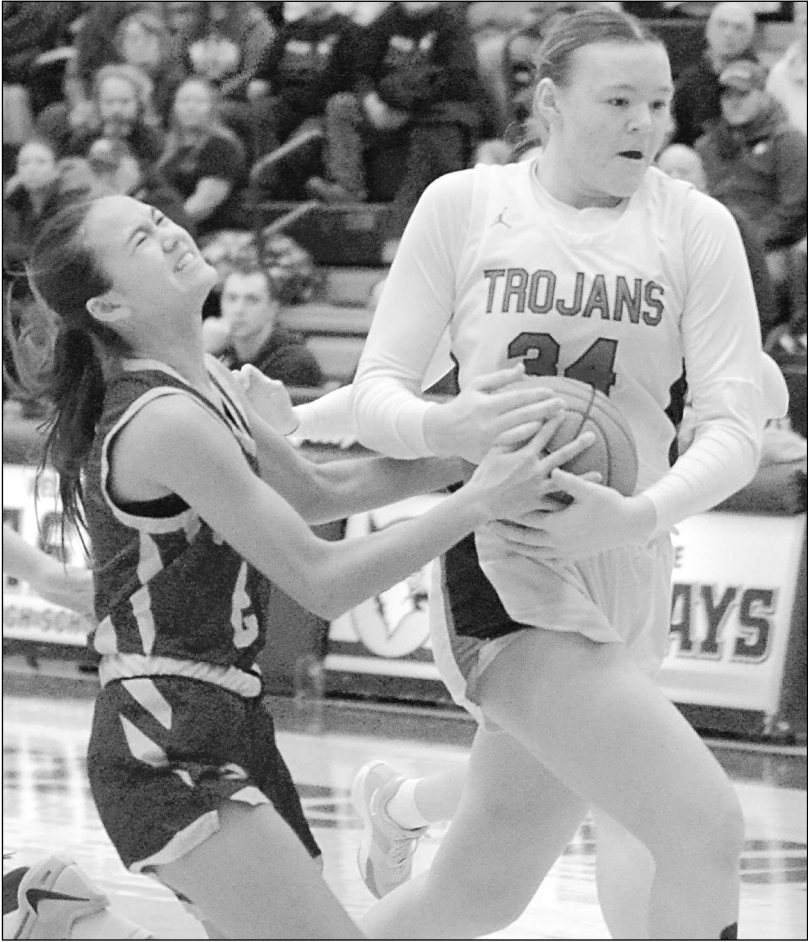
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BIG BASKET – Above, the Bluejays and coach Anthony Jackson celebrate a big first-half three-pionter that helped the Waseca High School girls' basketball team defeated Worthington, 60-56. Among those pictured: Hannah Sommers (41), Addison Kelm (21) and Lily Owens (24). Below left, Mia Kanewischer drives while Worthington's Jayden Spurtz defends. Below right, the Bluejays' Ava Miller ties up Worthington's Alaina Fell, who was called for traveling on the play.

Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



WHS girls rally past Worthington

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Friday was a good day to be a fan of Waseca High School girls' basketball.

The Bluejays notched their long-awaited second victory of the season, rallying from a halftime deficit to defeat visiting Worthington 60-56.

The win improved the Bluejays, 0-3 in the Big South East, to 2-16 overall.

The Bluejays started the game strong, sinking a number of first-half three-pointers while building a big lead. But the Trojans fought back and forged a halftime advantage.

Waseca retook the lead around the 7-minute mark of the second half and held a five-point lead with 20

"I'm especially proud of our defensive effort in the second half."

— WHS coach Anthony Jackson

seconds left. Worthington hit a three to cut it to two with 13 seconds remaining.

Then Gaby Lopez broke full-court pressure and bounced a pass to Katelyn McMurphrey for the game-clinching lay-up.

Gracie Morgan led three Waseca players in double figures with 15 points, adding 3 rebounds. Callie Dufault finished with 14 points and 6 assists, Mia Kanewischer 13 points and 8 rebounds.

Also: Lexi Kanewischer 3P;

Scoring: Morgan 14, Dufault 12, Lopez 6, Mia Kanewischer 6, Hannah Sommers 4 and Owens 2.

The Bluejays were seeking another victory Monday at home against Blue Earth Area, whom Waseca defeated earlier this season at Blue Earth. They were also hopeful of a win Tuesday at home against winless Medford.

The Bluejays play Friday at Marshall and Feb. 3 at home against Sibley East.

Big South East		
Tri-City United	6-2	13-3
Jackson Co. Central	5-2	12-6
Fairmont	4-2	11-5
Belle Plaine	3-3	7-10
Waseca	0-3	2-16
Blue Earth	0-6	0-15

WHS icemen bounce back in a very big way

Bluejays defeat Worthington, 17-0

After enduring a tough stretch the previous week, the Waseca High School boys' hockey team turned things around Friday at home against Windom, winning with a football-like score of 17-0.

Scoring goals for the Bluejays were Griffin Storey, Brayden Hesch-Priem, Cash Lynch, Jayden Gehring, Otto Schoenrock, Jude Gehring, Jackson Tesch and Avery Selvik.

Assists went to Schoenrock, Jude Gehring, Jayden Gehring, Hesch-Priem, Dahl, Beckett Sr, Lucas Groll, Storey and Tesch.

The Bluejays led 9-0 after one period and 15-0 after two. They outshot the Eagles 61-2.

Josiah Schmidt was in goal for Waseca.

The Bluejays, 14-2-2 overall, are 9-1-1 in the Big South, good for third place behind Luverne and New Ulm.

After a Tuesday game at Redwood Valley, Waseca skates Feb. 4 at Minnesota River and Feb. 6 at home against Fairmont.

Big South Standings			
	WLT	PTS	Overall
Luverne	10-0-1	21	15-2-1
New Ulm	6-3-0	20	9-8-1
Waseca	9-1-1	19	14-2-2
Marshall	6-5-0	12	7-11-0
Minn. River	5-2-0	10	9-8-0
Worthington	5-8-0	10	6-13-0
Windom	5-8-0	10	5-13-1
Redwood V.	1-11-0	2	2-16-0
Fairmont	0-10-0	0	0-14-0

Wikan wins all-around as gymnasts take 3rd at KM

The Waseca High School gymnastics team finished third among seven teams in Saturday's Kasson-Mantorville Invitational.

Farmington took the team title with 138.3 points, with Triton second at 135.04. The Bluejays totaled 134.25 points. Also competing were Rochester Mayo, Rochester Century, Red Wing and Faribault.

It was another big day for the Bluejays' Bella Wikan, who captured the all-around crown with 37.25 points. Wikan won the uneven parallel bars at 9.45, finished first in the floor exercise with a 9.5, second in vault at 9.2 and second on the balance beam at 9.1.

Other all-around scores for WHS: Brooklyn Flatau 32.0; Hannah Parks 31.85; Katelyn Weber, 31.8; Avery Carda, 31.7; Enja Francois-Saint-Cyr 21.2; Miley Anderson 14.2.

Other events:
Vault - Flatau 8.75; Weber 8.45;

Carda 8.2; Parks 7.8; Francois-Saint-Cyr 7.6.

Bars - Weber 7.6; Carda 7.6; Parks 7.55; Flatau 7.2; Anderson 3.0

Beam - Weber 8.05; Carda 8.0; Parks 8.0; Flatau 7.65; Francois-Saint-Cyr 6.6; Anderson 5.5.

Floor - Parks 8.5; Flatau 8.4; Carda 7.9; Weber 7.7; Francois-Saint-Cyr 7.0; Anderson 5.7.

After hosting Fairmont Tuesday, the Bluejays compete in the Big South Conference championship Feb. 7.

The section finals are Feb. 13 at St. James.



Wikan Flatau

Flyers skate past Austin

The South Central Flyers girls' hockey team skated to a 4-3 triumph at Austin last week.

Maddy Benson scored two goals for the Flyers, with one apiece by Emma Huelsnitz and Stevie Johnston. Assists were by Huelsnitz, Benson, Alison Drager and Kaylee Lawson.

Ilamay Draheim was the goal for South Central.

The girls lost 7-0 at Marshall on Friday, getting outshot 63-3.

The Flyers skate Saturday at 6 p.m. at Simley and play Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. at Windom.

The section tournament starts Feb. 5.

Big South Standings			
	WLT	PTS	Ov.
Marshall	11-0-1	23	20-2-1
MN River	10-1-1	21	16-4-1
Luverne	10-2-0	20	15-6-2
Fairmont	7-6-0	14	13-9-1
So. Central	4-9-2	9	9-14-1
New Ulm	2-6-1	5	9-12-2
Worthington	1-10-1	3	4-15-1
Windom	0-11-1	1	6-15-2

NRHEG matmen move closer to filling out lineup

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School wrestling team traveled to St. James for a quadrangular last Thursday.

The Panthers dropped three dual meets, 48-24 to St. James/Madelia, 61-9 to St. Peter and 14-9 to Pipestone Area.

"Our efforts were better tonight, than what we have been demonstrating as of late," said NRHEG coach Shawn Larson. "When we decide to use what have been working on in practice, we are able to move our opponents, score points, and when we execute just right, we are able to win."

And the Panthers, according to Larson, are moving closer to fielding a full competitive lineup.

"We are at a competitive disadvantage when we aren't able to get our full team out there," he said. "We will continue to work on cleaning up mistakes, being more aggressive, and condition-

"We are at a competitive disadvantage when we aren't able to get our full team out there."

— NRHEG coach Shawn Larson

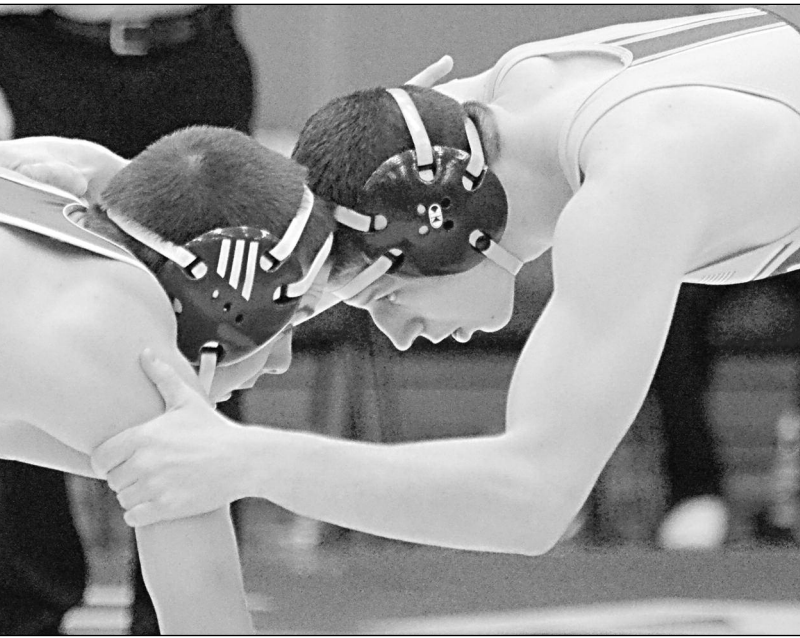
ing to give ourselves the best chance as the season moves toward the section tournaments."

After a Tuesday triangular at Dodge Center, the Panthers wrestle Thursday at 7 p.m. against WEM/JWP at Waterville. They compete Saturday in the Maple River Invitational.



WASECA WINS – Helping the Waseca High School wrestling team defeat Martin County West last week were, Devan Parpart, left, and Slade Barnett, right.

Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



WHS matmen upend MCW, 42-35

The Waseca High School wrestling team hosted Windom/Mountain Lake and Martin County West Thursday, winning one of two dual meets.

The Bluejays defeated Martin County West 42-35.

Waseca wins were by Kaiya

Stagman, 114 pounds; Jackson Janike, 121; Devan Parpart, 139, Slade Barnett, 160; Matthew Veroeven, 215; and Ben Hagen, 285. Also wrestling for the Bluejays were Archer O'Brien, 127; Jacob Knutson, 133; Jaden Schafer, 145; Oliver Staloch, 152;

and Ton Bethke, 189. The Bluejays forfeited at 172.

Waseca was edged 38-30 by Windom/Mountain Lake, with victories by Staloch, 152; Barnett, 160; Bethke, 172; Veroeven, 215; and Hagen, 285. The Bluejays forfeited at 114 and 189.

After a Tuesday triangular at Blue Earth Area, the Bluejays host a triangular at 5 p.m. Feb. 4. The Big South Conference tournament is Feb. 17. Section team semifinals are Feb. 15 at the Rochester Mayo Civic Center, with section individual Feb. 21 and 22 at Rochester.

Jays top New Ulm

By JIM LUTGENS Sports Editor

A year ago, the Waseca vs. New Ulm boys' basketball game would have shaped up as a close contest.

This season, it was just another Bluejay victory — despite the fact the visiting Eagles put up a strong fight.

“New Ulm played us really tough all night, and we never really found our groove,” said Waseca head coach Seth Anderson. “We shot 40 percent for the game and 23 percent from 3.”

It added up to a 74-59 triumph for the Bluejays at Waseca last Monday, improving their record to 18 wins without a loss.

The Bluejays led 41-29 at halftime.

Sophomore Deron Russell, who scored his 1,000th career point in the previous game, led the Bluejays in scoring with 21 points.

Carson Ohnstad scored 17, Damarius Russell 12, Ethan Hiller 11, Isaac Feldkamp 8 and Wyatt Hager 5.

Damarius Russell led Waseca with 8 rebounds. Deron and Feldkamp pulled down 7 apiece, Ohnstad 6, Hiller and Hager 5 each.

Damarius was tops on the team with 8 assists and 5 steals.

After playing Monday at Blue Earth Area, the Bluejays return to their home court Friday at 7:30 p.m. against Marshall. They travel to Truman to face Granada-Huntley/East Chain Feb. 6 at 7:15. They have a big game at Jackson County Central Feb. 8 at 1:30.

Big South East		
	W-L	Overall
Waseca	3-0	18-0
Jackson Co. Central	5-2	14-2
Belle Plaine	5-1	11-3
Fairmont	3-3	11-6
Blue Earth Area	2-4	8-8
Tri-City United	0-8	0-16

Class 2A state rankings	
By Minnesota Basketball News	
Week 8, Jan. 22, 2025	
1. Albany	14-0
2. Waseca	18-0
3. Caledonia	14-2
4. Jackson County Central	14-1
5. Montevideo	13-1
6. Breck	9-6
7. Blake	11-1
8. Warroad	15-0
9. Cannon Falls	13-2
10. Belle Plaine	11-3



MAN OF MANY TALENTS – Waseca High School sophomore Deron Russell, who scored his 1,000th career point in his previous game, also shows he can play defense (above), hit the three (below left) and distribute the basketball (below right).

Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



NRHEG basketball boys see progress despite three losses

The NRHEG High School boys' basketball team took a long road trip to Sherburn last week and lost 69-47 to Martin County West.

“The score wasn't indicative of how the game really went,” explained NRHEG head coach Dan Schmidt. “We played neck-and-neck with them through most of the first half, before giving up a run towards the end, to trail 37-20 at the break.”

At halftime, the Panthers discussed adjustments they needed to make. The result was a fine start for the Panthers, who cut the lead to 6.

“But MCW ramped up the pressure and we lost our composure and just never fully recovered,” said Schmidt.

Greyson Schaefer came off the bench to lead the Panthers with 17 points and 9 rebounds.

“Greyson played a heck of a game off the bench for the second straight game,” said Schmidt. “He's been bringing so much more passion and energy the last couple of games. I'm proud of him for the way he's turning things around.”

Also for NRHEG: Calvin Nissen 1 steal; Owen Wayne 10P, 3R, 1 assist, 1S; Brendan Schmidt 4P, 3R, 5A; Justin Beauvais 1R, 1S; Lavon Jewison 2R, 1 blocked shot; Hudson Chrz 11P, 2E, 1A, 1S, 2B; Jase Knudson 3P, 2R, 4A; Jordan Brouwers 2P, 1R, 1A.

On Friday, the Panthers were upended 59-24 at Blooming Prairie.

Individually: Schaefer 2P, 4R, 1A, 1S, 1B; Wayne 1P, 4R, 3A, 3S; Beauvais 2P, 2R, 1A, 1S; Jewison 3P, 1R, 1S, 1B; Dom Olson 6R; Chrz 5P, 1R, 1S, 2B; Gavin Lewison 1R; Knudson 2P, 2R, 1A, 1S, 1B; Brouwers 9P, 2R, 2S.

Last Monday, the Panthers fell 82-52 at LCWM.

“We took on a very good squad,” said Schmidt.

It was below-zero temps outside, but the shooting in the gym was on fire.

“LCWM does such a great job moving the ball and finding open shots that they put a lot of pressure on a defense,” said Schmidt. “I felt that despite their hot shooting, that we actually played a pretty clean game in comparison to some of our others, defensively. Offensively, we moved the ball so



JUMP SHOT – NRHEG's Jase Knudson puts up a shot.

Photo by Johnnie Phillips Steele County Times

much better than what we did the previous game or two.”

NRHEG kept it close in the first half, trailing 45-31 at the intermission.

“They methodically pulled away in the second half, as you could see us running out of steam,” said Schmidt. “I'm proud of the boys in the way they kept working and never got down on themselves. And, we saw some good things from guys off the bench. We continue to work on improving the little things, which will help get us over the top one of these days. We have a stretch of games coming up that can give us opportunities to pick up not only the first win, but string some together.”

Individually vs. LCWM: Schaefer 13P, 1A; Nissen 3P, 1R; Wayne 6P, 1R, 5A; Schmidt 6P, 1A, 2S, 1B; Beauvais 1S; Jewison 6P, 2R, 1A, 1S, 1B; Chrz 13P, 3R, 2S; Sean Lassahn 4P, 2R; Knudson 5P, 4R, 1A, 3S, 1B; Brouwers 2P, 4R, 1S.

The Panthers, 0-3 in the Gopher Conference West and 0-14 overall, were looking for win No. 1 as they played at winless Medford Tuesday. They play Thursday at United South Central.

JWP girls improve to 16-2

Don't look now, but the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School girls' basketball team is enjoying a great season.

The Bulldogs, coached by Brandon Goebel, improved their overall record to 16-2 and enhanced their Gopher Conference West record to 4-0 with three victories last week.

The Bulldogs defeated Kenyon-Wanamingo 65-45 in a nonconference game.

JWP leaders: Mikayla Wheelock 15 points, 4 rebounds; Katie Olson 13P, 4 steals; Presley James 10P, 17R, 5 assists; Nevaeh Weimert 8P; Kwynn Krause 7P, 4R; Hope Dimmel 6P, 9R.

The Bulldogs upended nonconference foe New Ulm Cathedral 59-39.

Individually: Olson 16P, 5R, 4S;

Weimert 10P, 3A; Wheelock 13P, 7R; Weimert 10P, 3A; Dimmel 6P, 7R.

In Gopher Conference play, the Bulldogs defeated WEM 60-44.

The leaders: Olson 25P, 9R, 6S; James 13P, 12R, 3S; Weimert 9P, 6R, 5A; Wheelock 8P, 6R; Dimmel 9R.

After playing Monday at United South Central and Tuesday at home against Tri-City United, the Bulldogs play Saturday at 5:45 p.m. at St. Clair. They're at winless Medford Feb. 3.

Gopher Conference West		
	W-L	Ov.
JWP	4-0	16-2
NRHEG	3-1	12-5
WEM	2-2	11-8
United South Central	1-3	11-8
Medford	0-4	0-18

JWP boys win battle for first

It was a battle for Gopher Conference West supremacy as the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School boys' basketball team hosted WEM last week.

But it didn't turn into much of a fight.

The Bulldogs bolted to a 37-32 halftime advantage and cruised to an 81-56 victory, improving to 3-0 in the Gopher Conference West and 11-4 overall while the Buccaneers fell to 2-1 and 8-7.

Daulton Bauer had a big night with 30 points, 8 rebounds, 6 assists and 3 steals. Gavin Bauer totaled 24 points, 7 rebounds, 3 assists and 4 steals.

Others: Parker Gearity 2P, 4R, 1A; Landon Johnson 11P, 8R, 3A, 1S; Caleb Quast 4P, 4R, 4A, 3s; Tyson Kronbach 2R; Isaiah Berndt 2P, 1R, 1A; Gavin Weedmen 5P, 2R, 1A; Ethan Born 3P, 9R, 9A.

After hosting USC Monday, the Bulldogs take the court at 7 p.m. Saturday at St. Clair. They're at winless Medford Feb. 3 at 7:15.

Gopher Conference West		
	W-L	Ov.
JWP	3-0	11-4
WEM	2-1	8-7
United South Central	2-1	6-11
Medford	0-2	0-13
NRHEG	0-3	0-14

Grizzlies win four of five dual meets

The WEM/JWP High School wrestling team continued its winning ways last week, emerging victorious in four of five dual meets.

The results:

WEM-JWP (WEJW) 45.0 Tri-City United (TCU) 21.0

107: Owen Delander (TCU) over Jacksten Knish (WEJW) (TF 16-0 3:58) 114: Bre' Ana Masso (WEJW) over (TCU) (For.) 121: Trey Richards (WEJW) over Griffin Lemieux (TCU) (Dec 15-13) 127: Carson Petry (WEJW) over Gage Factor (TCU) (Dec 7-4) 133: Tucker Skluzacek (TCU) over Carson James (WEJW) (Fall 0:31) 139: Brady Murphy (WEJW) over (TCU) (For.) 145: Cowen Bruzek (TCU) over Reed Sammon (WEJW) (Fall 3:40) 152: Nathan Blaschko (TCU) over Lucas Morsching (WEJW) (MD 13-0) 160: Luke Cahill (WEJW) over Maxxis Ross (TCU) (Dec 12-11) 172: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over Toren Kelly (TCU) (Fall 4:44) 189: Avery Fall (WEJW) over Ethan Woldsnes (TCU) (Fall 4:33) 215: Kavan Sheehy (WEJW) over (TCU) (For.) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over (TCU) (For.)

WEM-JWP (WEJW) 57.0 Sibley East (SIEA) 14.0

107: Jacksten Knish (WEJW) over (SIEA) (For.) 114: Bre' Ana Masso (WEJW) over Isabelle Alejandro (SIEA) (Fall 2:00) 121:

Trey Richards (WEJW) over (SIEA) (For.) 127: Carson Petry (WEJW) over (SIEA) (For.) 133: Tanner Johnson (SIEA) over Carson James (WEJW) (Fall 5:17) 139: Brady Murphy (WEJW) over (SIEA) (For.) 145: Benito Diaz (SIEA) over Ben Root (WEJW) (TF 15-0 1:53) 152: Lucas Morsching (WEJW) over (SIEA) (For.) 160: Luke Cahill (WEJW) over Atley Strack (SIEA) (Dec 6-1) 172: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over (SIEA) (For.) 189: Avery Fall (WEJW) over (SIEA) (For.) 215: Gianni Lopez (SIEA) over Kavan Sheehy (WEJW) (Dec 4-3) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over Axel Cardenas (SIEA) (Fall 1:41)

Rocori (ROCO) 35.0 WEM-JWP (WEJW) 26.0

107: Trey Kraemer (ROCO) over Jacksten Knish (WEJW) (Dec 0-0) 114: Davey Maldonado (ROCO) over Bre' Ana Masso (WEJW) (Fall 2:00) 121: Carter Kremer (ROCO) over Trey Richards (WEJW) (Dec 6-2) 127: Carson Petry (WEJW) over Mason Moscho (ROCO) (Dec 6-1) 133: Easton Rossman (ROCO) over Carson James (WEJW) (Fall 2:22) 139: Brady Murphy (WEJW) over Mason Molitor (ROCO) (Fall 3:52) 145: Kameron Moscho (ROCO) over Reed Sammon (WEJW) (Fall 1:33) 152: Lucas Morsching (WEJW) over Carson Alvarado-

Konz (ROCO) (Dec 13-11) 160: Sawyer Minnerath (ROCO) over Luke Cahill (WEJW) (Dec 7-4) 172: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over (ROCO) (For.) 189: Avery Fall (WEJW) over Zander Bitker (ROCO) (Dec 5-3) 215: Cooper Notch (ROCO) over Kavan Sheehy (WEJW) (TF 15-0 3:46) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over Aaron Baisley (ROCO) (TF 15-0 5:36) (ROCO wrong score 3.0)

WEM-JWP (WEJW) 65.0 Minneapolis North Community (MNC) 10.0

107: Jacksten Knish (WEJW) over (MNC) (For.) 114: Bre' Ana Masso (WEJW) over (MNC) (For.) 121: Trey Richards (WEJW) over (MNC) (For.) 127: Carson Petry (WEJW) over Prince Clark (MNC) (Fall 0:28) 133: Carson James (WEJW) over Dalton Conlin (MNC) (Fall 1:01) 139: Brady Murphy (WEJW) over Bravo Niyonkuru (MNC) (TF 18-0 3:41) 145: Johan Alcantara Lund (MNC) over Ben Root (WEJW) (TF 17-1 2:55) 152: Lucas Morsching (WEJW) over Deriyon Skinner (MNC) (Fall 1:02) 160: Luke Cahill (WEJW) over (MNC) (For.) 172: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over Cameron Wise (MNC) (Fall 1:52) 189: Jaylen Hutchinson (MNC) over Dakota Blaisdell (WEJW) (TF 23-6 5:26) 215: Avery Fall (WEJW) over Xavier

Alexander (MNC) (Fall 3:16) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over Elliston Rounds (MNC) (Fall 1:26)

WEM-JWP (WEJW) 42.0 Medford (MEDF) 29.0

107: Kyle Witter (MEDF) over Jacksten Knish (WEJW) (Fall 1:51) 114: Brenden Masso (WEJW) over Micah Wilson (MEDF) (Fall 2:15) 121: Trey Richards (WEJW) over (MEDF) (For.) 127: Carson Petry (WEJW) over Boe Wilson (MEDF) (Fall 0:29) 133: Kaden Harfmann (MEDF) over Brady Murphy (WEJW) (Dec 3-2) 139: Carson James (WEJW) over (MEDF) (For.) 145: Chase Balzer (MEDF) over Zach Quast (WEJW) (Fall 4:58) 152: Tanner Milewski (MEDF) over Lucas Morsching (WEJW) (Dec 8-6) 160: Luke Cahill (WEJW) over James Wegner (MEDF) (Fall 1:16) 172: Aiden Hunt (MEDF) over Trenton Huber (WEJW) (Fall 2:33) 189: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over Luther Johannes (MEDF) (Fall 2:14) 215: Conor Wilson (MEDF) over Kavan Sheehy (WEJW) (TF 21-3 5:45) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over Mason Degrood (MEDF) (Fall 1:48)

The Grizzlies wrestle Thursday against NRHEG at 7 p.m. at Waterville. They compete in the Maple River Invitational Saturday at 9:30 a.m.

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CRUISING TO VICTORY — Ezra Boerner (2) scored three points as the NRHEG girls’ basketball team won handily at Bethlehem Academy Friday. In the middle, the Panthers’ Camryn VanMaldeghem eyes up a three-pointer. At right, NRHEG’s Chloe Stork (15) goes up for a shot.

Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

Twins combine for 46 as NRHEG girls humble BA

There was only one game scheduled for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School girls’ basketball team last week.

The Panthers made the most of it. Traveling to Faribault to face Bethlehem Academy Friday, the Panthers came home with a convincing 63-42 triumph. It improved the NRHEG girls to 12-5 overall, 7-2 in Gopher Conference play and 3-1 in

the Gopher Conference West Division.

“It was a great team win,” said NRHEG coach Onika Peterson, who added that her squad did well in a game that was physical at times.

“The game was a little chippy, but the girls held their own,” said Peterson. “It was fun to see them aggressive on both sides of the floor, rebound well, and make the extra pass.”

Camryn VanMaldeghem led the Panthers with 26 points, 10 rebounds, 4 assists and 2 steals. Her twin sister, Quinn, totaled 20 points, 12 rebounds, 2 assists, 5 steals and 2 blocked shots.

Others: Gabby Schlaak 4P, 3A, 1S; Ezra Boerner 3P, 1R; Clara Buendorf 3P, 2R, 1A; Savannah Farr 1R; Chloe Stork 3R, 2A; Kylie Olson 7P, 6R, 1A, 2B.

The Panthers have two home

Reunion of 2004 state tournament team set for Feb. 10

“The game was a little chippy, but the girls held their own.”

— NRHEG coach Onika Peterson

of their 2004 state tournament team when they host St. Clair Feb. 10.

Gopher Conference West		W-L	Ov.
JWP		4-0	16-2
NRHEG		3-1	12-5
WEM		2-2	11-8
United South Central		1-3	11-8
Medford		0-4	0-18

games this week, Monday against Medford and Friday against United South Central. They play at WEM Feb. 3 and host JWP in a boy-girl doubleheader Feb. 7.

The Panthers will hold a reunion

Snow

from Page 3

iWEALTH — Brad Connors, DOMINO’S, MEDIACOM, SUBURBAN FURNITURE, and XCEL ENERGY. Please thank these sponsors for supporting the 28th Annual

Frosty: Week 1 Clue

Much like the legend,
The 2025 Sleigh and Cutter Frosty is anew.
Coming again this year,
In their white Frosty Hue

A Waseca transplant,
But ties they did bind,
Here the greater part of 40 years
A love match they did find

A local friend, and
A supporter of the arts,
Who will it be this year?
The answer, the clues will impart.

Frosty: Week 2 Clue

A northerner from the start,
Frosty moved South for school
The major of study initially unknown
But a degree was the general rule

Completing classes at Gustavus
And taking credits as MSU
A 1983 college graduate
History was a favored study too

Far out of school now
But to help pass the time
Frosty enjoys putting together words

Possibly a limerick or a rhyme

Medallion: Week 1 Clue

How quickly again,
The time of the year is here,
Another winter season bringing the Sleigh & Cutter Community Near

In our 75th year, the medallion
Once again is hidden
Bundle up for your search,
Perhaps you need a lucky mitten?

Hidden within the town
Easy to find but not in plain sight
The medallion is secured
Protected and strapped in tight.

Medallion: Week 2 Clue

One lucky winner
Will keep the grand prize
Their dedication and note taking
A technique which was wise

Now in support of the 75th year
And to give one more chance
The medallion will be re-hidden
In a special circumstance

\$750 is now waiting
For the second lucky finder
The medallion hidden well
Good luck to the new pathfinder

Medallion Hunt Rules

The medallion is hidden outdoors, on public property within the Waseca city limits. A \$1,500 prize of Chamber Dollars will be awarded at the Star Fire Event Center at 8:30 on Friday Feb 21, 2025. Bring the medallion to Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce or Waseca Music. Clues will be published each week in the Waseca County News, Facebook, Waseca County Pioneer, NRHEG Star Eagle, and Waseca Sleigh & Cutter Festival. Clues will also be broadcast on KRUE and KOWZ Radio and will be available online at Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce at info@wasecachamber.com .

The hunt is sponsored by: Waseca County News, KEEN Bank, Xcel Energy, KOWZ/KRUE Radio, Waseca VFW Club 1642, and M Peters Enterprises. Please thank these sponsors for supporting the 28th Annual Medallion Hunt!

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SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642

February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Four Chaplains Day	4 Burger nite 5-7pm USO Birthday	5 6pm BAR Bingo	6 7pm HALL BINGO	7 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	8
9 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am-Noon Your Host St. Paul Lutheran Church	10 7 pm Post & AUX. Meeting	11 Burger nite 5-7pm	12 6pm BAR Bingo	13 7pm HALL BINGO	14 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	15
16	17	18 Burger nite 5-7pm	19 6pm BAR Bingo	20 7pm HALL BINGO	21 WALLEYE or SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 to 7pm YOUR HOST	22
23 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am-Noon Your Host CERT	24	25 Burger nite 5-7pm	26 6pm BAR Bingo	27 7pm HALL BINGO	28 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	

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

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LEGAL NOTICES

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF WASECA

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No.: 81-PR-25-26
In Re: Estate of
SANDRA E. POPIEL,
Decedent
NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEAR-
ING
ON PETITION FOR FORMAL
PROBATE OF WILL AND AP-
POINTMENT OF PERSONAL
REAPRESENTATIVE IN UNSU-
PERVISED ADMINISTRATION
AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TO ALL INTERESTED PER-
SONS:
It is Ordered and Notice is hereby
given that on the 12th day of March,
2025, at 9:00 a.m., a hearing will be

held in the above Court at Waseca,
Minnesota, for the formal probate of
an instrument purporting to be the
will of the above named decedent,
dated February 4, 2020, and for the
appointment of Collette Berg whose
address is 917 10th Ave NW, Waseca,
MN 56093, as Personal Representa-
tive of the Estate of the above named
decedent in unsupervised administra-
tion, and that any objections thereto
must be filed with the Court. That, if
proper and no objections are filed, a
Personal Representative will be ap-
pointed to administer the Estate, to
collect all assets, to pay all legal
debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to
sell real and personal property, and to
do all necessary acts for the Estate.
Upon completion of the administra-
tion, the representative shall file a
final account for the allowance and
shall distribute the estate to the per-
sons thereunto entitled as ordered by

the Court, and close the estate.
Notice is further given that ALL
CREDITORS having claims against
said Estate are required to present the
same to said Personal Representative
or to the Court Administrator within
four months after the date of this No-
tice or said claims will be barred.

Dated: 01-21-2025
/s/ Carol M. Hanks
Judge of District Court
/s/ Shannon Asselin
Deputy Court Administrator

PATTON, HOVERSTEN & BERG,
P.A.
Ellie J. James, #505790
215 E Elm Ave, PO Box 249
Waseca, MN 56093
Phone: 507-835-5240

Published in the Waseca County
Pioneer on Jan. 30 and Feb. 6, 2025

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF WASECA
PROBATE COURT
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Probate Court Division
Court File No. 81-PR-24-907
In Re: Estate of
SHIRLEY J. BURDICK,
Deceased
NOTICE INFORMAL APPOINT-
MENT OF ADMINISTRATOR
AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Notice is hereby given that an ap-
plication for informal appointment of
administrator of the above named
decedent's estate has been filed with
the Registrar herein, and the applica-
tion has been granted informally ad-
ministrating such estate. Any
objection may be filed in the above

name Court, and the same will be
heard by the Court upon notice of
hearing fixed for such purpose.
Notice is hereby further given that
informal appointment of Debra J.
Heine, whose address is 18680
Walmer St, Stilwell, KS 66085, as
personal representative of the estate
of the above named decedent, has
been made. Any heir, devisee or
other interested person may be enti-
tled to appointment as personal rep-
resentative or may object to the
appointment of the personal repre-
sentative and the personal representa-
tive is empowered to fully administer
the estate including, after 30 days
from the date of issuances of his
letters, the power to sell, encumber,
lease or distribute real estate, unless
objections thereto are filed with the
Court (pursuant to Section 524.3-
607) and the Court otherwise orders

Notice is further given that ALL
CREDITORS having claims against
said estate are required to present the
same to said personal representative
or to the Court Administrator within
four months after the date of this no-
tice or said claims will be barred.

Dated: 01/06/2025
/s/ Deanna Verdick
Deputy Probate Registrar
/s/ Shannon Asselin
Court Administrator

PATTON HOVERSTEN & BERG,
P.A.
Ellie J. James, #505790
215 E Elm Ave, PO Box 249
Waseca, MN 56093
Phone: 507-835-5240
Published in the Waseca County
Pioneer on Jan. 30 and Feb. 6, 2025

City of Waldorf Public Hearing

The city of Waldorf is having a Public hearing announcement on 2/10/25, at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center to go over amending Title 151 Zoning to include Twin Homes Zero Lot Lines allowance.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on January 30, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

2025 OFFICIAL PUBLICATION FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Waseca County has designated its website, www.wasecacounty.gov, as the 2025 Official Publication for Transportation Projects, as allowed by MN Statute §331A.12. Waseca County will publish any transportation project advertisements for bids on its website.

Contacts:

Jim Kollar, Public Works Director/County Engineer, (507) 835-0661
Michael Johnson, County Administrator, (507) 835-0631

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From left Mikhail Rostislavovich, Aaron Omtvedt and Robin Dulas.

Aaron Omtvedt joins the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors

Waseca, MN – The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce the addition of Aaron Omtvedt to its Board of Directors. Aaron and his wife Carol, along with their business partners Samuel and Tara Steffel are the owners of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service. Their business has two funeral home locations in Waseca as well as locations in Janesville and Waterville. Aaron has also recently shared that he and Sam have acquired the Schoenbauer Funeral Home in Montgomery and Le Center Funeral Home in Le Center, and they are excited to continue the care that those families have come to expect in their communities. Together, Aaron and Sam offer funeral and cremation services as well as prearrangement services, various prefuneral resources, and monument sales.

“Aaron is a wonderful addition to our board, and we look forward to the skills and ideas that he will contribute. He is a respected member of the Waseca community, and we are looking forward to his involvement helping us move the Chamber forward,” said Chamber President Mikhail Rostislavovich.

Aaron grew up in Estherville, Iowa and is a 1998 graduate of Estherville Lincoln Central High School. He went on to earn a

bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa where he studied Interpersonal Communication and Religion. In the early 2000's he completed his Mortuary Science education at Worsham College near Chicago, IL. Aaron began working for Timothy Dennis at the funeral home in 2005 and after many years was able to purchase the funeral home upon Tim's retirement in 2022. Aaron's wife, Carol, offers massage therapy services at Xpressions Salon in Waseca. Their two teenage daughters have never known any home but Waseca. Their oldest, Ava, is a recent graduate of Waseca High School and their youngest, Stella, is currently a sophomore in Waseca.

Aaron says that he is excited to work alongside new friends and colleagues on the chamber board. His desire to care for and promote Waseca and its businesses to a broad population, both inside and outside our community, will help ensure a bright future for our community and its members. If you haven't met Aaron before he invites you to stop by the funeral home and say "hello" the next time you have an opportunity.

The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce is looking forward to working with Aaron on the Board of Directors.

County board considers construction plans, artificial intelligence

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

More than an hour of discussion during the county board of commissioners' work session on Jan. 21 centered around a "phased" approach to construction and remodeling which might begin with about \$13 million worth of work to upgrade and reconfigure the current law enforcement building and construct additional office space connected to the historic courthouse. Another central element of the discussion was complying with the state department of corrections (DOC) expectation that inmates leaving the jail to attend court proceedings should not share any part of their path with members of the public.

Brought up during the considerations were that the current law enforcement building is "structurally very sound," and thus a candidate for continued use whether or not the lowest level continues to house a jail. The point was made that its construction took place during the cold war, when the possibility of nuclear-level hostilities made sturdiness a priority while placing minimal importance on "curb appeal." One board member went so far as to claim the building "looks like a bunker from the 1960s."

A significant aspect of the phased construction, county administrator Michael Johnson suggested, is the much smaller amount of money which would need to be "bonded" before construction could begin: proposals discussed at previous board meetings have entailed financing as much as \$30 million—leading to prohibitive amounts of interest during the repayment period.

After considering the elements of a plan initially created in 2022,

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

board members encouraged county administrator Michael Johnson to look into having an update created which takes the DOC expectation of a dedicated pathway for inmates into account while also prioritizing plans for courthouse security. Another consideration is minimizing the profile of any new construction so that it doesn't conflict with the appearance of the historic structure.

During the regular board meeting which followed the 8 a.m. work session, commissioners took a few moments to express gratitude to departing county board of adjustment members Richard Possin and Robert Vogelsang. Both are retiring from that role—Possin after 22 years and Vogelsang after 34.

Commissioners also accepted a new policy which offers guidelines regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) when performing tasks for county projects. Although the term "AI" might have unsettling connotations, administrator Johnson pointed out "you've been using AI for years, whether you think you have been or not." He also called AI "a powerful tool that can increase productivity."

The new policy, two pages in length, defines AI and identifies three levels of county-controlled information: low, moderate, and high risk. Data regarded as "low" risk is that which is meant to be public. "Moderate" risk is associated with names and addresses which are not meant to be public. "High" risk is legally protected data including information about criminal proceedings, data from the social security administration, and others.



Richard Possin and Robert Vogelsang were honored during the Jan. 21 Waseca County Board meeting for long-standing service on the county's board of adjustment. Vogelsang, who could not be present, retired from the committee after 34 years. Possin, pictured here with county board chair Doug Christopher, served for 22 years.

The new policy allows low risk information to be entered into artificial intelligence apps for the sake of analyzing data, identifying trends, and similar tasks.

The policy also insists that, since AI sometimes "makes up an answer" when there is not sufficient data, all work must be proofread by someone knowledgeable in the field before it is accepted as trustworthy.

The county renewed its agreement with the state Department of Natural Resources regarding the local aquatic invasive species (AIS) program. According to Land and Water Resources department leader Chris Howard, having the agreement in place is a prerequisite to the county receiving its annual AIS funding, about \$47,000 to be used toward protecting water quality in area lakes. Howard told commissioners about \$22,000 of the amount is spent on "watercraft inspection"—hiring individuals who locate themselves at area boat landings and educate the public about preventing the spread of invasive species of aquatic plants and wildlife—while also confirming people remove plant matter

from their boats and trailers before leaving the landing.

Howard stated the remaining \$25,000 is made available to area lake associations which can apply for funding to carry out eligible projects.

During a legislative update at the end of the morning's session, commissioners heard about elements of Governor Tim Walz's proposed budget. As described by administrator Johnson, the preliminary information is "disheartening to counties."

Commissioners discussed among themselves that funding for numerous state initiatives had been promised, but is no longer expected to be delivered. One commissioner noted, "They've built too big of a government, and now cutbacks will be needed."

Board chair Doug Christopher suggested that, if funding was going to be removed, the mandate for counties to carry out the prescribed tasks should also be undone. Naming the expectations placed on counties to administer new cannabis policies as an example, he said "it feels like a broken promise."

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Waldorf

from Page 1

damage to property. It is believed

that Rocheford acted alone and there is no further concern to the public. The Sheriff's Office thanks the citizens and businesses in Waldorf & area law enforcement for assisting in the investigation and leading to a rapid arrest of the offender.

* * *

Annual Mike Filzen Memorial Poker Run starts at Waseca Legion Saturday, Feb. 1

The Waseca American Legion will host the Annual Mike Filzen Memorial Poker Run at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 1. There will be a noon departure, with or without snow. Contact Jake at 507-451-2510 with ques-

tions.

Barn Boys at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Feb. 1

The music group Barn Boys will be playing at the Indian Island Winery from 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 1. They play Live guitar and vocals, playing old country.

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