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LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY  
No. 17 Vol. IV \$2 Office at 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca Thursday, April 24, 2025



Rogers honored

**Waseca High School Grand March and Prom 6 p.m. April 26**

Grand March will be at 6 p.m. in the Waseca high school gym on Saturday, April 26. (Doors open at 5:30). Prom, which is not open to the public, will follow at The Mill.

**Sacred Heart Schools marathon and celebration 4 p.m. Wednesday, April 30**

Sacred Heart students will celebrate the accomplishments of their annual fundraising drive with a marathon around Loon Lake, a meal, and games. The celebration will be outdoors on the Sacred Heart campus.

**Blood Drive at Grace Lutheran Church on Thursday, May 1**

Grace Lutheran Church is hosting an American Red Cross Blood Drive in their Fellowship Hall from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 1. Appointments can be made at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) by entering 56093 in the Zip code search. Some walk-in's are available but appointments are preferred.

**Straight Talk with Sheriff Jay Dulas at the Waseca Chamber of Commerce office Friday, May 2**

Join Sheriff Dulas for Straight Talk from noon till 1 p.m. on Friday, May 2, at the Waseca Area Chamber office to ask questions or address concerns. There will be additional chances every first Friday of the month. Presented by the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

**Waseca High School Vocal Department Variety Show 7 p.m. May 2 and 3**

The Waseca High School vocal department variety show will be presented at 7 p.m. on both May 2 and 3 in the Junior/Senior High School performing arts center. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for students; ages 5 and under are free.

**Waseca Chorale Breakfast and Bake Sale at the Waseca Legion on Sun., May 4**

St. Paul Lutheran Church of Waseca will be having a Breakfast and Bake Sale at the Waseca American Legion from 7:30 a.m. till noon on Sunday, May 4. Cost is \$10 per plate, to be served are pancakes, eggs, sausage, juice and coffee.

**Waseca Intermediate School spring vocal concert 7 p.m. Monday, May 5**

The Waseca Intermediate School vocal department will present its spring concert beginning at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 5 in the Junior/Senior High School performing arts center.

**Waseca Pops Concert 7 p.m., Friday May 9**

The Waseca instrumental music department will present its spring "Pops" concert at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 9, in the high school performing arts center. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for students, with children 5 years and under free.

*A word from The Word*

*We love because he first loved us.*

*1 John 4:19*



**Occupants of all seven apartments at 113 and 115 South State Street were offered a designated 30-minute time to retrieve possessions the morning of April 12. According to Waseca Police Chief Kris Markeson, residents of all the units initially signed up for time slots, but only three groups followed through.**

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently



**When notified brief access would be allowed to apartments in the damaged buildings at 113 and 115 South State Street, one team put together a plan which would help them remove a friend's possessions in the 30 minutes allowed on April 12. Here, bags of suitable items are dropped from a second-story window to save the time needed to carry them down the stairs.**

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

## City arranges supervised entry for residents to reclaim some possessions

By DEB BENTLY  
News Editor

On Wednesday, April 16, tenants of 115 and 113 South State Street in Waseca were given 30 minutes' access to their apartments for the sake of retrieving some of their possessions. Access to the building's 7 apartments has been boarded up since tenants were suddenly evacuated the afternoon of Wednesday, April 2, when the east wall of 115 collapsed.

According to Waseca Police Chief Kris Markeson, his department coordinated the procedures needed for the "resource-intensive" process. City housing officials and an engineer first determined the structure was suffi-

ciently stable to allow short-term access. The building owner was contacted and asked to notify tenants of the opportunity to retrieve some of their belongings. Tenants reserved a 30-minute time slot in advance; on April 16 they reported to the police department to sign waivers and were then sent to the apartment buildings in turn.

Members of the fire department were on site to accompany tenants inside. Occupants of only one apartment at a time were permitted access, no more than five people were to come and go from apartments. Tenants were instructed to

Recover continued on 4

# Chorale concert spans decades

By DEB BENTLY  
News Editor

The Waseca Chorale has titled its upcoming May 10 concert "The Greatest Show." According to director Deb Wantoch-Yess, the name has numerous meanings.

"Yes, the first and last songs are from the musical 'The Greatest Showman,'" she observes. "The songs in between are also 'greats' that people from different generations will probably recognize within the first few notes."

Group members suggest the 16 songs they've been practicing since February create an intergenerational time capsule of sorts; the song "100 Years," which spotlights moments from each decade of a person's life, aligns with the idea perfectly.

People who come from the generation when the evening's entertainment was "whatever's on tv" will be brought back to that time by "Over the Rainbow" from "The Wizard of Oz." Of the arrangement the group will be using, Wantoch-Yess observes, "The melody is what you'd expect, but the harmony is not."

"It's one of my favorites," says group member Nancy Lehman. "It's beautiful and it lifts our spirits."

Al Judd is pleased to be among a group of four men who have been working together to prepare "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" in barber-shop style. Wantoch-Yess describes that "barbershop" groups are traditionally four male voices with one carrying the melody and the other three harmonizing, all without accompaniment.

Judd tells of having been part of a number of barbershop groups which performed in the region; he names the Crossroads Courtmen who were active in the 1980s.

"It feels good to be doing that again," he says. "I think the audience will really enjoy it."



**The 53 members of the Waseca Chorale will be presenting their spring concert at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 10, at the Waseca High School performing arts center. Elements of the concert will feature small groups and numbers which span generations, as indicated by the title of one featured number "100 Years."**

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

John Hoehn, co-director of the Chorale, says another way the May 10 performance will show the rising energy of spring is by the use of various groupings among the 53 members of the Chorale.

The barbershoppers, an octet, and men- and women-only numbers will mix things up a bit, he says.

"We have the stage of the performing arts center," Wantoch-Yess points out. "It gives us the space and the flexibility to move people in and out."

Andrew Miller says a favorite number for him is "When the Light of Morning Breaks."

"It makes me think of sitting in my backyard with a cup of coffee, taking in God's creation as the light becomes brighter and gradually changes color," he describes.

"Even just listening to the song makes me feel like I'm on vacation somewhere special."

Deb Vetter says she has trouble choosing a favorite song because what's special for her is the way the many songs intertwine when performed one after another.

"There are numbers from all these different decades and genres, but they go so well together it's almost like one long, harmonious song," she suggests. "I picture our audience members kind of floating through it with us, and each generation maybe choosing different highlights."

"It's a new combination of things that may also be very nostalgic."

Hoehn mentions that, as he and Wantoch-Yess considered what numbers to include in the spring concert, they were looking for a "pop" feel that would feel positive and light. They decided mixing small groups in among numbers performed by the full Chorale would add to the energy and variety, while also "pushing" Chorale members to advance their skills.

Also adding to the energy will be harmonies and accompaniments from seven high school musicians who will be adding their skills to selected numbers.

"It makes you just want to snap your fingers," says Lehman, upon which fellow Chorale member Rita Miller chimes in, "It's upbeat and fun. I think everyone—including us—will come away with a smile."

"The Greatest Show" will begin at 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 10, in the Waseca Junior Senior High School performing arts center. Admission is \$10.

Along with numbers already mentioned, "Listen to the Music," "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," "Walking on Sunshine," "Baby One More Time," "The Greatest Show," "This is Me," and others will be included.

Members of the Chorale express gratitude to the Waseca Area Foundation, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, and Waseca County for financial support which makes it possible for their organization to continue.

## Timeline of events at S. State St.

City of Waseca Building Official Daniel Murphy released this timeline of recent events regarding the privately owned building located at 115 South State Street.

January of 2025 Initial inspection revealed there was some movement on the lower one-third portion of the building's east wall. Murphy advised the owner to hire a structural engineer to design the wall repair and hire a building restoration contractor.

March 3 The housing office received a complaint via phone call from a concerned citizen regarding the condition of the east wall of 115 State Street South.

March 7 Murphy inspected the east wall and determined repair action was needed to prevent further deterioration. He called the building owner and ordered him to hire a structural engineer to design a repair or to shore up the wall, and warned a written order was forthcoming. The owner was responsive.

March 14 Murphy received a call from a structural engineer hired by the building owner. He was able to gain access to unit 7 of 115 State Street South. Unit 7 showed significant signs of wall movement; the engineer expressed safety concerns of the tenants of units 6 and 7.

March 18 Murphy composed written orders declaring 115 State Street South as unsafe and hazardous.

March 27 Murphy called CenterPoint Energy and ordered the gas meter at the base of the east wall of 115 State Street South disconnected and removed. That was done on the same day.

April 2 The wall of 115 State Street South collapsed and cut off electrical service to both 113 and 115 State Street South. All tenants were removed from the affected buildings for their safety.

As of April 10 the incident is considered an open and active investigation. The building has been secured to restrict access as the building is unsafe and hazardous.

These developments have taken place since the release was prepared:

April 16 Former residents of 113 and 115 State Street South were permitted brief access to their apartments for the sake of removing some of their belongings.

April 18 Work crews began removing the rubble of the fallen wall.

\* \* \*

## Drug charges filed against area resident

Derrick Lamarious Russel, 46, of Sixth Avenue Northwest in Waseca, will appear in Waseca County district court April 29 to face numerous felony charges dealing with the possession of illegal substances including cocaine. Russell is currently in the Waseca County Jail pending the posting of up to \$2 million bail.

Russell was arrested after an April 10 search of his residence uncovered a mixture including cocaine that weighed 25 grams or more; the search also turned up more than \$1,600 cash—much of it in \$100 bills—along with items which could indicate drug sales had occurred.

In an unresolved case from April of 2024, Russell also faces two first-degree and two second-degree felony charges for possession of cocaine which carry a combined minimum sentence of more than 10 years and fines as high as \$3 million.





# Compostings

by Al Batt

## It is a serious thing to be alive in this world

**ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING**  
It's a sad thing.  
What's that?  
All I've saved for a rainy day is the umbrella I lost.  
**DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE**

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. Vital statistics from the CDC and NCHS show the states that have the longest life expectancies are: 1. Hawaii (79.9 years) 2. Massachusetts 3. Connecticut 4. New Jersey & New York 6. Minnesota (78.8 years) 7. New Hampshire & Rhode Island 9. Vermont 10. California. Nebraska is 13, Wisconsin 14, Iowa 16 (77.7 years), North Dakota 17 and South Dakota 24. The shortest-lived people reside in 1. Mississippi (70.9 years) 2. West Virginia (71) 3. Alabama 4. Louisiana 5. Kentucky 6. Tennessee 7. Arkansas 8. Oklahoma 9. New Mexico 10. South Carolina. Many sources show the average lifespan of someone living in Canada is 3 years longer than someone living in the U.S.

1. Pick a number between 1 and 10
2. Double the number.
3. Add 8 to the result.
4. Divide the result by 2.
5. Subtract the original number.
6. Convert this into a letter of the alphabet.

A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5, F=6, G=7, H=8, I=9, J=10, K=11, L=12, M=13, N=14, O=15, P=16, Q=17, R=18, S=19, T=20, U=21, V=22, W=23, X=24, Y=25, Z=26

7. Think of the name of a country that starts with this letter.
8. Think of an animal whose name starts with the country's second letter.
9. Think of the color of that animal.

Are you thinking of a gray elephant in Denmark?

### BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

I watched "Duck Soup" and 'A Night at the Opera,' starring the Marx Brothers: Chico, Harpo, Groucho, Gummo and Zeppo. I'd forgotten about their sister, who was a great Olympic runner. Her name was Onya. They honor her at the beginning of every race.

I just found out Albert Einstein was a real person. I thought he was a theoretical physicist.

I bought a horse named Mayo. Sometimes, Mayo neighs.

What do you call an ungrateful water heater? A thankless water heater.

### NATURE NOTES

The sun had just gotten up, and

the turkeys were doing roadwork. They relish standing in the middle of a road and attempting to stare down cars. Large flocks of blackbirds fed in a field near the road. One black squirrel was near them. Seeing the lake, the duck said, "What a dive." Minnesota diving ducks are the canvasback, redhead, ringneck (ringbill), scaup (bluebill), goldeneye, bufflehead and ruddy duck.

From Mary Oliver's poem "Invitation": "... it is a serious thing just to be alive on this fresh morning in this broken world. I beg of you, do not walk by without pausing to attend this rather ridiculous performance..." It was a cool and damp morning. The yard held many fallen sticks I gathered while listening to robin, cardinal, redwing, dove and pheasant voices. A vesper sparrow sang, "Oh-oh-my-my, its-such-a-beautiful day" from an elevated perch. My farming father loved hearing that. That sparrow sings at any time of the day but gets its name from its evening hymns (vespers), "Listen to my evening sing-ing-ing-ing." I watched an eastern phoebe pursue flying insects I couldn't discern. My birdfeeders are locally owned and operated. LBJs filled the space below the seed dispensaries. Little Brown Jobs, including white-throated sparrows, song sparrows and chipping sparrows. I saw kinglet, sapsucker, bluebird, yellow-rumped warbler, bumblebee, butterfly, dragonfly and meadowlark nearby. After giving a bazillion talks, I've learned that no one who has heard a western meadowlark song ever forgets it.

I take in the feeders at night because of the rampaging and pillaging done by raccoons. Each morning, I return those feeders to their proper places. Blue jays magically appear to grab any peanuts I put out.

I saw red admiral butterflies the first week of April. They're named for the red-bar markings on their black upper wings. They have white in the upper corners of the forewings. The undersides of the wings, often visible when the butterfly perches, are mottled in brown, tan and black, with a pink band and white spotting on the forewing. Some red admirals migrate south in the fall, and others overwinter in the adult or pupal stage. The caterpillar host plants are from the nettle family, including stinging nettle and wood nettle. The adults feed on sap flows, fermenting fruit and bird droppings, visiting flowers when other foods are unavailable.

### MEETING ADJOURNED

"The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love."—William Wordsworth.



# In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

## Pleasant surprise leads to reflection on beauty

As I approached the front door of my house the other day, a light breeze came along the south-facing wall and brought me the scent of the hyacinths which are in full bloom there. Over time, I have managed to acquire a rainbow of colors—white, purple-blue, pink, almost-red—a scattering of daffodils provide yellow.

Those of you acquainted with hyacinths know how beautiful the scent is—and so rich it can actually be a bit too much if a pot of them is kept in a small room.

But there, outdoors, brought to me as a pleasant surprise by the breeze, it was an utter delight. I not only stood there, breathing deeply, for a few moments, I came back outside after my groceries were put away and breathed some more.

I also took a few moments to appreciate them—that is, to give them a close look, rather than the sweeping glance and quick statements of "Aren't they beautiful?" they had been getting so far this spring.

I think everyone who has spring bulbs knows at least three things about them: they arrive quickly, provide delight, and are finished as abruptly as they appeared—although I admit the cool weather we've been having seems to be keeping them

around longer than usual. It's as if they're in a giant refrigerator.

I had a chance to visit with Amber Ewert, who along with her husband, Scott, owns Country Blooms Greenhouse south of Janesville. Our interview took place in the greenhouse; throughout the conversation it felt to me as if the plants and flowers were leaning closer, trying to hear what we were saying about them. I don't mean in any spooky way—they were a presence behind us. Kind of like the hyacinths along my front wall, I felt an internal pressure to turn and appreciate them.

That reminds me of just before Valentine's Day, when I stopped by the Waseca Greenhouse, thinking the newspaper should have pictures of flowers in honor of the celebration. Owners Rick and Sheila Morris obliged me by stepping in among the forest of cut flowers being kept cool in their greenhouse.

Because I had surprised them with my request—or more accurately because the nature of my request evolved while I was there—they had to finish some small tasks before making themselves available. I encouraged them to take their time: there is no more pleasant place to wait than a space crowded with



A white Hyacinth in bloom.

flowers. The delight was tripled, of course, by the fact that it was well below freezing outside.

Given the many complications we all face in our day-to-day goings-on, I have to express my gratitude that

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently nature offers us, literally, chances to stop and smell the flowers. It is a privilege we overlook too often—food for thought next time you encounter a plant in bloom.

## I'm 21, I'm not a real adult yet



# To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

Sequence and Nertz.

My friends don't all know those games. My best friend plays Catan or the card game Hand and Foot with her family. Another plays what he calls Chinese poker. One didn't grow up playing games with his family.

So recently, now that we're seniors and have slightly more time on our hands (we're all 21), we've begun to play more games. It started with the classic drinking games of boom cup, ride the bus, king's cup, and cheers to the governor. Then they taught me real board games like Catan, and I taught them cribbage.

But some of those games are boring, so we've been exploring. It

started with the Game of Life. One time our game consisted of watching the movie "Trolls."

My father taught my family this past weekend an upgraded version of euchre that involved both jokers and a twist on the rules, and it was really fun. When our family first learned a board game recently, we didn't read the rules properly and ended up making our own way of playing that still worked.

How many times do we just take for granted the rules of the game and never think outside of the box? How many times do we do that in life?

I know I, for one, am a rule follower. So when someone else de-

cides not to do what is specified or doesn't follow the societal expectation, it makes me step back and realize that no, we don't have to do it that way just because we were told or expected to. We can do whatever we want and make up our own rules (to a limit—I'm not crazy).

But I like the concept that there are many opportunities to get creative that we just don't take advantage of. Or at least I don't take advantage of. Who knows, maybe there's a fun way to put a twist on some classic games like Chutes and Ladders, the Game of Life, Trouble, or Clue. But no one is touching my Princess Bride-Opoly.

My Determination: "You see us as you want to see us - in the simplest terms, in the most convenient definitions. You see us as a brain, an athlete, a basket case, a princess and a criminal. Correct? That's the way we saw each other at 7:00 this morning. We were brainwashed." - Brian Johnson, The Breakfast Club

### Easter



Miss South Central Teen Amaya Rath, Miss Waseca County Sleigh & Cutter Paige Johnson and Miss Owatonna Jasmin Kotek were all present for the funny and sunny Easter Egg Hunt at Clear Lake Park on Saturday, April 20, 2025.



## WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

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

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**Waldorf Petal Pushers plant sale**  
**Waldorf Community Center Sat. May 10**  
The Waldorf Petal Pushers plant sale will be held from 8-11 a.m. Saturday, May 10 at the Waldorf Community Center. Available will be bedding plants, house plants, succulents, perennials and much more.

**JWP Band Concert for students in grades 5 to 7, 6 p.m. Monday, May 12**  
JWP band students in grades 5 to 7 will present their spring concert in the school auditorium beginning at 6 p.m. on Monday, May 12.

**JWP Band Concert for students in grades 8 to 12, 7 p.m. Monday, May 12**  
JWP band students in grades 8 to 12 will present their spring concert in the school auditorium beginning at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 12.

**Waseca Junior High School spring vocal concert 7 p.m. Monday, May 12**  
The Waseca Junior High vocal department will present its spring concert beginning at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 12 in the Junior/Senior High School performing arts center.

**JWP Fine Arts Awards 7 p.m. Wed., May 14**  
The JWP Fine Arts awards ceremony will be 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 14 in the high school auditorium.

**Waseca High School Vocal Concert 7 p.m. May 19**  
Students in grades 9 to 12 will present a high school vocal concert at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 19 in the Waseca high school performing arts center.

**JWP Choir Concert for grades 7 to 12, 7 p.m. Monday, May 19**  
Students in grades 7 to 12 will be featured in a vocal concert to be presented in the JWP school auditorium beginning at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 19.

**JWP Academic Awards, scholarship celebration 7 p.m. May 21**  
Those JWP students who have earned academic awards or been selected to receive scholarships will be honored during a ceremony in the JWP auditorium which begins at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 21.

**JWP Graduation 6 p.m. Friday, May 23**  
The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton school district ceremony for the graduating class of 2025 will be at the school beginning at 6 p.m. Friday, May 23. The last academic day for younger students will be Thursday, May 29.

# A Legacy of Leadership: Penny Retires from SMIF

**By ANN STALOCH**  
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) President and CEO Tim Penny was celebrated by more than 500 community members, colleagues, and admirers on Thursday evening at Mineral Springs Brewery in Owatonna. After 18 years at the helm of SMIF and a lifetime of public service, Penny announced his retirement, marking the end of an era for the foundation and the region he has championed for decades.

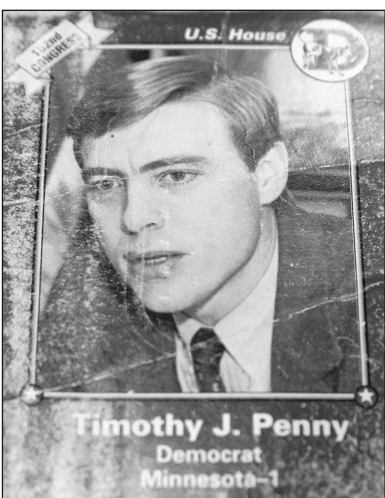
Guests gathered to toast his legacy with libations from MSB and fare from Hy-Vee and Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm, a local business widely recognized as a success story of SMIF support. Among those in attendance were family, friends, former colleagues, entrepreneurs, and many who had been directly impacted by Penny's work. But the truth was, nearly everyone there would call themselves a fan of Tim.

Penny, who served as a U.S. Congressman from Minnesota's 1st District from 1983 to 1995 before leading SMIF, is widely credited for strengthening economic opportunity and community vitality in the region. Under his leadership, SMIF invested over \$170 million into southern Minnesota, with initiatives spanning from early childhood development to rural entrepreneurship.

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, reflected on Penny's career: "He was like a boy-wonder when he came into Congress, he was willing to be different. Tim Penny is the guardian angel of Southern Minnesota."

Representative Brad Finstad also recognized Penny's retirement on the floor of the House, honoring his dedication to local economies and the people he served: "His departure leaves behind enormous shoes to fill, but also a legacy of service that will long be remembered."

Penny, always humble and known



**102ND CONGRESS - A congressional baseball card from the early 90s portaying Tim Penny, representative of Minnesota's First District.**

for his deep emotional connection to the communities he served, struggled to hold back tears during his brief address to the crowd. "I don't want to make this any longer than it needs to be, so... um, thank you," he said through a cracked smile, earning a heartfelt ovation from the audience.

The evening also featured touching tributes from Penny's children. His daughter Molly shared, "Throughout my life, I never tire of people coming up to me and telling me what an amazing, honest and good man my dad is. I know how lucky I am, and I'm grateful to have been able to share him with Southern Minnesota."

His son Marcus added, "I know it's hard for my dad to step down from this work. I think he would have stayed with SMIF forever if that were possible. His love for this region really got to shine. But that's what makes this fund so special, his legacy in Southern Minnesota will continue forever."

That fund is the Tim Penny Small Towns Fund, a giving option through



**Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar embraces Tim Penny after delivering a speech during Penny's retirement part.**  
Photo by Ann Staloch

"He was like a boy-wonder when he came into Congress, he was willing to be different. Tim Penny is the guardian angel of Southern Minnesota."  
— Senator Amy Klobuchar

SMIF created in honor of Penny's retirement; "giving to it is common cents." The fund ensures ongoing support for initiatives that matter most to the rural communities Penny has devoted his life to, economic development, community vitality, and investing in the next generation.

Tim Penny's retirement is not just the closing of a chapter, it is a call to continue the work he so passionately advanced. As Penny himself has often said, "Leadership isn't about titles, it's about making a difference." And in southern Minnesota, his difference will be felt for generations.

# Clinton Rogers acknowledged by League of Minnesota Cities

**By DEB BENTLY**  
News Editor

Janesville city administrator Clinton Rogers was greeted by a pleasant surprise when two leaders of the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) arrived during the April 14 meeting of the Janesville city council.

Those two were Luke Fischer, president of the LMC board of directors, and Justin Miller, LMC board member and city administrator for Lakeville.

According to Fischer, the LMC provides support, training and advocacy for the elected and appointed leaders of cities across the state, ranging from small to large and located both in and outside the metropolitan complex.

The organization works under the leadership of 17 board members who typically serve three-year terms; Rogers was visited and publicly thanked because he will be finishing his four-year service as a board member this July.

Fischer explains the lengthened term occurred because Rogers was "willing to step up and take a leadership role" when another board member had to leave prematurely.

Rogers has been the Janesville city administrator since 2001; the city has been a member of LMC all that time. He tells of always having valued the useful services and support the League provides, including

offering training to help bring city employees in nearly every department up to speed on procedures, policies and practices.

He describes how the LMC allows city leaders opportunities for collaboration and how the organization helps guide new initiatives. As a light-hearted example, he offers that a city looking to implement new policies concerning animals kept within city limits can contact the League for examples in use elsewhere. "That way we get an idea of what has worked for others and can consider whether it will work for us," Rogers explains.

He says he is also grateful for the work of the organization's lobbyists—staff members who keep an eye on trends and actions at the state legislature and make certain state leaders know how municipal governments will be affected by various proposed laws and decisions.

He mentions there are organizations similar to the LMC in every state, and Minnesota's is regarded nationwide as being one of the best organized and run.

Thanks to the value of the organization, Rogers says he was glad to be of help when a "replacement" board member was needed. When that term was completed, he was glad to con-

Rogers continued on 7



**Janesville city administrator Clinton Rogers was recently honored by the League of Minnesota Cities for his dedicated service on the state-wide organization's board of directors.**

## WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

# County sells land, buys vehicles

**By DEB BENTLY**  
News Editor

During their April 15 meeting, Waseca County commissioners voted 4 to 1 to sell a county-owned 30-acre parcel of land located near Janesville for \$2,500. Sometimes referred to as "Smith's Mill Park," the property was given to the county via a quit claim deed in 1965. It has been ineligible for any form of development because it is "landlocked," that is, completely surrounded by privately owned land, in addition to being bordered on two sides by county drainage ditches.

County facilities director Brian Tomford informed board members that, because of the landlocked status, the acreage could be sold only to one of the six adjoining property owners. Requests for offers had previously been sent out twice, first giving a price of \$54,000, later requesting bids. No responses had been received.

In reply to commissioner questions, Tomford noted the land consists of woods and some wetlands, and the proposed sale agreement includes a covenant the land is to remain in its current state.

When board chair Doug Christopherson stated his belief it would be better to retain the land under county ownership than to sell it for the low price of \$2,500 recently offered by landowners Mike and John Schuch, board member De Malterer, who represents the district and has attended meetings where the matter has been discussed, said "The township is anxious to see that property back in private hands." She explained a public cartway controlled by the township occasionally causes members of the public to behave as if there is access to the parcel; when they use it, they inevitably trespass on private land.

Commissioners speculated the Schuchs have full access to the land in its current status, and would be taking on assessments for the two county ditches once they own the property.

"The greatest value they would get in paying for something they can already use for free," speculated commissioner Brad Milbrath, "is trying to reduce the likelihood people will trespass on their privately owned property to gain access to the publicly owned piece."

After lengthy discussion, a motion to accept the \$2,500 bid was passed.

Commissioners voted in support of purchasing three Ford Explorer vehicles from Deml Ford for a total price of \$137,000.

County Sheriff Jay Dulas explained the vehicles are to be rotated into the sheriff's department fleet of 17 patrol cars, with the retired vehicles being offered for sale to the public via the department web page; he cautioned, however, they are not likely to appear there until

County continued on 4

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■ Recover  
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remove only “small” items—apparently nothing bigger than could be carried by a single person.

Electric power to all units had been severed when the east wall fell. According to Markeson, tenants of all 7 apartments originally signed up for a time slot, but on April 16 only 3 apartments were visited. According to Markeson, no other access days are scheduled.

Tenants report having left nearly everything behind on April 2 when they were evacuated suddenly, then permitted brief access to retrieve essential personal items after a structural engineer had examined the building: items considered essential included medications, pets, and some items of clothing and personal care.

Many of the residents have been living in hotel rooms acquired for them by MN Prairie human services, the American Red Cross, or other philanthropic agencies. Most have been told they should find more permanent housing by the end of April.

Mariah Sleeuwenhoek, 28, had lived in one of the apartments for about two years. She shared the space with her brother and 2-year-old son. She describes having seen the structural problems from the inside and being certain the wall would fall, even though the landlord issued assurances everyone was safe.

She happened to be outside the day the wall fell, and says she felt immediate fear for everyone inside, including her brother who was upstairs in the apartment. Her son, luckily, was at daycare at the time. Sleeuwenhoek noted tenants immediately began to check on each other and make sure everyone got out safely. Still, “It was one of the scariest moments of my life,” she recalls.

Sleeuwenhoek stated that, when she learned of the opportunity to fetch her belongings, she gathered “the most important people” in her life and asked for their ideas about how to make the best use of the 30 minutes allowed. She says they considered some of the obstacles—including potentially dusty air and the absence of lighting—and came up with solutions which included masks and head-mounted flashlights. Each group member took charge of a selected room; bags, boxes and laundry baskets were decided upon as the best containers.

Since Sleeuwenhoek’s apartment had an exterior window, and since going up and down stairs was a very labor intensive element of the process, one planner suggested it would save time and effort to drop any suitable belongings out the second-story window. About 10 garbage-sized bags containing fabric items and some toys were sent out that way.

Irretrievable, to Sleewenhoek’s chagrin, were a number of recently purchased pieces of furniture, including a bedroom set and a kitchen table.

On April 16, the group arrived with a pickup truck, a trailer, and a number of vehicles. More than five people came, but a couple waited outside to take containers as they were brought down and carry them to the vehicles. Tools were brought along to remove wall-mounted televisions.

Sleeuwenhoek expressed gratitude to her team of helpers for their “well-thought-out plan” and for their willingness to enter the building and carry her many possessions. She also thanked the Red Cross, MN Prairie, and her fellow tenants for the support they have provided.

Police Chief Markeson pointed out the city does not own the building at 115 S. State, but city agencies were willing to take part in the April 16 procedures to help accommodate the needs of the tenants and to ensure safe procedures were followed.

# Recognizing and responding when animals are in distress

By DEB BENTLY  
News Editor

Chasity Haslip, owner operator of Aspyr Acres farm animal rescue and an animal rescue and rehabilitation facility, shared information about how to recognize whether animals are truly in distress and so would benefit from human intervention. Her presentation was given to about 15 people who chose to attend her session during the Waseca Library’s “How-To Festival” on Saturday, April 12.

Haslip explained she receives many calls a day from individuals who have noticed animals—especially young ones—and feel an inclination to intervene.

“The first thing you need to know,” Haslip stated, “is that an animal is not ‘abandoned’ just because you can’t see its mother.

“If it can stay in the mother’s care, that’s best,” she went on to say. “So I may ask you for pictures of an animal before I agree to work with you in ‘rescuing’ it.”

Infant rabbits, known as “kits,” are an excellent example, she said, informing listeners that, after they have given birth, mother rabbits visit the nest only twice a day—at dawn and dusk. At that time, kits consume about 10 percent of their own body weight, and are able to wait 12 hours before nursing again.

“So it’s not a problem if you find a nest of kits and don’t see their mother anywhere around,” emphasized Haslip. “You’re not supposed to see her.”

If the nest is in an area where it might be disturbed by children or pets, Haslip suggested one way to protect it is to set an upside-down laundry basket over the top during the day and remove it late in the afternoon. If a kit has been removed, she said it is okay to simply set it back in the nest, assuming it is not injured.

“If it is injured, then it’s probably time to intervene,” she said. A visible wound and the presence of insects are important indicators. “Somehow, those bugs just know when something bad is happening,” she said.

If human intervention is called for, Haslip warned, “Whether we’re talking about a bird or a small animal, it can’t tell the difference between being handled by someone who wants to help it, or by an eagle that plans to eat it.”

She said there have been plenty of times when people transporting animals for “rescue” have been dismayed to find they died en route, even though they were being handled or held gently.

Another time people feel tempted to help is when they see a young bird not yet capable of flight hopping around on their yard and chirping.

“This is another time when things are following their natural course,” Haslip explained. The young bird is large enough to leave the nest, but is still being cared for by an adult; the chirping is its way of letting the adult know where it is—not an indication of distress.

In stark contrast to young rabbits, birds eat every 10 to 15 minutes. “The adult birds have time for that,” Haslip observed lightheartedly. “I have too much on my plate to be feeding baby birds every minute of the day.” Based on this, she again emphasized humans should interfere only when the animal is truly in distress.

For anyone who finds a featherless baby bird with its eyes still closed, Haslip suggested there would likely be a nest nearby from which the bird had fallen. She said the parents will still care for and feed the bird even if it had been touched by humans, but cautioned handling should be kept to a minimum.

She also mentioned it is possible to put displaced chicks in a “foster”



Trained animal rescue caretaker Chasity Haslip, who also operates Aspyr Acres Wildlife Rehabilitation and Farm Sanctuary, shared information about how to tell when young animals are truly in distress and when it is best to simply let them be during the how-to festival at the Waseca Library. Here, she showed people listening to her presentation four types of eggs: chicken, duck, goose, and emu. Pioneer photo by Deb Bentley

“It’s not a problem if you find a nest of kits and don’t see their mother anywhere around. You’re not supposed to see her.” — Chasity Haslip

nest—as long as it is about the same age and size as the others, the adults will care for it.

Again, the presence of a visible injury or swarming insects is an indication the chick may need to be brought in for care.

In contrast to rabbits, Haslip mentioned a baby squirrel found on the ground should be watched closely. She says its mother may be able to return it to the nest, but may not know where it is. If a baby squirrel remains alone for an extended time, it is fairly likely it requires rescue.

The case for unfeathered ducklings is the same. Haslip explained if a mother duck is walking a line of hatchlings and one of them becomes separated, she will not come back for it. If it becomes trapped in a window well or other hollow, she has no means to help it escape and will leave it behind. Once out of the nest, ducks do not return to it, but spend their time moving around their environment feeding, sometimes in the water, sometimes on land.

For people who may come across a young deer fawn, Haslip said chances are good it is where it should be. Fawn are trained to stay motionless to avoid catching the attention of predators, so simply because the deer is not moving is no sign of distress.

Key indicators of trouble, she shared, are the presence of swarming insects and if the tips of the ears are curled upward. Curled ears indicate dehydration, she explained, which would be a clue the fawn had not recently had a chance to nurse.

After presenting her informational talk, Haslip invited attendees to visit Aspyr Acres. She mentioned there are more than 50 animals visitors can interact with.

The animal rescue side of Aspyr Acres, however, is not open to visitors, since the animals being cared for there are meant to return to the wild, and should not become acclimated to human presence. She mentioned her facility is part of a network which divides different types of animals out based on where they can be best cared for, so animals brought to her may stay on the grounds or may be transported, depending on circumstances. When animals she cares for are mature enough, she releases them in suitable settings.

People who want to learn more about Aspyr Acres can visit her Facebook page; those with animals potentially in need of rescue can reach Haslip on her cell phone, 507-461-2108.

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sometime this fall, when the new vehicles have arrived and the needed equipment has been transferred and installed.

It is because of the need to transfer equipment that the department consistently purchases the same vehicle model, he explained.

Dulas also reported dash cameras and body cameras which were ordered recently have not yet all been delivered. Staff training on the use of body cameras is scheduled for May 6.

Board members heard a 45-minute summary of the South Country Health Alliance 2024 annual report. Executive director Leota Lind and chief financial officer Scott Shulman reported the agency received a “clean, unmodified audit opinion.”

South Country describes itself on its website as “a county-based purchasing health plan serving seven Minnesota counties—Brown, Dodge, Goodhue, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha and Waseca—in a joint effort to support accessible, quality health care through partnerships with community services and local health care providers for Minnesota health care program enrollees.”

Among other information, the two presenters reported the agency is seeing increased costs because of mental health needs, chemical dependency needs, and rapidly expanding use of GLP-1 weight loss medication prescriptions.



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Image displays a newly completed grass waterway that was built with the assistance of Waseca SWCD.

# Controlling erosion in Waseca County

As many of us have heard for most of our lives, March comes in like a lion and out like lamb. It seems that this year March came in like a lion and out like lion, with snowfall at both the beginning and end of the month. There was more snow at in March than we’ve had all winter. With or without snow, winter can be harsh on bare soils in rural Waseca County. For most of this winter we saw minimal snow, cold temperatures, and days that were very windy. This may be the perfect storm for invisible soil loss caused by high wind speeds. You may not notice the soil when it leaves but you will notice when it is gone.

Soil is one of the key components to having a successful yield. It is filled with micro-organisms and essential nutrients that can be beneficial in supporting plant life and agriculture as a whole. Heavy tillage, reduction of organic matter, and leaving the soil bare can speed up the loss of soil on agricultural lands. In addition to operational practices, soil often gets blown or washed away after expedited snow melt or extreme weather.

Luckily, there are many conservation practices that can help keep your soil in place.

Waseca Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) financially and technically supports landowners completing projects that conserve soil on their land. This could range anywhere from planting a cover crop after harvest of a cash crop or a structural practice like a grassed waterway.

If you have been frustrated with an area on your field where water continually concentrates and creates gully erosion during heavy rains, it could be suitable area for a conservation practice. Repairs of problem areas like this can be costly and timely to manage over the years. A grassed waterway could be a good option to help solve a problem like this.

Grassed waterways are channels planted with a perennial cover that carries runoff and sediment at a slower rate to prevent erosion on farm fields. Grassed waterways can be paired with filter strips to prevent additional nutrients and soils to run off into neighboring streams or ditches. Not only does a grassed water-

way benefit the area that it is constructed on but the field as a whole. It directs water in a way that works with the land, not fight against it.

Another practical solution to erosion is planting cover crops after harvest or interseeding them into a standing cash crop. Cover crops can create a shielding blanket over the soil that provides many practical benefits. For many people the primary benefit is reducing erosion. For others it may be increasing organic matter, increasing water infiltration, suppressing weeds, or other personal benefits. Cereal Rye can be particularly beneficial for reducing erosion because it has an extensive root system that can help in stabilizing the soil. It is also a winter hardy plant, if planted in the fall it will continually grow the next spring as well, as conditions allow. Cereal Rye is just one of many different types of cover crops that can be helpful in reducing erosion, depending on your operation needs.

Of course, adopting any new practice requires commitment and patience, especially when it involves erosion. Waseca SWCD may be able to assist in alleviating some of the financial and technical burdens of adopting or installing a new practice. Waseca SWCD can connect you to cost share programs that will help in reducing some of the financial burdens to the practice application. As well as provide landowners with engineering assistance customized to your land.

While some people may be ready to commit to something new, others may need some time to educate themselves and learn before they are willing to commit to a new practice or install a structural project. Waseca SWCD can be here to support you regardless of the capacity needed. We can also connect interested individuals to educational events and resources.

Adopting a conservation practice that helps prevent erosion will lead to long term benefits that help you and your farm be productive and resilient in a changing world. Maintaining your soil and land now will be part of the key to sustaining your legacy for years to come.

## Inaugural National Home Visiting Week is April 21-25

### Impact on maternal and child health outcomes

The first-ever National Home Visiting Week takes place April 21-25, an observance to celebrate and recognize home visitors and the positive impact they make on maternal and child health outcomes.

Home visiting connects pregnant and parenting families with young children to trained family support professionals who provide customized coaching and guidance through pregnancy and the early stages of a child’s development. Utilizing a variety of evidence-based models, home visiting supports healthy birth outcomes, increases family self-sufficiency and helps children enter school fully prepared to succeed.

At Waseca County Public Health, our Family Home Visiting serves to support young families at no cost. Our programs are completely voluntary and best served when we can enroll prenatally. Some of the activities families can expect from these services are re-

viewing developmental milestones, making positive family memories, and exploring your questions through the parenting journey.

In 2023, more than 280,000 families engaged in home visiting services across the U.S. Organizations throughout the country are celebrating National Home Visiting by sharing their services on social media and other digital channels.

“Our family home visiting program is invaluable in the early years of parenting,” says Healthy Families Minnesota South Central Counties Home Visiting Program Manager, Liz Heimer. “In 2024, 100% of our families shared that they are more confident that they can do a good job raising their child due to being part of Healthy Families.”

For more information or to make a referral or self-referral, please email Sam Holicky at sam.holicky@waseca-county.gov or call our office at 507-835-0685 to inquire about Family Home Visiting.



Stacy Weichert shared information with a group about how to harvest seeds from a dried flower head and preserve them for future use. Hers was among the sixteen topics covered in a four-hour time slot from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

## Waseca Library How To Festival ‘delivers knowledge

By DEB BENTLY  
News Editor

About 70 people took advantage of the 16 presentations offered at the Waseca Library the morning of Saturday, April 12. Sessions included an ambitious range of topics, from writing poetry, making crafts, bike repair, making a budget, and more.

According to Waseca Librarian Afton Finley, the how-to event is sponsored by the members of the “Friends of the Library” organization, many of whom give volunteer time to keep the day running smoothly. The “festival” began in 2015. Preparations typically begin four to five months in advance. She says ideas for topics are solicited from those who attend the event and complete evaluations, as well as from library staff members. “Once we figure out what topics would interest attendees, I start looking around to see if someone in the community has expertise in that area,” she explains.

Sessions are all free to attend. They are about 30 minutes long, with four topics covered at a time, each in different areas of the library. Some attendees stay for all four sessions, according to Finley.

The schedule for the April 12 event was designed to offer something for attendees of all ages, including crafts suitable for young children and teenagers as well as adults. Some came for the full 10

a.m. to 1 p.m. time frame; others chose to attend for the sake of one or two specific topics, Finley observes. A light lunch was served between the third and fourth time blocks.

Nearly 40 people attended a session on the topic of sourdough baking presented by Christa Wadepammer of Barefoot Lane MN, by far the highest single number of Saturday’s events, said Finley. Fairly large groups which included a mixture of adults and children took part in some of the craft projects.

Feedback offered on evaluation forms is overwhelmingly positive, Finley shares.

She mentions she was very pleased with the April 12 turnout: “With so many things going on in the community on Saturday, I wasn’t sure how many people would be able to attend.”

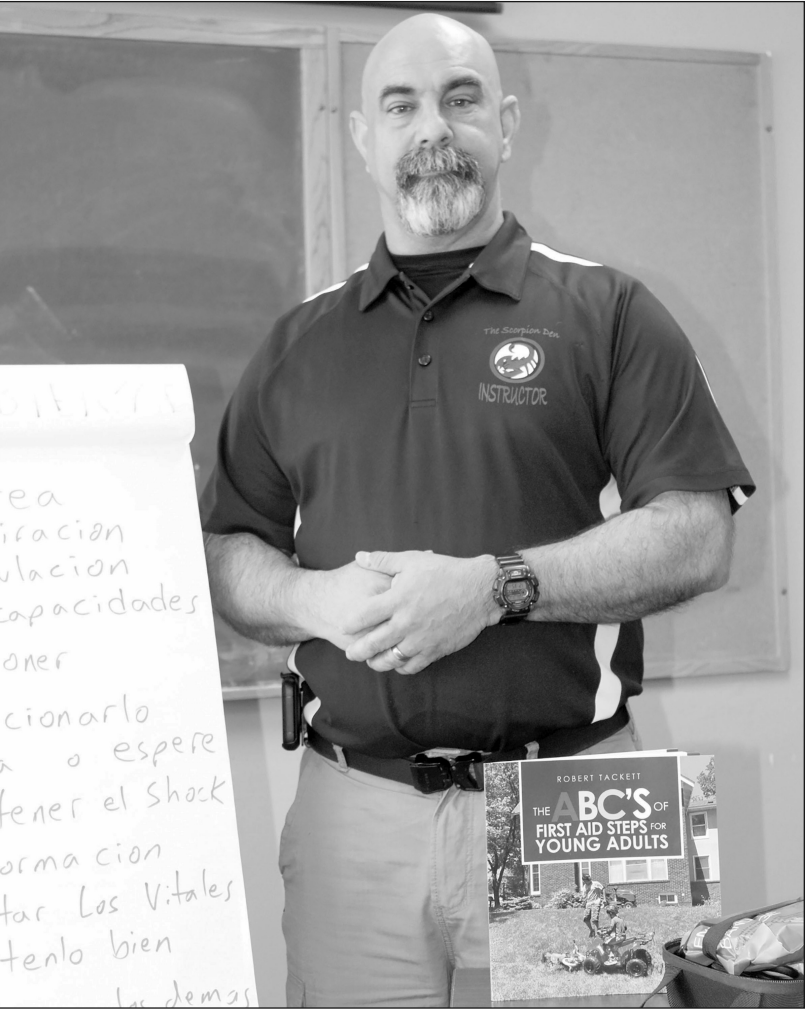
Somewhat surprisingly, “We had more people who came in throughout the day to attend sessions than in other years.”

In addition to any listed above, crafts taught at the event included “punch needle,” clay flowers, wooden cross stitch, mother’s day cards, sock hand puppets, and quilled paper.

Informational topics included preserving seeds, helping wildlife, first aid, preparing for an emergency, improving gut health, and downloading electronic books or audio.



Patrick Berg and his daughter Lileth, 5, worked together to create a “quilled paper cactus” during the how-to festival at the Waseca Library on April 12. Pioneer photos by Deb Bently



Robert Tackett of Waseca's Scorpion's Den shared the "ABCs of first aid" with people attending the Waseca Library's how-to event on April 12. He started, however, with the "Four Cs": Check the scene for safety; Call 9-1-1 for an emergency or to summon help; Care for the injured or compromised individual(s); Control what you can, including delegating tasks such as fetching a first aid kit, AED or other necessary items.



Clinical dietician Anne Harguth was among the "how-to" presenters at the Waseca library on Saturday, April 12.



Maggie Biegert worked with a group to help them learn how to write a haiku poem; her session was among those offered at the Waseca Library's "how-to festival" on Saturday, April 12.

## WCEM gets five new members

By BEN REVERMANN  
Staff writer

After an intense simulated tornado strike, five Waseca County residents completed their emergency response certifications, allowing them to be even more effective volunteers with the county team. Helping were 14 Rasmussen nursing students who took the roles of victims. The April 14 simulation was the final element of 27 hours of training which had been spread out over the past few months and covered topics such as fire safety, assessing and treating injuries and shock, search and rescue operations and disaster psychology. The five new members join the county’s already existing team, bringing the number to about 20.

Completing their training last week were Issac Roberts, Erica Forsythe, Traci and Dave Hodgkins and Amy Straube. All five earned their certifications by attending six different classes offered by the Waseca County Department of Emergency Management, headed by Denise Wright. The purpose of CERT training, according to program literature, is to prepare team members with the knowledge and skills needed to help the community in a time of tragedy. Other programs offered through the emergency management office are SKYWARN severe

weather spotter training; Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES); and the Sheriff’s Posse. The team’s experience and expertise are a county-wide effort to spread the readiness of those who are in the know, with the stated mission: “Help the most people in the shortest amount of time.”

The city of Waseca’s public safety building was used for the simulated emergency. In the fire station, the lights were out and the “bodies” of Rasmussen students were scattered everywhere. For the mock drill, a tornado was announced by retired registered nurse Vicki Neidt, who’s had forty years of experience in the medical field. She read, “A tornado was spotted and has touched ground in northeast Waseca, it went straight east to Clear Lake.” With injuries reported, the lifesavers got their hard hats on and their dayglow, green neon vests and entered the dark scene.

The students were under pallets, on top of each other or just lying on the floor. A pregnant/hysterical woman was screaming about her husband. Some of the students were obviously meant to be assessed as deceased: those were marked with a dark metal twist tie. A red twist tie meant the individual was in critical condition; a yellow one indicated the person was



Rasmussen nursing student Greta Finstad was a “victim” during the final session of the Waseca County Emergency Rescue Training course on Tuesday, April 15. Here, course participants Amy Straube and Traci and Dave Hodgkins practice what they learned in the classroom while responding to a mock disaster--the aftermath of a tornado--inside the Waseca Fire Hall.

injured and in need of help. Those who were “walking but injured” were indicated with green. Some were lying in well-lit areas, some were in areas that were pitch black and had to be found. On each of the rescuer’s hats was an LED flashlight so they could see in the dark without assistance. Some of the students were calling out for help, others were quiet. The goal of assessing the victims, Neidt explained, is to establish who can be saved and who is already gone. Cheri Brummund, administrative assistant for the Waseca Soil and Water Conservation District, was on hand serving in a supervisory role, she said, “No one wants to make

that call on the dead and the dying and then move on, but it has to be done, as unpleasant as it is.”

There was action as the five member group started barking orders. Dave and Amy Hodgkins helped to gather people for stretchers. Erica Forsythe was asking a woman, “Can you hear me?” and told her “Just stay here, help is on the way.”

At the end of the night, all five students gathered their certificates of completion. This will be the tenth year for the Waseca County CERT. There will be another opportunity to become an emergency management member in the fall.



The Pastor's Column

The Valley of Disappointment

By Rick Wulf  
Christ Community Church, Waseca

I don't know if you've ever felt it. That emptiness that sometimes follows a major event. It doesn't matter whether the event was joyful, exciting, or even tragic or disappointing—the adrenaline fades, the room gets quiet, and suddenly you're in emotional turmoil. The world keeps spinning on its axis, but something inside us seems to stop. That mountaintop moment is over, and you find yourself in the valley. What now?

This feeling—this sense of let-down—can show up in many different ways in our life. After weddings or graduations, after joyous holiday celebrations or family events, or after delivering a long-awaited performance or crossing a finish line marked out months ago. This letdown can be particularly hard after a funeral, or a long battle with an illness and you aren't cured. There's a quiet that can come, even a question mark in our hearts. Was that it? Is that all there is?

This is very normal human experience. The good news is you're not alone. The Bible gives us a window into this emotional experience through Jesus' disciples in the days surrounding the crucifixion and the resurrection. If you grew up in church at all, you know how the disciples left everything to follow Jesus. They had followed Him so completely for three years. They experienced His miracles and His teaching. He stirred their souls. They were fully committed to the fact that He had changed their lives, that He was the Messiah, the One to usher in the Kingdom of God.

But then, on Good Friday, they saw their world fall apart. Jesus was arrested, mocked, beaten, and crucified. They saw Him face public shame, and in excruciating pain, die on a cross as a criminal. In their minds, this looked like failure, even a betrayal. Could they even really trust God? They had put their hope in Jesus, but now that hope seemed to live in the valley of disappointment.

Remember the two followers were walking on the road to Emmaus? As they walked with hearts full of disappointment, they said, "We had hoped He was the One who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). Read that again. We had hoped—these three words speak volumes. Hope wasn't just lost; it was past tense. Hope had once existed, but now it was gone. In the matter of moments, their world had changed forever.

They were living in the tension of hope and letdown. In the valley of disappointment between Friday and Sunday. They had authentic hope in Jesus...and very real questions. Were the past 3 years a waste? How could God allow this? Their questions were real, raw, and relevant. Questions born out of heartbreak and hurt, love and loss.

This part of the resurrection story is so relatable, because this tension is our human experience. Let's remember, the disciples weren't anxiously awaiting in suspense for Jesus to rise, popcorn boxes in hand, counting down to the Sunday morning show. In fact, they were hiding, mourning, might

I even say, doubting. In John 20, we find the disciples behind a locked door, fearfully wondering what went wrong, wondering what

they are going to do next. They were in the valley of disappointment—the space between death and life, between despair and hope. Between what they hoped God was going to do and what He was actually going to do. Is that where you live?

Maybe you've endured seasons when you feel like God has let you down. Maybe you prayed for healing, but it never came. Maybe you trusted someone who hurt you, perhaps badly. Maybe you built something that crumbled to ruin. I have. And I know how it feels to walk in silent disappointment, much like those 2 disciples walking to Emmaus. Would I ever experience the joy I once had before the disappointment set in? What the disciples weren't able to see, while walking on that road—and what we often forget in our own letdown moments—is that God wasn't done.

Behind the scenes, God had already put the resurrection plan into motion. The stone was already rolled away; the disciples just hadn't seen it yet. And for those two on the road, the risen Jesus was walking the same road, about to reveal Himself. They just needed to look past their disappointment. We're not sure why they didn't recognize Jesus, but their hearts burned with the desire to see Him. When they turned their disappointment to excitement, and their confusion gave way to clarity, they saw Him. And in the very normal, everyday act of breaking bread together, hope returned. In the sharing of the bread and the cup, Jesus was revealed. In a matter of moments, their world had changed forever—this time for the good.

That's the miracle of the resurrection. Our resurrection God is at work, even when we can't see it. Saturday's silence doesn't mean God's abandonment. Sometimes the most holy transformation happens in the waiting. Truth be told, sometimes resurrection only happens in the valley of the shadow of death. So, that letdown, that low, that heartbreak you feel after that big (or small) event, isn't failure. Maybe it's a holy moment. Maybe it's an opportunity for God to meet you not on the mountaintop, but in the valley. Not with the flashy, but with His quiet presence. A place where we release our expectations in order to encounter something deeper—A God who shows up, even in our valleys.

Easter isn't just a celebration of an empty tomb. It's also a reminder for every moment that we feel stuck in our valley. We will often find ourselves between pain and promises, between Good Fridays and Resurrection Sundays. Our faith often is showed most visibly in our tragedies, not in our triumphs; not in the answered questions, but in the yet-to-be answered. Even in those moments, Jesus walks with us.

So, if you find yourself in that post-event low, in the valley after the mountaintop, know that you're in good company. And you're not forgotten. He is with you, and He is for you.



From left: Mikhail Rostislavovich, Kristie Biehn, Colin Worke, Larry Johnson, Justin and Bri Lehrke, Amy Potter, and Jodi Thompson.

Bin Pro joins Waseca Chamber

WASECA, MN — The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to welcome Bin Pro Dumpster Rental as its newest member, marking a milestone in the growth of a company rooted in faith, family, and community service.

What began as a leap of faith in May 2018 has grown into a trusted, dependable operation. The Lehrke family entered the dumpster rental industry with the purchase of Herold Rolloff's modest, local business with a single truck and 50 dumpsters. But for the Lehrkes, this was more than a business opportunity. It was a calling.

Just over a year later, Justin Lehrke, the eldest son, stepped into leadership, bringing with him a

teachable spirit, unwavering work ethic, and a deep-rooted faith. Together with his wife, Bri, and inspired by their daughters—Aubriella, Rossilynn, and Everleigh—Justin has transformed Bin Pro into a company that now operates five trucks and manages over 95 dumpsters, proudly serving southern Minnesota from its Janesville headquarters, with branches in Mankato and now Medford.

"We're proud to have Bin Pro Dumpster Rental join our Chamber family," said Mikhail Rostislavovich, President of the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce. "Their commitment to customer satisfaction and community impact aligns perfectly with our mission to support local

businesses and foster economic growth."

Kristie Biehn, Ambassador Chair, shared her enthusiasm: "It's always a pleasure to welcome businesses that are passionate about serving their communities. Bin Pro brings not only a valuable service to the area, but also the heart and integrity that comes from being family-owned."

At Bin Pro, faith is more than words; it's a way of life. The team shows up with integrity, treats customers with kindness and respect, and delivers promises with transparency. With no hidden fees or fine print, Bin Pro is committed to making roll-off dumpster rentals simple, honest, and hassle-free for contrac-

tors, homeowners, and businesses alike.

Led by full-time drivers Lyle Sellers III and Logan Johnson, the Bin Pro team is known for reliability, professionalism, and a can-do attitude that customers appreciate and trust. The company is also proud to be fully licensed and bonded in Waseca, Blue Earth, Le Sueur, and Steele Counties.

As the business continues to grow, so does the team. Bin Pro is always seeking individuals who value hard work, integrity, and community—those who want more than a job, but a place where they're treated like family.

Local organizations unite to support Waseca Food Shelf

WASECA, MN – In a powerful show of community spirit, Waseca's Exchange Club, Lions Club, Masonic Lodge and Rotary Club joined forces during March Food Share Month to raise critical funds and food for the Waseca Area Food Shelf. Their collaborative efforts resulted in an impressive \$12,075 raised and 197 pounds of food collected, helping ensure that no family in Waseca goes without access to nutritious meals.

Representatives from each organization gathered to present the donation to the food shelf, reinforcing their shared commitment to helping neighbors in need.

March is Minnesota FoodShare Month, a statewide campaign that brings attention to food insecurity and challenges communities to step up. Waseca's civic organizations did just that.

"This donation is a testament to what happens when people come together with a common purpose," said Cindy Kolander, Executive Director

of the Waseca Area Food Shelf. "These funds will go directly toward purchasing nutritious food for local families, and we're deeply grateful for the continued support from our civic partners."

Each organization played a key role in collecting donations and spreading awareness.

Amy Potter and Cassie Meister, Co-Presidents of the Waseca Rotary Club, noted, "Service above self is more than a motto—it's a mindset. Supporting the food shelf is one of the ways we invest in the health of our entire community."

Diane Beckmann, President of the Waseca Lions Club, added, "Hunger impacts people of all ages. As Lions, we're proud to contribute to solutions right here in Waseca."

Mikhail Rostislavovich, representing both the Waseca Exchange Club and the Waseca Masonic Lodge, shared, "This partnership shows how much more we can do when we work together. Charity, compassion, and community are at the heart of both



Representatives from the Waseca Rotary Club, Lions Club, Exchange Club, Masonic Lodge, and the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism present a donation to the Waseca Area Food Shelf as part of the March Food Share Month campaign. Pictured (left to right): Cassie Meister, Amy Potter, Diane Beckmann, Mikhail Rostislavovich, Cindy Kolander, and Robin Dulas.

organizations, and we're honored to support the food shelf's vital mission."

Robin Dulas, Executive Director of the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, remarked, "It was truly inspiring to see Waseca's civic groups come together in such a meaningful way. Their collaboration shows how united our

community is when it comes to taking care of one another."

The check presentation took place at the Waseca Area Food Shelf, where volunteers work tirelessly year-round to fight hunger. The funds and pounds of donated food will go a long way in keeping the shelves stocked and the community nourished.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

|                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH</b><br>2200 4th St NE, Waseca<br>507-835-2235<br>Service times 9:30 a.m.                                                                                                       | <b>CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS</b><br>1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca<br>507-835-4640<br>Sacrament meeting 10:00 a.m.                                                                                                                              | <b>VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH</b><br>New Richland, Minnesota<br>Brian Schanil Pastor<br>Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship; 9 a.m. Sunday School<br>Tuesdays: The Shepherd's Robe Ministry, 1-3 p.m., 6-8 p.m.; Bonfires and Yard Games, 6 p.m. until dark | <b>Pastor Jason Wolter</b><br>Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship<br>Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:30 a.m. Worship                                                                                |
| <b>4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH</b><br>605 4th St NE, Waseca<br>507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker)<br>Worship Sundays 10 a.m.                                                                            | <b>GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH</b><br>1221 8th St SE, Waseca<br>507-835-2213<br>Sunday worship 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m.                                                                                                                                           | <b>ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH</b><br>New Richland, Minnesota<br>Father Glenn Ferichs<br>Friday - 10 a.m. on 1st, 3rd and 4th Fridays p.m.<br>Mass<br>Sunday - Mass at 8 a.m.                                                                            | <b>JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b><br>401 N. West St., Janesville<br>Pastor Kathy King<br>Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship                                                                                        |
| <b>FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b><br>801 4th Ave NE, Waseca<br>507-835-3167<br>Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m.                                                                                               | <b>CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY</b><br>900 14th Ave SE, Waseca<br>507-833-1082<br>Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m.                                                                                                        | <b>FIRST LUTHERAN</b><br>Missouri Synod<br>Waldorf, Minnesota<br>Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Larry Sipe<br>Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class                                                                              | <b>BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b><br>43089 180th St., Morristown<br>Pastor Kathy King<br>Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Summer worship hours, (10:45 a.m. Worship, winter)                                         |
| <b>CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>309 6th St NE, Waseca<br>507-835-9176<br>Worship Sundays traditional 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Sunday School/Fellowship; 10:45 a.m. contemporary service             | <b>ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>New Richland, Minnesota<br>Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor<br>Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School, Choir and Choir; 10:30 a.m. Worship<br>Monday - 1 p.m. Quilters<br>Wednesday - 7 p.m. Worship                  | <b>IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>Freedom Township<br>Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH</b><br>307 W. 2nd St., Janesville<br>10 a.m. - Mass                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca<br>507-833-1703<br>Sundays 9:00 a.m.                                                                                                            | <b>ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>Otisco, Minnesota<br>Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor<br>Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study<br>Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship                                                                                     | <b>ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST</b><br>Pastor Ava Adams-Morris<br>Waldorf, Minnesota<br>Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship                                                                                                                                         | <b>FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>300 Owen St., Janesville<br>Pastor Sarah Krolak                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH</b><br>503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca<br>507-835-4548 (office email: lcwaseca@hickory-tech.net)<br>Worship Sunday 10 a.m.                                                          | <b>TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>New Richland, Minnesota<br>Pastor Mary Iverson<br>Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee<br>Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting<br>Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting | <b>ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC</b><br>Waldorf, Minnesota<br>Father Brian Mulligan<br>Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship                                                                                                                                                  | <b>TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>Smiths Mill, Minnesota<br>Pastor Robert Harting<br>Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship<br>Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship                                                        |
| <b>GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>300 E Elm Ave, Waseca<br>507-835-1709<br>Worship Sunday 9 a.m.                                                                                                            | <b>LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>New Richland, Minnesota<br>Pastor Dan Kordahl<br>Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School<br>Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting                                                                               | <b>TRINITY LUTHERAN</b><br>Wilton Township<br>Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor<br>Sunday - 8 a.m. summer worship; 10:45 a.m. Worship starting Sept. 1                                                                                                            | <b>NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>ELCA<br>404 30 120th St., Waseca<br>Pastor Sarah Krolak<br>507-234-6463<br>Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship, Second Sunday "Young at heart"<br>Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. confirmation |
| <b>SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH</b><br>111 4th St NW, Waseca<br>Father Glenn Ferichs<br>507-835-1222<br>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. | <b>VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>New Richland, Minnesota<br>Pastor Dan Kordahl<br>Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship                                                                                                                                            | <b>THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS</b><br>Brad Donner, Branch President<br>Waseca, Minnesota<br>www.lds.org<br>Sunday - 10 a.m. Sacrament Mtg.; 11:20 a.m. Sunday School<br>Wednesday - 7 p.m. Youth Activities, ages 12-18             | <b>NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.</b>                                                                              |
| <b>REAL LIFE CHURCH</b><br>620 W Elm Ave, Waseca<br>507-607-8245<br>Sunday worship 10 a.m.                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH</b><br>412 N. Main Street, Janesville                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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Janesville

1925

- A rambler walked form the Vendome Hotel to Nicollet, less than half a block, and then despite the interminable traffic he continued on in a partially diagonal direction across the street, a hazardous undertaking. At this particular corner there is no traffic cop and no device for warning pedestrians as to where and when not to go. So Rambler took his life in his hands and after much dodging and swinging about here and there arrived at his destination, the Palace Clothing House, where a popular nephew, Mr. C. R. Richardson is located as salesman and where he found that delightful gentleman deeply immersed in the acquired art of hypnotizing a customer. The young man is a professional and he can do that sort of stunt to brown perfection.

- The large stock barn of the farm of James Eustice, several miles southeast of town in Alton burned to the ground Thursday. A corn crib was also destroyed. The fire originated from some unknown source about eleven forty-five in the forenoon. Before discovered it had made such progress as to render ineffective all efforts to save the property.

- The biennial session of the legislature is drawing to a close and so far but little has been accomplished. The one proposal where the people would all be- come beneficiaries is likely to be turned down, that of a reorganization of the state government. The opposition is based upon groundless considerations, mostly growing out of petty jealousy and the inherent tendency of the individual solon to consider himself too seriously. If he don't get what he wants he opposes everything anybody else wants. He will even oppose what is manifestly for the benefit of the people.

1950

- Combining the latest in the home building and construction field with the personal needs of the people who must live in the completed house, is the new home plan and remodeling service announced today by W. M. Sommer, manager of the Standard Lumber Company. Designed to meet the specific needs of the individual, the Standard Lumber Company's "Home Planning and Home Remodeling" service is available to all persons in this area, without cost, Sommer said.

- Bringing the ancient art of puppetry to Janesville, the Lasselli Marionettes, credited with having one of the most original and ingenious puppet shows in America, will present an entertainment at 8:30 a.m., Friday, March 31, in the high school auditorium. "Open Sesame!" are the magic words Ali Baba's brother forgets at a crucial moment in Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves which will be featured at this performance. Exciting moments of suspense and the heartwarming devotion of a servant girl make this modernized tale from the Arabian Nights enchanting to marionette lovers of all ages.

- Waseca County March of Dimes Chairman Lloyd R. Kelly was generous with praise this week for the large number of persons in Waseca County who made the 1950 campaign such a success. With the final reports all in, the total figures amounts to \$6,277.31, about \$200 more than last year's total, according to Mr. Kelly. "I want to thank everyone who took part in this very successful campaign," Kelly said, "for the Waseca County chapter of the March of Dimes. More than 200 persons in the county contributed their time and effort to making this drive the big success it was. They deserve a big pat on the back for their work."

1975

- For the past five years Alvin "Bubby" Johns has been slowly going blind. At first his eyes just bothered him and he had trouble seeing. Then doctors found the source of his eye strain when he was in Veteran's Hospital for a knee operation. Johns has glaucoma and cataracts which are further complicated by diabetes and heart trouble. At first doctors thought they could remove Bubby's cataracts, but now they plan no operations. Bubby has been told that he will eventually be totally blind.

- The first of 78 million tax rebate checks will be miles on May 9 C. D. Switzer, IRS District Director for Minnesota, said today. The bulk of the mailings should be completed by the end of June. Switzer said taxpayers who filed returns the earliest will receive rebate checks first. The IRS will automatically compute all rebates.

- Baseball Coach Larry Milow is in strong contention for the Optimist of the Year Award for his insistence that the Spring Baseball Season will open here Thursday afternoon when the Bears host Owatonna. Milow had already postponed Monday's opener with Waseca, when the Argus talked with him Thursday, but still had not conceded Thursday's game. As this report is going down on paper, there is a three-foot snow drift in front of the dugout on the JHS athletic field. Conservatively speaking, snow covers the infield at a depth of about a foot.

2000

- It has been 40 years since the Janesville Bowl opened its doors for business. Gay and Lettie Brandvold were the owners at the time. The women bowlers formed their association in 1960 and had 8 teams bowling two nights a week. Over the years many outstanding bowlers have been awarded trophies and pins for their accomplishments.

- She's been called Cynthia, Cyn, Cindy, Mrs. Cahill, Paul's wife, and Paulie's mother, but she is losing one name she has been called for over 20 years: Director of Nursing. For Cynthia Cahill, the ending is bittersweet. She has loved her job at the Janesville Nursing Home, and by the looks of the retirement party that was held for her this past Friday, they have loved her. "I feel like I am abandoning the ship," she said about leaving her job. Cahill said that she had not intended on retiring quite yet, but persistent health problems helped her make her decision. "I felt like I was getting farther and farther behind, and there was no Assistant Director of Nursing to fill in."

- Coach Ann Gerdts didn't waste any time showing off her freshmen on the Janesville- Waldorf-Pemberton softball team. Gerdts used four of them as the Bulldogs opened their season with a 5-1 road victory against St. Clair Friday. The Bulldogs, who are coming off a 6-11 season, beat the Cyclones 18-3 in five innings last year.

Waseca

25 Years Ago

-Grace Lutheran Church celebrates in new sanctuary – Members of Grace Lutheran Church in Waseca held their first service in the newly completed sanctuary on Sunday. Leading the service were, from left to right, Liturgist Gary Bohm, Pastor Roger Haug, Pastor Brad Moe and Bishop Glenn Nycklemoe, held of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA. The congregation began the service in the original sanctuary and processed together to the new worship center.

-Rain the rabbit has been a special classmate in Deb Rysavy-Lien's kindergarten classes at Sacred Heart Elementary School for the last three years.

-These are the members of the DNR Star Waseca Blue Pool League Championship Team from the Waseca Eagles Club. They (front row, from left): Kevin Keagy and Rick Selbrade. Back row: Jeremy Philipps, Joe McNeely and Dan Yokiel. Not pictured Terry Linde.

50 Years Ago



**-Spring fever! – Some Wasecans caught spring fever Wednesday when temperatures soared into the 50's. Many took the opportunity to get outdoors, enjoy the sunshine and do a little spring cleanup. For some like Pat McLaughlin, 15, above, it meant starting up the lawnmower, attaching a thatcher and blowing the dead grass off the lawn. For others, like Mrs. Jeanne (Robert) McGuire, below, it meant washing down the sidewalk. The McGuires and McLaughlins live on 5H St. S.W.**

-Junior class play – BARRY REYSACK as Fred, left, and Julie Schwartz as Rita, play in the Morristown High School junior class play, "No Boys Allowed," which will be presented Friday and Saturday, April 18 and 19. The play begins at 8 p.m. in the high school gym. Tickets are 75 cents for students and \$1.25 for adults.

75 Years Ago

-“Everything looks normal” – Father John McShane quipped after viewing the Catholic Daughters women at their “crazy hat” night Thursday at the Sacred Heart auditorium. Mrs. Cletus Murphy, left, was winner of second place with her Miami beach creation. Mrs. Joseph N. Moonan, center, was first place winner with her “grandmother’s special” consisting of a basket with bottles, toys, baby good, and other baby sitting essentials. Mrs. Moonan’s snood is a baby diaper. Mrs. William Gallagher, right, was winner of third place among 85 entries. She has a bird’s nest with Easter eggs atop her hairdo.

-CLEAN-UP, PAINT-UP WORKERS – These Waseca merchants help to publicize Waseca Cleanup, Paint-up week which started Monday and continues until Saturday by donning their work clothes and going to work on Main Street. Left to right are C.D. Hollister, George (Pete) Mahler, Everett King, Burris Peterson, Elmer Nelson, Harvey Wolf, G.C. Dickerson and holding the whip, Chamber of Commerce president George Hackett. Wasecans are asked to cooperate by cleaning their yards and alleys this week helping to make Waseca a clean as well as beautiful city.

-MARY DEGNAN (fourth from left) is shown among contestants in the Minneapolis Star and Tribune spelling bee. Mary, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Degnan, is a Waseca county spelling champion.

100 Years Ago

-Waseca Post No. 228 of the American Legion has been awarded an engraved citation for meritorious service from the State Department of the Legion. The post has established an enviable record this year in the enrollment of eligible world war veterans within the Legion and in recognition of this fact the citation was awarded Monday.

-Three reels of motion pictures have been secured by the Waseca Chapter of the Isaac Walton League and will be shown in conjunction with the regular program at the State Theatre tonight. The reels have been loaned to the league by the Canadian Government. No extra admission charge will be made at the State for this feature, and the regular rates will prevail.

-Supt. Boyle of the C. & N. W. Ry., was in Waseca Sunday and called together the trainmen, about 75 in number, for a mass meeting at the city hall. Mr. Boyle addressed the meeting and talked on the solicitation of business for the road, urging the men to be on the lookout for freight and passenger business at all times.

New Richland

25 years back



**- Waseca County American Dairy Association held its annual banquet and princess coronation on Saturday evening at the Waseca American Legion clubrooms. Region X Dairy princess Amy Demmer (center) did the honors of crowning Amy Harguth (left) and Amy Dobberstein Waseca County Dairy Princess 2000. Each were presented with a bouquet of roses as the 2000 princesses and received a portrait of themselves for serving as 1999 princesses.**

- Valorie Crumb. Lundberg - Lee American Legion Auxiliary Unit 266 of Hartland has announced the selection of Valorie Crumb as their candidate to attend the 54th session of Minnesota Girls State. Girls state will be held June 11 - 17 at Bethel College in St. Paul. Valorie is the daughter of Brett and Lori Crumb of Hartland and is a junior at NRHEG, as an A honor roll student along with being a member of SHOC.



**- Melissa Barber broke the school record in the Accelerated Reader Program at the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Middle school last week. She read 12 books at the 6.5 grade level in the past quarter to earn 133 points. Here she sits beside the computer the students are tested on after reading each book. Melissa is the daughter of Wayne and Sarah Barber of New Richland.**

50 years back

- These three Waldorf-Pemberton High School band members will travel with the United States Collegiate Wind Band, three weeks in Europe this summer. They are Dan Geary, Bonita Tesch and Cindy Murphy.

- Dale Hoffman of Waldorf-Pemberton FFA chapter, was recently elected to the office of District Treasurer. He will assume his duties on April 24 at the District FFA Banquet at Owatonna. Dale is the son of Mr and Mrs Norman Hoffman of rural Pemberton. Other officers elected were Corey Seppman, president; Dave Schneider, secretary; Dennis Morgan, reporter and Rich Kelm and Mike Strobel, district sentinels.

- Jane Mueller, daughter of Mrs Armin Mueller of Waldorf and the late Mr Muellert, has been awarded an Aid Association for Lutherans Church Vocation College Support System Scholarship during the 1974-75 academic year.

75 years back

- Mr and Mrs Fred Proehl received the announcement of their first granddaughter, born to Mr and Mrs Roy Hall (Lulu Proehl) of Milan, Ill., on Mothers day, May 14. The little girl weighed seven pounds and nearly 13 ounces and has been named Margaret Lucille. The Halls have a son, Arvid, who is five years of age.

- Mr and Mrs James Jeddelloh are parents of twin sons born Thursday afternoon at the Memorial hospital, Waeca. One weighed 5 ½ pounds and the other son was 6 pounds. Mr Jeddelloh is attending Macalester College and will graduate at the end of this quarter. Mrs Jeddelloh is the former Irene Root. The boys are the first children in the family.

■ Rogers

from Page 3

tinue in a new one awarded to him through more typical procedures including an application and interview.

As a board member, Rogers says he has attended monthly board meetings in St. Paul as well as occasional committee sessions and conferences across the state. He says his own leadership skills have been expanded thanks to all the opportunities to mingle with and learn from other leaders.

Among initiatives he is proud of helping accomplish for the LMC are a change in the fiscal year, some facility reevaluations and upgrades, and helping implement the League of Minnesota Cities Insur-

ance Trust—an organization which consolidates and simplifies insurance processes for LMC members.

Said Fischer, "For four years, Clint has shown himself to be ready to show up and do the work. He's found ways to improve nearly everything we do."

Fischer names some of Rogers' biggest strengths as building relationships while simultaneously "seeing the big picture and understanding the details." The executive director mentions Rogers' work on the LMC "Grant Navigator" has been pivotal.

"Cities all across the state are working to augment their budgets by applying for grants," Fischer explains. "The Grant Navigator is a system that helps make the process smoother and easier.

"It's been wildly successful, helping cities get more than \$30 million in funding so far. Clint helped make that happen.

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TOP THREE – Manning the top three singles spots for Waseca in its 5-2 victory over St. James Area Saturday were, from left, Henry Huttemier, Tomasso Scognamiglio and Armaan Bhatti. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

# Exchange student helps WHS netmen stay unbeaten

By JIM LUTGENS  
Sports Editor

There's a very good reason Tommaso Scognamiglio was not listed among the returnees for the 2025 Waseca High School boys' tennis team. Last year he was on the other side of the globe, in Italy, playing on clay courts. Now, it appears he's emerged as one of the better players on the Bluejays' roster. Scognamiglio, an exchange student, won in straight sets at No. 2 singles Saturday as the Bluejays defeated visiting St. James Area 5-2, completing a 2-0 day as the WHS boys upended Faribault 5-2 that morning. Scognamiglio also win in straight sets against Faribault.

"Tomasso is a welcome addition to our

Bluejays improve record to 5-0 with 5-2 victories over St. James Area, Faribault

"Tomasso is a welcome addition to our team and gives us a little more depth."

— WHS coach Kyle Collins

team and gives us a little more depth," said Bluejays head coach Kyle Collins. "Tommaso can play singles or doubles, equally well. He is used to playing on clay courts, but has picked up playing on the hard court very nicely. He has a smooth forehand, and a nice backhanded slice shot,

along with being a very smart player. We are happy he is on our team." Bluejay fans had to be happy Saturday as Scognamiglio prevailed 6-2, 6-3 for one of three Waseca singles victories against St. James Area. Armaan Bhatti rolled 6-2, 6-0 at No. 3, while Allen Kopetzki rallied at

No. 4 6-7 (7), 7-5, 10-5. Henry Huttemier dropped a marathon match at No. 1, falling 6-3, 2-6, 19-17. At No. 1 doubles, Tyler Jellum and Tanner Hanson battled for a 7-5, 3-6, 10-6 triumph. Keenan Collins and Lucas McQuery won 6-4, 6-4 at second doubles. Brayden Hoof and Brighton Rugger lost 7-6 (7), 1-6, 10-4 at No. 3. Singles winners against Faribault were Scognamiglio at No. 3 and Hanson at No. 4, both in straight sets. Jellum was at No. 1, Huttemier at No. 2. The Bluejays swept the doubles in straight sets, with Bahtti and Collins at No.

1, McQuery and Kopetzki at No. 2, and Rugger and Hoof at No. 3. The Bluejays played at New Prague last Tuesday and came home with a 5-2 victory. Huttemier, Schoenrock and Hanson won in straight sets at singles. Bahtti and Collins won at No. 1 doubles while McQuery and Scognamiglio combined to win at No. 2. The WHS junior varsity lost 4-2. The Bluejays, 5-0, hosted St. Peter Tuesday, play today at 4:30 at Fairmont and Monday, April 28 at Winona Cotter at 4:30.

## Perfect day for a meet

Bluejays first, second at TCU

Weather-wise, it was a perfect day for a track and field meet. The Waseca Bluejays took advantage. The boys finished first among for schools and the girls were second in the Tri-City United Invitational Monday at Montgomery. "It was a great night, perfect weather for this time of year," said Waseca head coach David Abel. "We had some great performances, lots of season bests and personal records. There is a lot to be pleased about for the coaching staff." The Bluejay boys ran away with first, totaling 103 points to runner-up LeSueur-Henderson's 60.5. Sibley East and TCU also competed. The highlight was the 100-meter dash, where Waseca took five of the top six places. Jordan Johnson was second in 11.43 seconds, followed by Brady Tloutan in 11.47, Carson Ohnstad 11.73, Bennett Ludwig 11.82 and Jonah Worke 11.84. Finishing first for the Bluejays were Tloutan, 400, 51.56; Tovinn Grannis, high jump, 5-8; Toby Jeske, discus, 141-0; 4x400 relay, 3:38.33 (Tovinn Grannis, Tloutan, Wyatt Hager, Isaac Feldkamp); Hager, 800, 2:13.54; Feldkamp, 1600, 4:43.07; William Mansfield, pole vault, 12-6. Other top-five finishes: Mansfield, 4th, triple jump and 2nd, long jump; Jeske, 7th, triple jump; Owen Rupe, 2nd, high jump and 5th, discus; Hager, 2nd, discus; Tauston Rupe, 3rd, discus; 4x800, 2nd (Feldkamp, Grannis, Tristan Godwin, Landon Rutt); 4x200, 2nd (Malechi Noble, Worke, Titan Rahe, Brady McKenna); 4x100, 2nd



FIRST-PLACE FINISH – Waseca's Kalea Saratori won the shot put at the Tri-City United Invitational at Montgomery. The senior was also first in the discus. Pioneer photo by Jim Lutgens

(Ohnstad, Ludwig, Johnston, Mansfield); Michaiiah Grannis, 3rd, 100 hurdles; Godwin, 2nd, 3200; Rutt, 5th, 1600; Sunny Mei, 3rd, 800; Nathaniel Andrs, 4th, 800; Tovinn Grannis, 3rd, 400; Ayden Kath, 5th, 200. Tri-City United won the girls division with 109 points. The Bluejays had 66. The Bluejays had two double winners: Brooklyn Flatau, long jump, 16-5.5 and 100 hurdles, 15.6; and Kalea Sartori, discus, 110-6 and shot put, 37-1. Callie Dufault, Ellie Kopischke,

"We had some great performances." — WHS coach David Abel

Reese Rodriguez and Ava VanDenHemel won the 4x800 in 10:37.21. Others in the top five: Maren Schimming, 2nd, pole vault; Angelica Lopez, 5th, high jump; Savanna Vagts, 5th, high jump; Sierra Krause, 4th, discus and 5th, shot put; 4x200, 2nd (Schimming, Dufault, Rodriguez, Stella Omvedt; 4x100, 2nd (Lopez, Katelyn Weber, Krause, Flatau); Dufault, 3rd, 3200; Kopischke, 4th, 3200; VanDenHemel, 2nd, 1600; Schimming, 3rd, 1600; Omvedt, 2nd, 800. The Bluejays return to action Tuesday at 4:30 at the St. Charles Invitational.

## WHS golfers 4th at St. Peter, 5th at TCU

The Waseca High School golf teams were both on the road Monday for nine-hole meets, the boys at St. Peter and the girls at Montgomery. The boys finished fourth out of seven teams with 178 strokes. St. Peter won with 147. Hunter Anderson and Braiden Nelson led the Bluejays, both shooting 43. Reed Anderson totaled 45, Avery Selvik 47, Karter Selvik 50 and Brody Dufault 52. Owen Matejcek, a junior from St. Peter, was the medalist with a 34. The WHS girls were fifth with 231 strokes. Marshall won with 189. Waseca scores: Madison Rasche 45, Lexi Kanewischer 62, Elli Hoban 62, Alexa welander 62, Trenna Peterson 66. Dayton Webskowski of Marshall shot a 41 for medalist honors. "All around, it was a difficult day for us on a difficult course," said WHS coach Bill Dwinells. The Bluejays play Monday, when the boys travel to Worthington and the girls go to Marshall.

## JWP track teams 3rd in Maple River meet

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School track and field teams both finished third among seven squads at last week's Maple River Invitational. The host team won the boys' division with 171 points. The Bulldogs had 115. The highlight of the day for the boys was the second-place finish in the 200 by Isaiah Berndt, who set a new school record in the process. Tyson Johnson, Luke Cahill, Teagan Mulder and Alex Kleve teamed to win the 4x800 relay. Also in the top four: Cahill, 2nd 800; Mulder, 4th, 1600; 4x200, 2nd (Isaac Gahlon, Tyson Kronbach, Berndt, Daulton Bauer); 4x100, 2nd (Gahlon, Ethan Born, Bauer, Berndt); 4x400, 2nd (James Morgan, Derek Gustafson, Gavin Weedman, Krohnbach); Gahlon, 3rd, pole vault; Bauer, 2nd, triple jump; Kronbach, 3rd, triple jump; Eric Daschner, 4th, discus. The JWP girls totaled 137 points to 165 for first-place St. Clair/Immanuel Lutheran. The Bulldogs' Lilly Strauss won the long jump. Brielle Bure, Nevaeh Weimert, Katie Olson and Strauss team for first in the 4x100. Others in the top four: 4x800, 2nd Presley James, Kwynn Krause, Ava Krause, Madeline Hoehn; 4x200, 2nd (MaKaela Westphal, Weimert, Olson, Strauss); Onikia Herme, 2nd, 300 hurdles; Hoehn, 4th, 800; Westphal, 2nd, 200; Norah Welvaert, 3rd, 3200; Clare Groh, 4th, 3200; 4x400, 2nd (Kayleigh Donner, Krause, Herme, Weimert); Sarah Bulman, 4th, pole vault; Presley James, 2nd, triple jump; Aubrey Weedman, 2nd, shot put. After a Tuesday meet at Blooming Prairie, the Panthers are home Tuesday, April 29 at 4:30.

## JWP softball team drops 9-1 decision to Cleveland





MOVEMENT ON THE BASE PATHS — At left, NRHEG’s Chloe Stork rounds third base and races to home during the Panthers’ 15-8 victory over Blooming Prairie at Legion Field in New Richland. At right, the Panthers’ Ezra Boerner slides safely into second.



Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

# Softball Panthers return to winning ways

NRHEG mows down Blooming Prairie 15-8 after 7-0 loss to tough Bethlehem Academy team

The NRHEG High School softball team got back to its winning ways Monday, defeating visiting Blooming Prairie 15-8 in a Gopher Conference game at New Richland's Legion Field.

The Blossoms scored first, on a solo home run in the top of the first inning, but they didn't score again until the fifth. By then, the Panthers had a 9-1 lead. They broke it open with six runs in the bottom of the fifth.

"I was proud of the way the girls played tonight, especially on the defensive end," said NRHEG coach Wendy Schultz. "Cam and Olivia had a lot of action on the left side and made a lot of nice plays. Defensively, the whole team played

well as we committed one error. Offensively, the girls got the bats going and had quite a few solid hits. It was a good team win."

Cam VanMaldeghem, third base player, and Aspy Stenzel led the Panthers, both going 3-for-4. VanMaldeghem scored three runs, drove in three and had two stolen bases. Stenzel scored twice.

Paige Johnson was 2-for-2 with two RBIs, Olivia Berg 2-for-3 with a double, two RBIs and three stolen bases. Addie Stadheim, Chloe Stork, Kiera Eustice and Ezra Boerner added one hit each.

The Panthers combined for three strikeouts and two walks while scoring 10 earned runs.

Brooklyn Sommer pitched for the

"I was proud of the way the girls played tonight, especially on the defensive end."  
— NRHEG coach Wendy Schultz

Panthers, allowing seven earned runs on nine hits, with two strikeouts and four walks.

Last Thursday, the Panthers lost 7-0 to Bethlehem Academy at Faribault in a game that was called after six innings because of lightning.

"We lost to a tough team," said Coach Schultz. "I was happy with the way the girls played defense

tonight, committing only one error. We struggled getting runners on base, but Aspy and Cam both had great hits that were doubles."

They were the Panthers' only hits on the day as NRHEG hitters struck out 12 times and did not draw a walk.

Sommer gave up seven earned runs on nine hits, fanning three and walking five.



Berg



E.Boerner

The Panthers, 2-2 in the Gopher Conference and 2-4 overall, play today at 4:30 at Hayfield and Friday at 5 p.m. at Tri-City United before a weekend tournament at Caswell Park in Mankato. They host JWP Monday at 4:30.

## Panther track teams 5th, 6th at Maple River

The NRHEG High School track and field teams traveled to Mapleton last Tuesday for the Maple River Invitational.

The girls finished fifth among six schools.

Chloe Reiwer raced to gold in the 100-meter dash, winning in a season-best 13.8 seconds. She was third in the long jump at 14-10 and tied for sixth in the pole vault at 6-6.

Kylie Olson, a sophomore, won the shot put at 33-11 and took fourth in the discus at 88-8.

Sophomore Clara Buendorf was second in the 200, clocking a personal-best 28.85. Anika Ladlie cleared 5-2 for second in the high jump.



Olson

Julian Wobbrock, an 8th-grader, was third in the 1600 in 5:57.



Buendorf

The Panthers' Gabby Schlaak placed in both hurdle events, taking fifth in the 110s in 17.72 and sixth in the 300s in 55.7. She was fifth in the long jump at 14-2.



Ladlie

Other NRHEG top-six places: Sierra Fish, 6th, discus, 86-0; Peyton Frye, 7th, 400, 1:10.3; 4x400 relay, 4th (Sierra Misgen, Morgan Studier, Buendorf, Frye); 4x200, 6th (Misgen, Buendorf, Gia Cazares, Tiffany Jewison); 4x100, 5th (Reiwer, Ladlie, Cazares, Studier).

St. Clair Immanuel Lutheran won with 165 points, followed by Minnesota Valley Lutheran with 143.5, JWP 137, Maple River 94, NRHEG 88.5 and USC/AC 32.

The top placewinner for the NRHEG boys was junior Jacob Karl, who finished third in the 1600 in a personal-best 5:11.5.

Also placing in the top six: Lavon Jewison, 4th, high jump, 5-6; Harbor Cromwell, 6th, 200, 24.0; 4x200, 4th (Charlie Fuller, Wyatt Tuttle, Nathan Hager, Noah Weller); 4x400, 6th (Cromwell, Col Hutchens, Logan Schell, Gavin Stetten); 4x100, 5th (Hutchens, Colton Conroy, Hager, Cromwell).

Boys' team standings: Maple River 171, Minnesota Valley Lutheran 155, JWP 115, USC/AC 103.5, St. Clair/Immanuel Lutheran 78.5, NRHEG 46, Martin County West 23.

The NRHEG girls competed Tuesday at Blooming Prairie. Both squads are at the JWP Invitational April 29 at 4:30.



BIG ARM – NRHEG shortstop Aiden Schlaak fires to first from his shortstop position. Below, coach Shawn Larson talks to Seth Staloch at third base.

Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

## Progress at Blooming Prairie

Panthers keep it close after 10-3 loss to Hayfield

The NRHEG High School baseball team dropped a 10-3 decision to Hayfield at Reese Field in New Richland last Tuesday.

After taking a 4-0 lead in the top of the first inning, sparked by an NRHEG fielding error and an injury to the starting pitcher, the Vikings led 8-0 before the Panthers scored twice in the bottom of the third.

By then it was too late. The visitors cruised to the win.

"We got off to an extremely difficult start, with an error to start the game," said NRHEG head coach Shawn Larson. "That was followed almost immediately by the removal of our pitcher after being struck by a batted ball."

More of the same followed.

"The next two innings continued in this way with our focus slightly off, and execution that followed our focus," said Larson. "If we want to compete like some of the teams we are losing to, we need to play with our minds more than we have been."



Wyatt Larson was the unfortunate starter for NRHEG on the mound. Levi Whiteside was the first to relieve, going 5 2/3 innings while allowing three earned runs on seven hits, with four walks and three strikeouts. Fynn Baumann finished on the mound, giving up one earned run on one hit in 1 1/3 innings.

A.J. Deen, Owen Wayne, Aiden Schlaak, Ryan Schlaak, Jace Ihrke and Carter Martens had one hit apiece. Wayne drove in three runs.

Four Hayfield pitchers combined for eight strikeouts and four walks.

"Tomorrow we will get a much needed

practice, and hopefully we will turn it around Thursday," said Coach Larson.

The Panthers were rained out Thursday.

They played Mnday at Blooming Prairie and kept in close in a 3-1 final. It was, according to Coach Larson, more like it.

"Today the people that were in Blooming Prairie witnessed what a baseball game is supposed to look like," he stated. "Unfortunately, we were on the losing side of it, but this game was played cleanly on both sides of the ball for both teams. Baseball is a beautiful thing in the nice weather with kids competing the way



TOUGH OUTING — NRHEG starting pitcher Wyatt Larson delivers during the Panthers’ 10-3 loss to Hayfield at Reese Field in New Richland.

Photo courtesy Steele County Times

we saw today."

Wayne was again competitive on the mound, pitching four innings and leaving with the score tied 1-1. Larson went the rest of the way and took the loss. They combined for eight strikeouts and seven walks, allowing three hits total.

Alden Dobberstein was 2-for-3 with a double and an RBI. Wayne and Deen had one hit apiece.

The Panthers play Tri-City United at Montgomery Friday in a 5 p.m. doubleheader. They're at JWP at 4:30 Monday and host Mankato Loyola at 5 p.m. Tuesday.

## Softball Bulldogs fall to Cleveland

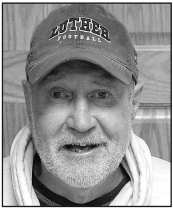
The JWP High School softball team lost 9-1 to Cleveland at Janesville last Tuesday.

Ryleigh Donner led the Bulldogs at the plate, going 2-for-3 with a double. Ellah Oliver and Kayle Langford had one hit each.

Donner pitched, giving up five earned runs on eight hits in six innings. She struck out three and walked seven.

The Bulldogs are home today at 4:30 against Kenyon-Wanamingo. They host Madelia Tuesday at 4:30.





Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika



Another March Madness wrap

Another college basketball “March Madness” tournament has finished. Both the women’s and men’s division one champions have been crowned. The participants of millions of pools have now collected their earnings, and the losers are looking forward to next season.

The women’s tournament was won handily by the Uconn Huskies. I’ve never been a big fan of the Huskies because they are always good and have dominated for years with outstanding talent. Names like Maya Moore, Breanna Stewart, and Diana Taurasi will always be the best of the best in women’s basketball, both college and professional.

This year I had to root for the Huskies because the team leader was Minnesota’s own Paige Bueckers. This year’s answer to Caitlyn Clark. I was always disappointed that Paige, the number one high school recruit out of Hopkins, decided on Uconn over the MN Gophers. Paige had never won a championship with the Huskies; she also had to overcome a serious ACL knee injury and adversity. In her final season she scored a ton of baskets, had many rebounds, steals, and assists and led her team to a convincing championship. Her interviews with broadcasters are always first class and some of the best ever. Paige will be the number one player in this year’s WNBA draft, a role model for everyone.

Uconn’s head coach is Geno Auriemma, who has had the position for a long time. He just won his twelfth national title, a record that will probably never be broken. He’s a tall man who looks intimidating, coaches vocally, and in previous interviews comes across as being a bit arrogant. He is a great coach, gets the best players, and wins basketball games. All of his previous players have expressed respect and appreciation for having played for him. In winning this championship, coach Geno took on a new appearance. He looked old and gray and coached like a grandfather. He hugged every player after the game. In an interview following the game he was asked about Paige Bueckers. He talked about her difficult journey, what a great role model and player she is, and how her difficulties have helped her become a better person. Asked what he said to her as he hugged her with tears in his eyes at the end of the game, he said, “I told her I loved her.” I don’t think he will be retiring this season. He has the best freshman in the country com-

ing back and another great player from Minnesota. Odds are he will be working toward achieving another national title.

The men’s tournament consists of 64 deserving teams. The teams are divided into four regions and are seeded 1-16. Only twice in the tournament has a number 16 seed beaten a number one seed: Fairleigh Dickinson had an epic victory over first-ranked Purdue and UMBC had a huge upset over number one Virginia. Basketball fans everywhere put a few bucks in a pool with others, and turn in their picks for each bracket. If you are lucky enough to predict some upsets, and pick a national champion, chances are good you’ll be in the money.

This year I thought I was doing very well. All four number one seeds made it to the finals. Auburn lost to Florida in the semifinals. I still had Duke playing and was sure they’d win the championship, since they have the best young player in the country.

In 1983 the biggest upset in men’s March Madness history was played. The N.C. State Wolfpack beat Houston to win the NCAA title. The Wolfpack were coached by the late Jimmy Valvano and it was a miracle they made it to the finals. Houston had some of the best talent ever on a college basketball team. Clyde Drexler and Hakeem Olajuwon went on to be stars in the NBA. The entire team was a high-flying dunking machine. The Wolfpack stunned 50 million viewers with a shot underneath the basket as time expired.

Coach Valvano was diagnosed with cancer. Jimmy V gave a speech to a packed house of coaches, players, and athletes at an event that will always be enshrined in the sports world. He made some historic statements. “Cancer can take me physically and my body but it can never take my mind and my soul.” “If you can laugh, think and shed tears you’ve had a full day.” In his conclusion, with barely enough strength to talk, he said, “Don’t give up, don’t you ever give up. It’s too late for me, but I want to help my grandchildren.” He announced the beginning of the Jimmy V Cancer Foundations. He was helped off the stage by two hall of fame coaches to a standing ovation.

So who is the best college basketball coach ever? Geno Auriemma, John Wooden, Dean Smith, Pat Summit, or Duke’s Coach K? I say it’s clear the award has to go to coach Jimmy Valvano.



From left: Owen, Tauston, Brynda, Cassie and Brian Rupe, and Bridget and Nate Morsching were present for Tauston Rupe’s St.Olaf College Letter of Intent signing at the Waseca High School performing arts center on Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Rupe signs letter of intent

By BEN REVERMANN  
Staff writer

Waseca High School senior Tauston Rupe signed a letter of intent on April 15 to play football for St. Olaf College of Northfield this coming fall. Rupe’s major will be kinesiology, the study of human movement.

Waseca’s head football coach Brad Wendland told the well-wishers gathered in the Waseca High School performing arts center he has known Rupe since he was little: “I was on vacation in South Dakota years ago and I saw this little kid walking through—I think it was the Corn Pal-

ace. This little kid is walking through the aisle with a Waseca Football shirt on and he recognized me or I recognized him.

“He’s the hardest worker in the room. It’s been such a pleasure to watch him grow up. Once back when he was in ninth grade, we just threw him into his first varsity snap and he nailed it, didn’t need to be worried at all.”

Rupe was signing his letter of intent for St. Olaf at the same time as his classmate and friend Ben Hagen was signing for St. John’s. Hagen said the two of them had been getting

up every morning at 5:45 a.m. to exercise at Snap Fitness, “I got Tauston to go with me, we’ve been putting that extra effort in since January. We totally bought the program and it’s really paying off.”

Both Rupe and Hagen suffered injuries that took months off their playing days and required extra grit and elbow grease to catch up. Hagen hurt his shoulder, Rupe hurt his knees and required surgery; he was wearing shorts and could point out the scars to prove it.

Coach Wendland added, “Not to mention Tauston can run and hit like

crazy. We might see him soon statewide as a thrower.” Rupe was asked if there was anything he would like to say and responded, “I want to thank my family, the coaches and my teammates. I have always believed that if you surround yourself with good people, that’s what you will become.”

The Performing Arts Center was almost half full of classmates, well-wishers and teammates. Also present were members of the Rupe family—Owen, Brynda, Cassie and Brian Rupe, Bridget and Nate Morsching.

Hagen signs letter of intent to St. John’s University

By BEN REVERMANN  
Staff writer

Waseca High School senior Ben Hagen signed a letter of intent on Tuesday, April 15, to play football with the team at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minn. Hagen was surrounded by friends, family and teammates in the high school’s performing arts center as he signed his letter.

Waseca head football coach Brad Wendland claimed, “Everything he’s involved in makes those other kids that are also involved, better. When he got his arm injury, he did not let that slow him down at all. St. John’s University, all the coaches there are really excited to have him.” Hagen experienced a torn labrum; labrum is a type of cartilage found in the shoulder joint.

Hagen, who was also the 2024 Homecoming King, will be attend-

ing St. John’s and practicing with the football team there beginning this fall.

In his search for a post-secondary institution, Hagen says he visited six different schools, but chose St. John’s because, “It was just like Waseca up there, the trees and the fields, everyone was nice, there was nothing negative.” The injury Hagen received to his shoulder laid him up for eight months; he told of having been frustrated, but when it was appropriate to do so, he started going to Snap Fitness every morning at 5:45. “I got Tauston to go with me, we’ve been putting that extra effort in since January. We totally bought the program and it’s really paying off.”

The Performing Arts Center was almost half full, but before the students were allowed to exit and grab a cookie on the way out, Jake Nelson, Waseca Dean of Students, made



Ben Hagen with his parents Brad and Allyson were present for Ben’s letter of intent signing for the University of St. John’s in the Waseca High School’s performing arts center on Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

a point of saying, “These two boys, Ben Hagen and Tauston Rupe, can do more than sports. They both dance, they both sing, and neither of them has gotten a detention or bad

mark on their records, ever. They are shining examples of what a student should be.” Also present were Brad and Allyson Hagen, Ben’s parents.

WAC Celebrates over three decades of talent

WASECA, MN — The Waseca Art Center hosted its annual High School Art Show last week, continuing a tradition that has spanned more than three decades. This year’s exhibition brought together works from 32 student artists across eight high schools, showcasing a diverse range of talent and media while offering students an immersive experience in both artistic creation and appreciation.

Participating schools included Blooming Prairie, Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton, New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva, Tri-City United, Mankato East, Le Sueur-Henderson, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, and Owatonna Online. Art teachers from each school selected up to five pieces to submit for consideration, with a final total of 32 artworks displayed in the Center’s professional gallery setting.

Mediums ranged from digital and watercolor to graphite, fiber arts, acrylics, sculpture—including metal and welded works—and relief printing. The show was judged by local artist Brad Donner, along with seasoned judge Mikhail Rostislavovich, who received formal training through the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

Alongside the exhibit, students participated in a hands-on watercolor workshop led by local artist Sherry Jacobson. The class focused on atmospheric watercolor techniques, where students created charming puffin portraits using the natural properties of water to achieve soft, dreamlike effects. “They made it their own,” said Christy Easton, Director of Programming at the Art Center. “Some added little top hats and glasses—each one was unique and thoughtful.”

The workshop environment was marked by quiet concentration and a sense of camaraderie, with students appreciating the opportunity to learn from a new instructor while also observing techniques from peers across schools.

Donner, who has helped coordinate the show for the past three years, remarked that this year’s collection is the strongest yet. “We saw exceptional graphite drawings, pixel-based pieces from classroom units, and compelling close-up compositions. The depth and precision these students brought to their work is incredible.”

In addition to art appreciation, the event provides professional exposure and a sense of pride for the students. “It’s powerful for them to see their work professionally displayed,” said Rostislavovich. “It gives them a glimpse into what pursuing art could

look like as a career.”

For the Waseca Art Center, the show expands its reach and visibility. “This brings in not only students but their families, friends, and art teachers from across southern Minnesota,” said Donner. “It’s great for the Art Center and for tourism in Waseca.”

The winners were as follows:

1st place: Nora Sipe, “Owl Eye,” medium: graphite, Grade 11, Mankato East, teacher: Lorrie Schroeder  
2nd place: Shane Witts, “Beauty,” medium: metal (welding), Grade: 12, JWP, teacher: AJ Seibert  
3rd place: Tessa Smith, “Flowering Star,” thread (crochet), Grade 9, Blooming Prairie, teacher Nate Pillar

People’s Choice: Mairead Holmes, “Catelyn,” medium: acrylic on canvas, Grade 12, Blooming Prairie, teacher Nate Pillar

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON  
PROPOSED COUNTY ROAD NO. 61 REVOCATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Waseca County will conduct a public hearing pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 163.11 for the purpose of receiving oral and/or written comments on the proposed revocation of County Road No. 61 (78<sup>th</sup> St/ 325<sup>th</sup> Ave/ 80<sup>th</sup> St) in St. Mary Township. The public hearing will convene at 7:00 pm, Monday May 19, 2025, at the St. Mary Township Hall, located at the intersection of 90<sup>th</sup> Street and 350<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Persons wishing to make written comment may do so by mailing them to Waseca County Public Works, 1495 5<sup>th</sup> St SE, PO Box 487, Waseca MN 56093, or by email to jim.kollar@wasecacounty.gov.

Jim Kollar, PE, Waseca County Public Works Director/County Engineer

Publish in the Waseca County Pioneer: April 24, May 1, May 8, May 15

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SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642

April 2025

| Sun                                                                             | Mon                         | Tue                  | Wed                           | Thu               | Fri                                                                       | Sat                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                                                                 |                             | 1 Burger nite 5-7pm  | 2 6pm BAR Bingo               | 3 7pm HALL BINGO  | 4 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm                                    | 5 GOLD STAR SPOUSES       |
| 6                                                                               | 7                           | 8 Burger nite 5-7pm  | 9 6pm BAR Bingo National for- | 10 7pm HALL BINGO | 11 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm                                   | 12                        |
| 13 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am-Noon Your Host Waseca high school Choir | 14 7 pm Post & AUX. Meeting | 15 Burger nite 5-7pm | 16 6pm BAR Bingo              | 17 7pm HALL BINGO | 18 WALLEYE or SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 to 7pm YOUR HOST HONOR GUARD & AUXILIARY | 19 SUPER EASTER BINGO 7PM |
| 20                                                                              | 21                          | 22 Burger nite 5-7pm | 23 6pm BAR Bingo              | 24 7pm HALL BINGO | 25 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm                                   | 26                        |
| 27 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am-Noon Your Host VFW POST 1642            | 28                          | 29 Burger nite 5-7pm | 30 6pm BAR Bingo              |                   |                                                                           |                           |

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# PHB’s lawyer Ellie James

By DEB BENTLY  
Staff Writer

Ellie James has been a lawyer with Patton, Hoversten and Berg (PHB) law office in Waseca since this past December, but her connection to legal work has been ongoing ever since she earned her master’s degree in business administration and began to work with the human resources office at Rice County in 2017.

“It seemed I was working with lawyers all the time,” she recalls. “I began to realize it was a job that aligned with who I am.”

As for what that means, she comments many people may have a misconception about how lawyers spend their work time. “We are by nature researchers, readers, and writers,” she clarifies. “Every word counts.” She goes on to say much of her time is spent keeping current with court decisions which affect matters she is working on, drafting documents, and communicating with clients.

Ellie, 34, completed her law degree in 2022, then spent a couple of years serving as a law clerk in an area courtroom before taking on her job at PHB.

Among the types of cases she handles are estate, probate, family law, and business and employment law. She says she is glad to be working at a firm with such a strong connection to the area community.

Ellie grew up in Waseca and graduated as a Bluejay, while her husband, Jacob James, graduated as a Buccaneer. Now married for 15 years, the two of them live in Elysian and have five children: Mackenzie, 14; Madelynn, 13; Meredith, 7; Weston, 9; and Miriam, 2.

“As you would guess, I feel really connected to the community, its people and its culture,” she observes. “I want the best possible outcome for people because it not only helps them, in many cases it helps keep the community stable.”



Ellie James, a lawyer in the Waseca office of Patton, Hoversten and Berg, has deep roots in the area. She graduated from Waseca High School and has always lived in or near Waseca County.

Photo by Deb Bently

Recognizing that people sometimes seek out a lawyer’s assistance when they feel a sense of urgency or uncertainty, Ellie assures, “processes in law are very important and sometimes take a central role, but they don’t move fast.” Falling in line with her statement lawyers make sure their work is carefully researched, she points out court procedures are usually scheduled weeks or even months apart.

“Sometimes that doesn’t line up with the idea of urgency,” she observes, “but it makes sure everyone has time to make certain their information is well prepared and their claims have a sound basis in law.”

What she and other lawyers can do for people who feel caught up in a crisis, she says, is to help them take a practical look at their circumstances and learn what steps are available moving forward.

Ellie says she feels particularly honored when she can work with clients in drafting their estate plans. “People have given a lot of thought about how they want to see things continue,” she describes. “It’s a privilege to help them set everything up so their wishes will be clear and things will play out as they choose.”

She goes on to say, for her, PHB is just the right size to allow for connection and collaboration. “We have a small-town atmosphere and a small-town approach,” she says. “We lawyers can build relationships with our clients and use that understanding to do the best possible job for them. The staff is a size that allows us to seek each other out and make use of each other’s expertise.”

“I’m really grateful to be where I am, helping the people this role allows me to help.”

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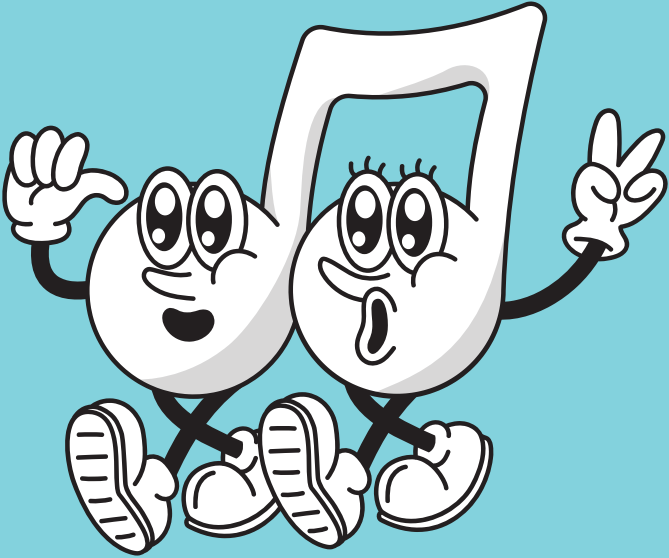
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