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WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY

No. 27 Vol. II \$2

Office at 103 South State Street Waseca

Friday, July 7, 2023

Pages 6-7



Lakefest

Growing together

Newspaper, community closely linked

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher

It has been a long, quick year. That's how I would describe our season at the Pioneer.

Time went by in the blink of an eye, and the work, well that went even faster.

Over that time the memories we've made—I've made—feel like a lifetime's worth. Well, actually many lives worth. It's an honor to hear someone's story and be entrusted to share it with dignity.

The relationships I've built over the past year here in Waseca are, simply put, the reason for doing the newspaper.

The relationship I developed with the Nelson family is towards the top of my list. Also near the top are Matt and Becky Petsinger's children, who wander through our main street office regularly, and whom I have come to love dearly.

Dave Zika—his connection to the community, and his open, friendly approach—are everything I hoped for when I was looking for a columnist. I can't tell you how many conversations I had with folks about finding a columnist; then Dave walked in my door. From the moment he introduced himself, I felt something special. Dave has a spark

Growth continued on 10

Waseca County Farmers' Market open on Saturdays

Waseca County Farmers Market at 409 8th Ave. NE in Waseca will be open Saturdays from 8 a.m. until noon through October.

Thirty-third annual FCA Sports Camp set for Aug. 1-3

The thirty-third annual Waseca Fellowship of Christian Athletes Jr. Sports Camp is set for August 1-3, 2023, for athletes entering grades 3-8. Registration online at www.minnesotafca.org/waseca-jsc.

SWCD to meet July 13

The Waseca Soil and Water Conservation district will hold its regular meeting July 13 at 6:30 p.m.

Otisco ice cream social 4 p.m., July 9

St. Peter Lutheran Church of Otisco is hosting an ice cream social beginning 4 p.m., Sunday, July 9. On the menu are barbecues, ham sandwiches, potato salad, calico beans, pie, ice cream, coffee, and lemonade. Suggested donation is \$12. Proceeds go to roof repair.

A word from
The Word 

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16

A year of stories

Pioneer celebrates first anniversary

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

People and their stories. Every member of the Waseca County Pioneer staff finds his or her motivation in the people of the community, their passions, motivations, and projects.

"Being a news writer pulled me out of my comfort zone," comments writer Michael Roy. "It's very demanding and it takes a lot of time."

"But I have gotten to know some people who do what they do, not because they're paid for it, but because

they truly care.

"No amount of money could bring out the passion and dedication I've seen."

Today's July 7 edition comes out on the anniversary of the paper's July 8, 2022, "Waseca addresses only" free distribution. Another free mailing had gone out on July 1 to all addresses in Waseca County.

The concept of the Pioneer – of a Waseca-based newspaper that covered local events—had started long before, and sprouted in November of 2021.



Lutgens



Roy



Bently



Roessler

"Sports, those are very important to a community," comments Lut-

Pioneer continued on 4

Lakefest 2023



COMMUNITY - A wide variety of events was featured during the July 4 Lakefest celebration at Clear Lake Park in Waseca.

Pioneer photos by Jonah Stafford and Jessica Lutgens

Lakefest brings energy, fun

By JONAH STAFFORD
Staff Writer

This year's annual Lakefest brought family fun to Clear Lake Park in Waseca on the Fourth of July holiday. Tom Sexton, this year's Lakefest Chair, volunteered for the position when it became clear that the event could not go on without

new leadership; planning began in April. Lakefest, which is put on by the Waseca Lakes Association, was in danger of being canceled had Sexton not stepped in; previous leaders had chosen to withdraw from their positions. For the occasion, Sexton assembled a committee to manage the various aspects of Lake-

fest, including Duane Rathmann, Freedom Run Chair; Trevor Kane-wischer, Food and Beverage Chair; Abbe Hoehn, Adult Sports and Games Chair and Music Coordinator; Jennifer Johnson, Boat Parade Chair; Brittany Krueger, Kids Games Chair; Tom Krause, Market-ing Chair; Justine Meyer, Marketing

Technical Expert; and Charli Harguth, Graphic Artist. "Give them credit, not me," said Sexton, adding that it was thanks to the effort of volunteers that Lakefest was able to happen this year.

Sexton said that his favorite parts

Lakefest continued on 5



SOUND EXPERT — Audiotronics owner Riley Poe settled into his Waseca location last August.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

One man crew

Audiotronics serving Waseca

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

Riley Poe is not an ordinary man in his 20s: He is a one-man crew running Audiotronics in Waseca.

"I've been slowly able to grow this doing it all on my own," he says.

Poe grew up in the neighboring Medford-Owatonna area and graduated from high school in 2014. Instead of going to post-secondary schooling like many graduates, he

decided to enter straight into the workforce. He had his start at a professional vehicle upgrade shop in Owatonna and got a lot of his experience there.

"I worked on fleet vehicles for Amazon installing things like dash cams and box cams," he explains. "I got to travel around the state as an independent contractor, which I

Audio continued on 5

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

Conagra study approved

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editorial Assistant

At their regular June 20 meeting, members of the Waseca City Council approved a wastewater impact study which will help determine whether it will be possible for ConAgra to move to year-round operation. Earlier this year, ConAgra informed the council that it wants to continue processing foods through the colder months, but would need to be able to expel wastewater into the city's sewage system to do so. The impact study approved Tuesday night is a second preliminary step. An earlier study determined that the city's system could not accept untreated effluence; this one will see how well it can handle partially treated waste. ConAgra will be paying for the study.

Council members bantered somewhat over new questions surrounding the Gaiter Lake development. On a 4-3 vote, the council approved moving \$500,000 from the utility fund into the general fund, thus making it accessible to continue with previously approved work at the city-owned property near Gaiter Lake. City Manager Carl Sonnenberg described the move as a simple balance sheet adjustment.

Council member John Mansfield reminded the council of their opportunity to walk back their previous decision.

"I don't agree with us being in the real estate business," councilman Jimmy Ebertowski commented. "I'm not hoping Waseca fails with this project... I just don't agree with it."

Despite these digs, the vote to move the funds was the same as the previous one to move forward with the development: 4-3.

Observations about the Gaiter Lake development had also been shared during the public comment period at the start of the evening. Area resident Deb Dobberstein said the council should be more transparent and honest with the citizens of Waseca; she described a recent tax increase as part of a system to raise money to invest in the Gaiter Lake property with the plan of making more money yet.

VFW members Tom Sexton, Steve Kahnke and Dean Farley spoke to the council about paying a strip of land along the south edge of the organization's parking lot. When patrons use the city-owned drive space as an entry to the VFW's lot, it wears on the edge of the concrete and carries rocks into the otherwise smooth space. VFW leaders have researched the cost and found a contractor willing to pave the space at a bargain price of \$9,700, providing the work is performed simultaneously with another project. The organization has raised nearly \$3,000 toward the \$9,700 cost, and requested that the city consider paying the remaining \$6,900. The council agreed to the request.

James Christensen addressed the council during the public comment portion. He suggested that photos of past mayors and other significant artwork be moved out of the council chamber, which is kept locked during business hours, and displayed in hallways and other locations more open to public

Council continued on 5



Compostings

by Al Batt

Turkey vulture or peace eagle?

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

I dropped my watch into the Le Sueur River and a year and a half later, it was still running.

Your watch was still running? No, the river.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Deep thoughts occur as I drive past his drive. Summer is the season when I sit outside on wobbly chairs and try not to let the flies settle on a day with the heat of Costco proportions and a day I'll dream about in January. The 4th of July reminds me that the infinite summer is finite. I've walked in enough parades to know the secret is to walk behind shady politicians on a sunny day.

A common refrain has been a wish for rain. People aren't getting their money's worth out of rain gauges. Ecosystem architects become stressed about stressed lawns. Harvey Benson of Harmony said he'd had a month of no rain and was watering flowers when he decided to water his rain gauge. The next day, his yard received an inch and a half of rain. In my mischievous years, I'd poured a little extra into a neighbor's rain gauge in the hopes he'd think he lived in the state's rainforest. I would have apologized, but I was a chicken.

I spied with my little eye the place I was looking for—Elmo's Eyecare and Car Wash. A meteorite had missed both Earth and me, but my wife had stepped on my head. If you're married long enough, everything is bound to happen. Here's a tip for you: don't let your spouse step on your head. It doesn't do your glasses much good. I was waiting for my spectacles to be straightened when another customer showed me his eyeglasses. His puppy (a blue heeler-lab cross) had chewed the usefulness out of them. It made me think of my wife's Uncle Harvey Crumb, who had put his hearing aids down and his dog ate them. Homeowners insurance doesn't cover your dog eating hearing aids or trying to eat eyeglasses, and it doesn't cover your wife stepping on your head.

I'VE LEARNED

The word "weird" sounds weird.

The hairs in my nose and ears aren't watching where they're growing.

An everything bagel doesn't include everything.

A consultant is someone you pay to flip a coin for you.

Never build a ship in a bottle

while driving.

BAD JOKE DEPARTMENT

A man was cleaning out his late grandfather's house when he came across a repair ticket from a local lawnmower repair shop dated 14 years ago. He pocketed the ticket and drove to the repair shop, figuring it was worth a try. He handed the ticket to the man behind the counter who disappeared into a dark corner at the back of the shop. A few minutes later, the man returned and said, "It'll be ready on Thursday."

NATURE NOTES

The Cherokee called the turkey vulture the "peace eagle," because it wasn't predatory.

Summer offers more blooming flowers in prairies, fields and ditches, and outside the woods where flowers bloomed in the spring.

A reader asks what she could do to prevent deer from eating her hostas. You can tell a deer has been dining because it eats the plant by tearing the leaves from stems, leaving hostas that resemble celery stalks. My radio partner, Karen Wright of Mankato, told me she has found two products that are effective in repelling deer—Milorganite and Deer Defeat. Milorganite fertilizer is one of the oldest branded fertilizers on the market and is derived from heat-dried microbes that have digested the organic material in wastewater from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. Deer Defeat doesn't need to be reapplied after rain. It's made from all-natural ingredients that require repeated spraying every 30 days.

Before the legislature decided on the common loon as Minnesota's state bird in 1961, several other birds were suggested, including the eastern goldfinch (1947), the mourning dove (1951), the pileated woodpecker (1951 and 1953), the scarlet tanager (1951) and the wood duck (1951). Erratic swimmers are the loon's favorite since it makes them easy to catch. Loons eat a lot of yellow perch, bluegill, pumpkinseed and crayfish. The Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU) held its 10th annual convention in Des Moines and recommended the goldfinch as the state bird. Representative J. Wilbur Dole, an IOU member, introduced a resolution adopted and passed by the House and Senate on March 22, 1932. Iowa was the first of three states (New Jersey and Washington) to name the goldfinch its state bird.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?"—Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Tuesday holiday sends week askew

Every once in a while, we all have a couple days, or even a week, when we feel like completing work is harder than usual.

This week was one of those for me.

I think the Fourth of July holiday was what threw everything off. One big factor, the Janesville Journal had to change its schedule because it usually mails on Tuesday.

The other thing that threw me off is that events were scheduled differently than usual. A majority of the events I needed to attend and the tasks I had to perform fell on Thursday, Monday, and Tuesday. I actually had most of the weekend off! But the tradeoff was working at least eight hours on the Fourth of July. (I don't know for sure yet. I'm writing this column ahead of time to hopefully reduce the number of tasks that await me on the Fourth.)

I didn't have too much on my list this week. I had Elysian's Fourth of July Celebration, some Lakefest events, a writeup on Wild Spirit Sanctuary, and the Waseca Library's water carnival. But, the first two items were plenty of work. I think by



Music to my Ears

by Michael Roy

the time I'm done, I'll have spent nearly 15 hours on Elysian's Fourth of July Celebration alone.

And the writer's block I had was insane. I've had some occasions when I just didn't want to write until Sunday night and I pushed through it. But the elongated work week made it so much easier to wait. When Monday came around, I had to force myself to type the first 500 words: Eventually, the writer's block eased a bit.

I am sorry to hear that the Good Game Gaming Center closed in Waseca. It honestly sounded like a good idea to me, bringing people in the community together to game. I just wonder if it never had a chance due to the popularity of online gaming. Why pay to gather in a space to

game when you could do the same thing at home or online?

The concept of Good Game Gaming Center reminded me of an old place in Janesville called Jethro's. There, you could "rent" a game and play it on a PS2 or Xbox. I think there were two of each and they eventually had an Xbox 360. It also included a place to sit down and hang out, a bar where you could order food, and a pool table.

When I moved into town, it became a haven for people like me. It's where I got to play the game Guitar Hero for the first time. It was where I fell in love with chili dogs with a vanilla malt or milkshake. I made a few friends there and we all spent time together enjoying the old Halo games on Xbox.

Jethro's ended up closing around 2011 or 2012. It was a shame because it was such a cool place to go after school, in the summer, and play games that you probably wouldn't have been able to play at home, to be honest. I never found out why it closed. I wonder if a parent found out their twelve-year-old kid played Grand Theft Auto or something and complained to the owners. Maybe there were too many scratched-up video games and there wasn't a reason to buy more.

Whatever the case, it was a great part of my childhood. In a way, I was rooting for Good Game Gaming Center to bring the same memories for young kids in Waseca. But sadly, their business concept didn't work out.

The only pieces of the business left that prove that such a business existed are the articles written about them, their ads, and a website they paid to have on the internet for ten years. It sounds like they're going to use their next nine years to "update" the website every once in a while just for the fun of it. At least they have a sense of humor.

Who ever heard of being cold in July?

Everyone talks about their Fourth of July traditions, so I thought I'd hop on the bandwagon. Each year, my family and I like to travel to the wonderful land of the north, to my grandparents' cabin in Merrifield, Minnesota. Their lake association has a tradition of putting together a boat parade every Fourth of July.

For the past I don't know how many years, we've decorated our family's pontoon to the best of our ability, tying pinwheels and plastic streamers to it to show our patriotic pride. Every boat "dresses up". It's fun to see how much people care.

This year, it was cold and rainy. There were only seven other boats circling the lake instead of the usual fifteen or so. My favorite participant was the fishing boat with the giant flagpole and flag standing near the front, while the proud and happy owner sat next to it, clearly pleased with how his entry turned out.

Since their boat leads the parade,



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

my grandparents chugged their pontoon along slowly, driving past empty docks where spectators usually wave and where we usually toss children our fun trinkets of rubber duckies and footballs. It's so fun to see their faces light up. But of course, this year there were only a few children braving the cool temperatures.

The boat parade is in the afternoon, so we spent the morning at a nearby park playing pickleball, one of my favorite sports. My grandparents taught me to play, but now when I'm in school, I play intramural pickleball doubles with my best friend. Not to brag, but I was the

best player in my family until my sister started tennis, and now we're pretty matched in skill level. Don't tell her that though.

We were playing some games of pickleball the night before and I won a game: Then she dominated me in the next one. I asked her what had changed and she said all she did was tell herself that she could actually do it. And she did. Wise words from Lizzie Roessler we should all take to heart - "you can do it."

But of course, the most popular part of the Fourth of July is the fireworks, not pickleball (although I am all for changing that). While I

enjoy fireworks, we as a family don't really enjoy them because they upset the dogs. Maybe someday we'll have dogs that don't shake so violently it seems they're about to quiver all of their fur off. We've tried the thundershirts and the blasting of the television volume, but nothing really seems to work. They just have to get through the night.

But I feel like some of us have lost sight of the true meaning of the Fourth of July. I know I have. Instead of appreciating my freedom and liberties that I take for granted every day, I look forward to going swimming and spending time on the lake. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe everyone else is enjoying their freedoms and appreciating the good ol' U.S. of A. I do hope so.

My Determination: "Yeah, life is a carousel. A great big crazy ball of pure living, breathing joy and delight. You gotta get one." - Ferris Bueller, Ferris Bueller's Day Off

Doing good for good's sake

Celebrating the Fourth of July this year, I felt some noticeable absences. This was the first Fourth since my grandfather, Dean Richardson, passed away last August. He loved fireworks. He and my mother's boyfriend would go all out for fireworks. Every year, it seemed, someone barely escaped with all of their fingers, or with all the hair on their head. This year we didn't have any family celebration.

The other noticeable absence was that of more than one best friend. Two folks I love to spend time with are in Florida on work. And my other best friend, well, he died in October.

I spent the Fourth at a grill-out with my favorite cousin, Taya—who was married to the best friend who died in October. It added a surreal touch to see their 2-year-old son run around without his father to chase him.

It seems to be commonly understood that people begin losing loved ones sometime in their 20s. It has been a year of losses.

It's hard to walk through the Remax building without thinking of Blair. The reminders of him, my grandfather, and my best friend jump out at me when I least expect it.

During Blair's funeral the pastor said when moments like that happen, it's those people saying hello. "Let those moments happen. Appreciate them."

I can't walk past Blair's desk without thinking there should be a can of Coke there.

The Fourth of July will always remind me of my grandpa.

And 2-year-old Gavin will always remind me of his dad, my friend Bryant.

I knew Bryant from the time we were both in daycare. When we met each other, he told me he didn't like me. That lasted a long time. I share that story, because prior to last week,



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

I hadn't seen Gavin since his second birthday a couple months ago. Then Taya showed up at my office. The little guy barely remembered me and I swear it took 45 minutes before he gave me a hug. Just like his dad—hesitant to give his love away at first.

This time, on the Fourth, he remembered me right away, ran up and gave me a hug.

Seeing little Gavin play with Taya I'm reminded kids need a male role model. I can't really explain it, but I know that's important. Yin and yang, I suppose.

Speaking of good and bad, a reader told me they enjoy it when I write about religion.

I was talking with a friend the other day and he mentioned that Catholics believe good deeds are really only good if a person does them for God. I gave that some deep thought because, really, how could doing a good deed for another reason be any less good?

And then I got to thinking. If a person sees an opportunity to do good, and they don't have faith, the person is likely left weighing the options of whether they should do the good deed or not. They must use their judgment.

I thought about this after I decided I should start using opportunities to do good deeds, to do them for God, instead of just because they're good. What I found was that I was much more likely to do the good deed. If there was a piece of trash on the

ground, I didn't think, "Why should I be the one to pick that up?" I simply started saying, well, I'm doing this one for You.

And then I got to more thinking, if everyone thought that way, the world would be a lot better off.

In the scenario where I just do good to do good, I might be lazy. Or I might choose to ignore a task if no one was around to see me perform it. From another perspective, if someone was watching, I might have chosen to pick up the trash so that I will create a positive impression.

I was out for a walk a month ago, prior to this experiment. I walked through the Legion Field complex in New Richland: Near the playground a trash can was knocked over and some trash was blown around. I stood the trash can back up and collected the garbage. My reason for doing so was because I love baseball, and I take pride in the field/playground I grew up playing on. I don't think I would have gone through the trouble to pick it up otherwise. The thought also occurred to me at this time that the city should have the same enclosed garbage containers they use by the fields at this adjacent playground. I say this because if not for my faith, or my pride for the area, I would have likely left after that thought and done nothing.

I'd like to think I would have picked up the garbage regardless, but I don't think so.

My conclusion is pretty simple. Do good for God, or for whatever

reasons you have. Just do good.

While I'm on this religion kick, I'll add some more. My Catholic friend has been doing some teaching with me. (I've gone through a few different bible study type activities since becoming an adult. This is the first Catholic style one.)

One of my disagreements with my friend is kind of based around the "works" part of Catholicism. Honestly, I just really can't imagine Heaven without my best friend there. I talked to him multiple times about religion and my faith. I never tried to convince him of anything. He asked questions, I told him how it impacted my life and why.

He told me it had such a profound effect that he started reading the Bible. And then he had a seizure while reading the Bible. (My friend had epilepsy.) He didn't read the Bible again.

He told me this years afterward when he asked about my faith again. I feel like I let my friend down sometimes, by not properly being able to explain my faith to him. I think that's part of the reason I work so hard still, to learn more and be stronger in my faith.

These same thoughts came back into my mind when Blair died. Blair never talked about his faith, but I knew he was a good person. (And later learned he did actually go to church.) The thought of not seeing Blair again in Heaven didn't seem real. Did that mean I would have to mourn him now and later? And truly never see him again? I just can't imagine and couldn't imagine a Heaven without Blair.

I don't have all, or really any of the answers. Just observations from a writer who misses those he's lost this past year.

"Is this Heaven? No, it's Iowa." - Field of Dreams.



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

PHONE: 507-837-6767

email: news@wasecacountypioneer.com

Address: 103 S. State Street

Mail: PO Box 578, Waseca MN 56093

DEADLINES: Pioneer: Noon Tuesday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

ELI LUTGENS	Publisher
MICHAEL ROY	Editor
JON LUCCA	Production Manager
DEB BENTLY	News Editor
JIM LUTGENS	Sports Editor/Dad
AMELIA ROESSLER	Editorial Assistant
JESSICA LUTGENS	Staff Writer
TRISTAN JENSEN	Staff writer
RACHEL LOVERINK	Staff Writer
MELISSA DUNN	Staff Writer

Contributing writers/photographers: Dave Zika, Santiago Ramirez. Al Batt

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

Waseca County Pioneer (USPS permit #25304) is published weekly on Friday, by Pioneer Publications Inc., 103 S. State St., Waseca, MN, 56093. Periodicals Postage at New Richland, MN. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Waseca County Pioneer, P.O. Box 578, Waseca, MN, 56093.



Katelyn Hodgkins braces herself to be dropped in the dunking booth.

Waseca library water carnival

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

An estimated 450 children and a few adults had the opportunity to cool off from the summer heat with a water carnival at Trowbridge Park on Thursday, June 29 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The event has been held annually by the Waseca Public Library for the past few years to give families a reason to cool off and enjoy the park. “We wanted to put on an event for the whole family to enjoy,” said librarian Brianna Bleeker.

The carnival’s main attractions were the dunking booth — where children were given three opportunities to dunk volunteers in the tank — and the bouncy castle, which in-

cluded a slide with a pool of water at the bottom. Crafts and the nearby playgrounds equipment were some of the other activities available. After everyone got the energy out of their system, the library provided hot dog meals for lunch.

“We planned for 450,” Bleeker explained. “Last year, we did the same and we had a few leftover hot dogs. But this year we were hopeful that a few more families would come out.”

The carnival was made possible with grants provided by the city, the state of Minnesota, and other library-related funding opportunities. “We are so thankful for those grants,” Bleeker said. “It allows us to have fun events like this.”



HEADS UP — It was a slippery slide down the bounce house into a pool of water for many kids at the Waseca Library’s water carnival.
Pioneer photos by Michael Roy



Helen Fowler

One year and many comments later...

“Finally, a local paper I won’t be wrapping fish in, or lining our birdcage with!” wrote area resident Jurgen Peters on the form he submitted to subscribe.

Patricia Skov commented, ““Thanks for taking the chance on this great idea for a local paper. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this edition. All the stories were great and well done and it was so refreshing to read local news about local people.”

One year ago on July 1, all residents of Waseca County found the Pioneer’s first edition in their mailboxes. That sample copy featured the news that Tim and Becky Dennis, who had been operating a number of area funeral homes in the Waseca area for about 30 years, were retiring; they shared many memories of raising a family while also operating a business. The issue’s lead story told about the publication—its roots, central purpose, and branchings. Inside was coverage of sporting events and area celebrations. The “opinion” page featured various staff members introducing themselves and their intentions for the new publication.

What may have seemed sudden to most had actually been months in the making.

Eli Lutgens, a young 20-something who had taken over the NRHEG Star Eagle from his father, long-time area journalist Jim Lutgens, had decided to expand his boundaries. Disappointed with the coverage the Waseca community was receiving—the town’s only newspaper at the time did not even have a locally based reporter—he had decided it was a vacuum he had the skills and resources to fill.

With a commitment from Ja-

Museum worthy Antiques of Waldorf open

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editorial Assistant

Susan Jirele is selling her antiques every second weekend of the month from May through October in Waldorf because her son told her he needed to downsize.

“I was at home with all sorts of things,” Jirele explained, “and my son said ‘Mother, you need to get rid of stuff.’ I said, ‘Well if I had a store...’”

So that’s what her son did - bought her the old Deml grocery store in Waldorf. “It was oh just perfect,” Jirele said. She explained that the building was about to “be pushed over the hill” and that it had a leaking ceiling and needed a new floor. But her son, one of five Jirele children, is handy: He fixed the building up so that she could have a storefront and he could live upstairs with his children.

While Jirele had her store open a recent weekend in June, she was babysitting those grandchildren—three boys and her “ballerina.” They kept her company as she watched over the main room with her antiques, most of which she had owned prior to buying the store and some of which she had purchased at an auction.

A great many of Jirele’s antiques have stories behind them. An old sink from a relative’s cabin, an old rocking chair that rode on a covered wagon, her great-grandma’s dress, tea cups, plates, dolls, and even an



TEA ANYONE? - Susan Jirele started “Antiques of Waldorf” this past May after renovating the old Deml grocery store building.
Pioneer photo by Amelia Roessler

old crank radio.

“The question is what to do with all this stuff,” Jirele said as she walked among the items remembering the dates and origins of many of them. Some, including an old rocking chair, Jirele originally purchased for herself. Because of that, she said she won’t sell it for anything less than she thinks it’s worth. Other items Jirele believes should be in a museum, including the one chair that rode on a covered wagon.

Jirele said the reason she isn’t at the store every day is because she’s starting out by testing what level of interest her items attract.

“I don’t want to be closed so that I’m never open and so by saying one

“My son said, ‘Mother, you need to get rid of stuff.’ I said, ‘Well if I had a store...’”
— Susan Jirele

weekend a month, I’m seeing if I get anybody,” Jirele said. “If some people start coming, I’ll be here more.”

The problem that Jirele faces is that she doesn’t live nearby, but rather ten miles away, halfway between Waldorf and Waseca. Her advice for anyone wanting to do this is “you need to be the person living upstairs.”

But Jirele has more ideas for the

place besides only an antique store. She tossed around the ideas of making it a restaurant, or a tea place, or even a place where she could teach home economics classes, something she used to do for a living when she was younger. “There’s a lot that can be taught in these things,” Jirele said, “not just the basics.”

Jirele hopes that her store can one day be considered a destination, not just a store that sells antiques.

Officers chosen

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

The Waseca Exchange Club elected its 2023-24 board of directors and officers at its meeting on Tuesday, June 27. Although there wasn’t an official vote count by the end of the meeting, the following members were written as volunteers and candidates: Sally Takala, President; Mikhail Rostislavovich, President Elect; Caryn Wendt, Secretary and Treasurer; and Board of Directors Perry Berg and Tom Sankovitz.

Takala shared that she will step down from her position as president at the end of the year; her term lasts until April of 2023.

Members present were also asked to join volunteer teams. Currently, Sankovitz is part of the club’s red team, which is in charge of public relations, membership development, and membership enrichment. Mark Butterfield, Linda Johnson, and Wendt are part of the white team, which is in charge of awarding and sponsoring a Waseca Student of the Month and working with community schools on projects. Berg and Johnson are on the blue team, which is in charge of community projects like highway cleanups and child abuse prevention and awareness.

Group members were asked to bring ideas for activities the exchange club can use to raise money to their July 11 meeting. They are also considering bringing in a speaker for the July 25 meeting.

Fond memories of past Independence Days

Another Independence day, July 4th, is in the books, it has come and gone. I have so many fond memories of the celebration.

When our kids were young we’d get together with friends, have a wonderful afternoon grilling and stuffing our tummies with food, and heading down to Clear Lake park just before dusk. I’m sure that mosquitoes also mark down July 4th on the calendar: They’d be there in full force. The kids would run off together to play, and the adults would sit in lawn chairs waiting for Waseca’s fantastic pyrotechnic display. At dark we all assembled and watched the fireworks. We’d oooooo and ahhh at the display in the lit of colors, sounds, and effects; If one was exceptional we’d give it a ten handclapper.

We would also sometimes go to Austin, my hometown, and attend the 4th of July Spam days parade. It was



Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika

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a long, first class parade, and a big time celebrity was always prominently featured. Grandma Adie would run out with Marc and Katie and gather candy with them from the candy throwers. One exciting year, Mom and Dad were the winners of a contest they entered. The prize, given by Hormel, was a trip to Hawaii. My mom was ecstatic and my dad, not so much. I remember Dad saying “Wow, they even threw in a case of Spam!”

After the kids were off to college or married, we’d get together at a

cabin in Wisconsin on Island Lake. The Denz, Jack and Mary, were the hosts, and we’d lead up with the Gilbertsons and Buums and take a three-hour drive to celebrate the 4th of July—for several days!! One year we entered the lake pontoon parade contest. We dressed up like pirates, decorated the pontoon with skulls, crossbone, and chests of gold, and sailed away into the parade. Jack had even constructed a small cannon we had on board. I remember that we did win a prize, don’t remember much after that. We did what all good pi-

rates do on a cruise, so I was in bed early!

Now that we are a bit older, Lisa and I spend the 4th at our cabin on Tetonka. This year I looked at the calendar and saw the 4th was on a Tuesday. That translates to lights and noises in the sky late into the night from Friday through Tuesday evening. There are cabins on both sides of us and down the shore with Americans who love to celebrate. Once in a while a loud boom will vibrate the cabin. Some of the nighttime fireworks shot off docks are spectacular: Certain neighbors spend a couple of thousand on their celebrations. Our dog Sammy is totally stressed out with the sound of the explosions, both far and near. She would have spent the entire four days under a bed at the cabin, so this 4th we spent our time at our home in Waseca. Sammy is healthy and happy and all is well.

As I watched the news I saw they

were closing down the stone arch bridge in the evening and taking precautions to monitor fireworks shot from moving vehicles in the Twin Cities. They showed videos from last year; it was frightening to watch as fire shot from people’s cars. But why the preventive measures? Because it’s nearly impossible to differentiate between gunshots and fireworks. Also saw a clip from Hudson, Wisconsin, where sellers at fireworks stores were interviewed; turns out, 75% of the sales are people from Minnesota buying high powered fireworks, because it is illegal to sell them in Minnesota. I have no idea what “illegal” means; guess anyone who chooses can cross the border and buy whatever firework they choose. It’s the choice of every Minnesotan.

Zika continued on 5

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OBITUARIES

Anita E. Swift

Anita Ester Swift, age 76 of Waterville, died at Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato on the morning of Sunday, July 2, 2023, shortly after being diagnosed with an aggressively advancing cancer.

Anita was born in Waseca on July 23, 1946, to parents Robert and Janette (Seljeskog) Byrne. She attended school in Waterville before continuing her education at the Brown Institute of Broadcasting in Minneapolis. She worked for a short time at KTOE Radio in Mankato before her marriage to Donald Swift in 1966. Shortly after Don finished his schooling they returned to Waterville where they raised their family together. Anita went on to work for over twenty years as a teacher, education director, and site manager for Migrant Head Start in Montgomery, Elysian, and Waseca. She enjoyed joining Don in baseball, golf, bowling, and horseshoes, and she enjoyed her previous involvement in cub scouts, girl scouts, school activities, church events, bowling events, and baseball picnics. She was a long-time member of the Waterville Evangelical United Methodist Church.

Anita is survived by two children, Kevin Swift of Chippewa Falls, WI, and Robyn Swift of Waterville; four grandchildren, Marissa (Nate) Lenhart of Dallas, WI, Arica (Jackson) Wierenga of Chippewa Falls, WI, Teagan Swift of Chippewa Falls, WI, and Colin Swift of Waterville; and two great-grandchildren, Blaze and Lily Lenhart. She is also survived by six siblings, LuAnn Byrne of Waseca, Bob Byrne, Jr. of Waseca,



Anita E. Swift

Donald (Debby) Byrne of Waterville, Linda Rumrey of Aberdeen, SD, Peggy Klotz of Owatonna, and Sharon Byrne of Waterville; and many nieces, nephews; and other friends and relatives. She was preceded in death by both of her parents; her husband; and a brother, Jimmy Byrne.

Visitation will be held from 4:00 until 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 13, 2023 at the Waterville Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service, and will continue for one hour before the service at the church on Friday.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, July 14, 2023 at the Waterville Evangelical United Methodist Church, with Rev. Kathy King officiating. A private family interment service will take place at Sakatah Cemetery in Waterville. dsfuneral.com
Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service
Waseca ~ Janesville ~ Waterville

Jon M. Weiske

Jon Michael Weiske of New Richland, MN passed away Thursday, June 29th, 2023 at the age of 78. A graveside memorial took place at 3:15 PM Thursday, July 6, 2023 at St. Peter's Cemetery in New Richland; a time for visitation was held at Friederich's Funeral Home in New Richland from 2 p.m. until 3:00 PM.

In the spring of 1945, Clarence and Verda Weiske welcomed a baby boy into the world on April 23rd in Madelia, MN. Jon grew up alongside his siblings, Mark, Jane, and Judy; moving from Lewisville, MN to Waseca when he was in 5th grade. After graduating from Waseca in 1963, Jon met his future wife, Audrey Schlaak, and the two married on February 13, 1971 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New Richland.

The two welcomed one son, Mike, into their family, and settled down in Waseca, where Jon worked farming most of his life. Along with farming Jon worked at a few other places during his life, spending some time at Brown Printing and Corchran Inc, both out of Waseca. When he wasn't hard at work, Jon enjoyed spending time with his wife, Audrey, watching Wheel of Fortune with her after dinner nearly every night and enjoying day trips together



Jon Weiske

when they could. Jon also enjoyed hunting, fishing, watching movies, and playing cards.

Preceding Jon in passing are his parents; sister and brother-in-law, Judy and John Deling; his grandparents; and his mother and father-in-law, Grace and Marvin Schlaak.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Audrey; son Mike Weiske and his partner Jeanne Selvy; brother, Mark (Joanne) Weiske of Waseca; sister, Jane (Dennis) Hager of Wabasha; sisters-in-law, Sandra Schlomann and Gerri (David) Lienke; two grandchildren, Brenden Weiske and Maverick Herriley; and several nieces and nephews.

Ruth Walther

Ruth Margarethe Christiane (Ewert) Walther, age 99, of Janesville passed away on Tuesday, July 4, 2023 at Whispering Creek Nursing Home in Janesville.

Ruth was born on July 25, 1923 in Alton Township, Waseca County to Erich and Hulda (Nicolai) Ewert. She attended county school through the sixth grade then attended Trinity Lutheran School for seventh and eighth grade. She graduated from Janesville High School and graduated from the University of Minnesota with a BS degree in dietetics. She worked as a dietitian at Barns Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri and at Mercy Hospital in Burlington, Iowa. She married Vernon Walther on May 17, 1948 at Trinity Lutheran Church.

She was a long-time member of Mother's Club. She enjoyed doing counted cross stitch and volunteering at the church and nursing home.

Ruth is survived by her children, James Walther of Forest Hill, MD, Tom (Dianne) Walther of Waseca, Barbara (Larry) Flaten of Janesville, Judy (Dan) Seys of Janesville; seven grandchildren; fourteen great-grandchildren; and



Ruth Walther

sister, Arlene Tschirhart of San Antonio, TX.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Vernon Walther; parents, Erich and Hulda Ewert; brothers, Loren Ewert, Marty Ewert; sister, Vera Lundquist; and daughter-in-law, Naomi Walther.

A private family service for Ruth is being held. Private interment at Janesville Cemetery. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service is handling arrangements.

Pioneer

from Page 1

gens. "It was a gaping hole in what a community should have." The regionally-owned paper didn't even have a staff writer located in Waseca at the time.

Roy's coverage of Waseca sports began appearing in the Star Eagle in December 2021. Since then, his dual positions as a writer both for the Pioneer and for the Janesville Journal have him attending sporting events of all types over a very wide area, including state competitions.

He finds it rewarding to be part of the dedication and passion shown at contests at every level. He is also grateful to be in a position to record history. He mentions the combined Janesville/Waterville wrestling team's accomplishments this year which included Keegan Kuball becoming state champion in the 285-pound weight division, soon-to-be sophomore Brady Murphy placing 4th in his first-ever state tournament, and Jack Cahill ending his high school career as a state participant.

"We've got a long line of successful wrestlers in the region," Roy observes. "I'm glad to have been part of that," he says. "By knowing what's happened in the past, I'm in a better position to write about what's happening in the present."

Roy admits that attending and writing about so many events is very demanding. Despite the long workdays and the many tasks he is called upon to take care of, though, he says it's worthwhile and rewarding enough to keep him willing to continue. And, he confesses, "Being young helps."

Waseca High School 2021 graduate and University of Minnesota journalism student Amelia Roessler was the second writer recruited for the Pioneer.

She began working out of the Star Eagle office in spring of 2022 shortly after the college spring semester ended. She sought out a job as a news writer to get some practical experience in the field; college programs being as they are, she had not yet taken a single course in journalism, even though it was her major.

The informal atmosphere and close-knit staff took her by surprise, but she adapted quickly. When sent to cover high school events, she had the advantage of being able to interview and take pictures of her former classmates—having been very active in band and choir, it was almost like coming home.

She not only wrote for the paper, but contributed her time to help set up the Pioneer's Waseca office and helped with non-writing tasks associated with record keeping and billing. She acknowledges those tasks are important, but says telling about people's accomplishments and projects is what she finds worthwhile.

"I get to talk to people, learn about them," she says. "I always feel glad I can tell their story."

"It's demanding," she admits. On a recent day she had already been working for 11 hours, and had so far written only eight of the 14 pieces on her docket.

Despite the demands, she is glad to have been part of starting the Pioneer, and grateful to be on its staff again this summer.

She thinks back to the Catholic Daughters' annual pillow fluffing event last year. "Those ladies were so grateful somebody wanted to write

about them and what they were doing," she remembers. "It had real personal meaning to them—that gave it a gravity that really stays with me."

When she returned to the University of Minnesota last fall, her experience at the Pioneer helped Roessler get a job with the campus newspaper, the Minnesota Daily. In spring when she decided to take part in an international exchange program in Spain, she was encouraged to submit weekly columns about her experiences. Now that she's back in Waseca, she says, it's as if everyone were one of her relatives who took the time to learn about her travels. "It's as if these people know me intimately," she jokes.

She mentions some of the fundraisers and charity events she has covered, including the O'Brien golf tournament benefit. "It's a great reminder to give back," she says.

Another source of inspiration for Roessler are the other members of the Pioneer staff. She mentions Eli Lutgens' desire to see the residents of Waseca receive local coverage—to a degree that he was willing to start a new newspaper—the only one started in the state of Minnesota in years.

Thanks to that inspiration, and to the variety the job represents, Roessler says she is glad to be associated with the Pioneer. "It's unique," she says. "I do something different every day. I get to know people and businesses. I see how a community works, how it is made up of the contributions of many different people."

"And I see why it's important to be sure those people's stories are told."

Like Roessler, 2021 NRHEG graduate Jonah Stafford began working for the Star Eagle in May of 2022, and contributed to the Pioneer as it began publishing in July.

Stafford is a student at St. Mary's University in Winona, where he is majoring in public relations and digital media. He had also been a writer for the NRHEG school newspaper, the Panther Press, which publishes its editions in the Star Eagle.

Stafford, too, finds community connection the most rewarding part of being a newspaper writer. His thoughts turn first to a story he worked on regarding a specially planned hunt which included injured Waseca policeman Arik Matson. He also remembers a story about a Girl Scout food drive, and the information he included about food insecurity and its profound effects on families.

In fact, Stafford is willing to go so far as to say he has learned important life lessons while writing for the Pioneer.

"It's exciting and humbling," he says "to be part of a newspaper launch in 2022. This is a time when we think of papers closing. I'm pretty sure it's a story I'll be telling until the end of my career...someday."

He says he has also learned to demand more from himself. "You have to ask yourself what kind of reporter you want to be."

Being aware of the important role a newspaper plays in a community is an important form of encouragement when the demands of the job become intimidating.

Stafford says he is especially encouraged because of the positive approach community members have to the Pioneer and to his work.

"I'm grateful for all the people I've met and gotten to know," he finishes. Remembering back to the first few editions of the Pioneer, he re-

members, "They were flying off the store shelves. That was proof to me that small-town newspapers still matter."

Writer and editor Deb Bently was an English language arts teacher at NRHEG in the spring of 2022. She was approached by Eli Lutgens and asked whether she would be willing to write a few stories for the Pioneer. With the school year coming to an end, and with the close association that had come about because of the school newspaper being published in the Star Eagle, Bently says she was glad to consent. Her first story assignment was to write about Tim and Becky Dennis, funeral home managers who were retiring from decades of service to the community that June.

"The interview was delightful," Bently remembers. "Just as Tim and Becky are delightful people. It was a privilege to tell their story."

Before becoming a teacher in the early 1990s, Bently had been a reporter and writer, first for the Waseca Weekly, and afterward for The Arabian Horse Times. Early in her marriage and career at that time, Bently describes having been faced with a choice: "I realized that if I wanted to advance to a comfortable career as a writer, I would have to leave Waseca," she recalls. "I would need to find a publication that was large and successful enough to be able to provide support to a growing family—things like higher pay and company-provided health insurance."

But she had no interest in leaving the area. She enjoyed being part of a large extended family. She wanted to raise her children—the ones at this point she was only thinking of having—with the support and love of their grandparents and great-grandparents. She thought of herself as a Wasecan, and had no interest in living in a big city.

Weighing these factors, she decided to go back to college and meet the requirements to become a teacher. By 1991, she was working for the NRHEG school district; by 1994 she had joined the school's staff. For a few years, she taught both English and German. After a time, the district decided to end the German program and Bently was teaching English full time.

Not that she stopped there. During the nearly 28 years Bently worked at NRHEG she was the coach of the speech team, the founder and operator of the school's drama club, a one-act play director, advisor to the student newspaper, senior class advisor, and held numerous leadership roles in the teachers' association. She taught a wide range of classes including journalistic writing, college composition, and a "drama and the theater" course.

Never forgetting her roots as a journalist, she frequently wrote articles about people and events at the school. "There is so much dedication and passion shown not only by students, but by the adults who look after them," says Bently. "Those stories needed to be shared, and I was grateful that I had the skills and resources to share them." True to the paper's name, Bently's stories were published in the NRHEG Star Eagle.

"When someone shares their story to me, I feel as if I have been entrusted with a treasure. I regard it as my obligation to pass that treasure along as richly and accurately as pos-

sible. The words, the pictures, the mood and tone of the writing, they all have to work together to bring the story alive for the reader while recording it accurately for the person or people it's about."

Stories that Bently thinks of when she remembers what she's written for the Pioneer include a recent one about the Waldorf graduating class of 1953, the story of WWII era veteran Norm Gehring, and a story she wrote for the first Pioneer about how the newspaper came to be.

"Even with decades of experience as a writer, I can tell you that the job is demanding," says Bently. "Sometimes the piece has to be written quickly, even under pressure. Sometimes it simply seems there aren't enough words in the language to do a story justice."

"But we do our best, because that's what people deserve."

"It's a privilege to be a writer, to record history and to tell people's stories. It's also an obligation."

Writer and columnist Missy Dunn has been a Waseca resident since the 1990s. Coincidentally, her first job when she came to town back then was as the circulation manager for the Waseca County News under Tom West.

Although she says she has always enjoyed writing, she had never taken the job on until beginning to write for the Pioneer in the fall of 2022. Married to long-time school board member Dave Dunn, she consented to begin covering school board meetings. Later she began pursuing less "newsy" stories.

She remembers the feature story she wrote about Waseca health care professional Hua Zhu, who performs acupuncture, acupressure, and other Eastern forms of treatment. "It felt good to let people know about this possibility," she remembers. "And I was really pleased that I got to tell about Hua and all she is capable of."

Dunn says she persistently hears positive comments about the Pioneer. She is proud to be a contributor because, she says, the publication provides a strong representation of the community and the positive things that happen here. "We make people aware of those things," she says. "We record them, and we provide a wider perspective. People are glad to see a presence like ours at events they deem important."

"I'm grateful to be a part of that."

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FANS - Zoe Thompson and Randi Piha in front of the cardboard cutout of Taylor Swift. Pioneer photo by Jonah Stafford

Library event centers around Taylor Swift

By JONAH STAFFORD
Staff Writer

Swifties rejoiced as the Waseca Public Library put on a Taylor Swift party on Thursday, June 22. It was the perfect time to celebrate the music superstar, as Swift performed two concerts at the U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis last Friday and Saturday night. Adding to the spectacle, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Fray temporarily renamed the city “Swiftie-apolis”; Governor Tim Walz called June 23 and 24 “Taylor Swift Days.”

Waseca’s Taylor Swift party featured themed decor and refreshments, along with several activities and crafts to make. The host was Waseca librarian Afton Finley, who curated a playlist of Swift’s great-

est hits, including “Mean,” “Picture To Burn,” and “You Need To Calm Down.”

After a heated round of Taylor Swift Jeopardy, guests were invited to make beaded friendship bracelets and decorate fabric tote bags, decorating them with iconography from their favorite Taylor Swift songs and albums. They also played a game that Finley called “balloon bop,” in which guests took turns popping balloons with Taylor Swift lyrics in them, winning points as they filled in the blanks correctly. As the party drew to a close, Finley gave out Taylor Swift stickers to reward guests for being “good sports,” during the trivia game.



Alexis Myers and Amy Nelson of Waseca 4-H publicizing a new “Power of Produce” program. Pioneer photo by Amelia Roessler

Program offers free produce

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editorial Assistant

The Power of Produce (PoP) club, a new 4-H program meant to assure children have better access to fresh produce, shared information about a service it will provide beginning after the county fair and continuing until the farmers’ market stops operating sometime in the fall.

According to Amy Nelson, University of Minnesota Extension educator and 4-H Youth Development coordinator, kids under 18 can come to the farmers’ market and register for the PoP club. They will then receive a \$5 voucher to

spend at any of the vendors for fresh fruit, produce, canned, pickled, freeze-dried or dehydrated vegetables, or eggs. The vendors will be reimbursed through the PoP program, a joint partnership between 4-H, Waseca County Public Health, and Mayo Clinic.

According to Nelson, the program is modeled after similar successful clubs in Mankato, Faribault and Albert Lea.

“It’s to promote a healthier community and better eating habits,” she said. “Usually when kids have a chance to pick what they’re going to eat, they’re more apt to try different things.”

Council

from Page 1

perusal. He also suggested that identifying information should be posted

Audio

from Page 1

loved doing.”

But he wanted to find a way to work for himself. So, for a time, he did electrical servicing and upgrades as a side hustle from his garage.

Poe officially got the LLC for his business in 2021, but he didn’t have a permanent location until last August when he bought the Waseca building that used to belong to Condon Farm Service.

“I never had an open house day because I was accepting clients before and since moving in,” he admits. “I installed everything and renovated the place in November.”

Now, he’s able to call himself a “full service upgrade shop.”

“I don’t do mechanical work; it’s

beneath historic city photos on display in the council chambers.

Other items approved during the meeting included previous meeting minutes, expenditures, a residential tax abatement for a new property and two public hearings were set for: July 5, a public nuisance at 501 3rd St.

all electrical,” he elaborates. “I do running boards, brake controllers, can install remote starts in vehicles, upgrade car audio — among other things.”

Basically, he works on “anything related to the engine itself.”

“I don’t do tires and rim work. I mostly cover the after-market accessories,” he says.

Poe believes Waseca is an excellent location for his services. “If you want another shop doing what I do, you have to either travel to Mankato, Rochester, or maybe Albert Lea. I wanted to provide a closer location for people in the Waseca area.”

When it comes to his choice to locate locally, “What really made the decision for me was that I live here with my wife. It’s nice here, and I’m much closer here than I would be owning a business in Owatonna. It’s a great town with a great population.”

Poe’s love for Waseca was recip-

NE, and July 18 for the THC/cannabis moratorium.

During updates from the council, it was mentioned that the tourism board is looking for donations to help fund the city’s fireworks, as it no longer receives income from the “Sinister Forest” Halloween fund-

raiser. It was announced that work on the Johnson Pavilion at Clear Lake Park is done. The next city council meeting is set for Wednesday, July 5. The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

He’s learned how to manage and budget his costs, keep his inventory stocked, and make sure he’s providing accurate estimates. “It’s a lot to look into, especially when you’re doing things yourself,” he says.

That’s why he urges new businesspeople to do their research. “There are lots of ins and outs when it comes to business, including taxes,” he adds. “It’s helpful to have an accountant.

“It’s also important to understand the specifics of your line of work,” he continues. “I’ve spent countless hours doing research. I didn’t go to college for this. It’s all on-the-job experience. There are lots of stresses involved.”

Despite the challenges, though, Poe says he wouldn’t change it for the world. “I love what I do,” he concludes. “I love going to work every day: I hope I show that every time I provide my service to a customer.”

Paper

from Page 3

nesville Journal writer Mke Roy, they had begun including coverage of Waseca school sports events in the Star Eagle back before Christmas: Now the Blue jays would have pages of their own. Also on staff was University of Minnesota journalism student Amelia Roessler. NRHEG teacher and former journalist Deb Bently had also agreed to commit part of her summer.

The July 1 edition offered introductory subscription rates and invited area residents to get “the best news coverage” of their community. The July 8 edition, mailed free to all Waseca addresses, repeated the offer.

Within less than a month, 500 subscriptions had been sold. Eli remembers going to the Pioneer’s post office box one day and pulling out a stack of subscription orders so bulky that it required two hands to hold them all. “That made me feel good about what we were doing,” he recalls.

Calls and suggestions came in for story ideas. One was the suggestion that area resident Helen Fowler, who would turn 102 on August 5, might be an excellent candidate for an interview.

Deb Bently contacted Helen and spent nearly two hours talking with her about her memories and experiences. At the time, Helen was living on her own and still driving herself from place to place.

By happy coincidence, the story about her published on her 102nd

birthday. “It was pretty exciting,” remembers Helen. “I was flattered. Somehow all my relatives saw it and they got a big kick out of it.” She later learned that family members from across 7 states had all seen the story.

After a century as a Waseca resident, Helen describes the paper as an important asset to the community. “It does a good job of telling our stories,” she said in a recent interview. “I like it much better than some of the others there have been. We learn news about what’s happening here, and we find out about things we didn’t know.”

Helen is not alone in her satisfaction. Below are some comments sent to the Pioneer over the past year:

“Wishing you the best in your new journey! This is much needed and I think all of Waseca is behind you.

Good luck!”

“You outdo any newspaper around. Love your paper!” - Sue Wobschall

“Thanks for taking the chance on this great idea for a local paper. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this edition of the paper. All the stories were great and well done and it was so refreshing to read local news about local people.” - Caryn Wendt

“We so enjoyed the new Pioneer - it’s wonderful to get all the local news and a bit of its history.” - Larry and Judy Hagen

“Thanks to you and your journalists for providing our community with interesting articles and photos in the Waseca County Pioneer. Keep up the good work!” - Marie And Russell Tesch

“Congratulations on a beautiful newspaper!” - Virginia McCarthy

Zika

from Page 3

Our 4th of July was very peaceful—had a great meal with family and listened to fireworks in the distance, coming from Clear Lake. Sammy

only spent a couple of hours under the bed.

Spending the weekend at home, Sammy and master took a walk across the street to the park. I found a monarch caterpillar stressed out on a milkweed plant on a 90-degree day. I picked a couple of stalks filled with leaves and placed them in a vase in our shaded garage. It took the caterpillar a while to perk up and begin

chomping away at the leaves. In a couple of days it was twice the size and had munched several tasty leaves. I was anxious to watch it form to a clear chrysalis stage and see the orange adult inside. The next morning the caterpillar was gone, no chrysalis was hanging there. I searched and found nothing hanging from shelves or the bottom of containers and boxes. A couple of days

later I came into the garage, ready to open the garage door and go out for coffee. There it was, a beautiful orange and black butterfly flying in the garage. I opened the garage door and away it flew to a life of gliding through a clear blue sky. I believe the monarch had gained its independence.

Lakefest

from Page 1

of Lakefest are “seeing everyone down here relaxing, enjoying Lakefest, remembering what our country stands for and how our country started in 1776.” Sexton added that “Waseca needs to keep events and continue to grow them,” emphasizing the importance of continuing the tradition of Lakefest. Outside of his new role on the Lakefest committee, Sexton is involved in many organizations in the community, including the American Legion and VFW, and has volunteered for various groups in the past. Sexton’s family has lived in the Waseca area for nearly 100 years and he owns a home along Clear Lake, so taking up the position was a natural fit.

Lakefest included a full day of events and live entertainment, start-

ing with the Freedom Run at 8:30 a.m. Ten community children ran the mile, four dog walkers participated in the “Wigglebutt Dog Walk,” and 40 adults ran the five-mile main event: Cole Streich, already at least a four-time winner of the event, continued his winning streak. Other Lakefest attendees with a competitive bent had the opportunity to play in beanbag and volleyball tournaments in the afternoon.

Kids’ activities, including a coloring contest and face painting by Hazel Moore, were also available.

Pete Klug, the first performer to grace the Lakefest stage, started singing at noon. The blues and folk singer is a New Richland native and, 2005 NRHEG graduate, though he now lives in Eagle Lake. “Waseca is kind of a hometown for me,” said Klug, who’s performed at Lakefest several times in the past. Klug fondly remembers attending Lakefest and the fireworks over Clear Lake when he was younger and said he is happy to be part of continuing the tradition

as an adult. Generation Gap, a Mankato-based grandfather/grandson country duo consisting of Rob Scheitel and Carter Quast, performed next. At 3 p.m., the music took a brief pause for one of the main events of the day: the Lakefest Boat Parade.

The Boat Parade took place on Clear Lake, with a large crowd of spectators watching from the beach. Providing narrative about the various “floats” was Molly Penny, a radio personality known for doing the KOWZ 100.9 FM morning show from Owatonna. “She graduated from Waseca High School, so it’s like coming back home for her,” said Jennifer Johnson, the boat parade chair. Judges consisted of Penny, Waseca Mayor Randy Zimmerman, and Dale DeRaad. They selected five boats in three divisions: “most patriotic,” “most creative,” and “craziest party barge.” The simply titled “Party Barge” won its division unopposed, while Aspy Acres, a Waseca-based animal rescue, had the “most creative” boat. Aspy Acres’

boat was helmed by an inflatable mallard and was followed by a trail of real-live ducks, a fascinating spectacle that was one of the most memorable sights of the day. A boat owned by Tasha Volkmann won the award for being the “most patriotic.” Each winner took home a cash prize.

After the boat parade, live music resumed with a set of covers by Waseca-based performer Melissa Schultz. In addition to singing hits like “Flowers” by Miley Cyrus and “Hold On” by Wilson Phillips at live gigs in southern Minnesota, Schulz teaches music lessons in the community. Los Tequileros and the Gary West Band also performed on the Lakefest stage as day turned to night. Once it was dark, community members got to enjoy a fireworks show over Clear Lake. Emerging from near-cancellation, the joy of Lakefest was able to shine through as the Waseca community and volunteers came together to support their town’s Fourth of July tradition.

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Photos by Jessica Lutgens and Jonah Stafford



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WELL DONE — Braves coach Tink Larson (7) greets Kyle Waugh at first base after one of his two hits in Waseca's 9-3 victory over the Cleveland Spiders Friday, June 30.
Pioneer photo by Jim Lutgens

Two wins improve Braves to 12-2-1

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

In terms of win-loss record, it's looking like the old days at Tink Larson Community Field.

Decades ago, when Larson was a player, before the ballpark was named after him, the Waseca Braves were among the best amateur baseball teams in Minnesota, regularly hosting (and defeating) state powerhouses.

Wins have been tougher to come by in recent years, but the 2023 Braves are an impressive 12-2-1 after defeating Cleveland and Minnesota Lake. That was on the heels of a victory over defending Class A state champion St. Louis Park.

The Braves bested the visiting Cleveland Spiders 9-3 Friday, June 30.

Danny Cromer pitched eight innings for the win, striking out 12 and walking three. Sebastian Teague pitched an inning in relief.

Chris Glynn, Tyson Reger, Kyle Waugh and Alex Feeney had two hits apiece, with one each by Teague and Payton Garza.

"Cromer pitched well again," said Larson. "He retired the last 10 batters he faced. We kind of just kept poking away. No real big innings, just grinding out a run here and there. We had a lot of guys with a hit or two. Tyson Reger might have had the best numbers with two hits, two runs scored, three stolen bases and a run batted in."

The Braves dispatched Minnesota Lake 4-1 on June 23.

Kelvin Nelson pitched a complete game, fanning 11 and walking two while allowing one earned run on seven hits.

Chris Glynn led the offense, going 3-for-4 with two RBIs. Waugh went 2-for-4 with an RBI. Nelson, Seth Anderson and Geno Glynn added one hit apiece.

"It was a very nice win," said Larson. "Kelvin pitched another great game. Chris Glynn had a great game at the plate."

Kyle Waugh had a couple hits and made a fantastic throw from center field to third base to nail a runner for the final out of the game.

WASECA BRAVES SCHEDULE – 2023				
Friday	July 7	Rochester	Home	7:30
Sunday	July 9	Morristown	Home	2:00
Wednesday	July 12	St. Clair	Home	7:30
Friday	July 14	Owatonna	Away	7:30
Sunday	July 16	Waterville	Away	2:00
Wednesday	July 19	League Play-in Game TBD		7:30

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Shining tiaras

Domonoske, Miller, Sluzacek crowned at Elysian pageant

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

The nearly week-long Elysian Fourth of July Celebration kicked off with Desirae Domonoske receiving the honor of becoming Miss Elysian 2023, with Kyleigh Duffey and Abigail Osness as her attendants. Payton Miller was crowned Junior Miss Elysian 2023 with Mackenzie James and Miley Anderson as her attendants. Mia Sluzacek was crowned Princess of the Lakes with her sister Macy as one of her attendants; Meredith James is another.

In addition to the crownings, James and Osness were given awards for their talents.

2023 Miss Elysian Candidates

Desirae Domonoske is the daughter of Chad and Brenda Domonoske. She was sponsored by Mama's Mercantile and the American Legion Post 311 Auxiliary of Elysian. Her talent was giving a presentation about herself, her abilities and skills, and about what the Elysian Fourth of July Celebration meant to her.

Kyleigh Duffey is the daughter of Justin and Stephanie James and William Duffey. She was sponsored by James Brothers Construction and Kuball Dairy. Her talent was a speech about body positivity.

Abigail Osness is the daughter of Tina Lamont. She was sponsored by Scoops, Pamela's Pet Shop, and Up Town Cuts. Her talent was a clarinet solo.

All the Miss Elysian candidates will soon be seniors at Waterville-Elysian-Morristown High School.

2023 Junior Miss Elysian Candidates

Miley Anderson is the daughter of Shawn and Shawn Anderson; her sponsor was Fischer's Corner Bar. Her talent for the night was a bow and arrow demonstration. Mackenzie James, daughter of Jacob and Ellie James, was sponsored by James Brothers Construction and Kuball Dairy. Her talent was performing "The Star Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America" on violin. Payton Miller, daughter of John and Brandis Miller, was sponsored by

Elite Lawn Care. She performed a jazz dance to Lady Gaga's "Bloody Mary."

2023 Princess of the Lakes

There were seven girls around the ages of 5-7 vying for the Princess of the Lakes title; Bailee Ahlman, daughter of Jesse Ahlman and Tiffany Hering; Mackenzie Carr, daughter of Brandon and Katie Carr; Reese Hebl, daughter of Ben and Hillary Hebl; Meredith James, daughter of Jacob and Ellie James; Mary and Mia Sluzacek, daughters of Charlie and Emily Sluzacek; and Taylor Tolzmann, daughter of TJ Tolzmann and Rachel Tolzmann.

After being presented, the candidates performed a dance to "You're a Grand 'Ole Flag."

Questions

The Junior Miss Elysian candidates were the first to answer questions, followed by the Miss Elysian candidates.

Anderson was asked, "Who is your favorite celebrity and why?"

"Probably Britney Spears," she answered. "She's been a big part of my life all my life. I love how inspiring her music is."

James was then asked what makes her unique. "I think what makes me unique is that I play instruments like the violin, I do 4-H and I am the president, and that I play with my siblings a lot."

Miller's question was, "What and why are you most grateful for?"

"I'm most grateful for my family and my friends because they're so supportive of me."

The first Miss Elysian candidate to be asked a question was Desirae Domonoske. Her question was, "If you could go back in time, what advice would you give yourself?"

"Always be confident in yourself, because even if everybody else isn't, you have yourself to lean on," she answered.

Duffey's question was, "What was your biggest challenge, and how did you overcome it?"

"Some of you guys already know this, but it's definitely my eating disorder and overcoming residential



ROYALTY — Top: Miss Elysian 2022 Royalty. From left: Macy Sluzacek, Princess of the Lakes Mia Sluzacek, and Meredith James. Back row: Mackenzie James, Abigail Osness, Junior Miss Elysian Payton Miller, Miss Elysian Desirae Domonoske, Miley Anderson, and Kyleigh Duffey. Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

treatment," she responded.

Osness was then asked, "What do you want people to remember about you?"

"I want people to remember about my heart and how I made them feel," she said.

Miss Elysian 2022 Royalty

As part of their farewell, last year's Junior Miss Elysian royalty performed talents while the Miss Elysian Royalty gave a presentation reviewing the whole year. Isabella Cage, Junior Miss Elysian Attendant, performed a dance to "Look Up Child" by Lauren Daigle while Junior Miss Elysian Madalyn Miller performed a dance to Billie Eilish's "Lovely."

Cage thanked her sponsor, James Brothers Construction, for the opportunity to represent Elysian. "I got to know people from other communities and was able to see how they do their pageants and what they do differently from us."

"I'm so grateful I got the privilege to be part of this community," Miller said. "Thank you to everyone who came out here tonight to support the new royalty. One last thing I would like to do before you welcome the new royalty is thank my parents and all the parents who helped us, in many different ways, including driving us both through parades and providing snacks to all the royalty. Please welcome the new royalty with the same kindness that you welcomed me this past year. Thank

you."

Miss Elysian 2022 Ava LaFrance and her attendant Katrina Brekke thanked their sponsors.

"Thank you all for a great year," Brekke said. "This was a new experience for me to try and come up on stage. I'd like to thank my family for everything. It's been such a wonderful year of meeting other princesses."

LaFrance shared her farewell speech next. "If you would have asked me if I would have gone out for this pageant, I would have said no. But my grandma would have loved this for me. My grandpa probably left a little early already."

"With everything going on, it's been a great year. I got the opportunity to go up to the St. Paul carnival. It was a lot of fun, even though we were freezing our butts off...it was very cold. We also have to eat with two spoons, two forks, and two knives. None of us were prepared."

"All in all, I've met so many different royalty this year. I don't know how many parades we've attended an hour away from us."

"But most of all, thank you all for this opportunity to represent this community. I'm proud to be a part of it. I never would have thought I'd be up here, wearing a crown and a dress, let alone being your Miss Elysian 2022."

Miss Elysian 2023 Speech

When Domonoske was crowned,

Pageant continued on 11

Elysian energy

Dynamic fun marks small town Independence Day celebration

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

Great food, good company, and celebrating the birth of the United States of America: Independence Day in a nutshell.

A couple thousand people were in and out of Elysian to celebrate the city's near week-long Fourth of July Celebration from June 29 to July 4.

Kicking off the celebration was the Miss Elysian Pageant on Thursday, June 29, at the Elysian Fire Department. Miss Elysian 2022 passed on her crown to Desirae Domonoske while Madalyn Miller retired her Junior Miss Elysian duties to Payton Miller. A more in-depth story on the pageant is in this week's paper.

Friday, June 30, was a beautiful day for two medallion hunts, while Saturday was the kids' fishing contest along with kids' bingo and the bean bag tournament. The Johnny Holm Band hit the stage at 9 p.m. and played until 12:30 a.m.

Sunday was the busiest day of all. The Elysian Fire Department held a pancake breakfast featuring Chris Cakes from 8 a.m. to noon; diners were offered the option of either finding a seat near the fire hall or taking their breakfasts to go.

While Elysian residents and visitors enjoyed a hearty breakfast, downtown Main Street was occupied by a flea market. Vendors ranged from local businesses like Ty's Ginseng to others selling Ecuadorian table runners and wooden pan flutes.



ON EDGE — A member of the Mankato Shriners organization takes things to a new level during the Elysian parade.

Pioneer Photo by Michael Roy

There was also the "28th Annual Elysian Car, Truck, Rat Rod, Motor-

Elysian continued on 11

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PLAY TIME — In 1998, Bohdi Crouch and Morgan Weninger convinced Vince Straub, principal, to come out and play on the Trinity Lutheran School's playground.

From Waldorf to Switzerland

1923

-Waldorf will celebrate July 4th. Large posters are out announcing the event. We dare say that anyone and everyone will find the day at that place fully as given over to satisfying the craving for excitement as may be the case in any other of the large towns. We do not exaggerate the situation nor the bigness of coming events when we say that you will not be disappointed if you go to that place.

-We were very much surprised when on Thursday morning this office received a visit from Mr. N. D. Hover of Frederick, Wis. Mr. Hover was accompanied by his son, W. D. Hover, and wife and three grandchildren. They drove through in a Ford car solely and exclusively to see the old town where Mr. Hover spent so many years of his youthful life. The old town is gone as he knew it. But the new town is here and although changed is still in evidence as memory recalls its early days. While here Mr. Hover met many old-time acquaintances. His grandchildren were much interested in the place as they noted the spots and places where their grandfather played when a boy. Before returning they visited at the home of Michael Cahill and Mr. Crow, and also drove to Waldorf.

-The Mission meeting held Sunday under the auspices of the Lutheran Trinity congregation was largely attended, probably in excess of three thousand persons being present. The weather could not have been more favorable for such an occasion. A very liberal collection was taken for mission purposes. Rev. Schultz of Amboy preached in English and Rev. Kloeter of Kasson delivered the discourse in German.

1948

-When farm crop varieties and practices are changing as fars as they do these days, it keeps a farmer hustling to keep informed and up to date. One help along this line is to see the new oats, barley, wheat and flax growing in the field. That is why the University Branch Stations hold Field Days. Visitors are always welcome at the Waseca Branch Station, but the special day this year will be Tuesday, July 13. Signs will give the variety names and anyone can see what is going on by driving past the growing grain and forage crops.

-The enthusiastic approval by leading insurance companies of the Minnesota Bankers Association's Thumbprint Endorsement Plan to reduce the frequency of fraudulent check losses was announced today by M. O. Grangaard, newly elected president of the Association and Vice President of the First National Bank of Minneapolis. Among those companies favoring the plan were the National Surety Corporation of New York, the Fred L. Gray Company of Minneapolis and the St. Paul Mercury Indemnity Company, all insurance organizations who provide indemnity for banks against all losses among which are forged checks.

-Sponsored by the Le Sueur County Volunteer Firemen's Association, the Annual Fireman's Picnic will be held at Hardegger's on Lake Jecenson on Sunday, July 18. All firemen are expected to be on hand to enjoy one of the most enjoyable affairs of the year.

1973

-Provost Ed Frederick told the Janesville Area Chamber of Commerce Wednesday that the Waseca Technical School needs to organize new support groups if the college is to survive and grow. "We had lots of agri-business support during this past session," he said, "but the legislators are uncertain about our role and we need to organize in order to tell them." Frederick attended the meeting with John McLoone IV, president of the South Central Education Association (SECA) and a group of Waseca area businessmen who are seeking membership and support for SCEA. The UMW provost said that the last legislative battle didn't do the college any good even though legislators finally agreed to fund the college at its present level.

-Benjamin B. Gosselink is a feisty old bachelor who believes in booze, hard work, lots of sleep and complete abstinence from the gentle sex. That's what Ben told the Argus Friday when we stopped down to the nursing home to photograph him on his 90th birthday. "This is the only home I ever had," he said. "I've been here six years and Carol (Administrator Carol Slack) is the best boss I've ever had. She's really been good to me." Ben says his folks died young and he never really had a home until he entered the nursing home.

-Janet Manthey, Waseca County's Dairy Princess, was named Miss Congeniality by the 17 other contestants vying for the Region IX title last Thursday. The announcement was made by Toastmaster Dean Curtiss shortly before he named Nancy Schrader, Northfield, as the new Region IX Dairy Princess. Miss Schrader will be representing the region in the State Fair Dairy Princess Contest.

1998

-Bolton and Menk's crew has been busy at work on the 1998 Teal and Second Street Improvement project. Joe Duncan, Bolton and Menk project inspector, relayed the following progress report: A pumphouse located near Janesville Nursing Home has been completed. Seeding will still need to be done in this area. Teal's street main between North and Third streets has been installed. Bolton and Menk is installing a 4-inch sanitary service. During the next two weeks the projected construction plans are to stop the sanitary sewer and go back to install Teal's storm sewer between North and Third Streets.

-Waldorf, Minneapolis, Switzerland, Russia and the Waseca County Extension Office. What do all of these places have in common? They are all stops along the way for the new Waseca County Extension Office Summer Assistant Julie Tesch. Tesch, who started her internship Wednesday, will work at the extension office throughout the summer. A 1998 graduate of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Tesch earned a degree in applied economics and international agriculture. She plans to return to the University of Minnesota this fall to pursue a master's degree in agricultural and leadership education.

Trip to Germany

Waseca Journal, 1923

-Making his last run after working for the Northwestern Railroad Company for almost fifty years, R. J. (Bob) Johnson greeted some of his friends who were down at the North-western depot Isat Saturday noon. Harry Read, who made his last run nearly seven years ago, was among those at the depot to greet him. "Well, Bob," said the railroad veteran, "you are going to find it's a hard thing to quit. I found it hard going the first year I retired. Keep working all the time. That's the secret of it."

-Crazed with moonshine which he had obtained at Waterville, Ben Helum returned to his home in Blooming Grove about four miles north of Waseca last Saturday evening and started to quarrel with his brother Henry. He stated that he had heard that his brother was saying things about him to the neighbors and he would not stand for it. Before Henry could understand what his brother was talking about, Ben was on him kicking and scratching furiously.

-Dr. Giltner's Colts journeyed over to Madison Lake last Sunday, only to be defeated by the team by the lake by a score of 7 to 3. J. Conley held the Madison Lake team within his control until the fatal seventh inning when four scores were put over on him. Durigan then went into the box and held the opposing team scoreless. Conley got six strikeouts and Durigan got two. Madison Lake was a little stronger on the hitting than the local team, getting eleven hits to six for the local team.

Waseca Journal, 1948

-A verbal round of what looms as the hottest state political race since 1937 will be fought at the Waseca County Fair Friday and Saturday, August 6 and 7. Hubert Humphrey, popular Minneapolis Mayor and right wing leader of the DFL Party, will take over the speaker's rostrum at 8 p.m. Friday. Humphrey is given a 50-50 chance of unseating Republican incumbent Joe Ball for the U.S. Senate in the November elections. Senator Ball, now battling for his political life, will grab the spotlight in an address, also at the fairgrounds, the following evening, Saturday, August 7.

-Can you top this? Corn hitting the 88 inch mark was brought to the Waseca Journal office yesterday morning from the John Sutter farm in Blooming Grove township. Also arriving was a bunch of Bonda oats from the Walter Buker farm, three miles southeast of Waseca. The oat stems measured 71 inches. Buker stated, and a fellow farmer agreed, that his oats would go 100 bushels to the acre. At any rate Buker will have a big straw pile. Sutter isn't making and predictions on how many bushels his corn will go to the acre.

It came from a small field that was hog pasture last year.

-Clifton L. Gill, for 14 years owner-operator of the Daisy Shop, sold his business to Mrs. Doris Haag of Mankato. Gill has been in business for 45 years and will take what he terms "a much needed rest." He came to Waseca in 1933 after business experience in Pennsylvania as a buyer for three departments in a large store. Gill will spend part of his time at the store in an advisory capacity. Lorraine Roe, Mrs. Fred Miller and Joseph gill will remain at the store. Mrs. Haag worked in the advertising department of the Mankato Free Press for the past four years.

Waseca Daily Journal, 1973

-The Blackwood Singers will be featured again this year at the 9th Annual Waseca County Free Fair. The Singers are returning to the Waseca County Fair for a repeat performance. The fail will run Wednesday, July 18 through Sunday, July 22. Saturday, July 21 the Blackwood Singers will be performing in front of the grandstand at 8 p.m.

-Some called it America at its best, others called it homecoming week and some declared that America could use more North Morristown. It was like a big family reunion at North Morristown the 4th of July as folks from far and near gathered to celebrate Independence Day in the best way possible. The celebration was as old fashioned as homemade apple pie and the American flag. There were family picnics, fire crackers, squirt gun fights among the youngsters and folks visiting in every corner of the grounds.

-The gas shortage, a recent topic of national interest and concern, apparently hasn't affected too many gas companies in Waseca, at least not yet. Most stations in town are being allotted gas from their regular suppliers. The allotment is determined monthly on the basis of last year's sakes. For some, this is working out alright, but for others it is causing problems. In order to satisfy more customers Neidt Standard Service has been forced to limit gas sales in July to \$5 except in case of an emergency.

Waseca County News, 1998

-Fifteen Waseca High School students and their adult chaperones have just returned form a month-long educational experience in Germany. The Waseca contingent left for Germany on June 1 and returned June 25. They participated in the first year of Waseca High School's German American Partnership Program (GAPP). Through the experience they discovered that Germany is more than mountains, castles, villages and cathedrals. "The students had the opportunity to get immersed in the German culture," said chaperone Don Zwach. "I think the trip



ABROAD WITH FRIENDS — In 1998, Waseca High School students joined a few of their German friends in front of Wartburg castle near Neuhaus, German. Pictured are Tracy Frederick, Rachel Carlson, Jennifer Bortoch, Cassie Carson, Sarah Born, Jennifer Mackey, Scott Draheim, Mike Swenson, Melissa Flitsch, Alec Sonstebly, Joel Falenschek, Andrea Nelson, Jon Hayunga, Jennifer Sletsema and Heather Miller.



HOME AWAY FROM HOME — Fred Salsbury, Waseca's newly hired the city engineer in June of 1998, grew up in Cheyenne, Wyoming. After working in the Twin Cities for a few years, Waseca was the closest thing to his former home as he could get in Minnesota.

took all of us out of our comfort zones a little bit, and as a result, we gained a greater appreciation of the German culture." Waseca's partner school is in Neuhaus, Germany."

-When Fred Salsbury was a youngster growing up in Cheyenne, Wyo., he would often spend time on his grandfather's cattle ranch. Under a bright blue sky stretched across the wide open landscape, the young boy would bounce in his saddle while riding a galloping horse across the ranch. Salsbury became so attached to the country life that he hoped to return to it someday. With his recent hiring as Waseca's new city engineer, now he can.

-Up one game, down the next. The rollercoaster season of the Waseca Americana Legion baseball team continued this week. Post 228 split a pair of 10-run contests, leaving Waseca with a 5-8 overall record for the summer. Waseca is currently 1-3 in First District League action. Waseca banged out 14 hits in a 12-0 five-inning triumph on the road against Pine Island Monday. The Rochester A's shrugged off a 3-0, first inning deficit against the Waseca Tuesday, and hammered the locals 17-3 in five innings at Tink Larson Field. Waseca, which has dropped seven of its last 11 games, is 2-2 at home and 3-6 on the road.

St. Olaf Lake picnic proposal

100 years ago (1922)

- Rev. and Mrs. J. E. Eriksson and two children, Harold and Ebba, will leave today from Waseca for New York City where they will board an ocean liner for Sweden to make their future home there. The many friends of Rev. and Mrs. Eriksson and family are grieved to see them leave this country, but wish them the best of success and health in their new home.

- New Richland friends will be pleased to learn of the marriage of Miss Celia S. Johnson and Mr. S. Birthen Sebersohn which took place Wednesday at Albert Lea. The couple are both well known in New Richland and their many friends extend to them their heartiest congratulations.

- Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Bell are the proud parents of a baby girl, born to them Saturday, June 24, 1922.

- The bake sale conducted by the All Saints Catholic ladies' aid society last Saturday afternoon netted the society about \$20. The sale was a splendid success and all the goods were disposed of in a short time.

- A meeting of the New Richland Community Club has been called for Monday evening, July 3, to consider a proposal to purchase the St. Olaf lake picnic grounds. The meeting will be held at the high school auditorium at eight-thirty. Everyone in this community in any way interested in this proposal is requested to attend.

75 years ago (1947)

- After living considerably longer than the average span of life, Henry C. Siffing passed away Tuesday, July 1, at the advanced age of 88 years, 1 month and 17 days. Complications incidental to old age together with a heart affection were the causes of death.

- Softball fans will get an opportunity to see some fast ball here, Friday July 11. The fast Northside Inn Colored team of Minneapolis, an entry in the National League, will be here that date at 8:00 p.m. This outfit has played in several towns in the state and has defeated Crosby-Ironton, Stillwater, and several Minneapolis teams to date.

- Born prematurely, a daughter born at 10 a.m. Monday at the Memorial hospital, Waseca to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Schlaak, died at 5 p.m. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. W. J. Pilgrim of Waseca at the Tyrholm funeral parlors here Tuesday and the remains were interred in St. Peter's cemetery, northwest of town.

- It is the will of the council that no unlicensed dog should be permitted to live after July ends. Dogs without a license tag will be impounded and killed unless the owner obtains a license tag.

- Charles Butler, 22; John Ryan, 18; and William Lerman, 20, of West Concord community received sen-

tences of six months in jail and fines of \$100 for each when they pleaded guilty to wrecking rural mail boxes "just for the fun of it." The \$100 fines were suspended and the youths placed on probation for two years.

50 years ago (1972)

- A new dog ordinance was enacted by the Council of the village of New Richland at a recent meeting. All dogs must be licensed and owners of dogs must present evidence that their animals have had rabies shots within the past two years before they will be issued a license.

- The New Richland Hartland high school band will play a concert at Hartland, Saturday evening, beginning at 8 p.m. Following the band concert, there will be an ice cream social at the Hartland Evangelical Synod Lutheran church at Hartland.

- New Richland will celebrate the Fourth of July with fireworks. A spectacular display of fireworks is planned for dusk that evening on the football field. Following the fireworks, some lucky person will win a prize of his or her choice. Given away will be a Resorter 14 ft. fishing boat valued at \$289, a Road Bike by Herter's valued at \$299 or a certificate worth \$275 in merchandise.

- Mrs. Lee Dillavou of Freeborn announces the engagement of Leann Bangert, daughter of Mrs. Dillavou and the late Harold Bangert to Glen I. Juveland of Albert Lea.

Afternoon coffee guests at the

Donald Robinson home Thursday were Mrs. Mary Wenzel, Mrs. Harold Echternach, Mrs. Mary Madden of Waseca, Mrs. Billy Robinson and Mrs. Joe Collins.

- At 11 p.m., Monday evening, the New Richland ambulance took Mrs. Cora Baker to the Waseca Memorial Hospital.

25 years ago (1997)

- The Black Sox lost to Waterville 10-1 on June 18, but came back to defeat Cleveland 5-2, Sunday. They hold a 3-league record and are 4-8 overall. A clutch single by Tom Herman was the highlight of the Sox win over Cleveland.

- Jim and Tracie Lutgens advertise their business J.T. Photography, located at 115 South Broadway in New Richland.

- In honor of the 50th wedding anniversary of Leo and Elizabeth Chicos, their grandchildren invite relatives and friends to an open house at the Medford Straight River Path Chalet on Saturday, July 5, with a reception and refreshments from 2 to 7 p.m.

- Fire your boss! You can operate your own profitable business. Call toll free for information.

- Internet at Home and Work! Prairie Lakes Internet is New Richland's Gateway to the Internet since August, 1996.

The Pastor's Column

Liberation by forgiveness

By SANTIAGO RAMIREZ OCAMPO

Forgiveness, as the ultimate expression, is (or should be) the action identifying a Christian. The theology of what we profess as little Christ is based on the forgiveness offered by Christ through the life [and not only the sacrifice] of His son, Jesus, and also through the forgiveness we offer to others, perhaps as a sign of the understanding of that forgiveness received.

Paul, the Apostle, according to whom our Bibles state is the author and co-author of thirteen New Testament epistles, wrote a letter to a man we know as Philemon. This epistle is the third smallest in the New Testament, and despite being so short, its message of forgiveness is gigantic.

But, before addressing its message, let us recall that episode in which Paul and Barnabas have a disagreement about taking John Mark (Acts 15; 36-40), who, on a previous trip, had deserted them (Acts 13; 13). On their new Journey, according to Acts fifteen, these two fellow travelers/ministers, Paul and Barnabas, disagreed on separating over a person because it did not seem right to Paul to take the one who had already deserted them once. I find surprising, then, this statement of Paul in his second epistle to Timothy, where he declares: "Get Mark and bring him with you because he is helpful to me in my ministry." (2 Tim 4; 11).

Tradition points to the fact that the man mentioned in Acts 13; 13 and 15; 37 is the same person as the one mentioned by Paul in the second epistle to Timothy. Furthermore, it is also understood that this man, John/Mark, is the gospel author, according to Mark, which is also the firstborn of the gospels according to tradition. Having stated the above, a question arises: what happened during the time in Paul's mind and/or life to go from separating from his traveling/ministry companion to asking Timothy to please take him with him, that he is helpful for the ministry? Like

many other occasions in the Bible, this seems wild to me.

The first thing that happened was time; the second thing I think happened internally, or externally- I don't know about that-was forgiveness. I find it hard to understand such a radical change from arguing about what a third party did to separating from a colleague/friend to one day seeing that same person as necessary for the ministry. And this is where Philemon's gun takes on another value. It is the final reflection I want to share: I leave the reading from Philemon as a reminder of the incarnation of the work of Jesus in a practical way in our daily lives. Additionally, I ask: Did Paul write this epistle to Timothy before or after the Second epistle? I do not know for sure, and tradition is divided as to the order in which the epistles were written. I assure you that an epistle like the one to Philemon is not written without experiencing the most profound and authentic forgiveness. And here we have two lines of work: Either Paul had experienced forgiveness in his particular situation with John/Marcos and to Philemon, he writes from the experience of forgiveness; or the epistle to Philemon somehow leads him to make a reflection that ends up taking him to his own experience of forgiveness with someone close and loved who made a mistake.

In either case, I find a definite conclusion: as the little Christs we are in theory when we call ourselves Christians, the preaching of forgiveness means nothing if we are not transformed by the liberating experience of forgiveness from our Father. We live it either by needing or offering forgiveness to/from our neighbor. My point is that the letter to Philemon is beautiful, transforming, and challenging, but it would be worthless if Paul's life did not reflect its message. The pulpits have been filled with ethically correct preaching that does not reflect anyone's life. Philemon was fortunately not that case.

his wife. She called in to resubscribe this week and, well, I happened to answer the phone and I love to engage people in conversations.

This year has been filled with many, many hours of work. Thousands of dollars spent. More than half a million words published (Personally, in stories I've written). And several lifetimes worth of memories.

I could write about the challenges, and some of the good moments, but for today, for this issue, I'm just going to settle in, take a deep breath, and relax. There will be more challenges, more beautiful moments, and, because of you, more editions of the Pioneer.

I can't stop without thanking our advertisers in addition to our readers. Without both, we could not operate.

Thank you for a great year: Here's to many more.

"And in another year everything will be different yet again. It is always like that, and always will be; you are forever standing on the brink, in a place where you cannot see ahead; there is nothing of which to be certain except what lies behind. This should be terrifying, but somehow it is not."

Penelope Lively
50 veh

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& DESIGN

Sanctuary for all Goats, sunflowers, and crafts

By MICHAEL ROY Editor

"It's been a dream come true for me here."

That is what Cora Packard said about being an owner of Wild Spirit Farm Sanctuary, a ten-acre farm about three miles west of Waseca.

In four short years, the farm has come to house a few different goat breeds including pygmies and Nigerialians, as well as sheep, chickens, and a sunflower field. And the hope, Packard says, is to keep expanding.

Originally living an hour north of Waseca, Packard and her family moved into the city in 2006. "We lived right next to the county fairgrounds," she explained. "I was used to it being very busy in the summer."

She loved being part of the Waseca community. However, the thought lingered of owning a farm full of goats. It was something she always dreamed of doing.

"I don't know why goats became my favorite animal, to be honest," Packard admitted. "I just remember going to fairs as a kid and thinking they were so cute."

The sunflowers were something she liked, too. "I always thought they were cool," she said. "They follow the sun, they're colorful... what more do you need?"

In 2018, Packard moved out of Waseca and to the west of town in a more secluded area where she could realize her farming dreams. The farm is on ten acres of land which includes a few acres of woods.

Many of her goats are adopted from other farmers. Her newest acquisition, Bumblebee, is a baby goat that was less than ten days old by the end of June. She was born with her front legs pinned behind her back,

leading to major walking issues.

"The farmer I picked her up from wasn't sure what to do with her," Packard said. "So, I decided to take her home with me and have her out on the farm."

Bumblebee has improved greatly since Packard picked her up. She can stand on her own for small periods of time and walk with some assistance. Her left front leg is healing much better than the right front, so Packard and her family are hopeful she can use at least three legs when she grows to adulthood.

In addition to providing a sanctuary for animals, Packard started holding events out at the farm in 2021. Some of the more recent ones include Restoration 101, a class for refurbishing furniture, on June 29; wool needle felting classes June 22, and "Sunflowers, Crafts, and Farm Animals" this past Saturday, July 1.

The July 1 event featured local crafter Lynn Hirschey, who showed her woolen sculptures and dreamcatchers at the event. Hirschey is a friend of the Packard family.

"I started doing crafts about 30 years ago, when my son was six months old," she explains. "I didn't really get into it and make it a serious hobby until two years ago."

She typically spins her own wool for the dreamcatchers. "I usually buy colored wool, though," she admits. "I've tried dying my own wool, even with natural dyes, and it never comes out the way I want."

While providing entertainment is enjoyable, Packard also likes holding events promoting health and wellness. "I have a medical degree, so I am naturally interested in that stuff," she said.

The Restoration 101 class, for ex-



Cora Packard has offered classes, sunflower bouquets, and classes at Wild Spirit Farm Sanctuary since moving to the rural Waseca farm in 2018.. Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

ample, was run by a licensed therapist who uses furniture restoration as a way to relieve stress.

Although the farm is mostly for animals, Packard is hoping to be a sanctuary for humans as well. She also wants to plant a garden and teach more people about farm life.

"I think sustainability is very important," she said. "Learning to plant your own food is a good skill to have."

For now, though, she is happy to host classes about crafting and help people pick bouquets of sunflowers. "Everyone is welcome," Packard said. "We want people to feel that way when they come here."

Wild Spirit's newest addition, Bumblebee, a LaMancha-Pygmy mix goat.



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507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker)
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FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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507-835-3167
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CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH
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507-835-9176
Worship Sundays 9 a.m., 10:15 a.m.
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Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m.
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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca
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Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor
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Pastor Mary Iverson
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting
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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
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Pastor Pamela Jensen
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Pastor Kathy King
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FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
300 Owen St, Janesville
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* * *

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* * *

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NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA
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& DESIGN

Elysian from Page 8

cycle and Tractor Show” on the western blocks of Main Street, where 50 vehicles were judged. On display was a bit of everything from an old John Deere tractor to classic muscle cars like Chevrolet Camaros and Novas.

Throughout most of the morning, the Wendt Sisters (Brenda and Lynda) performed under the entertainment tent with the Father’s

Daughters performing from 1 to 3 p.m. The kids’ power pedal pull also took place at noon.

After a few rounds of bingo at 7 p.m., the fireworks went off from Lake Tustin Park.

Monday, July 3, was less tightly scheduled with a chicken feed at the American Legion from 5 p.m. until the food was gone. However, the fireman’s street dance, featuring Smokescreen, was a four-hour long affair.

As is tradition for Elysian’s Fourth of July Celebration, Independence Day featured two different parades: the first one took place on Lake Francis and featured decorated boats. The

second, arguably the most popular event of the celebration, took place on Main Street at 2 p.m. People wanting a decent spot for the grand parade had to get there at least an hour early; folks were already taking up spots before noon.

In between the parades were face painting by Making Faces of Mankato and the 37th Annual “Bob Childs” Turtle Races. After the parade was an arm wrestling tournament.

Throughout the celebration, there were food trucks such as Polly’s Pantry, Kelm’s BBQ, and Wiste’s Meat Market. Main Street Venue also provided refreshments like water, lem-

onade, and strawberries and cream.

Unlike the weather for most of last weekend’s local celebrations, this week was almost perfect. Although Mother Nature did threaten to make the last day of Elysian’s Fourth of

July Celebration stormy, it turned out to only be a typical humid summer day, capping off a week of music, parades, and everything red, white, and blue in Elysian.

Got news? 507-837-6767

Pageant from Page 8

she had a speech already prepared.

She started by thanking the coordinators for making the pageant possible. “I would also like to thank the firefighters for letting us use this amazing fire hall,” she added. “Thank you to the judges for taking time out of their day to be here tonight.”

She then thanked her supporters. “You guys rock,” she said. “I am so excited to represent this town and celebrate this weekend with these two amazing girls by my side. Thank you all for coming tonight and have a great Fourth of July!”

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						1
2	3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY	5 6pm BAR Bingo	6 HALL 7pm BINGO	7 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	8
9	10 7pm Post & AUX. Meeting	11	12 6pm BAR Bingo	13 HALL 7pm BINGO	14 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	15
16	17	18	19 6pm BAR Bingo	20 HALL 7pm BINGO	21 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	22
23	24	25 NATIONAL HIRE A VETERAN DAY	26 6pm BAR Bingo	27 HALL 7pm BINGO NATIONAL KOREAN WAR VETERANS ARMISTICE DAY	28 NATIONAL BUFFALO SOLDIERS DAY MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	29 ARMY CHAPLAIN CORPS ANNIVERSARY
30	31					

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EUROPE - Waseca High School art and spanish students along with the chaperones stand in front of the palace in Madrid, Spain. Contributed photo

WHS Spanish, art students take trip to Spain, France

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editorial Assistant

A group of 20 students and chaperones from Waseca has recently returned from a trip abroad, visiting Madrid, Barcelona, and Paris.

These students, chaperones, and teachers spent ten days in Europe in June, arriving home June 23. The combination of Spanish and art students from Waseca High School spent four days in Madrid, Spain, two days in Barcelona, Spain, and then three days in Paris, France, before the long flight back to Minnesota.

The trip was organized by the two high school Spanish teachers, Mary Gilson and Nancy

Kaplan, along with art teacher Jen Popp. While summer trips of this type have previously been scheduled every three or four years, this year's was different: It included a combination of students from both Spanish and art classes on what had previously always been for language students.

High school student Britney Ross said that she loved the trip, especially Paris. "It felt like a whole different world over there," Ross said. "Overall, the best part was our tour guide Paqui and all the things we learned such as the royal families and the history and culture of these beautiful places."

The big weekend is here

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

Farm & City Days, the annual celebration that seems to swell the population of the town by several hundred, runs Friday through Sunday, July 7-9. The parade is scheduled for 5 p.m. Saturday, followed by a street dance from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Broadway.

The weekend starts Friday as the Lions Club serves baked potatoes and root beer floats from 4:30-6:30 Friday at City Hall. At 6:30 p.m. the Commercial Club will host bingo at the dance area on Broadway: \$10 for 10 games. A bean bag tournament at NR Liquor starts at 7 p.m. and a movie in the park at 9:30 p.m. will conclude the evening's fun.

Saturday starts bright and early with the annual fire department pancake breakfast from 7-10 a.m., where the grand marshal of the parade will be announced. As usual, Jim Kozan will provide entertainment.

Saturday is packed with events, highlighted by the parade at 5 p.m.

A tradition, the Top 25 Antique Car and Tractor Show, is Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. near the intersection of Broadway and First St. NW.

There are many events this year, including some which are new:

- Inaugural Golf Car Show from 9 a.m. to noon.
- Friends of the Library book sale at the library from 9 a.m. to noon.

Got news?
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Farm and City Days July 7-9



GRAND MARSHALLS - The 2022 Farm and City Days Grand Marshalls were the three oldest businesses in New Richland, Bonnerup Funeral Service, the State Bank of New Richland and the NRHEG Star Eagle. Representing those businesses at the New Richland Fire Department pancake breakfast are, from left: Bonnerup: Lori Tuchtenhagen, Larry Thorstad, Lanae Thorstad, Andrew Schwarz, Kasie Watkins, Tammy Busho and Amy Ihrke; SBNR, Matt Harrington, Kristi Harrington, and Star Eagle, Eli Lutgens. Farm and City Day's is set for this weekend, July 7-9.

Vendor fair from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Three-person golf tournament beginning at 9 a.m. at Riverview Golf Course.

Neighbors Meats events from 10 a.m. to noon. These include CowPie Bingo, meat grading, and poultry races

Scavenger hunts at the Craft Mall from 10 a.m. to noon.

NR Area Historical Society Display from 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. on Broadway.

NRHEG Cheer Camp Performance on Broadway at 10 a.m.

Kiddie Parade on Wheels at 11:30 a.m.

Bounce Houses at the city park from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Other events along main street and city park include Free caricatures by Casey, a Bocce Ball tournament, live music at the park by Melissa Schulz, cheerleaders face painting, a petting zoo from 1. to 3 p.m., St. Olaf Brewing Company tasting, horse-drawn wagon rides, and a kids' power pedal tractor pull.

Saturday night concludes with the parade at 5 p.m. and street dance from 8 to 11 p.m.

On Sunday, winning button numbers are drawn following a community worship at the park at 10 a.m.

Water wars are set for noon. Bingo is the final event at 1 p.m. in city park.

Farm and City Days buttons are \$5 and are available at the Star Eagle and many other New Richland businesses. Buttons give you discounted breakfast on Saturday, free admission to the Saturday night street dance and a chance to win prizes up to \$200. Buttons won't be sold once Farm & City Days begins.

"We appreciate all the sponsors for the events," said Farm & City Days committee member SaraJo Vulcan, "We appreciate the effort everyone puts into Farm & City Days, and we look forward to a great weekend."



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