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Murder Mystery

Waseca County Historical Society Vintage Sale Nov. 20 & 21

A Vintage Holiday Gift sale at the Waseca County Historical Center will be from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 20 and Friday, Nov. 21. Purchases help support the Waseca County Historical Society's mission to preserve and share our county's stories. Come shop, find something special, and make this holiday season truly memorable.

Drawing Club at Janesville Library Thurs., Nov. 20

Join our drawing club for teen artists! Learn new techniques and practice your drawing skills. We'll sample a variety of drawing styles. Exclusively for ages 12-18. All skill levels welcome at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 20 at Janesville Public Library.

Waseca Public Library Mother-Daughter book club Thursday, Nov. 21

The Waseca Public Library will host a Mother-Daughter book club at 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21. Stop by to pick up this month's book, "Invisible" by Christina Diaz Gonzalez. This is for girls in grades 3-6.

Harvest Mission Festival Brunch at Grace Lutheran Church Friday Nov. 21

There will be a Harvest Mission Festival Brunch at the Grace Lutheran Church, 300 East Elm Ave from 10 a.m. till noon on Friday, Nov. 21. Cost is \$9 and will include breakfast bakes, cinnamon rolls, fruit salad, fresh lefse and homemade baked goods. Take out is available.

School play "A Lighter Shade of Noir" Nov. 21 and 23

The Waseca Junior Senior High drama department will present "A Lighter Shade of Noir" in the Waseca High School performing arts center at 7 p.m. Nov. 21 and 2 p.m. Nov. 23. The play is a lighthearted mystery in which "every detective is on the case." Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for students.

Jack Backbone and TJ Brown at Indian Island Winery Friday, Nov. 21

Music duo Jack Backbone and TJ Brown will perform at the Indian Island Winery from 6-8:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21. Enjoy live music, Americana blues, rock and country.

Legion Burger Fry Fundraiser for Waseca Caregiver Services Friday, Nov. 21

The Waseca American Legion is holding a Burger Fry Fundraiser on behalf of the Waseca Area Caregiver Services from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21. Cost is \$10 with karaoke starting at 7:30 p.m.

A word from
The Word

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish.

2 Peter 3:9

Next stop, state finals!



At left, Waseca senior Deron Russell (7) makes a leaping grab for a late second-quarter touchdown Saturday during the Bluejays' 14-13 victory over Dilworth-Glyndon Felton. At right, the Bluejays take the field. See Sports for more. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



From left, Kellen Klinger (15) Cyrett Long (1) and Peyton Sommers (37) exit the field after the Bluejays' big win. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Waseca football team prevails 14-13 in nailbiter of a semifinal

By **ELI LUTGENS**
Sports Editor

The Waseca High School football team made school history last Saturday, defeating Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton 14-13 to earn the school's first-ever trip to a state championship football game.

"It was great," said Waseca head coach Brad Wendland. "I'm just so proud of these guys."

"This is awesome," said WHS senior Deron Russell, who earlier in the week was named a Minnesota Mr. Football finalist.

It wasn't easy, though. The Bluejays survived a big and talented DGF squad, turning back the Rebels with two goal-line stands

and coming up with key stops throughout the game.

Key plays included Russell's touchdown catch in the waning seconds of the first half, and William Mansfield's block of the Rebels' PAT kick after their second touchdown.

"I'm really proud of the team and how much we battled through adversity," said senior Jordan Johnston. "It feels great."

The Bluejays return to U.S. Bank Stadium this Saturday to face Annandale in the Class AAA state championship game. Kickoff is set for 1 p.m.

For more on the semifinal game, see Pages 12 and 10.



HONORING THE BRAVE - The Waseca Intermediate School and the Waseca Junior Senior High School held Veterans Day programs honoring vets. Above, colors were presented by by members of the Waseca Sweet-Sommers VFW post 1642. Below, students carried banners representing each branch of service. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Veterans Day WIS and Waseca High School show veteran appreciation

By **BEN REVERMANN**
Staff writer

Both the Waseca Intermediate School (WIS) and the Waseca Junior Senior High School held heartfelt Veterans Day programs on Tuesday, Nov. 11. At the WIS, colors were presented by members of the Waseca Sweet-Sommers VFW post 1642; at the high school, colors were carried by members of Waseca American Legion post 228.

Principal John Huttmeier opened the WIS proceedings with the posting of the colors and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. The VFW sent their members carrying flags to silently cross the gym

floor in front of the audience, then march toward the middle of the room where they stood like sentinels keeping watch as every member of the audience took off their head gear and placed hands on hearts; the flags stayed as motionless as the VFW members holding them. Sixth-grade teacher Chad Atherton recited a poem titled, "I am the Flag" by Jamie Burns. Then Huttmeier read a brief history of Veterans Day. The Sixth-grade choir sang their rendition of "America, The Beautiful" directed by music teacher Andra Andreen, followed by a moment of silence before Taps was played. The VFW members silently carried the flags



out of the gym: Color guard members were Blaine Brooks, Chris Weber, Darnel Anderson, James Britton, Chad Davis, Grant Duffy, Dean Farley, Gary Huckfeldt, Mike Peterson and Dave Schema.

The High School posted colors by the Waseca Legion and Auxiliary Color Guard with a welcome from principal Justin Johnson. The Legion

Veterans continued on 5

WASECA CITY COUNCIL

Council gets visit from Rep. Sexton

By **BEN REVERMANN**
Staff writer

Representative Tom Sexton appeared at the Nov. 4 meeting of the Waseca city council meeting requesting council members' input prior to a visit from the Minnesota House Capital Investment Committee Tour which was to stop at Clear Lake Park at 2:45 pm Wednesday, Nov. 5. The purpose of the 30-minute visit was to acquire more information about large-scale projects the city hopes to carry out with financial assistance from the state.

Don White, operations manager for SMART Transit provided a presentation about the service, saying his drivers have provided 11,000 rides over the past year. He mentioned the service now has three full-time drivers and 4 part-time workers. They service 35 children; and 10 percent of all passengers are disabled.

City engineer Nate Willey presented the Eighth Avenue NE reconstruction project assessment, which consisted of the reconstruction of Eighth Ave NE from Third Street NE to Clear Lake Drive. Total length of the project was 3,160 feet; work was completed Nov. 1 of 2024. For any properties without reduction factors, the final rates per assessable foot would have been as follows: Property Land Use Type: Residential/Duplex \$150, Multi-Family \$171, Commercial/Tax Exempt \$193. Assessments can be paid in full to the city without interest on or before December 4, 2025. After December 4, payments must be made to the Waseca County Auditor's Office. Assessments are paid with property taxes over a 10-year period at four percent interest beginning in 2026. David Snider, a resident along Eighth Ave NE expressed dissatisfaction regarding the dirt used to fill his yard back in after work was complete: "You couldn't even dig your heel into the dirt. It was crap dirt, they've got to bring in the good stuff." The council will revisit this during the city council meeting on May 5, 2026, to discuss any additional problems with Eighth Avenue.

Wiley also presented information about the Fourth Street SW rehabilitation project, which ran between Fifth Avenue SW and Johnson Avenue. Total improved street length was approximately 1,930 feet. Final rates for residential/duplex will be \$17, Multi-Family housing \$27, commercial/tax exempt \$30.

Ordinance 1123 Amending the Shoreland Overlay Provisions of the city code were last updated in 2016. The DNR has numerous ordinances Waseca must follow; the list has since been updated and approved by the DNR and

Council continued on 11



Compostings

by Al Batt

Saving a Jaguar with a borrowed flashlight

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB

Where are you coming from? I've been at the gym. I watched a guy do 50 pushups. Do you think you could do that?

Easy-peasy. I once watched a man do 100 pushups.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I leaned into the wind. I'd lost enough weight that I'd become wary of a brisk wind. The weather had become normal, which means it was strange. I wouldn't have been surprised to hear that a volcano was on its way to South Dakota. I've visited the Arenal Volcano in Costa Rica. That volcano is in a resting phase. No fiery lava. I recalled sitting around a fire in a friend's backyard. We were talking smart while toasting marshmallows. We heard a commotion nearby. A neighbor's car was on fire. Never buy a Mercury Volcano. We ran over to see. That's what we did in those days. Someone used a fire extinguisher. The car's owner stood nearby. She looked our way to see the three of us standing in the glowing light of a burning vehicle, each holding a marshmallow on a stick. Saving a Jaguar with a borrowed flashlight

In college, I lived in several places. One was a building with an "Unfit for Human Habitation" sign on its front door, which didn't preclude it from being rented to college students. Another residence was a large apartment building filled with college students and other slackers. There were a few renters with worthy goals who were in the process of achieving them. I regularly greeted one of those industrious fellows with, "Good morning, Colonel. It's a nice day to work on a Jag." The JAG didn't reference his service as a military lawyer (Judge Advocate General's Corps), but he had been a colonel. A cousin of mine shared that rank in the Army. The Colonel had retired from the armed forces and was pursuing a degree in something or other. The Jag alluded to his car, a Jaguar. He also possessed a Fiat—"Fix It Again Tony." I'd known no one who had owned a Jag. The acronyms for Jaguar were: "Just Another Ghastly Unbelievably Annoying Repair," "Just A Guess U Are Rich," and "Jaguars Always Guarantee Unlimited Astronomical Re-

pairs." The Colonel didn't drive it much because the Jag needed constant repair. I wasn't much help as he struggled to fix his car, but I held the flashlight for him when darkness came. I was battle-tested. I'd been trained in the art of flashlight holding by my father. Dad didn't own a Jaguar. The closest we came was a giant yellow tomcat, but we had many farm machines in constant need of repairs in the dark.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

Who eats snails? People who dislike fast food.

What should I do if I encounter a giant snail? Walk for your life.

My wife said to me, "You haven't listened to a single word I've said, have you?!" What a weird way for her to start a conversation.

NATURE NOTES

I love watching the snowbirds (dark-eyed juncos) with their white outer tail feathers that are indistinct when the birds are at rest but make for a prominent signal when they flash in flight. Those white feathers present a marked contrast to the dark ground.

While on the subject of white feathers, keep an eye out for tumbling flocks of snow buntings foraging for seeds in fields and on roadsides. The restless birds flash white and black as they fly, and don't stay in one spot for long. They have feathers covering their ankles, and when the cold gets serious, snow buntings bury themselves in snowdrifts for warmth. They are bigger than a junco, but smaller than a robin. They are also smaller than an ostrich.

There is a group of raccoons that hang around the yard, hoping to become emotional support raccoons. I shine a flashlight and catch a raccoon looking back at me with its reflective red eyes. A raccoon's eye features a structure called a tapetum lucidum, which reflects light, enabling the animal to see well in low-light conditions. The reason raccoons tend to gaze at humans who are confronting them is probably because they are nearsighted. They have a remarkable ability to discern movement, as do many predators. Their eyeshine may be the reason I use gaze as the collective noun for raccoons. Gaze is a suitable moniker, but mostly I call them way too many raccoons.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"Remember, there's no such thing as a small act of kindness."—Scott Adams.

It looks like the sky is on fire

A friend and I spent more than an hour parked along a dark country road Tuesday night watching the aurora borealis.

When I say the show was "breathtaking" I am not speaking only figuratively. More than once I looked at the colors in the sky and gasped, it was so impressively wondrous.

I did not happen to have heard any of the announcements letting people know the planet expected a light show. Frankly, I'm glad, because the process of discovery brought me so much pleasure.

I had been in town for an evening interview, and then had stopped at the store for a few groceries, so it was about 7:30 p.m. as I drove south out of Waseca. I noticed two "clouds" overhead, and my first casual impression was that they were two lonely visitors in an otherwise cloudless sky, and that they were being lit from above by the moon.

You may have already noticed the "careless" element: there was no moon Tuesday night. One of the "clouds" seemed to be right above me, the other slightly to the west. They kept imposing themselves on my routine thoughts of how I would have to wash the grapes and get them into the re-



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

frigerator, and my self-deprecations at having forgotten to purchase some seasoned salt.

The clouds seemed to be sending the message "notice me," so that by the time I pulled up on my yard and got out of my car, I stood still and looked at one of them, asking myself internally whether it was a cloud or something else.

As I watched, it faded from sight. Poof, gone, as if sending the message "It's about time you paid attention."

That was the first time I gasped in wonder. Then I grabbed my bag of groceries, hurried inside, and called out to my husband, "You have to come outside and see the northern lights." Somewhere in there, I also called everyone I could think of who would have a chance to go out and look.

The two of us walked to the end of the driveway, where there is a more open view of the sky, and

spun in slow motion taking in the colors, each pointing out features we found remarkable. Such was our wonder, it may have been 10 minutes or more before we realized how bitingly cold the wind was.

We both went back inside, but I craved further amazement, so I called Cindy, who informed me, to my tremendous surprise, she couldn't see any aurora. That settled it, I texted her I was on my way. We found a quiet road with a wide open view in pretty much all directions, selected a field road, and parked. I turned the car off so the dash lights would not be a distraction. The car held the heat well enough that wonder continued to win out against the cold wind.

For the next hour or so, we were leaning forward and back, opening the windows when we thought their shading was interfering with the colors, even occasionally get-

ting out and braving the wind when some feature extended above the roof of the car.

I'm pretty sure no one was aware of us—we were a fair distance from any houses, and only one vehicle passed us the whole time we were parked. But if someone had been watching, they would probably have gotten a good laugh.

The spontaneous call-outs of "ooh" and "aah" and "look at this one over here!" were only the beginning.

"Is that orange?" and "It looks like the sky is on fire" were accompanied by a few more sharp intakes of breath, when words were simply not enough. We even got two bonus shooting stars.

To quote Cindy, "That made my winter!"

Some agency had suggested the show would peak at about 9 p.m. That seems to have worked out exactly. By 9:30, the night sky was only as wondrous as usual, motivating me to start the car and turn the heat on high.

It had been a rewarding and enriching evening, high on my lifetime list of pleasant surprises. I have the pictures to prove it.

Finding new schedules for my life and work

How do you figure out life? Does anyone ever?

Now that I've started working another job, I'm learning what my new schedule looks like. Nine to five during the week for the magazine, working on newspaper tasks on the weekends, and along with that, whatever events and activities I can squeeze in.

Wake up, get to work, go to the gym, go home and relax for an hour or two and then bed. That I can do just fine; it's the little things I keep trying to figure out. Like do I take a walk during my half hour lunch break or do I do the house chores that need to be done? When do I go to the store? Am I eating the right things throughout the day to keep me healthy? (I can't live off a college diet anymore.) How do I ensure I will make time for relationships, and not only that, but make sure I am able to be present with others mentally and physically?

You know, the little things. I know Eli shared last week about the importance of taking



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

time for your health, both physical and mental. It meant a lot to me hearing that come from a boss, as I know that a lot of managers out there might not be as empathetic as Eli.

In good news, I'm liking my new job as associate editor of "Colorado Parent" magazine. I get to write fun little articles for the website and talk to parents and businesses making a change in the community for the publication. I even get to go to fun events—I get to interview and then go to a Disney on Ice performance and go and sample plant-based macaroons at a new shop in Denver!

As much as I'm enjoying the job and the work, I sometimes

think it's funny that I work for a parent magazine, given that I'm not even close to being a parent. Other editors I work with here are indeed parents and it's fun to read their more personal articles about what it's like taking care of their children and what advice they are giving to other parents. Me, I just write more about fun events that I think kids and families would want to go to. Or I talk with parents and get to know what it's like for them to have kids and what advice they'd give other parents. One mom I talked to this past week suggested that if anyone is struggling with anything, to ask herself, "What would I tell 30-year-old (insert kid's name)?" She

said it helps her put perspective on her situation to think about what advice she'd give her kids and then use that for herself. I guess I can take notes for the future whenever I decide to have kids.

So that's been my life recently. The weather is warmer than I want, but at least the sun is out, heating my apartment through all our windows while I work. I keep getting told how different a Denver winter is from a Minnesota one and I'm curious to learn whether I agree, or if they are just lying to me to convince me to stay. Nothing will beat a Minnesota winter, though.

My Determination: "Grown-ups don't look like grown-ups on the inside either. Outside, they're big and thoughtless and they always know what they're doing. Inside, they look just like they always have. Like they did when they were your age. Truth is, there aren't any grown-ups. Not one, in the whole wide world." — Neil Gaiman, The Ocean at the End of the Lane

Waseca County History Center holding 'vintage' sale

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Waseca County History Center, located at 315 2nd Avenue NE, will be holding their first vintage holiday sale from 9 a.m. through 5 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 20 and Friday, Nov. 21.

Step back in time and shop a Vintage Holiday Sale at the Waseca County History Center!

A little bit of everything and not just holiday items like gift shop and seasonal programming items that they've collected from the museum and library. Discover treasures with character, from timeless home décor and charming collectibles to unique pieces not available in any store like rare books, greeting cards and used furniture.

Whether searching for the perfect gift, adding to holiday decorations, or just a love for a good vintage find, enjoy browsing their handpicked selection. All prices will be discounted up to 75 percent off, items not marked will be around \$5 or less. Perfect for one-of-a-kind holiday gifts, vintage holiday décor or collectibles with history and charm.

All purchases help support the Waseca County Historical Society's mission to preserve and share Waseca county's stories. Come shopping, find something special, and make this holiday season truly memorable! Contact the Waseca County History Center at 507-835-7700 with questions.

In Brief

Books and Brews at Oscar's All American/Waseca Library Saturday, Nov. 22

Pick up a copy of the book at the library, then meet us out to discuss the book. "Little Faith" by Nicholas Butler, then meet at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 22 at Oscar's All-American to discuss.

Flannels & Fizz at Starfire Event Center Saturday, Nov. 22

There will be an adults only event, Flannels & Fizz at the Starfire Event Center from 5:30-11:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 22. Food, games, live auction, prizes and live band. \$30 per person or \$50 per couple.

Thanksgiving Dinner at First Congregational Church, Nov. 23

There will be a Happy Thanksgiving Dinner at the First Congregational Church of Waseca at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 23. Eat in person or deliveries are available, limit 5. Sign up at Waseca Senior Center or call 507-835-4548 before noon Wednesday, Nov. 19. First Congregational is located 530 2nd Ave. NE.

St. Olaf Lake Christmas Festival Craft Show Saturday, Nov. 22

The St. Olaf Lake Christmas Festival will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in a heated area on Saturday, Nov. 23 at 9633 SW 128 Street,

New Richland. Four vendors will be selling crafts, cookies and other goodies, hot chocolate, cider and coffee.

The Jazz at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Nov. 23

The Indian Island Winery near Janesville will host The Jazz 10 at 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 23. The group plays classic and modern jazz for dancing.

Waseca Garden Club meeting 6:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 24

The Waseca Garden Club will have a potluck dinner at the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 24. There will be a "Bull Session" and officer elections for 2026. This event is free and open to the public.

Greeting Card Club at Janesville Public Library Nov. 25

Learn techniques to create beautiful greeting cards for ages 18+. Register at the Janesville Library or at wasecalesueurlibraries.com/getregistered. This event is at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 25.

Melissa Schulz performing at Papa Olie's Wednesday, Nov. 25

Singer Melissa Schulz will be performing in Waldorf at Papa Olie's from 8-11 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 26. She performs solo keyboard and vocals.



SERVING THE WHOLE OF WASECA COUNTY
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OBITUARIES

Linda Marie Stevens

Linda Marie Stevens, age 75 of Waseca died on Sunday, November 16, 2025 at her home.

Born on December 15, 1949 in Little Falls, Minnesota, she was the daughter of Frank Ferdinand and Beatrice Marcell (Danko) Nasal. She proudly attended Ascension Catholic School in Minneapolis before graduating from Edison High School in Northeast Minneapolis. Linda was united in marriage to Ronald George Stevens on September 6, 1969 at St. Clement Catholic Church in Northeast Minneapolis.

She took great pride in her role as an Army wife and as the mother of a Navy servicemember. She fondly remembered her time working at Stillwater Medical and the friendships she made there. A life-long animal lover, she adored her pets. Linda enjoyed reflecting on “the good old days,” especially the importance of preserving family history. Family was always at the center of her life, and she loved writing and sharing stories of her loved ones. She treasured time spent with her husband, son, and



Linda Stevens

grandson and keeping up with other family members. Linda enjoyed history and reading.

She is survived by her husband, Ronald of Waseca; one son, Chad Stevens of Imperial Beach, CA; and one grandson, Xavier Stevens. She is also survived by two brothers, Frank Nasal and Ron Nasal.

Private family services are being held. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service of Waseca is handling arrangements.



JOYOUS VOICES - "Joy! He Shall Reign" is the title of the Waseca Chorale concert scheduled for 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 30 at Sacred Heart Church. The many members of the Chorale have been preparing for the concert since September. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

Waseca Chorale sharing the joy Nov. 30

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

The Waseca Chorale holiday concert titled “Joy! He Shall Reign” will be at 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 30 at Sacred Heart Church. Chorale members say they are excited to present their 90-minute performance and believe it will serve as an energetic transition from fall and harvest to the excitement and fulfillment of the holidays.

This will be holiday concert number 53 for the independent organization’s 54 singers, whose ages range from the late teens to the mid-eighties. Most are from the county’s communities, but some come from Owatonna, Mankato and Faribault to be part of the group.

“We just like to sing,” comments

Andy Miller, who, along with a few others, has been a member since the group first formed. “It feels really good to be part of something beautiful and uplifting.”

Director Deb Wantoch Yess mentions that she and fellow director John Hoehn spend a lot of time considering what music will be challenging and rewarding for the singers and will have the variety, energy, and meaning to touch the audience members’ hearts and leave them with something which adds to their holiday spirit.

She says she believes the seven individual numbers and the cantata featuring interwoven elements of eight numbers fit the bill. Interspersed throughout will be instrumental features, soloist, and “even eight bars of the Hallelujah Chorus.”

Chorale member Deb Vetter names “Love is the Reason Why” as one of her favorite numbers for the concert. “It’s got everything,” she observes. “It has a rich message, beautiful lyrics, and a great tune.

“I enjoy singing it because I believe people will find it meaningful.”

Director Hoehn names “Ennis-corthy Carol” as a favorite. He comments that the song brings a “counterintuitive” melody while also featuring alto voices and a resonating instrumental solo. He refers to it as “deceptively difficult,” while also being “a gorgeous piece.”

Chorale members express gratitude to area organizations which have provided financial support, including the Waseca Area Foundation, Prairie Lakes Art Council and Waseca County. Al Judd, who was

also a Chorale member when the organization formed, remembers a time when fundraisers were necessary to meet the costs of music, an accompanist, hall rentals, and more. “It was a lot of planning and interruption of our routines,” he remembers, “but it was a chance to work together and get to know each other better, too.”

He comments the Chorale has been a “true blessing” to him and other members, and so they are glad to pass that blessing along to new members, and to the community through their performances.

“We’re glad when lots of people come,” he observes. “It means we can share the joy.”

Admission cost to the Nov. 30 concert is \$10 for adults, payable upon entry at Sacred Heart Church.



ALL-IN-ONE - Cast members of "A Lighter Shade of Noir" will be presenting their play at 7 p.m. on Nov. 21 and 2 p.m. Nov. 23 at the Waseca Junior Senior High School performing arts center. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

“A Lighter Shade of Noir” to perform Nov. 21 and 23

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

More than 20 Waseca students will present the comic mystery “A Lighter Shade of Noir” at 7 pm. Nov. 21 and 2 p.m. Nov. 23 in the Waseca Junior Senior High School performing arts center.

The 90-minute play introduces audiences to the talents and traits of detectives Trent Trowel, Monsieur Eustache, Tracy Dyck, Miss Beatrice and Shirley Holmes. The gumshoes are all in attendance at an international gala; many have brought artifacts from their most famous cases. The lights go out, and the artifacts are gone.

Suddenly, the legendary investigators have a personal stake in solving a mystery.

Senior Jude Robinson, cast as Mr. Watson in the play, predicts the audience will enjoy the staged reenactments which supply a live-action illustration for the theories each of the detectives offers while trying to determine the culprit. “Everybody is running back and forth showing how each version of the crime would look,” he describes, going on to say the entire play is filled with “chaotic fun.”

Seventh-grader Audrey Gray, cast as Mrs. Benedict, says the accents and characterizations in the

play add entertainment value. She also recommends that audience members look for small details and behaviors which the actors have devised for their characters to show how they “really feel,” no matter what they may be saying. The “stage whispers” among characters also add humor, she suggests.

Eighth grader Hailey Proehl, in the role of scheming gangster Big Bill, says she enjoys the many touches of humor in the play. She also believes everyone who comes will have the chance to recognize “the amazing amount of talent” the cast and crew bring to the performance. “It’s really impressive what everyone is bringing to the play,” she says.

Stage manager Amber Hagen and “waiter” Carlo Driessen say they believe the energy and humor in the play will be appealing to all ages. They also hope their fellow students will recognize how much fun everyone on the stage is having. “That way they might consider joining the drama program,” she says optimistically.

“Then they could be part of the fun, too,” suggests Driessen.

Admission to the play is \$7 for adults, \$5 for students.

Representative Allen visits JWP

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

Representative Keith Allen of legislative district 19A visited with the senior students from Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP) school district during their social studies class with Blake Frink on Friday, Nov. 7. The topics they covered ranged from curiosity about Allen’s political life, affordability of college education and childcare, and street infrastructure on the state and local level.

Allen graduated from Dover-Eyota High School in 1996 and attended Hawkeye Community College to take advantage of a scholarship before going on to the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities from 1998 to 2002. He earned a bachelor’s degree in animal science. Throughout his life, he has worked extensively in agriculture and farming, customer service, sales, and management. A few years ago, he launched a seed business called Allen Seed Source.

“I was very interested in politics, specifically centered around policy and how rules and laws are crafted and how it actually gets implemented and how people are affected by it,” Allen stated. “I was on the Farm Bureau and very active on that side of it.”

He went on to say he has been disappointed seeing that national and state committees frequently make rules without presenting questions to farmers about how they run their businesses. So, he added, these laws

can negatively affect farmers and can become frustrating.

Congressman Brad Finstad, who Allen attended college with, reached out to Allen when the farm bill was rewritten and asked him to work for him since they both were knowledgeable in agricultural business. When representative Brian Daniels decided to retire from his position, Allen decided to throw his hat in the ring.

“Not all congressional jobs happen in D.C.,” Allen pointed out. “They do happen here in the district.”

Allen went on to say he conducted more than sixty listening sessions with stakeholders who were involved in the Farm Bill in areas like food service and cafeterias in schools, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), manufacturers, and farmers. He said the data was an important foundation in a new version of the Farm Bill which is still waiting to be passed.

“What does a typical day look like in St. Paul?” Frink asked Allen.

“I am slammed with a pretty tight schedule,” Allen responded and added that his day starts at 7 a.m. He has committee meetings with hearings following at 8. “On an average day, I get maybe 15 minutes to a half hour to myself to look at some email.”

If anyone notices during a committee meeting that he is on his computer or phone, Allen said he’s doing his best to keep up with what’s happening in the district from all the emails he receives.



Rep. Keith Allen of legislative district 19A visited with senior students from JWP on Nov. 7.

“When we’re in session, people want to make sure that their voice is heard,” Allen stated.

He also shared that last year, the House worked at setting budgets starting in January through the end of May. Alongside that process, Allen said bonding is set and policies are reviewed, but this next year, session will begin in February and focus more on policy.

When one student asked what the rewarding part of a job as a representative is, Allen said he enjoyed crafting a policy that works and seeing its results.

“Too often we write law and write rules that don’t necessarily do what they’re intended to do,” Allen said. “We can see that with mandates that were thrown on education and the impacts it has there. What we see for regulatory stuff like building permits and agriculture – is making sure people are heard.”

Noting that his whole social studies class is in their last year of high school, Frink asked Allen about the affordability of a college educa-

Pioneer photo by Rachael Jaeger tion with a four-year degree.

“On the higher end, that’s something that our committee is wrestling with,” Allen said. “It is not cheap to go to college. When you get out of college, there’s the question if there will be a spot for you to get hired.”

He also noted that the costs and needs for a college or university are going through the roof and stated commitment to entities such as the Minnesota State System.

“The Minnesota State University is more than happy to remind us in the legislature on a regular basis that they’ve been around longer than we’ve been in existence,” Allen said. “They were founded long before our state was. It’s always kind of an interesting conversation to have with them, but they’ve been a very good partner, regardless.”

If the legislature can keep on top of its bonding, bonding requests and funding for universities, Allen added, he hopes that will help keep the tu-

JWP continued on 5

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ETHANOL

■ Marathon

from Page 3

around Clear Lake and on nearby roads with her Brittany spaniel Waffle as a companion. The two of them log between 65 and 85 miles of running each week.

“I’m nobody special,” says Mercier of her many runs. “Just someone who found a passion in running and has been consistent and dedicated to it over a number of years.

“It’s been a big benefit to me to put in the work and see the fruits of those labors.”

She observes that early in her training “I couldn’t have run a mile at the pace I averaged throughout the whole marathon in New York.”

She credits some of her success to a number of factors that aligned on Nov. 2.

Although there are hills in the New York course, which winds through all five of the city’s boroughs and crosses numerous bridges, she describes a “rolling” effect: That is, after laboring up one side of each hill came the benefit of running down the other side.

While that may seem like a given, she mentions that the course in Boston finishes with a long uphill push, made to seem longer because it comes after runners have already come about 25 miles

The temperature in New York was in the low 50s on Nov. 2, and winds were calm—essentially ideal weather.

Also a benefit, she continues, was the enthusiastic support from the gigantic crowd which lined nearly the entire course. “They were cheering us on, shouting out encouragement, wanting to give high fives,” remembers Mercier. “That energy really helped.”

Along with the crowd in general, Mercier could also set her sights on certain locations along the course where she knew friends or family were watching for her, and where she knew her boyfriend Steve would be ready to cheer for her. Along with that was the ever-changing view—the buildings, parks and structures along the course.

“Having a string of things to look forward to is a great motivator,” she comments.

Though it may not seem like it with 60,000 runners, not everyone who wishes to take part

is granted a space on the starting line, Mercier describes. The marathon is organized by the New York Road Runners Association. Applicants who have officially logged strong times in other marathon events are placed in one lottery and have a somewhat higher chance of being selected, but not everyone with qualifying times gets in. Mercier would know. She says she applied for the 2024 New York marathon and was not accepted. Applicants without qualifying times are also placed in a lottery.

According to the marathon’s website, more than 200,000 people applied to be part of the 2025 marathon; of those, not even 5 percent were accepted. A “guaranteed” way of getting a slot is by being part of a team raising money for an acknowledged charity. But even the “charity” runners must pay the \$250 entry fee.

The next goal Mercier has set for herself is achieving a time of 2 hours 37 minutes or less, the threshold for being allowed to compete for a spot on the U.S. women’s Olympic Marathon Trials. The next international olympic games will be in Los Angeles in 2028, with the trials coming sometime in the spring of that year, so Mercier says she has more than two years to keep improving.

“I wouldn’t be competing to try and make the Olympic team: Making it to the trials would be the win for me. Competing next to all the other women on that day would be the celebration of all the hard work and reaching a difficult, improbable goal.”

The current record for the olympic women’s marathon is 2 hours 22 minutes 55 seconds, set in 2024.

As for how the challenges of training for marathons apply to everyday life, she says the determination and consistency of recovering from an injury is a much like building the stamina and motivation needed to complete a long run.

“Some of my patients know they have a long road ahead of them,” she observes. “With neurologic damage or with pain, it’s a long, difficult road during rehab.

“Each time they reach a milestone, we celebrate their hard work and their accomplishment.

“Then we have to find the next goal and work toward it.”



VETERAN HONOR - Many veterans and individuals attended the NRHEG Secondary school program for Veterans Day. Students in grades 4 through 12 attended, as did 70 members of the general public.



Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

NRHEG Veterans program features student recruit

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

About 25 representatives from the Ellendale and New Richland American Legion posts, along with many veterans who attended as individuals, were present for a 45-minute program at the NRHEG Secondary site in New Richland. Students in grades 4 through 12 attended, as did about 70 members of the general public.

Speaker for the event was NRHEG Senior Jacob Karl, who joined the U.S. Army Reserves and attended boot camp this past summer. He introduced himself as “Private Jacob Karl.”

Musical numbers during the ceremony included the national anthem, “My Country ‘Tis of Thee,” “God Bless America,” “Thank You Soldiers,” “We Remember,” and “In Flanders Field.”

The band also played an “Armed Forces Salute” which included the anthems for each of the branches of the military: veterans were invited to stand when the tune for the branch they served in was played.

Members of the high school ambassadors demonstrated the ceremonial folding of the flag; students Logan Lewis and Winter Pederson gave readings.

Jacob Karl’s “Remarks on Veterans Day” are shared here:

“It’s an honor to stand here today—not just as a senior getting ready to graduate, but as someone who has chosen to serve our country. Veterans Day is a time to pause and remember that heroes aren’t always the people with medals or statues. Many of them are ordinary men and women—our grandparents, parents, teachers and neighbors—who stepped forward when their country needed them most.

“When I decided to enlist, I thought a lot about what ‘service’ really means. I thought a lot about what God wanted me to do. I kept coming back to how God wants me to serve him. Service is not about glory or recognition. It’s about duty. It’s about standing when it would be easier to stay seated. It’s about standing up and fighting for those who can’t fight for themselves. Serving is about choosing something bigger than yourself. Every generation has faced such moments.

“In World War II, a young man named Desmond Doss refused to carry a weapon because of his faith—but he still ran into battle, rescuing 75 men from the cliffs of Okinawa in Japan. In Korea, soldiers endured freezing temperatures at the Chosin Reservoir so that freedom could hold its ground. In Vietnam, many came home to a divided nation, yet they



NRHEG Senior Jacob Karl, who joined the U.S. Army Reserves this past summer, was the speaker on Tuesday, Nov. 11.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

carried on with courage and quiet strength. And in most recent years, our veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan have shown what it means to serve with resilience in a complex and changing world.

“These stories remind us that service takes many forms. Some fight on battlefields, others serve through leadership, medicine, or support—but all of them make sacrifices that protect the freedoms we sometimes take for granted.

“As a student wearing the uniform, I think about those who came before me—the ones who didn’t hesitate to step forward when the call came. Their courage built the path that I and so many others will walk. Honoring them isn’t just about saying ‘thank you,’ it’s also about living

in a way that keeps their legacy alive.

“We honor the past to preserve the future. We study their stories not just to remember, but to learn—to keep our nation strong, compassionate, and united. Veterans Day is a reminder that freedom isn’t inherited automatically: It’s earned, protected, and passed on by people willing to serve.

“To every veteran here today, and to those who are no longer with us: Thank You. Your example lights the way for the next generation. As I prepare to begin my own journey, I hope to live up to that example with courage, humility and gratitude.

“May we never forget the cost of freedom, and may we always strive to be worthy of it.”

■ Veterans

from Page 1

silently marched to the center of the gym before taking a stand in the back between the Select Choir and the Marching Band. Senior Class Delegate Andres Vasquez led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance before the band played the Star-Spangled Banner. Choral music instructor Megan Kreinbring directed the WHS Select Choir in Taps before veteran speaker Rue Sticha, told about her brother, a military veteran who died honorably in action. There was a spe-



TAPS - The Waseca High School Select Choir sang at the Veterans Day program on Tuesday, Nov. 11. They were directed by choral music instructor Megan Kreinbring.

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

cial Veterans Salute by the band that included banners and flags displayed by JH Student Council Members Regan Barr, Lillian Whitesitt, Olivia Hagen, Jordan Rosenthal, KynAdi

Glover, Alexander Henry, Teagan Neidecker, Taelyn Nowak, Jade Rice, Caiden Scheller, Lindsay Bergdale, Ashlynn Lopez, Gracelyn O’Malley, and Olivia Brunner.

The Waseca Legion and Auxiliary Color Guard were Kari Priebe, Cheryl Frear, Karla Scherff, Cindy Dickie, Kevin Dickie, Barry Hagey, and Jodi Winkleman.

■ JWP

from Page 4

ition rates in check. However he said, there’s not much to do in the short term since colleges and universities keep accruing debt.

When questioned why the costs for education, Allen responded there have been numerous factors such as inflation and maintenance of facilities.

“The one thing we’ve never talked about in the university system but the process they’re going through is re-evaluating maintenance facilities and maybe getting rid of them,” Allen stated. “It takes a whole pile of money to maintain some of these

older buildings and it’s not worth maintaining them.”

Instead, Allen said the universities are looking at building new classrooms with more flexibility, and heating and cooling efficiencies, and reevaluating their programs.

A student inquired whether the legislature has any plans to ensure the safety of Highway 14 and Highway 60, given recent disastrous accidents.

“That would qualify for what’s called a highway trunk and I’m not on transportation, so I’m not sure if that’s on the radar for them,” he said. “I know on bonding, we did a construction project on Highway 14 over by Byron which would put in two new overpasses, one off ramp one overpass.”

Frink posed a follow-up question regarding what regular citizens can

do so if there is interest for any change in the highways.

“Putting it on my radar is a good way to start so I can start a process of talking about what’s going on and advocating it to a committee,” Allen said and suggested anyone could bring it to the attention of county commissioners also.

In closing, Allen left any students who might be interested in government with some resonating advice.

“Be curious and see what’s out there,” he said. “Find out what you’re passionate about and see how that can help you as far as different intersections of government. If you’re really interested in it, you can intern as a page. It can be an interesting way to see behind the scenes and know what you’re getting yourself into.”



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The

Pastor's Column

Relax, it's Thanksistmas!

By PASTOR RICK WULF

I love holidays. Every. Single. One. Even the made-up ones. National Strawberry Ice Cream Day (January 15), Penguin Awareness Day (January 20), Hamburger Day (May 28), and so on. Life's fun, so you might as well get on board!

But what I don't love is the in-between holidays. And this time of the year, we can easily get caught between Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas (and throw New Year's in for good measure). And retailers don't help. We start seeing Christmas commercials and ads sooner and sooner every year. They start stocking the shelves with all the red and green. I know what they're doing. The sooner you get in the holiday spirit, the sooner you'll spend money. And between the Halloween necessities, all the fixin's for Thanksgiving, and all the presents under the tree, this time of the year can feel very heavy. Do you feel it?

If you do, I want to tell you, to relax. It's Thanksistmas. Halloween is over and we just have to look at the two (don't worry about New Year's, you have too much on your plate as it is) upcoming holidays that are meant to bring us so much joy and gratitude. So, if you don't mind, sit back, relax, and follow along...and enjoy the journey!

If we're going to relax, we need to first understand that we can't complain in the inbetween. That's right, despite the cost of food, the busyness of the stores, the pages and pages of worthless items in Wal-Mart's "Early Black Friday Deals", we can't complain. Complaining actually does something inside our brains that rewire us towards continued negativity. We actually get a little buzz off complaining and our brains say, "ooh, I like that." So it's easier to complain a little more, then a little more. I think Paul knew something. Look what he writes in Philippians 2:14-15, "Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky..." The truth is, complaining is draining. While we get the slight buzz from it and the brain chemicals rush through the brain, they actually drain us spiritually. That's why Paul tells us, "Al-ways be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4) There is something freeing about choosing joy over complaining.

There's this scene in the awesome Christmas movie called, "Jingle All the Way." Arnold Schwarzenegger is looking for TurboMan, "the hottest selling Christmas toy ever", but it's sold out everywhere. What ensues is Arnold and Sinbad in a mad dash against one another trying to get a TurboMan action figure. This pursuit leads to some wild shenanigans! The question I have for you, is simple. What wild shenanigans does chasing after stuff, even good things, lead you to doing? Does it lead to a deeper sense of joy? Here's another question. How does the busyness and drive to get the right gift steal joy from Christmas? One more. Do you ever feel drained after complaining? Why?

Complaining drains us emotionally and spiritually. So, what is the remedy? How can we relax in the in-between and when we get drained from all the holiday stress? Thankfulness when the complaining becomes straining. When we become overwhelmed, it strains relationships. It strains our margin. It strains our relationship with Jesus. To remedy this strain, we must choose to be thankful. Paul tells us in Colossians 2, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." This is how we relax—by resting in Him, trusting in His great love for us.

So here are a couple questions for you to think about as you keep on reading. Why do you think it's so hard to be thankful at times? How does complaining affect how we look at the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas?

I stumbled on this quote by Christian musician, Toby Mac. He said, "Let's stop complaining about the troubles we have and offer thanks for the troubles we don't have." I think that sums up the teachings of Jesus pretty well.

As we continue thinking about how complaining affects us, not only does it drain us and strain us, it also stains us. Complaining actually steals our peace and leaves us with an emptiness that we fill with the wrong things. Money, stuff, mindless scrolling, comparison, consumerism, and anger are all results of a life that has no peace. And complaining robs us of our peace. That's why we read in Isaiah 26:3, "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."

There is a hilarious scene in the movie, Daddy's Home 2. "Old dad" Will Farrell (Brad) is trying to live up to new dad "Mark Walberg" (Dusty). Because he's living a life with no peace, he tries to prove he's capable and goes to cut down the family Christmas tree. I won't ruin the scene for you, but in his haste to prove his worth, Brad cuts down the wrong tree, leading to a list of unintended consequences. But isn't that how it usually works? When we're out of peace, our life becomes very messy.

Here are a few more questions to think about as we're almost finished here. Do you think the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas are supposed to be peaceful? Are they? Why or why not? Can complaining change our attitudes at Christmas? How?

As you are gearing up for the two best holidays of the year, there will always be something to complain about, especially as we wait for whatever is next in our lives. But God calls us to a higher standard of joy, thankfulness, and peace. What is one thing you can find joy in, be thankful for, or have peace in this week? When we can answer this question, we can relax. We can take the pressure off. We can enjoy the many blessings this time of the year can bring.

From my family to yours, Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas (and Happy New Year, too)!!!!

Area Food Shelf of New Richland



THANKSGIVING GIVERS - The Waldorf Peppy Peppers 4-H Club donated 37 bags (370 pounds) of Thanksgiving dinner supplies to the New Richland Area Food Shelf. The supplies were packaged in reusable shopping bags, all signed by the Peppy Peppers. The food shelf expresses its enthusiastic thanks to the 4-H members and leaders for serving as examples of the organization's four central values: Head, Heart, Hands and Home.

Prairie Ridge golf welcomes Cumberland

By RACHAEL JAEGER
Staff Writer

On September 30, Kevin Cumberland became the new golf clubhouse manager at Prairie Ridge golf course in Janesville; Cumberland taught for the last decade at St. Clair and has been a teacher and coach for 14 years. Cumberland stated when he saw the position advertised, he thought it was a unique opportunity and just "had to" apply.

"About 15 years ago I actually did look into going back to school for golf course management," he shared.

He added that the timing wasn't right back then since he had two young children to take care of, so that was another reason why this opportunity excited him.

"Being an educator, you do lot of the same things here," Cumberland stated. "I may not be teaching, but I'm definitely taking care of people. Passion for people is a big part of education."

His first week on his own began the second week in November after working the previous week with Scott Allen who had worked at Prairie Ridge as a golf pro and general manager for 26 years.

"He did a fine job of laying the groundwork for me," Cumberland said of Allen.

Not only does Cumberland see golf as a lifetime sport where any age, from a kid to a ninety-year-old can play, he also sees how golf can relate to real life and who you are, especially with who you're going to be when no one else is around.

"A lot of times you're competing against yourself. Golf builds that character where you call your own penalties. No one is looking so you can do what you want with the ball."

Golf also provides quality time with family or friends, Cumberland added.

As soon as he clocks in for the day, he said members usually come in, ready to play golf.

While Cumberland has worked at Prairie Ridge Golf Course only a few weeks, he says he is already wearing numerous hats as the merchandiser, ordering materials and food, bartender, cook, and maintaining health and sanitary regulations. Along with all that, he has been learning about the new computer system.

Cumberland grew up in Elysian and Waterville before he attended Minnesota State University (MSU) in Mankato and acquired a bachelor's degree in social studies. After he graduated, he moved to South Dakota where he lived for three years. He mentioned he applied to about 70 schools in the Midwest region before he landed the job in Sioux Falls.

While there he also met his future wife Liz, who was just finishing her nursing degree at Augustana University. They both needed to try something different, so they moved to Tennessee for seven years but have lived in the area again for about 13 years, he added. Cumberland's dad and stepmom also moved to Knoxville, so it became an incentive to move there and it's where their two children, JJ and Kendal, were born. Liz also went back to school to become a nurse practitioner at King



Prairie Ridge golf course welcomed new golf clubhouse manager Kevin Cumberland on Sept. 30.

Pioneer photo by Rachael Jaeger and so it's set up to play the other way."

Cumberland said he doesn't expect to make many changes for a while. Instead he hopes he will build repertoire with clients as much as he has with the veteran staff he has interacted with, including Allen and Jakob Lehrke. Cumberland expressed how impressed he's been with the increase of memberships over the last decade and remarked he has a really good framework to work with.

"What I want to do is keep learning that framework and keep the status quo with what's been working and make little fine-tuned adjustments so the course keeps growing," Cumberland stated.

Since settling into his new position, Cumberland made it clear how much the Janesville community has touched him.

"They're very friendly and I look forward to serving them for many years to come," Cumberland stated.

University while he became a stay-at-home dad for that time since they realized his income essentially paid for day care.

"At the time, I was working for the University of Knoxville as a nutrition educator, so I was traveling through Knox County and working with elementary schools, nursing homes and health fairs," Cumberland said and added while he enjoyed the job, and it had good benefits it didn't pay very well.

One of the most unique features Cumberland has noted about the nine-hole golf course is its reversibility. Every Sunday night, Cumberland shared he prepares to change the direction club members will play for the following week.

"It plays like it has 18 holes even though it has nine," he explained. "For tournaments we can actually turn it into an 18-hole event. We'll have them play one direction in the morning for lunch and then I'll send the crew out to reverse all the holes



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* * *

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Waldorf, Minnesota
Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Larry Sipe
Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class
* * *

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Freedom Township
Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship
* * *

ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Pastor Ava Adams-Morris
Waldorf, Minnesota
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship
* * *

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC
Waldorf, Minnesota
Father Sammy Pothreddy
Saturday - 5 p.m. Worship
* * *

TRINITY LUTHERAN
Wilton Township
Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor
Sunday - 8 a.m. summer worship; 10:45 a.m. Worship starting Sept. 1
* * *

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
Brad Donner, Branch President
Waseca, Minnesota
www.lds.org
Sunday - 10 a.m. Sacrament Mtg.; 11:20 a.m. Sunday School
Wednesday - 7 p.m. Youth Activities, ages 12-18
* * *

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
412 N. Main Street, Janesville
Pastor Jason Wolter
Rev. Timothy Contreras
Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship
Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:30 a.m. Worship
* * *

JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
401 N. West St., Janesville
Pastor Kathy King
Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship
* * *

BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
43089 180th St., Morristown
Pastor Kathy King
Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Summer worship hours, (10:45 a.m. Worship, winter)
* * *

ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH
307 W. 2nd St. Janesville
Father Robert Schneider
Sunday - 8:30 a.m. - Mass
* * *

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
300 Owen St., Janesville
Pastor Sarah Krolak
* * *

ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH
Alma City, Minnesota
Pastor Robert Harting
Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship
* * *

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Smiths Mill, Minnesota
Pastor Robert Harting
Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship
Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship
* * *

NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA
404 30 120th St. Waseca
Pastor Sarah Krolak
507-234-6463
Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship; Second sunday "Young at heart"
Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. confirmation
* * *

NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.

Janesville

1925

- The Janesville High School football team lost to the University High at Minneapolis last Friday 20 to 7. The game found the local men hardly up to their usual point of condition, the hard game with Waseca only two days before hardly permitting them time to get back to their proper stride. Janesville scored in the first few minutes of the opening quarter. Taking the kickoff, the Janesville men started a smashing attack against the Minneapolis team and took the ball straight down the field to the 15-yard line when Koplen heaved a pass to Swanson who scurried over the line for the first counter. From that time, though, the locals failed to get going with the snap that has characterized their work all season, while the city boys opened up with a passing game that resulted in three touch-downs.

- There are 91 more farms in Waseca County now than there were in 1920 according to a new federal survey just issued by the Department of Commerce at Washington. There are now 612 tenant farmers in this county compared to 451 in 1920. There are 58 less owners operating Workers. Honorable mention went to Vista Busy Bees and Woodville Hustlers. This award is based on all-around 4-H club activities. That is, membership f inish-up, the number of members exhibiting at the county fair, the number of members participating in demonstrations, the number of members taking part in special activities such as safety, health, and community service. 1975 Monday night regarding the proposed south side drainage project. A proposal has been before the council since October 16 for a comprehensive improvement project for the south side of Janesville. The complete project included storm sewer improvements, sanitary improvements and road improvements. The project carried with it a price tag of \$1.1 million, and would result in the highest tax increase in the history of Janesville. Instead of In 1975, Janesville High School juniors prepare for a mystery-themed play called “The Whole Truth.” Actors, in front, are Darold Rudolph and LeeAnn Meyer. Painting the set, in back, are exky Kopischke, Jerry Cahill, Marie Borneke, Deb Dauk, and Dan Gahler. farms now than there were five years ago. There are 2,000 less acres in farm lands than in 1920. The average size farm in this county is now 132 acres compared to 154 acre average in 1920

1950

- William Ellis, U. S. Field Supervisor for Aetna Casualty and Surety Co., has notified R. T. Pearce of his selection as one of two agents from the State of Minnesota to attend a special training course at Hartford, Connecticut. The course dates are from November 13 to December 15 of this year. The training course will consist of an intensified study of all types of casualty lines and all lines of general insurance, providing a specialized understanding of all insurance fields. Mr. Pearce will leave for Hartford via Capital Airlines November 11, arriving in Hartford on the 12th. Mrs. Pearce will have the office open afternoons during Mr. Pearce’s absence.

- 4-H club members and their leaders were guests of the Waseca County Bankers and the Waseca Chamber of Commerce at the 14th annual 4-H Club banquet. Five hundred thirty-five 4-H club members, leaders and parents were in attendance at the banquet. The banquet was held in the Sacred Heart school auditorium in Waseca Wednesday evening of that week. The outstanding club award of the year was awarded to the Janesville Hearty Workers. Honorable mention went to Vista Busy Bees and Woodville Hustlers. This award is based on all-around 4-H club activities. That is, membership f inish-up, the number of members exhibiting at the county fair, the number of members participating in demonstrations, the number of members taking part in special activities such as safety, health, and community service.

1975

- At a time when church attendance is falling nationwide, a Janesville man never misses a Mass. In fact, John Janson attends three masses a weekend – once Saturday night and twice every Sunday morning. Janson, 36, calls St. Ann’s parishioners to Mass by tolling the church bell just seconds before Father C. J. Haberman comes out on the later. If you’re a block away when John pulls the bell rope, you know you’ll be late. If you’re on the front steps, you can make it if you hustle. But no matter where you are, you can bet that John is going about his task with a warm smile on his face.

- The District 830 School Board is still wondering where to put the high schools chorus and the over-crowded conditions in the present band room. The subject came up again at their November meeting Monday night. The possibility of presenting school district voters with a bond issue for just a music addition was considered. “I think one of the reasons the bond issue failed is that people still consider band and chorus as extracurricular activities,” Ken Johansen commented. Sib Joyce, chairman of the board, said the board may be disregarding their responsibilities if they don’t bring the space problem to the voters again.

2000

- Sometimes, the more things change, the more they stay the same. That sentiment was shared by some in attendance at the Janesville city council meeting Monday night regarding the proposed south side drainage project. A proposal has been before the council since October 16 for a comprehensive improvement project for the south side of Janesville. The complete project included storm sewer improvements, sanitary improvements and road improvements. The project carried with it a price tag of \$1.1 million, and would result in the highest tax increase in the history of Janesville. Instead of passing the original resolution, a motion was made by city council member Jim Hesch to consider a plan that would be less comprehensive and much less expensive. Under the new plan, only storm sewer improvements would be made, and only in those areas experiencing flooding.

- The results of last week’s election leaves the Janesville City Council with two familiar faces and one new one. Mayor incumbent Frank “Buzz” Morrill ran unopposed for another term and was returned to office with 872 votes out of 1,025 voters. City council incumbent Jim Hesch was returned to office with 572 votes. The new face on the council next year will be Jerry Schendel, who received 340 votes. Incumbent Russ Wiebold had 300 votes, first time candidate Tom Estice received 328 votes and Allen Fetchenhier received 209 votes.

- A rash of attempted breakins and burglaries in the city of Janesville recently have led the Janesville Police Department to step up their investigation efforts. These efforts have led to an arrest in at least one of those incidents, with the suspect making a first appearance in court on Monday, November 11. Jaymes Hines of Janesville, 18, has been charged with one count of burglary in the third degree and one county of felony theft. The first county carries with it a maximum penalty of 5 years or \$10,000, or both; the second county carries a penalty of up to five years, \$10,000, or both.

Waseca

25 years ago



- These 10 Waseca football players all started last season, and will carry much of the load when the Bluejays travel to Benilde-St. Margaret’s for Friday’s season opener. Front row (from left) are: David Miller, Andy Guse, Jake Bjerke, Jeff Roemhildt and Joe Isder. (Back row): Kellen Driscoll, Jim Mienek, Steven Hanson, Spencer Hanson and John Arnold. The Jays opened the 1999 season with a 23-0 loss to the Red Knights, and went on to a 2-7 year. Waseca is looking to even the score with BSM Friday night.

- After the Election of 2000, it will be harder, if not impossible, to make a case for the theory that one person’s vote doesn’t count. In the Presidential race between Al Gore and George W. Bush, the election has been thrown into a stalemate because of the incredibly tight vote. In Wisconsin, which went for Gore, the difference between the two candidates’ totals is a mere 6,000 votes. A recount is being considered by the state’s Republican Party. In Florida, where a recount is underway, Bush leads in the popular vote by 946 votes, or less than one-quarter of one percent of the total votes cast in the state. In the nation as a whole, Gore leads in the popular vote by 167,695 out of 101 million votes cast.

- Holland Van Zetten and Eric Taylor were united in marriage on August 12, 2000 at Fremont United Methodist Church, Fremont, Iowa. Pastor John Conway of Waseca and Julie Wehner officiated at the 4 p.m. ceremony. Holland is the daughter of Gary and Cynthia Van Zetten of Oskalcoso, Iowa. Erik is the son or Richard and Jeanette Taylor of Elysian, Minnesota.

- Joel Schaub, a senior, has been selected as Student of the Week by the Industrial Technology Department. Joel is the son of Alvin and Kathleen Schaub of Waseca. His father is employed by Brown Printing and his mother is employed by Johnson Components. He has an older sister, Angela (19,) who is a freshman in college at Watertown, SD. In school, Joel has taken classes in the Industrial Technology Department that have included: Intro and Advanced Woodworking/Cabinet making, Drafting I, Electronics and Construction. He has also been involved in Choir, Tech Crew, and State Stree Singers and maintains a solid B average.

50 years ago



- Senior co-captain Lindsay Wadd powers down another kill in Waseca’s season opener against Rochester Lourdes last week. Wadd led the Bluejays with nine kills and eight blocks, sparking them to a four-game victory. The Jays are at home against Austin tonight, and open South Central Conference play when Blue Earth comes to town Thursday.

- On Tuesday, Nov. 11 a Veterans Day observance will take place at the Waseca County Courthouse beginning at 11 a.m. Waseca American Legion Post 228, and Veterans of Foreign War Post 1642 will begin the ceremonies at 11 by raising the American flag. A short speech by First District American Legion Commander Sylvester Priem of Janesville will follow. The program will end with the playing of “Taps” and a gun salute honoring the fallen veterans of war. All interested spectators are invited to attend.

- Dennis O’Rourke, owner of Denny’s Auto Body Shop located in the Waseca Industrial Park will celebrate the completion of his new building with an open house this Friday, Nov. 14. The open house will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday with Dennis serving coffee and cookies to all who come to inspect his new facility. The building is located one block south of Delta Truck Body. The Chamber of Commerce Goodwill Ambassadors will stage a ribbon cutting at 9:30 a.m.

75 years ago

- The Keeley Farm Equipment Co. is building a new structure to house their implement business at 1002 West Elm. Construction started about three weeks ago and the building is expected to be completed in a similar period of time. The new building, a 40 by 80 structure will be one story and made of cement and clay block. Everson and Woyke are doing the construction work. Plans are to make no changes to the operation of the firm for the present.

- The Waseca Public schools will be literally “busting at the seams” within a few years unless something is done to enlarge the system. Figures revealed by the school census show that the first grade will be one third larger threes from this time. Superintendent Dahlager told a Herald reporter today that there is no doubt that the facilities of the local schools will have to be remodeled to cope with the situation.

100 years ago

- Two young boys giving their ages as 13 years, were lodged in the city jail last evening while the authorities investigate their stories. The boys are Kenneth McNulty and Milfor Paulson and they give Minneapolis as their home. They were picked up by the police at the farm of L. A. Sendelbach south of Waseca early last evening after they had stopped at the Roesler farm to secure lodging. Police in Minneapolis have been notified and an investigation is being made.

- Waseca’s wrestling season will open at the city hall Thursday evening, Nov. 19, Fred Ross, the local lightweight, and champion of Minnesota, has accepted the challenge of George (Spike) Graham. The challenge came to the Waseca Journal last week and we got in touch with Fred at once. “Sure,” said the local wrestler, “I’ll take on anybody, at any time or place. I would have wrestled “Buck” Sterling who challenged me in your paper recently but I think Sterling was the man I threw recently at Elysian.”

New Richland

25 years ago



- Joining the New Richland Police Department in September was Scott Eads. Scott grew up and graduated from Mountain Lake High school, attended law enforcement training at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and was on the Police force at Truman from March 1999 to September 2000.

- Announce Engagement. Melissa Landauer and Jonathan Olsen, both of Mankato, announce their engagement and approaching marriage. Melissa is the daughter of Steve and Georgia Saefke and the late Fred Landauer of Burnsville. She is a 1997 graduate of Burnsville High School and is attending Minnesota State University, Mankato. Jonathan is the son of Robert and Cynthia Olsen of Leland, Iowa. Jonathan is a 1998 graduate of North Iowa High School, Buffalo Center, Iowa and is attending Minnesota State University, Mankato. A December 30, 2000 wedding is planned at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Mankato.

- Leon and Brenda LaRoche of Breezy Point at Pequot Lakes are the parents of a daughter born Wednesday, October 25, 2000. Hannah Elizabeth, as she has been named, weighed 7 pounds and 8 ounces, she has two sisters, Ashley, 5 years old and Courtney, 4 years old.

50 years ago



- Lloyd Blowers of Hartland, foreman for Anco Construction, who built the Richland Care Center, presents the keys of the building to Mayor Margaret Engesser as Dwayne Kozak watches at the Saturday afternoon ceremonies at the home.

- Four members of the Future Farmers of America have been named regional winners of the FFA Diary Production Proficiency Award sponsored by the Celanese Chemical Company of New York, New York, in cooperation with the national FFA Foundation, Inc. The four regional award recipients were: Western Region - Dwayne Nelson. Southern Region - Elwin Nolan Husser, Jr. Central Region - Jim Demmer. Eastern Region - Jean M. Tugend.



- Dan Bell and Gene (Duke) Tukua celebrated with an open house last Saturday at their new Duke and Dan’s Automotive Service. They purchased the station from Melford Westeng, November 1. It was first owned and operated by Ed Reistad in the early 1920s, when it was a Standard Station. The new owners have Cen-ex Gas and Oil products as well as complete automotive repair service. The young men are both Hartland natives and were mechanics at Allis Chalmers, Hartland.

75 years ago

- Relatives and friends numbering 100 gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Hagen Sunday afternoon to help them celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. A delicious meal was served at 4 o’clock which included a wedding cake, a gift from, and baked by Mrs. Eldo Utpadel of Ellendale, cousin of Mrs. Hagen.

- Mr. and Mrs. Carl Tesch of Byron are rejoicing over the arrival of their first daughter, born at the Waseca Memorial hospital Saturday, December 9. She weighed 7 pounds and 2 ounces, she also has four other brothers.

- Pamela Jean, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Horn was baptized during morning services at Trinity Lutheran Church Sunday by Rev. J. C. Walledom. Mr. and Mrs. Horn entertained at Sunday dinner at Horn Inn following church services. Present were the sponsors and their children. Mrs. J. W. Romine, Miss Minnie Sunde. Harry Sunde and Pastor Walledom.



2025 farming season in review

By MARK BERNARD
Staff Writer

The 2025 Harvest has largely come to a close for most and somewhat like last year, it meant a mixed bag on yields on both corn and soybeans. Much of the crop looked decent from the road only to be consistently inconsistent. Soybean yields were mediocre to very respectable and in most cases improved over 2024. Corn yields were better as one went east or west once out of the heavy rain areas. Not surprising as combines rolled and yields began to tell the tale. Why were yields so variable this time around?

We had well above normal moisture during the growing season for June through August. Like 2023, we went into winter in 2024 with a soil profile that was deceptively full in many places. The scant rainfall in September after the crop matured continued in October gave some a false sense of security that the soil was dry going into winter. The 2" + of rainfall that occurred in the last half of August when the crop was maturing was largely overlooked. November contributed nearly 3" to the profile. December added to the mix with nearly an inch of precip falling as rain when there was very little frost in the ground. Winter '24 - '25 snowfall overall was far below normal, while the frost depth reached 27" due to cold temps and the lack of snow cover. The snow that did fall tended to melt and percolate into the soil rather than running off.

By mid-February, estimates had the soil moisture profile at nearly 80% capacity down to 4". Any of the temporary snow cover was gone by mid-March. Above normal March precipitation as rainfall added additional moisture to the soil profile. A dry early April allowed planters to roll until the 17th when heavier rains shut them down until the first full week in May. Planting conditions were deemed fit although the soil had changed its complexion somewhat. Soil that had started out fluffy and mellow a few weeks earlier had suddenly become firm and more dense, likely due to packing caused by heavier rains.

Aside from the rain the first few days of May, it remained dry until

almost the 20th. We received more extensive rain from about May 20th through the end of the month. The total in New Richland for May was 3.52", in contrast to the heavy rains in May of 2024. The normal for the SROC in Waseca for May is 4.47". Corn emergence in May was erratic in some fields, so rotary hoes were employed to coax some of the struggling plants to poke through. Blowing soil also chewed some corn and soybean fields up to the point that replanting became necessary.

Rainfall for the month of June was slightly above normal. In New Richland, it was 5.83" vs. normal of 5.38" at the SROC in Waseca. Soils allowed application of sidedress nitrogen as well as post-emerge application of herbicides. With corn in the upper \$3 to low \$4 per bushel range it was tough to get anyone too excited about throwing additional money at it.

Unlike 2024, herbicide applications were made in a timelier fashion. Good thing too as the weed pressure coming out of last year was enormous. In many cases, corn fields in 2024 got a pre down and that was it. Precipitation in July was unreal after mid-month, and some were able to apply nitrogen in the corn. New Richland tallied 12.34" of rain, most of it during the last two weeks of the month in three main rainfall events. Normal rainfall for July at the SROC is 4.93".

August was another wet one although the crop managed to stay above water, taking up more moisture to maintain the yield producing factory. 6.02" fell making for another well above normal month of precipitation. Even though it rained frequently, September was dry and very warm, pushing the crop to maturity quickly. Worries about test weight in corn arose due to the above normal temperatures. Other situations became quickly apparent as a result.

While our growing season precipitation was again excessive, one might surmise that the wet season meant a lot of corn leaf disease. There was a fair amount this time, including southern rust northern corn leaf blight (NCLB). In some instances fungicides paid and in others not so much as the levels of

infestation varied from field to field and hybrid to hybrid. The tar spot that everyone worries about constantly was present, but infestations weren't heavy or widespread across the region. As noted last season, we are likely building inoculum so fungicide use may become more important in the near future.

One disease that was very prevalent particularly in earlier maturing hybrids was anthracnose. Foliar applied fungicides do little to control this pathogen. It too tended to be field and hybrid specific. This disease results in poor stalk quality and reduced yield when it strikes early as it did in 2025. We were extremely fortunate that we didn't get a week's worth of soaking rain with wind. There likely would've been a huge demand for corn rakes again.

What on paper should've been a banner year for white mold year in soybeans, turned out to be less than anticipated. Above normal temps in July probably kept it from being the problem it had the potential to be in most fields. Earlier maturing varieties that were done flowering by August 1st were a factor as well. Once flowering ceases, it's more difficult for the disease to mount an offensive. Later varieties typically had more white mold, again.

SDS (sudden death syndrome) was expected to be a factor with the wet spring. SDS wasn't the factor it could've been with good soil moisture from August carrying the crop to the finish line. SDS symptoms tend to be worse in seasons with a drier August. The continued prevalence of seed treatments to control SDS was a big factor. Pod and stem blight was again noticeable. Not a huge yield reducing factor on a field wide basis but generally occurred in localized areas. When one starts considering the few bushels per acre each of these diseases took in a year like this one, it adds up.

Soybean aphids while present, didn't reach treatable levels. As has been the trend, the infestations increased late enough (R6) that insecticide applications were unlikely to benefit. To no one's surprise, synthetic pyrethroids continue to be ineffective on soybean



The scant rainfall in September after the crop matured continued in October gave some a false sense of security that the soil was dry going into winter.
Photo by Deb Bently

aphids due to resistance. Even with low crop prices and the fact the insecticide is cheap, there still was no rational justification for their use.

Our GDU accumulation for the growing season was well above normal thanks in large part to the warm September and killing frost that held off until October 23rd. At Waseca, the May - September Growing Degree Units totaled 2780 this season, 11.7% more than the normal season total of 2509. The warm dry September was a boon to crop maturity. Tack on an additional 223 GDU's from August to set the new SROC record at 3003.

However, the daytime high temperatures and much higher than normal overnight temps that persisted into the first week of October may have exacerbated the phantom yield loss. Ears that I'd personally pulled for a yield estimate on September 22nd were re-measured and the yield recalculated after a month. The re-calculated yield estimate was nearly 8% less and in this particular case, well over 20 bu./acre lower. Shrinkage.

Soybean harvest began in earnest for many about the week of September 22nd. Same song different verse for soybean moisture this year. Warm temps at harvest with breezy conditions took soybean moisture content down into the single digits overnight. By the time many started picking corn, thanks in part to increased disease pressure, moisture had fallen into the low to mid-teens on the earlier maturing hybrids planted early. Aside from one brief rainy spell,

corn could virtually be harvested at will. Some with early planted early maturing corn were able to dump it directly into the bin or perform minimal drying. Harvest went quickly with most finishing well before Halloween.

So how did this growing season turn out for most after the devastating rainfall? On the early soybeans, some yield averages were as high as the low 70 bu./acre range, with most harvesting 55 - 60 bu./acre area as harvest progressed. Better than last year but disappointing based on their late-season appearance. Moving west and particularly where hail and rainfall was higher, soybeans were worse than those figures. As one moved east across I-35 and beyond, yields were better as rainfall totals lessened. Areas of MN to the north that had been stricken by drought in 2024 had vastly improved crops as well.

In South Central MN, corn yields were dependent on combinations of multiple factors this year. Where water had ponded, it was apparent denitrification and/or leaching had occurred. Unlike last year, there was actually crop in those holes. Stands were still reduced in many fields. While little warranted replanting, rotary hoes were running trying to maintain a respectable stand. There were also areas where blowing soil limited stands and corn was replanted in those areas. Yields for corn planted on last year's soybean ground were typically better than their corn-on-corn counterparts. In general, full season hybrids had a distinct advantage in yield. With the dry, warm fall, moisture levels were

very respectable even on 110+-day hybrids.

More corn on the ground again after harvest this year. Similar to last year. When the ears were grabbed by the snapping rolls, it frequently resulted in kernels shattering and not getting in the combine. While not as bad as last year's harvest, the result will be an abundance of volunteer corn in many of next year's soybean fields. In the meantime, wildlife will reap the benefits until it's buried under the snow, or the ground is tilled.

Corn yields were still slightly disappointing considering what the crop looked like. As expected, 190 - 200 bu./acre caught most of the farm average yields. Harvest moisture too was surprisingly dry considering the planting date on the second wave. Well above normal temperatures in September and October dried the corn down rapidly, particularly with the unheard-of 90+ degree highs October 4th and 5th with high winds.

Corn and soybean prices are down but fertilizer prices, particularly phosphorus prices, are up. This has prompted many to scrutinize their soil tests more carefully and only apply phosphorus where odds of a response are most likely. Despite these obstacles, there is some optimism. Recent dealings with China have resulted in potential soybean sales. Yields, while not what people hoped for, especially after early estimates, were still much improved over 2024. Can we keep this trend going? My guess is we'll know by next year at this time.

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A Day in the Country

HAPPENINGS IN THE LOCAL AG COMMUNITY



50 years and counting for Frechette Trucking

JANESVILLE JOURNAL - When you've survived as a business for over 25 years, you know you're doing something right. But when you survive adversity like Frechette Trucking has to make it half a century, it's a clear testament to how hard work as a local business pays off.

Frechette Trucking is owned by Rick Frechette, along with his wife, Michelle, who have been the owners since 2008. The story of this business, however, begins with Rick's father, Wrey, who founded the company in 1975.

"Back then, we mostly hauled grain," Frechette explained.

"We had one or two trucks to start with. I've been around the trucking part of it pretty much my whole life."

The large buildings that occupy the Janesville business also didn't exist. Frechette claimed that back in 1975, there wasn't even a short to work out of. If a big rig needed an oil change, it happened either in the parking lot or at home. The shop was constructed in 1983, and the truck washing station was added on about a decade later.

Things changed for the better for Wrey when he happened to meet a forester named Donna while hauling grain through Missoula, MT, in 1976. According to an article from the Ja-

nesville Argus written around 2008, Donna had felt the "pull in Janesville," and the two married later that year. She also learned to drive a truck in only three months.

Meanwhile, Rick got his CDL in 1983. Although he had intended to pursue an engineering degree in college and attended for three years, he never completed it. While he enjoys what he does now, he wishes he had gone back to finish his degree.

The intention was for Rick to take over the business from Wrey in 2005. However, Wrey had been diagnosed with cancer, and he passed away in 2006. Rick worked with his mom for a couple of years before he and his wife, Michelle, officially took it over in 2008.

These days, it's less about transporting grain and more about hauling pigs. Like most farmers and workers in the agriculture industry, it's busy nearly every part of the year. However, while some farmers adjust to the winter, Rick Frechette and his crew keep on trucking — literally.

"I usually haul every day," he explained. "I'm one of ten drivers. I get up at about 2 a.m. and then haul feeder pigs."

In the winter, though, Frechette usually gets in some part-time help. That allows him to focus on maintaining his trucks as needed.

One of the main stops he makes is in Northfield, where there is a farm operation with over a million pigs. At its peak, Frechette claims there are close to a million and a half pigs. "They are 50-pound pigs, and we haul a majority of them," he said. "They go from the nursery to a finisher."

Although that's one of their most frequent stops, they also service barns around the area. "We visit barns all over the region," he said. "We have some in Iowa, others in Wisconsin."

One of Frechette's favorite parts about being in the trucking business is the clientele he meets. "We work with about 250 producers," he explained.

"I deal with people every day. However, I don't usually interact with the office employees. It's more of a hands-on business. I can work directly with the producers. The people I meet doing this are wonderful."

While Frechette Trucking has stood in the face of some personal adversity, it's always a challenge to change with the times. Many may not understand the trucking business. One challenge Rick pointed out was that those who don't drive trucks often don't understand the sheer size of the big rigs.

"We haul up to 80,000 pounds," he



Rick Frechette, owner of Frechette Trucking, stands proudly next to his Truck.

elaborated. "People on the highway don't always understand that we need the room to make turns. We also can't stop as quickly as a car."

He also feels that the trucking industry's value to the overall food chain is underestimated. "We're critical to everyone," he said. "Even during Covid, we were running full steam ahead. Trucks not only deliver live animals but also the foods that you see in grocery stores."

On the other hand, it's not always easy to find workers. "It's hard to find qualified drivers," he said. "Many in the younger generations are more interested in working on computers. But it's also a matter of finding those who want to work in general."

So, how can the trucking industry not only survive but thrive and incentivize hard work? Higher wages, Frechette said. "I think wages have to come up," he said. "Right now, with the hours we run, it's difficult to find guys to work. The only way you can attract employees is with better wages."

At least in the case of Frechette Trucking, they have had loyal employees, some of whom have worked

for the company for 30 years. "We try to make it as appealing as possible," he shared. "Plus, you're working with smaller communities. We might not offer as well as bigger companies, but we do as much as we can."

As the business turns 50 this year, Frechette is hopeful that the company will still run strong for years to come. As the Argus article on him taking ownership of the business rightly claimed, no one could replace his father, Wrey. But Rick has done a great job continuing the family legacy.

Local farms recognized as century farms in 2025

The Minnesota State Fair and the Minnesota Farm Bureau recognize 77 Minnesota farms as 2025 Century Farms. Qualifying farms have been in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years and are 50 acres or more. Century Farm families receive a commemorative sign, as well as a certificate signed by Minnesota State Fair and Minnesota Farm Bureau presidents and Governor Tim Walz. Since the program began in 1976, more than 11,000 Minnesota farms have been recognized as Century Farms.

Family farms are recognized as a Century Farm when three requirements are met. The farm must be: 1) at least 100 years old according to authentic land records; 2) in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years (continuous residence on the farm is not required); and 3) at least 50 acres and currently be involved in agricultural production.

2025 Century Farm families are listed by county, then by the farm's city or township, family or farm names and year of original purchase:

Becker
Park Rapids The Homestead of Ferdinand Hensel 1895
Benton
Foley Carlson Family Farm 1894
Blue Earth
Eagle Lake Frank Family Farm 1924
Good Thunder Nathan Ulrich 1866
Madelia Gronewold Farming

Est. 1925 1925
Brown
New Ulm Willard & Dorothy Waibel Family Farm 1910
Carlton
Kettle River Pasek Dairy 1909
Carver
Waconia EJ RIETZ FAMILY FARM 1869
Watertown Vanderlinde Farm 1885
Watertown Grandpa Schmidt's Farm 1925
Clay
Hawley JDD&K Farm 1897
Hawley Grefsrud Farm 1923
Clearwater
Bagley Titera/Skala 1925
Bagley Titera/Skala 1925
Clearbrook The Thompson Farm 1910
Clearbrook Engebretson 1910
Shevlin Lone Pine Farm 1912
Cottonwood
Lamberton Marlene and Harvey Pedersen 1924
Lamberton Stavnes Farms 1898
Sanborn 343 Farms, Inc. 1906
Dodge
Hayfield Ray Kylo Farm 1882
Fillmore
Canton Duxbury/Jones Farms 1898
Harmony Koliha Farms 1923
Freeborn
Albert Lea Nelson Family Farm 1924
Ellendale Langlie/Baarson 1902
Hartland Olson Farms 1925

Goodhue
Welch Carlson Family Farm 1925
Zumbrota Hoven Family Farms 1925
Houston
Caledonia Gavin Farms LLC 1868
Jackson
Okabena ATZ FARM 1925
Kandiyohi
Paynesville Manz-Herding Farm 1895
Kittson
Kennedy Ron Fossell Farm 1925
Lac Qui Parle
Bellingham Hiepler Farm 1925
Dawson Kleva 1882
Madison Bauler/Goerger 1904
Marietta Kriesie Family Farm 1919
Le Sueur
Le Center Jindra Family Farms 1903
Le Sueur Rolling Acres Farm 1924
Le Sueur Krenik Family Farm 1925

Waterville Triple T-MDC Farm 1911
Marshall
Warren D-J Nelson Farms Inc. 1881
Martin
Fairmont McNeerney/Maday 1894
Fairmont Rodney and Debra Laue Farm 1894
McLeod
Hutchinson Howe Holsteins 1919
Morrison
Pierz Stangl Family Farm 1906
Pierz Tschida Family Farm 1925
Mower
Grand Meadow Calkins Farm 1920
Norman
Ada Klask Farm 1925
Olmsted
Rochester Luhmann Farms 1925
Otter Tail (East)
Bluffton Endres Farm 1904
Pennington
Thief River Falls Agassiz Acres

1915
Pine
Hinckley Sikkink Farms 1925
Pope
Lowry Karen R. Tauber Trust 1892
Villard Walker 1925
Redwood
Clements Rothmeier Family Farm 1901
Renville
Hector Thomas Koeberl Farm 1923
Morton Donald & Edna Wertish 1918
Stewart KurthHaven Farms 1906
Rice
Montgomery Pesta Family Farm 1925
Rock
Hardwick The Paulson Farm 1906
Luverne Kruse 1918
Roseau
Greenbush CMK FARMS INC. 1902
Strathcona Bernat 1918
Sibley

Arlington Orlin Kurtzweg 1887
Winthrop Johnson Family Farms 1925
Stearns
Belgrade Braun Family Farm 1887
Holdingford Czeck 1883
Melrose Zierden Farm 1896
Steele
Owatonna Armstrong Farm 1896
Owatonna Partridge Farm 1905
Swift
Benson Lake Hassel Lee Farm 1901
Murdock Larson 1886
Todd
Eagle Bend Nelson Farm 1919
Osakis McKindley - Gray 1917
Waseca
New Richland Joecks Family Farm 1925
Waldorf Gerdt's Family Farm 1924
Waseca Eaton Farms 1880



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DEER OPENER - Governor Tim Walz spent the morning of Nov. 8 enjoying the woods, but did not harvest a deer.

Gov Walz celebrates deer opener

Governor Tim Walz today celebrated the opening weekend of Minnesota’s firearms deer hunting season in Goodhue County. He was hosted by Dan and Mary Lundell on their private land near Cannon Falls, where he spent the morning enjoying the woods but did not harvest a deer. The Governor then visited a chronic wasting disease (CWD) check station with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Sarah Strommen and talked with hunters as they brought in their deer to be sampled for CWD.

“Deer season is a special time in Minnesota, whether this is your first hunt or part of a family tradition passed down for generations,” said Governor Walz. “Minnesota is known as a premier deer hunting destination, supporting communities across the state. I always enjoy time in the deer stand and the connection it brings to the outdoors and to one another. I wish all Minnesota

deer hunters a safe, enjoyable, and successful season.”

“Deer hunting connects us to the outdoors and to our family and friends, supports Minnesota communities, and plays a vital role in managing our state’s deer populations,” said Minnesota DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen. “I’m grateful to the nearly 400,000 hunters who take part in the firearms deer season each year with tradition, safety, and conservation in mind.”

Hunting contributes more than \$1.2 billion annually to Minnesota’s economy and supports jobs in tourism, outdoor recreation, and rural communities across the state. It is also one of the most effective tools the DNR uses to manage deer populations. Hunters play a key role in maintaining population goals and contributing to the overall health of Minnesota’s landscapes, ecosystems, and economy.



CWD CHECK - Gov. Tim Walz enjoys his time in the outdoors during the official opening of deer season.



WHO DUNNIT? - Murder was in the air of Waseca’s Alexander House on the evenings of Nov. 14 and 15, but in good taste. Volunteers from the community played roles as staff, left, and royalty, right, of the ostensible royal cottage. Many are members of the Exchange Club or board members of the Waseca Art Center. Pioneer photos by Melanie Piltingsrud



Alexander House Murder Mystery

By MELANIE PILTINGSRUD
Staff Writer

Rubles exchanged hands between the curious and the greedy as the scandalous scent of murder tainted the air of Waseca’s Alexander House on Friday and Saturday evening, Nov. 14 and 15, but it was all in a good cause. The proceeds of the yearly “Murder Mystery at Alexander House” go to the Exchange Club of Waseca, a Service Club founded in 1910 and the local club chartered in 1982.

Each year, Mikhail Rostislavovich, President of the Exchange Club, invites guests to traipse through his beautiful 31-room estate at 610 State Street N. to solve a murder mystery. Though the victim, Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich, remains the same in each of the four scenarios that play out over two evenings, murder, weapon, and room alter, and guests play the role of investigators who attempt to help the St. Petersburg police solve the crime.

Deb Bently, who writes for the Waseca Pioneer and NRHEG Star Eagle, greeted investigators as Equerry to the Noble House, expressing the family’s appreciation for the visitors’ willingness to investigate the murder. The air of grief, distrust and impending doom were already evident in the Antechamber as Bently cautioned that the family was grieving over the death, and, “Although they are trying to put the best face on things,” said Bently, “they are very nervous about how the Revolutionaries are going to behave in the next few months [...] Some of them are even considering fleeing the country.”

The story behind the murder mystery, written by Rostislavovich, involves Rostislavovich’s actual ancestors, the Imperial Romanov family, who were assassinated by Bolshevik revolutionaries in Yekaterinburg, Russia on the night of July 16-17, 1918. The scenario represented in Waseca last weekend, was to have taken place shortly before that, when an intimate, formal evening dinner was disrupted by an emergency: the Tsarevich’s sudden hemophilia attack. Though his great uncle and great aunt, Tsar Nicholas II and his wife, Alexandra Feodorovna, had to hurry away, HSH Prince Mikhail of the Noble House of Holstein-Gottorp (Rostislavovich’s proper title), greeted each visitor regally, and often with playful, regal disdain, as they were formally announced by the footman, played by Dwight Tostenson on Friday evening, and Vincent Dardis on Saturday.

These and other volunteers from the community played roles as Rostislavovich’s ances-

tors and staff at the ostensible royal cottage, many of whom are members of the Exchange Club or board members of the Waseca Art Center.

Once you, the investigator, have triumphed over adversity in greeting His Serene Highness, the first individual you might encounter is Prime Minister Pytor Stolypin, played by Dr. Carroll Gavin in the Bell Room. He has tried all evening in vain to telephone the Duma on a line that he suspects has been tampered with. “The murderer must have cut the line!” he fumes.

Countess Natalia Brasova, played by Ann Staloch, pines away on the boot bench in the Receiving Room as she longs for her lover, Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich. Though the family despises her, she is said to have threatened to kill anyone attempting to prevent her from marrying the Grand Duke. “I truly love Mikhail!” she wails as the Prince decries her as a “whore.”

The Withdrawing Room to the left is overseen by the imposing figure of Pytor Dumovo, director of the St. Petersburg police, whose usual role is County Sheriff Jay Dulas. “What’s in your bag?!” he startles as you scurry past. If you stopped and talked with him, you aren’t sure you wouldn’t be convinced that you were the perpetrator.

Vera Karalli, a famous silent film actress played by Lindsey Eaton, is bored listening to Sergei Rachmaninoff play piano all evening and expresses as much. Princess Zinaida, played by Jeanne Sexton, is unimpressed; with all of the awful things going on, how can Vera go on about herself? Countess Anastasia, played by Robin Dulas, is equally bored with trying to talk with Vera and turns to admire a piece of statuary. The three ladies sit in the Withdrawing Room near the Music Conservatory. “We have been here all evening,” they claim. Which means all of them have an alibi. Drat.

Mylia Merseth, a theater major at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, played Princess Irina Yusupov who talks with the Dowager Empress, played by Grace Galvin. The Princess is trying to eavesdrop on her husband’s conversation in the next room. The Dowager Empress expresses her disgust with Rasputin: “I’ve told Nicky that Rasputin is a dangerous charlatan!”

Tom Sexton, Minn. State Representative, played Vasily Maklakov, an attorney and recently appointed ambassador to Paris. He’s been talking all evening in the Reading Room with the Princess’s husband, Felix Yusupov, played by Tostenson’s son, Hans, who, when

he’s not being conscripted for roles at the Alexander House, is an airplane mechanic. The two of them have been overheard plotting to kill Rasputin.

Brad Donner reprised his role this year as Peter Carl Faberge, the family jeweler, who questions whether he can trust Anna Vyrubova, aka Jen Losen, with his jewel encrusted egg. The Lady-in-Waiting is insulted. How dare he question her trustworthiness?

Behind them in the Cookery, Ivanka Griorianova, played by Jen Williamson, looks menacing as she slugs wine and brandishes a chef’s knife over an array of vegetables without actually accomplishing anything. “Do you belong in my kitchen?!” she demands.

On the second floor, Jake Lieser serves as Timofey, the Dowager Tsarina’s Cossack Guard, but if he knows anything, he’s not forthcoming. The only word anyone can get out of him is, “Nyett!” Christy Easton occupies the Sanatorium as the Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna. But why would Xenia keep fretting about how the Tsarina is manipulating her son to the ruin of Russia? And why did that lace fan she unfurled suddenly make you feel like a social climber? You accidentally curtsy and move on.

Ekaterina, the upstairs maid in the Petrovsky room, played by Jessica Revermann, tremulously sews jewels into the hem of her mistress’s petticoat as the imperial family prepares to flee Russia. She weeps, each red ruby reminding her of the members of her family, crushed to death on the grounds of Khodynka Field near the Petrovsky Palace in 1894 during Nicholas II’s coronation. She draws her breath, remembering an axe she found under the bed. “The scullery boy must have put it there! What happened to it?” It disappeared when she left the room for only a moment. Where is the scullery boy? She doesn’t know. In fact, she doesn’t know anything.

“Well, we’re not going to get anything out of her,” one group of sleuths commented.

Yet with frightened eyes, the maid warns about the third floor: “Rasputin’s up there! He’s a mad man!”

At the opposite end of the hall, Tarin Kuball, director of the Senior Center in Waseca, plays innocent as Sasha Tegleva, the governess in the Lastochkino, “the Swallow’s Nest,” where she and poor little Alexi had been admiring Civil War artifacts earlier. As she frets about the boy, she maintains that she’s been here all evening, and none of the weapons are missing. The question is whether one can believe her. The only witness is the stuffed Bobcat Gunther, and he’s even more oblivious than



NOBILITY - Grace Galvin expertly played the role of Dowager Empress, royalty of the cottage. Pioneer photo by Melanie Piltingsrud

the maid.

On the third floor, Grigori Rasputin, played by Gregory Bruce Easton, Jr. on Friday evening, and by Christopher Bently on Saturday, frightens visitors in the Gatchina room with his glowering expression and gesticulations as imagined smoke wafts around the room from the brass incense burner in his hand. “State your business, you infidels!” he demands.

At the opposite end of the hall in the Massandra, Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna of Russia, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria and sister to the Tsarina, prays in her nun’s habit, timidly explaining to visitors that she has become a nun after the murder of her unfortunate husband, Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, who was murdered in the Kremlin. She has found her husband’s rosary in the attic, and considers it a good omen. You still haven’t got a clue who committed the murder, but leave the room inexplicably reassured by the notion that she will pray for your soul.

The Alexander House Murder Mystery has proven to be a popular event. Whereas last year each group had a limit of 20 people per group touring the house, this year so many people wanted to come that the Exchange Club sold over 100 tickets. The last group on Saturday evening comprised 40 people, all trying to pin down the elusive suspect at once.

As they divulged their findings in the Summer House, only one group of visitors over the weekend managed to figure out the suspect, weapon, and room in which the heinous crime was committed. As for the other inspectors, foiled again. Maybe next year. Newspaper owner Eli Lutgens said he thought he got closer to cracking the case this year than last year, “Because I had every single thing crossed off,” he laughed.

The Exchange Club has become an influential organization and a great benefit to the Waseca community. According to Losen, when Rostislavovich moved to town in 2022, the Exchange Club wasn’t the thriving organization it is now. “He made the Exchange Club go from four members to 27 or 28,” she said.

Rostislavovich stated, “The Murder Mystery at Alexander House is more than an evening of intrigue and entertainment; it is a celebration of community. Events like this bring us together in joy, curiosity, and laughter, allowing us to support the vital work of the Exchange Club while creating unforgettable memories. I am grateful for everyone who joins us in keeping service, fellowship, and a little bit of fun in the heart of Waseca.”

The weekend event garnered \$3,000 in ticket sales, as well as over \$6,000 in a matching donation. The Exchange Club engages in child abuse prevention, promoting Americanism, youth enhancement and community service. Proceeds from Exchange Club fundraisers go to these causes.

Allina to take over baby deliveries

By STEELE COUNTY TIMES

“It’s a win all the way around for the community.”

Michelle Sorensen summed up what many in Owatonna and the surrounding area were feeling after last week’s announcement that Allina Health would provide obstetricians to continue labor and delivery services in Owatonna.

The move was prompted by Mayo Clinic Health System’s decision to end on-call labor and delivery coverage at Owatonna Hospital, effective Nov. 17.

The collaborative effort between Allina Health and its partners ensures expectant mothers who planned to deliver their babies in Owatonna may still do so.

Sorensen, a local nurse, praised the leadership at Allina, as well as the providers.

“They are the ones who came together and said, ‘we’re going to make sure we take calls,’” she said. “I think leadership saw the outcry, the voices of our community. . . . It was such a beautiful collaboration.”

The Minnesota Nurses Association is also pleased with the move.

“Nurses negotiated for a week to address the risks to the community posed by the service disruptions following the MCHS decision to remove OB-GYN providers from Owatonna Hospital,” MNA wrote in a statement.

“This decision provides resources to expecting families in Owatonna without requiring them to travel outside the community to receive essential care,” the statement said. “Nurses will continue to advocate for accessible patient-centered care in every community.”

The background

When The Steele County Times broke the news of Mayo’s planned departure on Oct. 17, it seemed to come as a surprise to nearly everyone; more importantly, it left the hospital without doctors to handle births.

Allina Health owns and operates Owatonna Hospital; MCHS owns and operates the Owatonna Clinic nearby as part of a joint operating agreement.

Allina’s hospital staff includes labor and delivery nurses, but not physicians who practice obstetrics.

Mayo doctors were contracted to provide the labor and delivery services at Owatonna Hospital, which sees about 400 babies born each year.

MCHS officials said their decision to end that contract was based on staffing challenges and an ongoing nationwide shortage of obstetrics and gynecology physicians.

The fallout

Mayo’s announcement to end deliveries in Owatonna left pregnant women and their families wondering about their next steps.

The closest hospital providing labor and deliveries is Faribault, which is nearly 20 miles away.

In addition to the obvious issue of having to travel out of town instead of across town while in labor, Sorensen said there were other considerations.

“What about people who can’t afford the financial impact?” Sorensen asked. “What if they don’t have a vehicle? What if they can’t pay for parking? Pay the hotel bills they might incur if they’re not in active labor?”

Another possible obstacle: “What if the closest hospital isn’t in their (insurance) network?” Sorensen said.

If the hospital had to send the mother and/or baby by air or ground

ambulance to another facility, “that could all be secondary out-of-network pocket. That could bankrupt somebody,” she said.

City and county leaders voiced their disappointment and frustration as they look to grow the local population.

The reaction

Allina Health officials “did a really good job. They did a solid for our community,” Sorensen said after the Oct. 30 announcement.

“Our teams are stepping up to fill critical gaps in labor and delivery services and ensure compassionate, timely care continues without disruption,” said Whitney Johnson, president of Owatonna Hospital.

“We are deeply grateful to our providers, nurses and care team members who have gone above and beyond to ensure patients receive the care they need.”

Sorensen believes everyone “saw a need. I’m glad that somebody was actually thinking and using some common sense.”

Union nurses waged a sticker campaign, she said. “It was loud and proud; the collaboration was a huge part.”

Ever since Mayo’s decision to pull out, local leaders have been critical of the move and pushing to find a resolution for baby services to remain in Owatonna. Leading that campaign has been Owatonna Chamber President Brad Meier, along with various city and county officials as well as representatives from Federated Insurance, the area’s largest employer.

All four entities met with both Allina and Mayo officials last week in hopes of preventing a lapse in baby deliveries. During Friday’s meeting with Mayo, Meier said Mayo officials confirmed they were on board with Allina’s decision to start a clinic for women.

Meier said he is encouraged by Allina’s announcement last week on two levels. First, they will be able to pull something together for the immediate need to continue coverage when Mayo ends on Nov. 17. And, secondly, he is even more excited that Allina plans to have a woman’s health clinic.

“What this means for Owatonna is that Allina is committed to do labor and delivery services,” Meier said. “This is really a positive step to keeping care (locally),” he said, adding he hopes Mayo will follow through on its verbal commitment to support Allina’s move.

While Mayo still plans to provide care in the Owatonna area, Meier is not certain how that will look in the future.

“We will continue to have dialogue with both Mayo and Allina,” he said. “There will need to be an on-going voice needed as healthcare changes. We want the community’s voice to be heard. There are certain expectations we have in this community.”

Meier is grateful that things came together as quick as they did. “There has been a unified community voice,” he said, adding, “We felt we were heard in this process.”

She emphasized that expectant mothers may be seen at any clinic, and still have their babies at Owatonna Hospital.

“The hospital is prepared,” Sorensen said. “We do want everybody to have access to care; we want people to be able to birth their babies locally, and we’re able to do that.”



WORLD OF NATURE - Brad Donner, Penny Vought, Mikhail Rostislavovich, and Robin Warburton in the Beckmann Gallery of the Waseca Art Center the evening of Thursday, Nov. 13.
Pioneer photo by Melanie Piltingsrud

World of Nature at Waseca Art Center

By MELANIE PILTINGSRUD
Staff Writer

Walking through the Waseca Art Center on Thursday evening, Nov. 13 immersed fortunate visitors in a world of nature as artists Robin Warburton of Janesville and Bradley Donner of Waseca, displayed their lifelike, exquisitely detailed representations of animals in their natural habitat.

Mikhail Rostislavovich, President of the Waseca Arts Council, expressed his honor in welcoming everyone, and in introducing the artists and their work, inviting them to speak and answer questions from the audience.

Warburton’s passionate pursuit to represent the animals of her world began with a free exhibit in Rochester, Minn., where she became so inspired that she bought books on woodcarving and took classes to learn the process. Now, after retiring in 2018, having won many woodcarving competitions, and receiving grants to help with the costs of producing her work, she is on the board of the International Woodcarvers Congress.

Warburton’s woodcarvings of fish, owls, and other birds, displayed in the Harguth Gallery, may be lifelike enough to fool even the creatures they represent. Her painstaking approach to the creation of each specimen can take thousands of hours to complete after detailed research, which often includes traveling to see specific animals. “I’m working on an owl now [...] that I figure will take 3,000 hours to complete, and the wood alone will cost \$10,000,” she said.

A life-size eagle catches the eye as it is caught in a moment of arrested motion, appearing to have been in the act of soaring through the art center when time stood still. Warburton said it has been a life-long dream of hers to carve an

eagle. The eagle is so large, that Warburton and her husband, Marvin, drove all the way to North Carolina to acquire enough tupelo wood to complete it. “Tupelo comes from the swamps of North Carolina, [...] Louisiana and Florida,” Warbuton explained. She had to make the wings separate and removable, because its seven-foot wingspan would have made it otherwise impossible to transport. Photographs on display show separate pieces that make up the eagle, and what the project looked like before it was completed.

Warburton’s process proceeds in multiple steps. After sketching the forms on the wood she intends to use, Warburton roughs them out using a band saw. Then she creates texture with a Foredux 1/3 HP motor. “From there I’ll go to a micro-motor, which your dentist uses on your teeth,” said Warburton. Even after the carving is complete, Warburton’s work isn’t done; the carvings create a textured, 3-dimensional canvas on which she paints with acrylics.

Warburton hopes people who come to the Waseca Art Center this month enjoy her exhibit. “It’s a passion of mine, and I’ll keep doing it until the good Lord takes me away,” she said.

For those who felt the irresistible urge to touch Warburton’s intricate artwork, she had samples on display, which showcased the effects of various drills in combination with woodburning.

Donner’s work, displayed in the Beckmann Gallery, also represents the denizens of the animal kingdom in his signature two-dimensional representations in oils and acrylics.

Like Warburton’s, Donner’s work, too, can involve a long process from beginning to completion. As he spoke to those assembled, he referenced a large

painting of a ram in the Beckmann Gallery. He took the photos of his original sketch for the piece in Oct. of 2023. He finally finished it three weeks ago.

“My mother was such an influence,” said Donner, who explained that she took acrylic classes when he was still young. “Watching her process, she would bring her work home and practice before her class, and that was what inspired me. I thought it was so neat when she was painting, how she could get things out of nothing.”

Donner has been drawing since he could hold a pencil, occasionally even getting himself into trouble through his enthusiasm. For the most part, however, Donner’s teachers and his mother encouraged his artistic interests. His mother ensured that he was exposed to the arts and enrolled him in classes and workshops. “I did have to take a break to raise children,” said Donner. But as the children grew up, and Donner eventually retired from full-time work, he gradually found more time to pursue the passion he’d grown up with.

Donner highlighted a painting he did of a Comanche warrior on horseback, part of a series he painted of Native Americans with a grant from the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council. Perusing a book during a long wait in an airport, Donner became inspired to paint an Indian warrior. Searching through internet sources, he discovered a photographer who photographed rodeos. One of the rodeo performers was an individual who dresses as a Comanche warrior and participates in mock battles. “I didn’t really like his outfit,” admitted Donner, who wanted something truly authentic. So he altered the outfit for the painting. What really attracted him to this

image, however, was not the Indian, but the horse; the look of fear in the horse’s eye, turned slightly toward the viewer, was captivating. Donner explained. “If you look at that eye, it looks like he’s either going into battle, or he’s just come out of it.”

Only three pieces are left from the series on Native Americans that Donner painted.

The research that Donner engaged in for the Comanche warrior is typical of his working method; he sometimes travels long distances to capture the photographs to use as references for his work. He drove to Custer State Park in the Black Hills for the photos that became a large painting of running buffalo, kicking up dust in the foreground, an effect he achieved by flicking paint at the canvas with a toothbrush. Donner explained that the painting was supposed to be eight feet wide. “But I got scared,” he explained with a smile. “The biggest problem is how am I going to transport it, and where am I going to hang it?” So he compromised with 32” by 40”. “It took me all summer that year,” Donner continued, “just this piece alone.”

Of course, no Waseca Art Center reception would be complete without the artistry of Christy Easton, education director, who turned her talents on Thursday evening to the display of sparkling beverages and edibles that guests were happy to sample as they mingled and admired the exhibits.

Although the official reception is over, Warburton’s and Donner’s artwork will be on display through Dec. 20. The Waseca Art Center is open Tues. - Sat. from noon to 5 p.m. For more information on the Waseca Art Center, visit their website at www.wasecaartcenter.org.

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■ Council
from Page 1

the planning commission.

Council members approved re-direction of Environmental Protection Agency grant funding in the amount of \$750,000, to a new water tower. The current city hall water tower, which was built in 1954, will need to be renovated within the next five years.

Council member Conrath said about Treats on the Streets, he had

to sit through two green lights because people kept walking on the crosswalks, not honoring the WALK signs. Conrath expressed concern that if pedestrians don’t pay attention to the control lights, “Someone could get hurt and I don’t want to see Treats on the Streets ending because of that.” He suggested asking for more volunteers from the Sheriff’s Posse since officer volunteers are so short. Council member Schroeder added, “Congratulations go to Allie Kopischke for her contribution to cross country.”

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- Call (507) 837-6767
- Stop in person 111 West Elm Ave

Scenes from state



At left, Isaiah Dymeck (81), Julius Oveido (52) and others are jubilant after the Bluejays' win in the state semifinals. At right, Waseca defenders Deron Russell (7), Titan Rahe (12) and another teammate converge on a Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton pass.

Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



At left, William Mansfield brings down DGF Quarterback Brady Wadena. In the middle, Deron Russell (7) acknowledges the crowd as the Bluejays walk off the field. At right, William Mansfield after blocking a PAT kick.

Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



Waseca's Jordan Johnston (2) follows his blockers, including Owen Rupe (33).

Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Waseca had a strong following at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Kellen Klinger raises his arms after scoring a touchdown.

Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Deron Russell (7) and Kallen Glynn (22) team up for a tackle of a Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton ball carrier.

Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Russell among 10 finalists for Mr. Football

The Elite Ten finalists for the 2025 Mr. Football Award have been announced by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association (MFCA).

They include Waseca High School senior Deron Russell.

The Mr. Football Award is sponsored by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association and the Minnesota Vikings.

The Mr. Football Award was first presented in 2004, with the first winner being Nick Mertens of East Grand Forks High School. The 2024 Mr. Football Award winner was Camden Hungerholt, LeRoy-Ostrander.

The 2025 Mr. Football Award will be presented at the Mr. Football Banquet on Sunday, Dec. 7 at 9 a.m. at the Doubletree by Hilton Minneapolis Park Place Hotel (1500 Park Place Blvd., Minneapolis).

The 10 finalists for the 2025 Mr. Football Award (in alphabetical order) are:

- Micah Bush, Hills-Beaver Creek, WR/S, South (West), 9M
- James Engle, Maple Grove, RB, Metro (West), 6A
- Caleb Francois, Minnetonka, RB/DB, Metro (West), 6A
- Carson Heimer, Byron, RB/S, Skyway (Brass), 4A
- Howie Johnson, Forest Lake, DL, Metro (East), 6A
- Quak Johnson, Cretin-Derham Hall, QB, Northstar (East-Gold), 5A
- Logan Lachermeier, Minneapolis North, QB, Skyway (Blue), 3A
- Owen Linder, Chanhassen, OT, Northstar (South-Gold), 1A
- Deron Russell, Waseca, WR/DB, Southeast (Red), 3A
- Roman Voss, Jackson County Central, QB/DB, Mid South (Brown), 2A

Through 12 games this season, Russell has 63 pass receptions for 1,055 yards and 10 touchdowns, an average of 16.7 yards per catch. He also returned two punts for touchdowns. Defensively through 12 games, he registered 21 solo tackles and seven assists

to go along with five interceptions, a fumble recovery and numerous pass break-ups.

Mr. Football Award Criteria:

- The nominee must be a graduating senior.
- Nominee's head coach must be a current member of the MFCA.
- Nominee must not have any MSHSL violations.
- Each player must be nominated by their sub-district/MFCA representative, after being selected by the coaches in each sub-district.

Previous winners of the Mr. Football Award:

- 2023 - Maxwell Woods, Chanhassen
- 2022 - Cade Ostermann, Elk River
- 2021 - Emmett Johnson, Academy of Holy Angels
- 2020 - Jake Ratzlaff, Rosemount
- 2019 - Jalen Suggs, SMB Wolfpack
- 2018 - Jason Williamson, Owatonna
- 2017 - Antonio Montero, Eden Prairie
- 2016 - Wade Sullivan, Lakeville North
- 2015 - J.D. Spielman, Eden Prairie
- 2014 - Robbie Grimsley, Hutchinson
- 2013 - Jeffrey Jones, Minneapolis Washburn
- 2012 - Bridgeport Tusler, Osseo
- 2011 - Philip Nelson, Mankato West
- 2010 - Peter Westerhaus, Holy Family Catholic
- 2009 - Zach Vraa, Rosemount
- 2008 - Varmah Sonie, Apple Valley
- 2007 - Michael Floyd, Cretin-Derham Hall
- 2006 - Blake Sorensen, Eden Prairie
- 2005 - Matt Carufel, Cretin-Derham Hall
- 2004 - Nick Mertens, East Grand Forks

BLUEJAY FOOTBALL



PLAYER of the WEEK

Jordan Johnston

Jordan lit up the field for the Waseca Bluejays State Quarterfinal game on Nov. 8th, with 128 rushing yards and a touchdown in a win over Holy Family. Way to go Jordan!

Bluejay Football Player of the Week Sponsored by:



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BLUEJAY FOOTBALL



PLAYER of the WEEK

Kallen Glynn

13 tackles, 8 assists in the Bluejays State Semifinals 14-13 on Nov. 15

Bluejay Football Player of the Week Sponsored by:



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IMPORTANT PROPERTY TAX HOMESTEAD NOTICE
This will affect your 2026 property taxes and eligibility for Property Tax Refund.

Have you purchased or moved into a property in the past year?
Contact your county assessor to file a homestead application if you or a qualifying relative occupy the property as a homestead on or before December 31, 2025.

What is a qualifying relative?
For unoccupied agricultural property, a qualifying relative includes the child, grandchild, sibling, or parent of the owner or owner's spouse. For occupied agricultural or residential property, a qualifying relative also includes the owner's uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece.

When do I apply?
You must apply on or before **December 31, 2025**. Once homestead is granted, annual applications are not necessary unless they are requested by the county assessor.

Contact the assessor by **December 31, 2025**, if the use of the property you own or occupy as a qualifying relative has changed during the past year.

If you sell, move, or for any reason no longer qualify for the homestead classification, you are required to notify the county assessor within 30 days of the change in homestead status.

Waseca County Assessor's Office 507-835-0605

City of Waldorf Public Hearing Notice
The city of Waldorf is holding a public hearing on December 8, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Waldorf Community Center to discuss the potential rezoning of

ORIGINAL PLAT LOTS 1 & 2 BLOCK 10, to commercial.
A tiling supply company is interested in purchasing the lot.



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SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642 November 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 Burger night 5-7pm	5 6pm BAR BINGO	6 2pm HALL BINGO	7 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	8
9 VFW BREAKFAST 8am to NOON Host ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSION	10 7pm Post & AUX Meeting	11 Burger night 5-7pm Veterans DAY	12 6pm BAR BINGO	13 2pm HALL BINGO	14 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	15
16	17	18 Burger night 5-7pm	19 6pm BAR BINGO	20 2pm HALL BINGO	21 WALLEYE OR SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 TO 7pm	22 <i>Turkey Bingo 7:00pm</i>
23	24	25 Burger night 5-7pm	26 6pm BAR BINGO	27 HAPPY THANKSGIVING CLOSED	28 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	29
30						

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Jays reach state finals

WHS football team edges Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton 14-13 in semifinals

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor
Nobody said it was going to be easy.

But the Waseca Bluejays got the job done. Again.

The Bluejays advanced to the school's first-ever state championship football game with a hard-fought 14-13 victory over Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton in last Saturday's state semifinals at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

The Bluejays kept their unbeaten streak and state title hopes intact, improving their record to 12-0 while DGF, the Section 8 champion, finished 9-3.

The big question coming into the game was whether the Bluejay defense could contain the Rebels' potent running attack, led by a huge offensive line. They did, many times, including two goal-line stands. The play of the game, though, may have been turned in by William Mansfield, who blocked the Rebels' second PAT kick to preserve the 14-13 lead. Brady McKenna sealed it with sack of GFW quarterback Brady Wadena late in the fourth quarter.

The Bluejays move on to face Annandale in the Class AAA state championship game Saturday Nov. 22 at 1 p.m. at U.S. Bank Stadium. Annandale defeated Minneapolis North 36-20 in the other state semifinal.

"It was a great game," said Waseca head coach Brad Wendland. "We knew it would probably be a flip of the coin. I think we took advantage of our opportunities. Credit to them, too. But we've got a pretty special group this year."

"This is awesome," said Deron Russell.

The tone of the game was set early, with the Bluejays punting after four plays.

The Rebels moved the ball, but two penalties took them backwards and they too punted.

A holding penalty negated a nice return by the Bluejays' Jordan Johnston and, on their second play, DGF came up with an interception for Waseca's only turnover of the day.

Again, the Rebels drove, but a holding penalty left them with a fourth-down-and seven and they were forced to punt.

The Bluejays, starting on their own 14-yard line, picked up two first downs before punting as the first quarter ended.

Then the Rebels mounted their first scoring threat, driving from their own 49 to the Bluejays' 11 before Wadena's fourth-down pass fell incomplete.

After three plays the Bluejays punted again, this time from their own end zone, giving DGF the ball on Waseca's 30. Three plays later the Rebels faced fourth-and-two from the Waseca 7, but the Bluejays held and took over on downs at their own 5 with about 2 minutes left in the first half.

The Bluejays moved the ball with five straight running plays before facing third-and 3. Then Kellen Klinger hit Cyrett Long with a key 25-yard pass. A 16-yard run by Johnston put the Bluejays on the DGF 25. From there, Klinger found Russell in the end zone, and his leaping touchdown catch produced the first points of the game. One second remained on the clock as Owen Rupe kicked the PAT, and the Jays led 7-0 at halftime.

"It was the biggest play of the game," said Wendland of Russell's catch. "We had a call in mind. Then I saw Deron out of the corner of my eye and said, 'We're going to give him a shot.' Kellen made a great throw, and Deron's the best player in AAA football. And we'll find ways to get him the ball next week too, I promise you."

Said Russell, "When your coach has that much confidence in you, you just play better in the game. It's been that way my whole career. That's what makes me play as well as I do."

The teams exchanged punts to start the second half before the Rebels engineered an 11-play 62-yard drive that ended with a 26-yard touchdown pass from Wadena to

Nolan Verdi on fourth-and-14. Guillermo Collado's PAT kick tied it.

The Jays then took it the other way, the key play a 35-yard pass from Klinger to Ethan Hiller, and Waseca was knocking on the door as the fourth quarter began. Klinger ran for the final 4 yards on fourth-and-1 and Rupe kicked the PAT, capping an 11-play, 66-yard drive.

But the Rebels refused to fold, and just three plays later, Jace Baumgartner scored on a 20-yard run. A penalty on GFW, maybe caused by a defender clapping in the face of an offensive lineman, moved the ball back 5 yards. That's when Mansfield stepped up and blocked the PAT kick, and Waseca led 14-13 with 8:42 remaining.

The Jays picked up one first down before punting, and Deven Parpart made it a good one, pinning the Rebels on their own 4. DGF made it interesting in the final minutes, running 11 plays to the Waseca 28 before McKenna's sack on fourth-and-four.

The Bluejays then went into victory formation as the Waseca fans, players and coaches celebrated, finally able to breathe easy.

Afterward, Wendland said he had confidence in his defense, and his offense if it would have been necessary.

"I always feel confident in our defense," said Wendland. "Our offense can kind of come and go, but it's there when we need it. With this team, don't put anything past anyone. If they would have scored, I would have had confidence our offense could go down and do that."

Kallen Glynn registered an impressive 13 tackles and eight assists for the Bluejays.

Johnston, coming off back-to-back ACL injuries, said he felt grateful to be in this position.

"I'm really proud of the team and how much we battled through adversity," said Johnston. "It feels great."

"I've coached for 30 years and never seen this before," said Wendland of Johnston's recovery. "There's probably .01 percent of the population that could do what he did, overcoming that mentally and physically. He deserves so much credit."

Wendland also commended the Rebels on playing a tough game.

"That's a heck of a football team," he said. "They're big and strong and physical, and we haven't played anyone like that. Their personality comes from their offense, and they're really good at it. And they're not just ground and pound. You saw in the second half, they schemed up some nice pass plays to get guys open, and they made plays."

Wendland also praised his coaching staff and, of course, his defense.

"I think we had a lot of confidence in our players and our coaches," said Wendland. "We feel confident that when the game is the biggest that we're going to be at our best. We're going to be our best when the best is required. That's a phrase we use a lot."

Waseca 14, Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton 13
DGF 0 0 7 6 - 13
WAS 0 7 0 7 - 14

First Quarter

No scoring
Second Quarter
WAS — Russell 25 pass from Klinger (Rupe kick)

Third Quarter
DGF — Verdi 26 pass from Wadena (Collado kick)

Fourth Quarter
WAS — Klinger 4 run (Rupe kick)
DGF — Baumgartner 20 run (kick blocked)

	DGF	WAS
First downs	15	11
Rushing yards	166	53
Passing yards	109	163
Total Yds.	275	216
Penalties	7-55	6-66

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing — WAS: Johnston 13-60; Russell 1-0; Klinger 7 — 7; DGF: Baumgartner 22-77; Luebke 13-47; Wadena 11-42

Passing — WAS: Klinger 13-23. 163; DGF: Wadena 7-10, 109

Receiving — WAS: Russell 6-66; Johnston 1-11; Hiller 2-41; Long 3-39; Parpart 1-6; DGF: Whitney 3-54; Verdi 2-40; Tysver 2-15

Waseca Defense — Mansfield 4T, 2A, 1S, 1 bk, kick, 1 fum. rec.; Russell 4T; Rahe 5T, 2A; Glynn 13T, 8A; Rohl 1T, 2A; Kath 1T; Root 6T, 2A; Jeske 1T; Oviedo 5T, 5A; L.Selthun 4T; Garza 5T, 1A; McKenna 4T, 3A, 1T; Brown 2T



SEE YOU NEXT SATURDAY! — Members of the Waseca High School football team celebrate after last Saturday's 14-13 victory over Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton in the Class AAA state semifinals at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. The win advanced the Bluejays to their first-ever state championship football game. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



At left, Waseca receiver Deron Russell makes a leaping catch for a touchdown late in the first half. At right, Kaden Garza (56) makes a diving tackle on Brady Wadena. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



At left, the Bluejays' Titan Rahe (12) brings down DGF quarterback Brady Wadena. In the middle, Jett Rohl brings down Jacob Luebke. At right, Bluejay defenders converge on Wadena. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



At left, Bluejay quarterback Kellen Klinger gets into the end zone. At right, Deron Russell (7) and another Waseca defender chase Mason Tysver. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



At left, Cyrett Long looks for running room after catching a pass. In the middle, Brady McKenna (58) and William Mansfield (6) apply pressure to DGF quarterback Brady Wadena. At right, Ethan Hiller breaks free while Camden Leichtenberg pursues. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens

