



Compostings

by Al Batt

Best-laid plans of mice, men and winter days

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

We had an Amish turkey for Thanksgiving. What's an Amish turkey?

It's a turkey that's never driven a car.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I'd listened to Cassandra—the weather report. Scheduled appointments were postponed. The best-laid plans of mice, men and winter days often go awry. I walked in the early morning. Small mountains of snow had drifted onto the road. My shoes crunched. When the snow is warmer than 14 degrees, the pressure from my step creates enough heat to melt the snow. But when the temperature drops below 14 degrees, my steps don't melt the snow. They crush the ice crystals, which rub against each other, producing a squeaking sound. It lets me know I'm making progress.

My wife and I used to go door-to-door Christmas caroling with friends. I don't pretend to be a talented vocalist, but I'm loud. The Good Book tells us to make a joyful noise. I made a noise far from tuneful. One sweet lady turned off the porch light of her house as we began crooning. I talked to her a couple of days later. She told me she thought she was turning the light on. Right. She'd had time to come up with an alibi.

A fellow caroler asked what I'd done with all that money. I asked him what money he was referencing. He replied, "The money your parents gave you to take singing lessons."

THE CHRISTMAS TIRE SWING

In the deepest parts of my memory, the Christmas preparations were in full swing. Mom had spent around \$87 on olives. Unopened, jarred olives stay fresh for up to two years. She had stocked up on her secret ingredient for making delectable Christmas foods—butter. We put a new tire swing up for Christmas. It was an odd time to do that, but the planets had aligned, and the perfect tire made itself available. It was a tire, a rope and a bad attitude hanging from a maple tree. I know what you're thinking—it had replaced a flat tire. Well, you're mistaken. It replaced a gunny-sack swing, a bur-lap bag filled with straw. We

replaced the old rope before the tire swing was put in place. The new piece of a poor man's playground was like the new bull at a rodeo; it had never been ridden. Yup, pardner, it was just like that bull except for the tire and the tree. We never tired of it.

NATURE NOTES

Three young opossums fed on snow-covered ground on a gelid day. Opossums are omnivores and eat eggs, grains, nuts, fruit, birds, snakes, frogs, mice, carrion, berries, garbage, insects, crustaceans, pet food and bird seed. Claims of their eating large numbers of ticks are dubious. A group of opossums is called a passel. I cracked open a window of the house and tossed an apple gently in the passel's direction. The apple hit the frozen ground and rolled into one of the three animals. After being bumped, the opossum jumped into the air and, upon returning to Earth and realizing it didn't want to waste its life being bumped by things, scrambled off into the woods. The second opossum sniffed the apple and then ran away to safety. The third, noted for its critical thinking, used its 50 teeth to grab the apple and, smiling like an opossum eating an apple, ran off to that secret hiding place where it goes to eat apples. The three different reactions of the opossums reminded me that not everyone wants the same Christmas present. None of the opossums wanted money or gift cards.

I saw a muskrat. Muskrats don't hibernate or cache food, and feed all winter. They spend time in a sleeping lodge, which they dig into a steep bank with an underwater entrance. In early winter, muskrats create small shelters called push-ups by chewing holes in the ice and covering them with a mound of mud and plant debris. These mounds are often 3 feet high and up to 300 feet from the main lodge. Muskrats can stay underwater for about 10 minutes and use the push-ups to catch their breath out of the weather and away from predators. Muskrats have stiff fur around their back feet and toes, which works like webbing to propel them through the water. Their front feet are smaller, and they hold them under their chins while swimming.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"Bless us Lord, this Christmas, with quietness of mind; teach us to be patient and always to be kind."—Helen Steiner Rice.

It's possible to sail without using a boat

Back when I was teaching composition, my students would frequently say something like, "I can't write the assignment because I can't figure out how to start it."

My answer was "Don't start it then, just write it." I explained that, thanks to modern word processing, there is no need to craft the perfect beginning before the rest of the writing can proceed. It's often easier to write the start after one knows what path the rest of the piece follows.

Well, I am taking my own advice with this column, but for a rather different reason than all those students I advised. I can think of about a dozen ways to start this story, and I want to use them all.

So here's the story: Last Friday night—a remarkably cold and windy evening, you may recall—I was driving home on slightly unfamiliar roads. I headed down a street I believed I recognized and proceeded forward into the dark night as if I were on a somewhat familiar gravel road that provides a slightly shorter route to my house than the blacktop.

I can't say how fast I was going, although I'm pretty sure it wasn't much over 30 miles an hour, when I realized the road did not continue on, but instead came to a rather abrupt end.

I touched my brakes.

My vehicle continued forward at the same speed as before.

It was only hours later, after the tow truck pulled me out, that I got to see just how shiny-slick that patch of road had been.

What I knew at the moment in question was that I had milliseconds to choose between various obstacles ahead of me. These included fences, trees, and a pile of snow probably five feet tall made when someone cleared snow from the road, probably with a tractor.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

The snow was the obvious best choice.

I still shake my head in wonder that somehow, although I felt as if I had no control at all, I managed to miss a mailbox and turn my vehicle sideways so that I came to a stop broadside up against the pile of snow. A drift probably two feet deep had slowed me down as I slid, and my SUV was now surrounded partway up the carriage.

There was no way to open my door, and there was no way my vehicle would be able to drive out—but I was ecstatic. It's amazing how many forms of disaster can flash through a driver's head when she is careening wildly toward doom and destruction.

Instead, I was unharmed, my vehicle was undamaged, and the motor was still running. A kind gentleman with a tractor would have pulled me out if it had been possible, but with my car buried as deeply as it was, he saw no safe way to attach a chain.

"You're going to have to call a tow truck," he concluded.

I contacted Triple A, and Triple A sent me periodic electronically produced text messages assuring me everything possible was being done to assist. I was informed a "high volume" of calls was making it difficult to find a service vehicle to help.

Time passed.

I played a word game on my smartphone.

Time continued to pass.

Though I sat in my car for well over three hours, I could not make

myself impatient or angry.

Every now and then I looked at the pile of snow just outside my driver side window, shook my head, and laughed gently.

I was unhurt, though severe injury would not have been a completely unlikely outcome.

I had no one but myself to blame for my predicament.

Yes, my carelessness of having misidentified the road was an inexcusable and embarrassing mistake, but I was warm and safe and help was being procured.

At about 8:30 I was informed T&W Towing out of Owatonna had agreed to perform my "extrication." The tow truck driver, a rugged fellow named Pete, gave me a call and said he expected to arrive in about 30 minutes.

Right on time, headlights shone in my direction.

Pete popped out of his truck, walked through the snowbank and up on top of the snow pile near my driver's side headlight. I rolled down my window to hear what he had to say.

"It looks," he said brightly, "like you're in a bit of a pickle."

"I haven't decided whether it's a Gurkin or dill," he declared. "But it's definitely a pickle."

With that he turned on so many floodlights I thought I was on a football field, positioned his tow truck, and slid my car out of the snowbank, making me feel somewhat like a kid on a backward-facing toboggan.

Roughly four hours after facing imminent disaster, my car's tires

were on a road and I could open my door.

Pete wouldn't even accept a hug—not that I felt offended in any way when he declined.

It was now, with the floodlights glaring off it, that I saw just how shiny that 30-foot-long patch of ice was. I shook my head and laughed softly.

Then, with Pete's tow truck leading, I drove back to the blacktop and silently vowed never to take another "shortcut" after dark. Ten minutes later I pulled into my driveway, opened my driver's side door, and walked into my house. I was not in a hospital. My vehicle was not in a salvage yard.

All's well, they say, that ends well. The increased caution I use when I see an icy road—and aren't they all icy just now?—is probably a very valuable thing, so all is, indeed, well.

Now you know the story.

Here are some of the introductions that entered my mind.

I have a story I wish I didn't have to tell...

In my case, "distracted driving" seems to be all in my head...

I learned the true meaning of "Minnesota nice" the other night while I was stranded in a snowbank...

Thanks to a recent experience, I have learned a few things about what artificial intelligence can... and can't...do...

It was a dark and stormy night...

My mother always told me to keep good winter gear in my car. I never doubted her, but I recently learned just how wise her advice was...

It turns out, it's possible to sail without using a boat...

No one should have needed to tell me that ice is slippery...

Have you ever felt as if you were flying?

Playing the role of content creator

I think I have become what I never thought I would – a social media content creator.

I'm not saying I don't like content creators, I just "knew" it is something that I wouldn't ever want to do, or especially not do full time. It seemed stressful putting in all the work and not knowing whether it was going to do well or I would get any income from it. Plus, I'm not a huge fan of recording my life and putting it out there for all to see.

But with my wonderful job at the "Colorado Parent" magazine, social media is on my list of tasks to perform. I have to create 10 social media posts every week—two posts every business day. Usually, it's pretty fine. I just take stories from our website or our latest edition and put one up on Instagram and Facebook. Or I'll go to Canva and make a cute list of things to do over the weekend. And occasionally, I'll make a



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

video to post about whatever event I was just at.

When I was interviewed for this job, she asked me if I had any social media experience. I said yes – I had created a Waseca County Pioneer TikTok a couple years ago, but gave that up once I went back to school. Still, I figured since I'm a 22-year-old who is almost chronically online, I feel like I could pretty easily make some social media posts. The magazine gave me the job anyway, and here I am.

My boss told me the magazine had built a good social media pres-

ence, but for some reason got locked out of their account by Meta or whoever was in charge of it. They tried to fight back, but never managed to reacquire access to their account. So they started a new one. When I was given access, the new social media account had around 230 followers, compared to more than 6,000 followers associated with the previous account.

So while I may not be a professional or expert content creator, it has been very satisfying seeing the numbers go up showing higher stats on each post. The profes-

sional dashboard on the account says I'm up over 10 thousand views in the last thirty days (which is when I started, over 30 days ago). And I'm up over 40 new followers since I started.

But now my company has hired a real social media person, so I will no longer have the job of posting to social media. Which might be for the best. The amount of time I spent on those posts instead of doing other work was probably more than it should have been.

And work has been hectic. We get two weeks off at the end of the year to celebrate Christmas with our families, so we're working on getting January's publication done before a few weeks ahead of schedule.

My Determination: "You want to remember that while you're judging the book, the book is also judging you." — Stephen King, Night Shift

Child's History of Waseca County

Continuing Chapter III, 1855

The members of the company were not so much given to song and stories and funny jokes as they had been on the previous evening. The romance of camping out in mid-winter had lost to them, after their two days' experience, something of its imaginary charms. They piled high the campfire with fuel and retired early to their hay beds, which were spread upon the snow-covered ground. The wind came up from the northwest in the evening, and before morning the weather was intensely cold. Long before daylight, the next morning, they arose, fed the cattle what hay there was in the beds, and at their own breakfast. As soon as there was light enough to enable them to keep their course, they renewed their journey. They crossed the LeSueur river, in the town of New Richland, with some difficulty, the banks of the stream being very steep. Soon after crossing the river, they reached the height of the prairie level. They

could then see, and took it for their guide, a large bur-oak tree standing alone on section thirty-six, in Wilton about a mile from the Sutlief shanty. Never were weary mortals more pleased than were those first settlers when Mr. Sutlief announced that that tree was within a mile of his claim.

They reached the Sutlief place at four o'clock p.m., rejoiced to find Mr. Barrett alive and well. To say that every member of the company was thankful for this safe resting palace is a very mild way of expressing his feelings on that occasion.

The condition and appearance of the country, at that time, however, were neither very pleasing nor inviting to the most of the pioneers, for they had come from a heavy timbered country. To the south and west, as far as the eye could reach, there was a vast expanse of bleak prairie, without either tree or shrub, swept by the howling blasts of winter and covered with snow, sleet and ice. The few trees along the

river looked to them then to be short and scrubby; the weather was intensely cold; it was thirty-five miles to the nearest postoffice – Mankato; they could get no newspapers and no letters, except at long intervals of time; there were no houses, no barns, no fences, no roads, no bridges, no human beings to be seen in any direction. This shanty was then the only human habitation between what was afterwards known as the Winnebago agency and Owatonna—the only one within the present limits of Waseca County.

The writer mentally resolved, within a week after his arrival, to return to Wisconsin as soon as his term of service should expire. But when the month of June came, what a change! The trees had put forth their fresh, green foliage; the prairies were decked with the most gorgeous flowers; feathered songsters held grand jubilee concerts in every grove, and prairie chickens in endless numbers made early morn melodious with their merry love-

making. No more enchanting picture of a grand, rich country ever met the eye of a man than that presented in the valley of the LeSueur during the summer of 1855.

Editorial Note - Upon rummaging through the vast library of contents at the Star Eagle, I stumbled across a very old blue book titled, "Child's History of Waseca County Minnesota for Fifty Years, 1854-1904."

After thumbing through the first several pages it was determined this book was too interesting to go back on the shelf. So, it was used as a stand for a computer monitor. Several months later, after finding a more suitable stand, I opened the book to show a reader who stopped into the office. After reading about the Horse Thief Detective Association, I made the decision that this piece of history should not be lost to time.

Eli Lutgens



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OBITUARIES

Douglas Strand

Douglas Carl Strand, age 72, of Waseca, Minnesota passed away peacefully at his home surrounded by family.

Born on February 27, 1953, in Waseca, MN he was the son of Donald and Dixie (Schafer) Strand. He was raised in the Waseca area and graduated from Waseca High School. After completing high school, he began a railroad career that spanned 35 years, working with the Chicago & North Western Railway before continuing with the DM&E Railroad. He was a loving and steadfast father, and he embraced his roles as grandpa and great-grandpa with pure joy. The sparkle in his eyes whenever he was with them said more about his love than words ever could. He took great joy in his morning cruise through the countryside, catching up on the day's happenings. He especially treasured his "Taco Tuesday" chats with his son, and his Friday gatherings with the guys, visiting and tackling whatever projects came their way.

The outdoors was where he felt at home, taking in the peace of nature and the company of his family and friends. Fishing was a favorite pastime; especially the annual trout opener in Houston, Minnesota and he always treasured his time at the cabin on Lake Jefferson. He also enjoyed a lively



Douglas Strand

game of bean bags in the backyard and never passed up a good game of darts.

He will be lovingly remembered by his children, Nathan C Strand of Brooklyn Park, Adam (Joy) Strand of Duluth, Cory Tangen of Dexter, and Alicia Strand of Waseca; grandchildren, Abigayle, Tessa, Autumn, Adam II, Austin, Hunter, Chase, Hannah, Ciprianna, Devon, Kody, and Steven; great grandchildren, Ana Laya and Braxton; and his furry companion, Marley.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Barbara (Charles) Decker; and brother, Ronald Strand. Doug's family will host a Celebration of his life on Sunday, December 21, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Waseca American Legion. Interment will be at Woodville Cemetery at a later date.

Carol Seehafer

Carol Christine Seehafer (née Bitzer) passed away on December 14, 2025, at Stoney River Memory Care. She was born to Alvin and Mildred "Millie" Bitzer on December 16, 1936, in Marshfield, WI. The story goes that her dad took his time to get ready when Milly went into labor, which didn't leave enough time to get to the hospital; so, Carol was born at home!

She was supposed to be named Alice, but the neighbor who helped with the delivery, told her parents she looked like a "Christmas Carol", so Carol it was!

She met the love of her life, Richard (Dick) Seehafer, when they were both 16. They were the classic high school quarterback and cheerleader who fell in love. They were also the Junior Prom King and Queen. Carol graduated from Marshfield Senior High School in 1954, and was the class valedictorian. After high school, she went to the University of Eau Claire and Dick went to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. That lasted a short time and Carol transferred to Madison to be with Dick again! The two graduated (her again

with honors in Elementary Education) in 1958, and they were married a week later. After their wedding, they moved to Georgia where Dick served in the Army. After a brief stint in Milwaukee, WI, they moved to West Des Moines, IA, where they lived for 18 wonderful years.

After her children were a little older, Carol began teaching at Western Hills Elementary in West Des Moines, IA. She was a beloved teacher and spent hours putting together fun and engaging bulletin boards and lessons to challenge her students. After they moved to Waseca, MN, Carol taught at Southside Elementary, where she won several teaching awards, including the Who's Who of Teaching.

Carol played sports throughout her life, mostly swimming, golf and tennis. She was the women's golf champion at Bass Lake Country Club in 2009. Her faith was important to her, too, and Dick and Carol sang in the choirs and were heavily involved in every church they belonged to wherever they resided.

She and Dick raised four children and greatly impacted the lives of her nine grandchildren!

She was very competitive when

playing broom ball, water ball tag, pickleball, golf, tennis, and endless board and card games with all of us every winter and summer at the cabin.

She and Dick made the cabin "a magical place" for her family. Carol was an amazing artist and she was known for the unique birthday cakes she made each year for her grandchildren!

Carol is survived by her children: Cathy Pont of Antigo, Ann (Kurt) Boson of Marshfield, Joan (Jerry) Erwine of Johnston, IA, John (Lori) Seehafer of Inver Grove Heights, MN; nine grandchildren: Alyssa (Jon Stoll) Pont, Andrew (Jenny Melendez) Pont, Alex (Sara) Boson, Tanner (Jessica Schaefer) Boson, Taylor (Alex) Ceceña, Mackenzie Erwine, Ella Seehafer, Josie Seehafer and Jason Seehafer; three great-grandchildren: Reyna Ceceña, Ginevra Stoll, and a new great-grandbaby, Ceceña born on Carol's birthday. She is also survived by er sister, Barbara McDermid of Madison. She is predeceased in death by her husband, Richard Seehafer; and her parents, Alvin and Mildred Bitzer. The family and her many friends in West Des Moines IA, Waseca MN, Mesa AZ,



Carol Seehafer

and Elcho, WI, will truly miss her.

The family would like to thank the staff at Stoney River and Heartland Hospice for their care of Carol the past few years. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Alzheimer's Association or Heartland Hospice. A celebration of life will be held for Carol this summer in Elcho, WI.

Online condolences may be made at www.hansenschillingfuneral-home.com for your convenience.

Sen. John Jasinski announces district re-election campaign

State Senator John Jasinski of Faribault announced today he will run for re-election in 2026, asking residents of Goodhue, Rice, Steele, and Waseca Counties to send him back to St. Paul to continue pushing for safer roads, stronger oversight of state spending, and a more affordable Minnesota.

Sen. Jasinski, a Republican who has represented Senate District 19 since 2017, said he plans to focus his campaign on concerns he hears from residents across southern Minnesota.

"It has been the honor of my life to represent the people of District 19," Sen. Jasinski said. "Minnesotans deserve safer roads and bridges, far better oversight of government spending, protections against fraud, and policies that make life easier for families, farmers, and small businesses."

Sen. Jasinski said rising costs, state mandates, and repeated failures to stop fraud in government programs are issues he hears about most from constituents. He said he intends to focus on affordability for working families and seniors, support for law enforcement, protecting local control, and securing new investments in Greater Minnesota infrastructure.

He also said he will continue advo-

cating for tougher safeguards to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse in state programs, a theme Senate Republicans have emphasized for the past two years as revelations of widespread fraud have drawn national scrutiny.

"Minnesotans are frustrated, and they should be," Sen. Jasinski said. "I'll keep fighting for balance, for accountability, for common sense, and for the values that make our communities strong."

Sen. Jasinski also said he wants the Legislature to refocus on improving student achievement. He noted the state has provided record funding for schools over the years, but test scores have remained low while burdensome new state mandates have strained school budgets. Sen. Jasinski said his priority is strengthening core areas of instruction like reading, writing, math and science, and giving local schools more flexibility to direct funding toward classroom learning rather than new regulations.

Sen. Jasinski, who serves as Deputy Republican Leader, has emerged as one of the GOP's leading voices on transportation, infrastructure, and government accountability and over-



Senator Jasinski speaking during a committee meeting.

sight. He is the Republican lead on the Senate Transportation Committee and sits on the Capital Investment and Finance committees. He has also been heavily involved in candidate recruitment and fundraising efforts aimed at helping Republicans retake the Senate majority in 2026.

A lifelong Faribault resident and Navy veteran, Sen. Jasinski previously served on the Faribault City Council and as the city's mayor from 2008 to 2016. He continues to serve on the Faribault Charter Commission and the Faribault Industrial Corporation and works as a real estate broker with MDC Real Estate.

Sen. Jasinski said he plans to continue meeting with residents of District 19 to outline his agenda, which includes improving affordability, expanding transportation and infrastructure funding, strengthening rural healthcare, supporting agriculture and small businesses, funding and mandate relief for local schools, and preventing fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

"Minnesota needs a more balanced government that puts Minnesotans first," Sen. Jasinski said. "That's what I'm fighting for."

Kevin McShane

Kevin Michael McShane passed away on December 14, 2025 at his home in Waseca. He was 61 years old.

The son of Joseph and Leona (Kramer) McShane, Kevin was born on June 5, 1964 in Waseca, Minnesota. He was raised on the family farm in the Waseca area and graduated in 1985 from Owatonna High School. As a youngster, Kevin was mischievous and imaginative, often spending hours playing in his playhouse on the farm. He was a big fan of Gilligan's Island and even named his dog "Skipper." He watched the episodes over and over, never getting tired of them. As he grew older, he began recording the show on VHS tapes and continued watching his favorite episodes again and again. He even had the chance to meet Mary Ann, Gilligan, and the Professor, and Mary Ann signed his shirt; a moment he never forgot.

He enjoyed reading, especially Stephen King novels along with a fondness for collecting watches, particularly those with multiple dials, which always seemed to catch his eye. Over time, he also gathered statues of all kinds, but angels were his favorites and held a special place in his collection.

His favorite time of year was his birthday, and he made sure everyone knew it. Months ahead of time, he'd start reminding people so there was no chance the big day would be missed. When it finally arrived, he loved every card and gift—and always paid you back with a hug, a smooch, and a big, thank you.

He loved being an uncle and soaked up every playful moment he shared with his nieces and nephews, always ready for laughs, games, and a little mis-



Kevin McShane

chief. Kevin met the world with an open heart, a playful spirit, and a knack for making people smile. His joy was genuine, his affection freely given, and his way of connecting with others left a lasting impression on everyone lucky enough to know him.

He will be lovingly remembered by his siblings, Pat McShane, Joseph McShane, Michael (Sigrid) McShane, Peg (Mike) Lawrence, Thomas (Betty) McShane, Alice McShane, Gene (Diane) McShane, and Deb Meissner; brothers-in-law, Mike Murtaugh and Bruce Brown; along with many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; grandparents; siblings, Robert, Lori, Colleen McShane, and GERALYN Murtaugh; and brother-in-law, Ron Meissner.

A funeral service will be held on Friday, December 19, 2025, at 12:00 PM at Sacred Heart Catholic Church; Father Glenn Frerichs will officiate. A visitation will be held one hour prior to the service at the church. Interment will be at Calvary Cemetery in Waseca, Minnesota.



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Rep. Tom Sexton newsletter update

Legislative Update
Greetings!
I hope this newsletter finds you safe and warm after the snowy weather we had this week.

New Christmas Lights in Waseca
Last week, after writing my weekly newsletter, I was honored to witness the lighting of the new Christmas season lights in downtown Waseca on Thursday night. The new lights look amazing! Of course, the fresh snow in the background really put us in the Christmas spirit! Congratulations to all who supported this effort through their organizational and personal donations!

Owatonna Main Street Lighted Parade
On Friday night, I had the honor of donning a yellow vest and helping with the Owatonna Main Street Lighted Parade. At last report, there were over 80 units in the parade and the lighting of the of Central Park was spectacular!

I was honored to be photographed with Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce Events Director, Julie Seykora. Now you know who turns the lights on in Central Square!

K-12 Education Funding
Last week, during my Coffee with Tom in Owatonna, we discussed K-12 Education. From that discussion, I accepted a little bit of homework as you will see below.

During the meeting I mentioned that we significantly increased the K-12 budget during the calendar year 2023 budget session which funds fiscal years 2024 – 2025. For clarification fiscal years 2024 – 2025 equates to calendar year July 1st, 2023 – June 30th, 2025. Currently, the State of Minnesota is operating in fiscal year 2026.

Thus, in calendar year 2023, the legislature increased the K-12 education budget by \$2.3B of which our Minnesota school districts received \$1.8B. Furthermore, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) received a 21% budget increase which included funding for 40 new Full-time Equivalent (FTEs) employees.

In addition, during this same

budget cycle, 65+ new mandates were imposed upon our independent school districts. I use the term 65+ because I have seen a summary spreadsheet showing over 80 new mandates. However, some of the mandates can be combined with others, so 65+ is a good overall summary.

Furthermore, personnel costs represent the most significant operating cost for our school districts. The one-time \$1.8B increase helped implement Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST), Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML), and Unemployment Insurance (UI) payments for seasonal employees (like our lunchroom workers and bus drivers) who are now compensated over the summer months when school is not in-session. However, these costs, which are mandated and pushed down to our school districts, are rising faster than the General Fund budget. As I stated earlier, personnel costs represent the highest cost for each school district and mandated programs like ESST, PFML, and UI significantly impact our school districts over the long term. While these programs are designed to help our school district employees, can our school districts sustain them?

As an added bonus, I want to show you the impact of our two largest budgets below. K-12 Education and the Health and Human Services budgets represent [\$25.697B + \$23.999B = \$49.696B / \$66.874B] = 74.31% of the overall budget. Source data from the MMB table below.

Coffee with Tom
Our next meeting in Waseca will be on Friday, December 12th at the Waseca Chamber of Commerce from 12:00pm-1:00pm.

Please feel free to join me for Coffee with Tom at the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce on Friday, January 2nd at the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce from 12:00pm-1:00pm.

Thank you for your support and feedback!

I want to hear you
I am always here to listens to concerns or ideas of my constituents. I can be reached via email rep.tom.sexton@house.mn.gov or phone 651-296-5368.

‘Ask a Trooper’: winter driving

Question: I’ve seen the traffic safety information you share on your X account when it comes to dealing with winter weather and slippery roads. Can you write about winter driving safety here for all of us? I’d like for you to share some basic winter driving tips. Thank you and be safe.

Answer: While summer months are the deadliest on Minnesota roads for fatal crashes, wintertime leads to the most crashes and poses its own safety risks and hazards. Stay safe while on the road in the winter:

- Avoid unnecessary travel if conditions are too poor.
- Buckle up and make sure child restraints are secured tightly. We recommend you use bulky clothes and blankets on top of the child restraint harness, not beneath, to ensure harness restraints fit properly.
- Drive at speeds that are safe for the road conditions and provide for plenty of travel time.
- Leave plenty of space to stop between vehicles.
- Use extra precautions when driving around snowplows by keeping at least 10 car-lengths behind plows.
- If you start to skid, remain calm, ease foot off the gas and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go.
- If vehicle has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply a steady firm pressure to the brake pedal. Never pump ABS brakes.
- Clear snow and ice from vehicle windows, hood, headlights,

- brake lights and directional signals.
- You must turn on your headlights when it is snowing or sleeting.
- Do not use cruise control on snow, icy or wet roads.
- Equip vehicles with a scraper/brush, small shovel, jumper cables, tow chain, and a bag of sand or cat litter for tire traction. Blankets, heavy boots, warm clothing and flashlights are also important, as are storing high-energy foods such as chocolate or energy bars.
- Be sure cell phones are charged for long trips, and inform your family or friends of your travel plan and schedule.
- If you get stranded, stay in the vehicle.
- Parents of teen drivers should make sure they experience snow and ice driving in a safe environment, such as an empty parking lot.
- For weather-related road condition information, call 511 or visit www.511mn.org
- You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.
- If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson — Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

JWP Bulldog Baseball



JWP Bulldog Baseball would like to thank these people and places who helped with their breakfast fundraiser last Sunday. “Thank you to the Waseca American Legion for letting us host there. Especially Bruce Tappe and Randy Prange who kindly volunteered their time to help cook. Thank you Kwik Trip off West in Waseca for your kind donation. Thank you Mankato Hy-Vee for your kind donation. Thank you Waseca Walmart for your kind donation. Thank you to the players, parents, Tyler and Bill who helped with everything. Lastly, thank you everyone who supported us by coming for the breakfast or donating some money. This doesnt happen without your support!”



Above: Members of the NRHEG high school choir delighted instructor Krista Reeder when they appeared on stage in colorful, fanciful holiday attire. Below: Saxophonist Alexis Olson stands for a solo during the band concert, while fellow brass section musician Sophia Williams looks on.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

NRHEG Music presents Dec. 8 concert

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

In back-to-back concerts presented the evening of Dec. 8, the vocal and instrumental music departments at NRHEG shared an array of lively holiday tunes performed by students in grades 6 through 12.

The instrumental department, directed by district music instructor Seth Schaefer, presented fourteen tunes performed by five combinations of musicians.

The Jazz Band played “Home-town” and “Georgia on My Mind.”

The chairs were then handed over to the sixth-grade band, who entertained the audience with “Embark,” “Gingerbread Men on Parade,” “Frere Jacques” presented in rounds, and the energetic piece “Dragonblood.”

Grades 7 and 8 presented “Air of Nobility,” “In Search of Yeti,” and “Winter Morning” before being joined by the high school band for a few familiar holiday tunes.

The final five numbers of the band concert were played by musicians in grades 9 to 12: “Flashpoint,” “Silver Bells,” “Softly Speaks the Night,” “Pure Imagination,” and “Winter-tide.”

The vocal portion of the concert also featured combinations and re-combinations of musicians, with vocal music instructor Krista Reeder both playing the piano accompaniment and directing.

The Senior Select Choir began with “O Come, O Come” and “Long Ago.”

They were then joined by the additional members of the Senior Choir for “Winter With You” featuring Christian Cully playing the viola, “Snow on Snow,” and “A Celtic Silent Night” featuring Faith Phillips on the violin.

The Senior Chamber Choir performed “How Many Kings.”

Members of the Junior Choir took the risers to perform “Snow,” “Carol of the Bells,” “On a Snowy Evening,” and “Take You on a Sleigh Ride.”

The Treble Choir presented “An Irish Cabin” and “Mary Sat A-Rockin.”

Senior Sophia Williams acted as guest conductor as the Junior Chamber Choir sang “Sleep, Little Baby, Sleep.”

The Senior Choir returned to the stage, this time without their robes and instead dressed in brightly color-



ful Christmas attire including elaborate hats and other headgear. Director Krista Reeder burst out in delighted laughter before seating herself at the piano keys to continue accompaniment, this time for “African Alleluia” with Christian Cully and Paige Johnson featured as percussionists. The senior choir sang “Sing of a Merry Christmas” before being joined by the junior choir and even some vocal music graduates for “A Very Merry Christmas.”

During a brief pause between performances, members of the NRHEG Music Boosters brought out two handcrafted quilts which are the prizes in a long-term raffle. Tickets were for sale before and after the

concert for those wishing to support the music program’s project to acquire new choir robes; the red and white ones currently owned by the school district were acquired in the 1980s. Raffle sales will continue at upcoming events until a drawing takes place later in the semester.

The program for the Dec. 8 concert also listed upcoming music department events. These include a “Merry Bandmas” event on Dec. 22; caroling during the Dec. 23 school day activity day; the Gopher Conference fine arts showcase on Feb. 6 and 7; the Feb. 26 mid-winter junior high concert; and music contests and showcases set to take place in March.



The Pastor's Column

Hope, Peace and Joy

By REV. MICHAEL GRANNIS

Hope, Peace, and Joy be to you through faith in the incarnate Word: Emmanuel, In many churches throughout the world people will gather late in the evening before Christmas Day and hear these ancient words:

When all was still and it was midnight,

Your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the roval throne.

This text was written before the birth of Christ. It is taken from the book known as

"Wisdom." For Christians who know our Savior as the eternal, almighty Word of God who took on flesh in the womb of His blessed virgin mother Mary, these words may evoke thoughts of a beloved Christmas carol:

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon virgin mother and Child Holy Infant, so tender and mild

Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Our salvation from sin, death and hell was conceived and born into the world through scandal, stress, and suffering. With scandal comes doubt. With stress comes doubt. With suffering comes doubt. This doubt can be daunting when we are trying to deal with all of the troubles and trials of life in this crazy, broken world.

But the Almighty Word of the Lord has descended from His heavenly royal throne for a purpose. God sent His Word into our world in the midst of scandal, stress, and suffering in order to replace our doubt with something far greater. Yes, the result of God's Word coming to us is nothing short of heaven-sent; scandal, stress and suffering are met with hope, peace, and joy.

Where do these heavenly gifts come from? Hope springs forth from faith. Peace flows out of faith. Joy abounds in faith. This faith is not just some warm nostalgia, or self-help form of positive thinking. No, the Christian faith is nothing more, and nothing less than faith in Christ.

Jesus Christ - the Word made flesh - came to save His people from their sins. Who are His

people? All who look to Him, and trust in Him for their salvation.

Throughout His earthly life, Jesus was the center of scandal. Yet, He became the center of scandal so that we might center our hope in Him.

From His infancy all the way to the Cross of Calvary, Jesus was repeatedly the target of stressful attacks. Everyone from kings and neighbors, to religious leaders and the devil himself added stress upon stress in order to try to eliminate the power and presence of the Almighty Word. But Jesus endured these constant stresses so that we might abide in and find comfort in the peace He brings.

Jesus was no stranger to suffering. He experienced thirst and hunger, weariness and tiredness, pain and loss the same as you and me. But He endured all of the suffering willingly - even faithfully suffering for our sins on the Cross - so that we might abide in the joy of Salvation even during our times of greatest suffering.

I pray that the Almighty Word of God would dwell with you richly, so that the Lord's joy would be made complete in you. The Lord's joy is made complete when His Word lives in us. For when His Word lives in us, then faith in Christ fills us.

When faith in Christ fills us, then we are strengthened by the Spirit to live by faith: hope springing eternal, peace overflowing, and joy abounding in all circumstances.

When all was still and it was midnight,

Your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

I'll leave you with some words from another hymn of which these lines remind me.

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, Who orderest all things mightily;

To us of the knowledge show, And teach us in her ways to go.

O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree, Free them from Satan's tyranny That trust Thy mighty power to save And give them victory over the grave

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

New powerline under consideration

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

A cooperative project being undertaken by numerous regional power companies is underway to build a new 765 kiloVolt (kV) powerline intended to extend across most of southern Minnesota. Representatives from two power companies appeared at the Dec. 2 meeting of the Waseca County board of commissioners to share information about the project, for which construction would likely not begin until 2030, with transmission beginning first in 2034.

The line will be located in the vicinity of the I-90 corridor, but its exact route is not yet specified because, spokespersons explained, "We're very much in the early stages."

Matt Ellis of Great River Energy and Mike Frank of ITC Midwest explained that, though they do not work for the same company, they began leading almost daily open house sessions together in southern Minnesota early in November. The public sessions are a required part of the application process.

The two explained four companies are cooperating to apply for and eventually use the powerline: Great River Energy, ITC Midwest, Otter Tail Power Company and Xcel Energy. The companies have determined that transmission needs are increasing, and so have begun a process toward having the line approved and then built. It would begin in South Dakota and lead to a connection with another major line in the area of Rochester.

New powerlines are under the authority of the state public utilities commission (PUC), which has the final say in where the lines will be located. Thus, "We can't tell you what route the line will take," explained Ellis. "But the only part of Waseca County likely to be impacted is the very

Power continued on 14



COOKING UP BUSINESS - Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism and the Waseca Area Ambassadors welcomed Barefoot Lane, LLC as their newest member. Barefoot Lane is a MN Cottage Food Bakery.

Ambassadors welcome Barefoot Lane, LLC

The Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism and the Waseca Area Ambassadors are pleased to welcome their newest member, Barefoot Lane, LLC, an MN Cottage Food Bakery owned and operated by modern-day homesteader Christa.

Barefoot Lane specializes in fresh, made-to-order baked goods, including sourdough bread, pastries, cookies, and more—all crafted with a "Make It, Bake It, Grow It" philosophy. Customers can enjoy convenient delivery within Waseca city limits or schedule a pickup at the Barefoot Lane MN Homestead. Christa also brings her handcrafted goods to the Waseca County Winter Farmers Market at Farmamerica from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. every other Saturday.

Orders can be placed online at www.hotplate.com/barefootlanemn. For more information about Barefoot Lane, LLC, please visit www.barefootlanemn.com or find Barefoot Lane on Facebook.

Executive Director Robin Dulas shared her excitement about the new addition to the Chamber community, saying, "We are excited to welcome Barefoot Lane to the Chamber community. Christa's dedication to handcrafted, local food reflects the heart of Waseca's entrepreneurial spirit. We're proud to support small businesses like

hers that add richness and creativity to our local economy."

Ambassador Chair Katie Gonzales added, "Meeting Christa and learning about Barefoot Lane's homemade offerings was such a delight. Her passion for quality and her connection to the community truly shine through her work. We're thrilled to have her as part of the Chamber and look forward to seeing her business continue to grow."

14th annual Waseca Bluejay Blast results

The Waseca community showed record energy and Bluejay pride on Saturday, November 22, as families, students, and supporters gathered for the annual Bluejay Blast – Presented by Katie Gonzales, State Farm Insurance. The full-day celebration featured morning family activities and an evening Flannels & Fizz event, all coming together to raise funds and rally support for Waseca Public Schools.

The day kicked off with a morning family event featuring a pancake breakfast and activities for kids and families. Parents, students, and community members filled the space throughout the morning, creating a warm, hometown atmosphere before many headed to Minneapolis to cheer on the Waseca Bluejay football team in the state championship game.

In the evening, doors opened for Flannels & Fizz, the adults-only Bluejay Blast celebration. Guests arrived in their best flannel for an energetic night of raffles, baskets, games, food, and beverages—all with one goal: supporting students and staff across the district.

"November 22 will go down as one of the greatest days for Bluejay Pride," said Brett Prescher, Bluejay Blast Co-Chair. "From the pancake feed to the football game to Flannels & Fizz, our community showed up for our kids in every possible way."

This year's event saw unprecedented generosity from the community: over 170 businesses, individuals, families, and classrooms donated items to help make the raffles, silent auctions, and prize baskets possible.

"The support was overwhelming in the best way," said Abby Nelson, Bluejay Blast committee member. "Our sponsors stepped up, our volunteers went above and beyond, and our families never stopped saying 'yes.' Every dollar raised goes right back into creating opportunities for Waseca students."

Funds raised from Bluejay Blast help support classroom needs, enrichment opportunities, student experiences, and staff appreciation efforts throughout the year.

Donations Still Welcome

Community members who were unable to attend can still contribute. Checks, cash, or Venmo donations -@BluejayBlast are being accepted to continue supporting Waseca students and staff.

The Bluejay Blast committee expressed special thanks to:

Event sponsors and local business partners

Over 170 donors across the community

Volunteers who helped with setup, games, ticket sales, and cleanup

School staff and administrators supported planning and promotion

Families and community members who attended, donated, and shared the event

Planning for next year's Bluejay Blast is already underway. Community members and businesses interested in sponsoring, donating, or volunteering for future events are encouraged to follow Bluejay Blast Waseca Schools PTO Fund-raiser on social media or contact the committee directly.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-835-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m. * * * * *	Sunday worship 10 a.m. * * * * *	VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Brian Schanil Pastor Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship; 9 a.m. Sunday School Tuesdays - The Shepherd's Robe Ministry, 1-3 p.m., 6-8 p.m.; Bonfires and Yard Games, 6 p.m. until dark * * * * *	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 * * * * *
4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m. * * * * *	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 1221 8th St SE, Waseca 507-835-2213 Sunday worship 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m. * * * * *	ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Father Glenn Ferichs Friday - 10 a.m. on 1st, 3rd and 4th Fridays p.m. Mass Sunday - Mass at 8 a.m. * * * * *	JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 401 N. West St., Janesville Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship * * * * *
FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m. * * * * *	CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY 900 14th Ave SE, Waseca 507-833-1082 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m. * * * * *	FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Larry Sipe Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class * * * * *	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) * * * * *
CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH 309 6th St NE, Waseca 507-835-9176 Worship Sundays 9 a.m., Sunday School/Fellowship 10:15 a.m., Wednesday evening worship 6:30 p.m. * * * * *	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School, Choir and Choir; 10:30 a.m. Worship Monday - 1 p.m. Quilters Wednesday - 7 p.m. Worship * * * * *	IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship * * * * *	ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH 307 W. 2nd St. Janesville Father Robert Schneider Sunday - 8:30 a.m. - Mass * * * * *
ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH 401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca 507-833-1703 Sundays 9:00 a.m. * * * * *	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Otisco, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship * * * * *	ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Pastor Ava Adams-Morris Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday — 9 a.m. Worship * * * * *	FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 Owen St., Janesville Pastor Sarah Krolak * * * * *
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH 314 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-2647 Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m. * * * * *	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Mary Iverson Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting * * * * *	ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC Waldorf, Minnesota Father Sammy Pothiredy Saturday - 5 p.m. Worship * * * * *	ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH Alma City, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * * * *
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-4548 (office email: lcwaseca@hickorytech.net) Worship Sunday 10 a.m. * * * * *	LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting * * * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN Wilton Township Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor Sunday — 8 a.m. summer worship; 10:45 a.m. Worship starting Sept. 1 * * * * *	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Smiths Mill, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship * * * * *
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m. * * * * *	VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship * * * * *	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 * * * * *	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 * * * * *
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca Father Glenn Ferichs 507-835-1222 Worship Sundays 10:00 a.m., Tues. and Wed. at 8:30 a.m. and Thurs. at 7 a.m.; Saturdays at 5 p.m. * * * * *	REAL LIFE CHURCH 620 W Elm Ave, Waseca 507-833-0017 * * * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH * * * * *	NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.

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Janesville

25 years ago

- Leroy Kleimola, son of David and Linda Kleimola of Janesville, has been accepted as a student for admission at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, for the 2001-2002 academic year. Kleimola is a senior at Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School. He hopes to pursue a career in communications at broadcasting.

- The Waseca County Historical Society will celebrate the opening of the "Festival of Trees," Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 2 and 3, from noon-7 p.m. A life-size paper mache snowman made by Lindsay Wadd, Marie Mulcahey, Heather Treat and Jayme Larson of the Waseca High School YSL program will be raffled off. Also in the raffle will be one of Peg Mawby's highly collectable "Father Christmas" Santas.



- Left to right: Cassie Goodnough, Adam Huxford, Katie Malterer, Kenny Maas, Kris Maas, Angie Manthey and Andy Meyer.

- The Celebration Singers will present "The Gift of Christmas-Worshiping the Gift of the Giver" on Friday, Dec. 8 and Sunday, Dec. 10, at 3 p.m. at the Janesville United Methodist Church. The choir is under the direction of Jowane Howard and the members are from various local and area churches.

50 years ago

- Are Minnesota winters getting longer and colder?

Eighteen-year-old Jeff Bartelt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bartelt, thinks Minnesota winters are actually getting shorter. He mentioned the longer fall this year and the fact that the first big snow did not hit Janesville until Nov. 30.

Kelly Radunz, 14, was riding his bicycle uptown when the Argus cameraman stopped him Sunday. He says he planes to put the bike away for the winter soon and to overhaul it next spring, "Winter does seem to be getting a lot worse every year" he said, "It seems to be getting longer with more snow."

JHS Superintendent says that Minnesota winters definitely are getting long and colder, at least for him, "I finally decided I would have to begin dressing for the weather if we were going to continue living here," he said with a laugh.

75 years ago

- The Smiths Mill Winners 4-H club meeting was held at the home of Sharon Berndt Monday evening Dec. 4. The president, Norma Stankey, brought the meeting to order with the pledge to the flag and the club pledge. The secretary's report was given by Dale Blank. Georgia Grams was taken in as a new member. Sharon Berndt gave a demonstration on threading a needle.

- Lawrence Roban, employee at the Commander Elevator, sustained injuries to his right hand Wednesday morning when his hand caught in a revolving belt while at work at the elevator. Examination by a local physician revealed that ligaments of his hand were torn and lacerations resulted on the middle and little fingers. An x-ray examination showed no bones were broken.

- The Senior Walther League of Trinity Lutheran church of Janesville will hold a three-act comedy play entitled, "Thirty Second Cousin," at the high school auditorium Saturday and Sunday, December 9 and 10, at 8 o'clock p.m. Director is Marilyn Fischer and the assistant directors are Delores Strietelmeyer and Noreen Malvitz.

100 years ago

- Louis Lynch sold 60 acres to Adolf Kukuk last week for \$10,250, an average of \$175.50 an acre. This land is between Janesville and St. Clair and is a particularly nice piece of ground that should make its new owner an excellent farm. Mr. Kukuk is a son of John Kukuk. Mr. Lynch is not fully decided on his immediate plans but will probably reinvest in other farm property.

Mr. and Mrs. George Sprengler have bought a tract from Fred Morrill and have already begun preparations for building a new residence here. A bungalow, modern in every way, will be constructed. Mr. and Mrs. Sprengler, who live about four miles east of Janesville, will move here as soon as their new dwelling is completed. Both real estate deals were handled by the L.W. Converse Land Co., who report considerable activity in the market now.

- The Morristown High School basketball team comes here Saturday evening to pry the lid off the season with the local high school quint. The game will begin at eight o'clock and will be played at the Town Hall, the scene of many a historic floor struggle. Morristown has always put up good games. This year they are reported unusually strong and should make our boys hustle from start to finish.

- The Janesville Farm Bureau Unit and the Civic League, in a joint meeting, will attract a large audience at their program Friday evening. These two clubs are active in their efforts to advance the interest of the community. Working together, they will be able to achieve results that will be of real benefit. J.H. Hay of St. Paul, a man prominent in the state as a speaker, will deliver the principal address. The program will follow a dance with a lunch to be served at midnight.

Waseca

25 years ago

- The proposed by-pass of MN Highway 14 creates significant opportunities for the City of Waseca. The construction of the by-pass introduces the potential for Waseca to expand its industrial park and determine its future land use and growth patterns. Alleviating the problems caused by heavy traffic and congestion along Highway 14 in the downtown district (State Street) provides Waseca with the opportunity to strengthen both the economic vitality and aesthetics of downtown.

- The City of Waseca and Waseca County are in the process of submitting an application to the Minnesota Department of Transportation for a grant to construct a bike and walking path around Clear Lake. An informational and input meeting was held on November 20, 2000 for interested parties. It was fairly well attended, and the outcome was that an overwhelming number of those attending wished to see a trail constructed for safety reasons.

- Trent and Laurie Flom of Waseca are proud to announce the birth of their son, Logan Lowell Flom, born November 18, 2000, at the Owatonna Hospital. He weighed 6 pounds 5 ounces and was 20 inches long at birth. Maternal grandparents are Loren and Joyce Frink of Waseca.

50 years ago

- Former Viking great Bill Brown is coming to Waseca County next Friday, Dec. 12, but he's going to try and score points for a different team. Retired this year after 14 years in professional football, 13 with the Vikings, Brown is coming to Waseca on behalf of local State Rep. Rod Searle. Searle is going to let Brown lead interference for him at a noon luncheon at the Powell House where Searle hopes to raise most of the money needed to run his re-election campaign in 1976.

- The 4-H Clover-for-luck 4-H Club held its monthly meeting at the Norbert Schultz home Monday evening. The Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H pledge were recited. Secretary's report was read and approved. The Christmas party was discussed and it was decided to go caroling Dec. 22. The will proceed to the Harvey Peterson home for a Christmas party and lunch, where they will also have a gift exchange. The meeting was followed by group singing, games and lunch. Julie Jessen, reporter.



- Supervisors from the Waseca County Soil and Water Conservation District attended the thirty-ninth annual convention of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Marshall Nov. 30 - Dec. 2. Attending were Mr. and Mrs. Bill Wheelock and Mr. and Mrs. Art Trahms, Janesville. The Wheelocks are pictured here receiving their award for Waseca County Conservation farmer of the year, from Bob Rupp, left, editor of the Farmer Magazine. Art Trahms is pictured behind the Wheelocks.

75 years ago

- One of the world's foremost cellist will be presented here by the Waseca Concert Association at 8:15 p.m. Dec. 7 in Waseca Central High School auditorium. He is Dimitry Markevitch who has been called by the Vianna press-"the greatest cello talent since Casals and Piatigorsky." As a boy of 16, Markevitch was famous in the concert halls of Europe. He emigrated to the United States a few years ago, and served in the United States Army during the recent war.

- The Chicago Northwestern railroad announced last week that it has closed the old fire road which led from highway 13 to the railroad's roundhouse, crossing eight railroad tracks on the way. The closure was made in the interest of safety, the company said. The fire road was built over 40 years ago for use of the city fire apparatus should it be called to a fire at the roundhouse.

- Many Waseca county people had a special surprise in watching T.V. last Thursday evening. David Clausen, a Waseca county 4-H boy, made a guest appearance on Wayne King's Thursday evening program. David has been in Chicago attending the National 4-H Club Congress. Wayne King interviewed David, who told of his 4-H Tractor Maintenance project work in Waseca County. David was awarded the trip on the basis of his long-time and outstanding work in the project.

100 years ago

- Three hunters were caught in the game refuge on Thanksgiving day with two pheasants and one prairie chicken in their possession. The men were caught by Fred Von Sien who confiscated their shotguns and brought the men into municipal court where he charged them with breaking the game laws. They were fined \$5 and costs and the fine suspended. The shotguns were sent into the state game and fish commissioner. Dr. I. Thornby, Barney Harguth and John Campion were the men apprehended. Harguth was using a gun that he had borrowed from Hawkes' Hardware store.

- Two crews, working night and day, are making short work of the graveling of Highway No. 13 south of Waseca. At the present rate the graveling will be completed before the first of the year, and it is possible that the Klemmer Construction Co. will add more trucks on the job.

- Formal opening of the new Calvary Episcopal church in Waseca is planned for Sunday, Dec. 20. Rev. Brandon plans a special opening service at 10:30 in the morning and at four in the afternoon an evening song service in which other churches of the city will co-operate.

New Richland

25 years ago



- Amy Sack and Kristin Jessen lit the candle of Character during the induction of new members into the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Chapter of the National honor society, Wednesday, November 15 at the high school, here.

- A Spanish teacher at a Austin (Minnesota) High School, Barb Judd, former Spanish instructor in the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva School District, noticed last spring that many of her students had plagiarized an Internet source for a translation assignment. Judd decided to respond in a way that would inspire a broad discussion about ethics. For that and several other ethics lessons that struck Judd's peers and students as innovative, she recently won a \$10,000 Ethics in Education Award from the Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation.

- In a great team effort, the Panther girls B squad defeated Maple River, Tuesday, November 28, here 37-28. The Panther Girls B basketball squad won their second game of the young season, Friday night, when they defeated Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton 27-19.

50 years ago



- Guidance Counselor, Robert Westland of the New Richland-Hartland High School presents Neal Linnihan with his appointment to take part in the house page program in the Minnesota House of Representatives at the right is representative Rod Searle.

- Ewald brothers, Lynn, Guy and Jay, of Waldorf, exhibited one Short-horn and three Polled Hereford heifers at the Chicago International Livestock Show, December 2. The boys had the second place Polled Hereford Heifer which was also Reserve Senior Champion. Their heifers received a first in the summer yearling class of Polled Hereford and also a third in another class.

- A daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Loken (nee Joann Simonson) of LaPaza, Bolivia, South America, on November 10. The little miss weighed 6 pounds, 8 ounces and has been named Grace Ann. She has one sister, Heather, seven years old and a brother, Nathan, two years older.



- The Traffic Department of the simulated Lester Hill Corporation in the Business Education department at the New Richland-Hartland High School makes good use of the phone system recently installed by the United Telephone Co. are Kim Olson and Karen Truebenbach.

75 years ago

- Bob Westland is one fellow who practices what he preaches. The slender New Richland high school coach today holds the scoring lead in the City Basketball league with 73 markers to his credits. Westland, who plays center for the Morlea Dairy quintet, has built up his league leading royal on 27 field goals and 19 free throws. Westland's 19 free throws is tops in that department.

- Mr. and Mrs. Don Peterson of Emmons announce the engagement of their daughter, Kathryn Lois, to Marlin Sandsmark of Albert Lea, son of Mr. Oscar Sandsmark of New Richland.

- Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ische (Virginia Berg) of Hopkins are the parents of a daughter, weighing 8 pounds and 5 ounces, born at a Minneapolis hospital, January 5. Mr. and Mrs. Ische also have another son, Micheal.

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TOUGH NIGHT — Above left, Deron Russell takes it to the hoop despite being double-teamed during Tuesday’s loss to St. Peter. Above middle, the Bluejays’ Toby Jeske attempts a lay-up. Above right, Cyrett Long brings the ball upcourt. Below, Russell slam dunks.

Photos by Cassie Rupe



Struggles continue for WHS boys

Bluejays fall to conference co-leader St. Peter, edged at LCWM

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

There's a reason the St. Peter Saints are 5-0 overall and leading the Big South Black Division boys' basketball standings at 3-0.

They're good.

The Saints came to Waseca last Tuesday and blew out the Bluejays 88-58 after leading 39-32 at half-time.

"St. Peter took it to us," said Bluejays coach Seth Anderson.

Deron Russell was the lone Waseca score to reach double fig-

ures, finishing with 25 points, five rebounds, three assists and one blocked shot.

Others: Ethan Hiller 8P, 6R, 2A, 1S, 1B; Cyrett Long 9P, 2R, 2A, 1S; Wyatt Hager 5P, 1A, 1S; Owen Honstad 2P, 2A; Logan Reger 1R; Brody Dufault 5P, 3S, 2B; Owen Rupe 4P, 1R, 1B; Toby Jeske 3R, 3A, 1S.

A second-half rally fell just short Friday as the Bluejays trailed Lake Crystal-Welcome Memorial 38-26 and absorbed a 73-70 loss at Lake Crystal.

"Deron was at the all-star football game, so he didn't play," said Anderson. "Wyatt injured his hand during 7th hour and had to go to the ER, so he didn't play either. We started to play some better basketball the last 10 minutes of the game."

Individually: Hiller 18P, 9R, 6A, 1S; Long 25P, 5R, 5A, 2S; Honstad 9P, 2R, 1A, 1S; Reger 4R; Dufault 4P, 2R; Rupe 1B; Powell 12P, 5R, 1B; Jeske 2P, 88R, 1A, 3S, 1B.

The Bluejays, 0-3 in the Big South and 0-4 overall, travel to

Marshall Friday for a 7:30 game and play in the Rochester Lourdes Invitational Dec. 29-30. The first action in the new year is Jan. 6 at St. Clair at 7 p.m.

Big South - Black

	Conf.	Ov.
Marshall	3-0	4-0
St. Peter	3-0	5-0
Belle Plaine	1-0	4-0
Worthington	1-1	1-3
New Ulm	1-2	1-2
Tri-City United	0-3	0-5
Waseca	0-3	0-4



NO LACK OF EFFORT — From left, Waseca’s Hannah Teague brings the basketball up court; Reese Rodriguez defends against an LCWM player; Ava Miller, Rodriguez and Hannah Sommers guard an LCWM player in the paint.

Photos by Debbie Rodriguez

Waseca girls can’t contain LCWM, St. Peter

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Try as they might, the Waseca High School girls' basketball team just could not slow down Clara Jeddeloh.

The Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial junior poured in 39 points Friday as the Bluejays fell 67-49 at Waseca.

"We continued to battle, but couldn't find an answer for Jeddeloh," said WHS coach Brian Rupe.

But that doesn't mean the Bluejays didn't give it their full effort.

"We played with the most energy we have for an entire game all year," said Rupe. "LCWM puts a lot of pressure on and overall we handled it very well for as young as we are.

When you have to handle the pressure and have a lack of depth that can also wear on you. I was very pleased with how the girls responded."

The Bluejays, again playing without injured starter Adrianna Willingham and Tyler Stagman, saw Ava Miller called for her third foul in the first half and LCWM pushed its lead to 41-28 at the intermission.

Individual totals for Waseca: A.Miller 16 points, 7 rebounds, 3 assists; Belle Miller 1R; Reese Rodriguez 11P, 3R, 1 assist, 1 steal; Maren Schimming 2P, 9R, 2A, 3S; Libby Miller 1R, 2A, 1S; Hannah Sommers 14P, 8R, 1A, 1S; Alexa Welander 1A; Shakiya Powell 2P; Anna Benson 1P, 1S; Ahvah Maas 3P.

"We rebounded the ball very well,

with Maren and Hannah leading the way," said Rupe. "We shot very poorly from the free-line (10-26) which I bring that back to fatigue from the pressure and lack of depth."

Last Tuesday, St. Peter went on an early run and the Bluejays couldn't recover, falling 79-35 after trailing 60-21 at halftime.

"St. Peter put a lot of pressure on us and we got rattled early," said Rupe. "Our inexperience showed, and we dug ourselves a pretty big

hole. They ran the floor really well and we did not get back on defense very well. Once we were able to calm our nerves and get into some offense, it helped to see the ball go in the hoop."

Rodriguez led the Bluejays with 11 points.

"That was good because she has been in a bit of a shooting lull to start the season," said Rupe. "It was good to see her have some success tonight. The girls continue to work hard. We are down Audianna right

now so we are looking at a few of the JV girls to step into a larger role and they played some great minutes."

Waseca totals: A.Miller 6P, 3R, 1S, 2A; B.Miller 2P, 3A, 1R, 2A; Rodriguez 11P, 5R, 1S; Schimming 5P, 1A, 1S; L.Miller 3R; Hannah Teague 3P, 3R, 1A; Sommers 5P, 4R; Welander 4R; Powell 2P, 6R; Benson 1P, 2R.

After a Tuesday game against TCU, the 0-6 Bluejays host Cleveland Friday at 7:15 and play Saturday at 6 p.m. at Marshall. They travel to NRHEG Dec. 23 for a 6:15 game and then in a tournament at Winona State, facing Lake City at 4:30 Dec. 26 and PEM Dec. 27 at 8:15 a.m.

JWP boys up record to 4-0

The JWP boys' basketball team cruised to an 89-45 victory over Kenyon-Wanamingo Friday at Janesville.

The Bulldogs, who remained undefeated, took a commanding 45-27 lead into halftime as five players reached double digits in scoring for the night.

Gavin Bauer was the leader with 27 points, four rebounds, five blocked shots and five steals.

Others: Daulton Bauer 17P, 8A, 8S; Caleb Quast 12P, 5R; Gavin Weedman 17P, 6R; Jaxon Wolff 12P, 3R, 5A.

The Bulldogs, 2-0 in the Gopher Conference, improved to 4-0 overall.

The Bulldogs play Thursday, Dec. 18 at NRHEG and host St. Clair Dec. 22

Flyers fall three times

The South Central girls' hockey team dropped three games this past week, 14-0 at Minnesota River on Tuesday, 9-2 Thursday to Worthington at Waseca Community Arena and 13-0 at Luverne Saturday.

The Flyers trailed Minnesota River 3-0 after one period and 9-0 after two.

South Central goalie Lila Pavlec made 46 saves.

The Flyers led Worthington 1-0 at the end of the first period on a goal by Allison Draeger.

Mckenna Mortensen scored for South Central in the second period, but the Trojans found the net five times, adding four goals in the third.

The Flyers trailed Luverne 9-0 and 12-0 at the breaks.

The Flyers, 0-11, play Thursday, Dec. 18 at Windom and, after the Christmas break, host New Ulm Jan. 6 and travel to Worthington Jan. 9.



SHOWDOWN — The Waseca boys' hockey team traveled to Luverne Saturday in a battle of Big South leaders and fell short, 4-2. Above, the Bluejays' Griffin Storey sets up for a shot during a recent home game. Storey had four goals and an assist in a 15-0 victory over Worthington. Below, August Hansen, Storey and others celebrate a goal.

Photos by Jim Lutgens



WHS icemen fall in battle of Big South co-leaders

Loss follows wins of 15-0, 6-0

The Waseca High School boys' hockey team was on a roll. It ended Saturday at Luverne. The Bluejays lost 4-2 in a showdown of Big South co-leaders, following a 15-0 whitewashing at Worthington Thursday and a 6-0 shutout of Minnesota River last Tuesday at Waseca Community Arena.

Luverne took a 1-0 lead just 22 seconds into the opening period Saturday, adding a goal at the 16:47 mark. An Otto Schoenrock goal at 16:47 cut the lead in half. Griffin Storey assisted.

The Cardinals scored the lone goal in the second period. Storey scored at 2:32 of the third on assists from Schoenrock and Jude Gehring. Luverne iced with a score at the 6:05 mark.

Corbin Martens was in goal for Waseca for the first time this season and recorded 27 saves as the Bluejays were outshot 31-28 for the game. Waseca outshot Luverne 12-7 in the third period.

The Bluejays drew six penalties for 12 minutes, the Cardinals three for six.

Storey had a big game at Worthington, netting four goals and an assist. Jude Gehring, Avery Selvik, Henry Huttemier and Schoenrock each scored two goals, with one apiece added by Cash Lynch, Jackson Dahl and Jayden Hervey.

Dahl assisted on six goals, with Ayden Kath, Schoenrock, Jude Gehring and Huttemier dishing out two assists each. Other assists went to August Hansen, Jayden Gehring, Dawson Slechta, Owen Weiseler, Lynch, Storey and Max Bodenweiser.

Josiah Schmidke secured the shutout in goal.

Waseca outshot Worthington 47-8, leading 7-0 after one period

BIG SOUTH STANDINGS			
	WLT	PTS	OV.
Luverne	5-0-0	10	5-0-0
Waseca	4-1-0	8	3-1-0
New Ulm	2-1-0	4	4-2-0
Windom	2-2-0	4	2-2-0
Fairmont	1-1-0	2	2-1-0
MN River	1-2-0	2	2-4-0
RW Valley	0-3-0	0	1-4-0
Marshall	0-2-0	0	1-5-0
Worth.	0-3-0	0	0-5-0



ON THE ATTACK — Above, Waseca's Kole Nelson battles his opponent during Thursday's wrestling triangular at Janesville. Below, the Bluejays' Zander Rahe looks for a takedown opportunity.

Photos by Kallen Glynn

Grizzlies drop two, Jays 1-1 in triangular

Bluejays' Barnett first at JCC

The WEM/JWP wrestling Grizzlies hosted a triangular at Janesville last Thursday and came up short 49-22 to LeSueur-Henderson and 40-27 to Waseca.

WEM/JWP winners against LSH: Otto Root, 114 pounds; David Mielke, 139; Brady Murphy, 145; Trenton Humber, 189.

Also wrestling for WEM/JWP: Jacksten Knish, 107; Finn Root, 121; Branden Masso, 127; Trey Richards, 133; Parker James, 152; Ben Root, 160; Charles Adams, 172; Kavin Sheehy, 215; Quinn Anderson, 285.

Against Waseca, the Grizzlies got wins from Otto Root, 114; Finn Root, 121; Masso, 127; Richards, 133; Murphy, 145.

Winners for Waseca were Kole Nelson, 107; Deven Parpart, 139; Braxton Nelson, 152; Sam Selthun, 160; Alex Bethke 172; Slade Barnett 189; Lucas Selthun, 215; Matt Veroeven, 285.

Also wrestling for Waseca: Jackson Janike, 133; Jacob Knutson,

152.

Waseca winners in a 51-21 loss to LSH: Kole Nelson, 107; David Haley, 139; Barnett, 172; Veroeven, 285.

The WHS boys and girls competed in the Jackson County Central Invitational on Saturday. A total of 23 teams competed.

Barnett took the gold at 172, scoring an 18-4 tech. fall in the finals. Knutson was fourth at 145, Bethke sixth at 172 and Selthun sixth at 160.

For the girls, Sofia Bunn finished first, Jazelle Neal and Hailey Proehl third.

The Bluejays travel to Lake City Friday for a 5 p.m. quadrangular.

WEM/JWP's boys traveled to Byron Saturday for the Dave Scharberg dual-meet tournament.

After a first-round bye, the Grizzlies dispatched Dover-Eyota 46-29.

Winners for the Grizzlies were Knish, 107; Otto Root, 114; Masso, 127; Richards, 133; Murphy, 145;



James, 152; Trenton Huber, 189; and Sheehy, 215.

The Grizzlies then lost by the narrowest of margins, 33-32 on a criteria tiebreaker as both teams won six bouts.

Winning for WEM/JWP were Knish, 107; Otto Root, 114;

Richards, 133; Murphy, 145; Adams, 172; and Huber, 189.

The Grizzlies faced Plainview-Elgin-Millville and lost 53-11.

Adams and Huber were the lone winners for WEM/JWP with a pin and a tech. fall, respectively.

Huber finished 3-0 on the day.

Wheelock breaks school record in win over LCWM

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton girls' basketball team started fast and never let up against LCWM last Tuesday, winning 73-41 at Lake Crystal.

"The girls had the best start to a game so far this year," said Bulldogs head coach Brandon Goebel, whose team led 39-23 at halftime. "They competed at a high level from the start and didn't let their foot off the gas."

Mikayla Wheelock had a night to remember for JWP, setting a new school-record with eight three-point baskets, hitting eight of 10 from beyond the arc. She finished with 28 points, four rebounds and six assists.

Two others reached double digits in scoring.

Katie Olson had 20 points, six rebounds and two steals, Ashlynn Wolff 10 points and a team-high seven rebounds.

Others: Ray Blasing 5P, 3R, 2A; Nevaeh Weimert 7P, 5A, 2 steals; Kwynn Krause 3P, 3A.

"The girls were doing a lot of the little things well, defended at a high level, finished possessions with rebounds, and pushed the ball in transition which, was great to see," said Goebel. "We still have things we can clean up, but overall I am very happy with the things they were able to do. One thing I am very happy and proud of them for was moving the ball on offense. We ended the game with 19 assists, which is great to see. We have so many scorers on our team and we are at our best when we are playing together and sharing the ball."

The Bulldogs defeated Glencoe-Silver Lake 60-32 Friday in the opening round of the Maple River Showease. They took control early and led 33-19 at

halftime.

"The girls did a great job coming out right away and setting the tone," said Goebel. "I thought we shared the ball well throughout the game. There were times throughout where we were a little flat, but it was nice to see us figure it out throughout the game to come away with a win against a team in our section."

Wolff led the way with 25 points, 12 rebounds and one assist...

Others: Blasing 5P, 8R, 1S; Weimert 16P 3R, 5A; Krause 5R; Wheelock 9R, 2A; Olson 13P, 6R, 7S.

The Bulldogs faced a strong Jordan team in the championship game Saturday and lost 74-43 after trailing 25-14 at halftime.

"We knew coming into the game it was going to be a very difficult task," said Goebel. "We started off the game going toe-to-toe with them, which was great to see. Shots didn't end up falling, and their size was difficult for us to deal with. I'm proud of the girls for sticking with it to the end."

Individually for JWP: Olson 22P, 5R, 2S; Weimert 7P, 2R, 3A; Wheelock 6P, 2R, 3S; Wolff 3P, 10R, 3S.

"The score doesn't necessarily reflect how hard we played throughout," said Goebel. "I can't wait to get back to work with them on Monday and continue to get better. We will regroup on Monday and take care of business next week."

After a Tuesday game against WEM, the Bulldogs (6-1) host NRHEG Friday and St. Clair Dec. 22. They play in the Rochester Lourdes Invitational Dec. 29-30 and start the new year Jan. 3 against Minnehaha academy at Kasson-Mantorville. They host Minnesota Valley Lutheran Jan. 12.

Masso leads Lady Grizzlies at Hopkins

The WEM/JWP girls' wrestling team traveled to Hopkins on Saturday to compete in the Athena Invitational. A total of 663 girls from teams across the state of Minnesota participated in the event. The Lady Grizzlies were represented by four wrestlers.

BreAna Masso placed fourth at 112 pounds, Kayle Langford 10th at 142. Payton Miller, 112, and Anaelyse Skidmore, 112, did not place.

The Lady Grizzlies finished 43rd out of 59 teams. Apple Valley captured the team title.

"The girls Lady Grizzlies faced strong competition, an experience that will pay dividends later in the season," said coach Adam Roesler. "Events like this provide valuable insight into the level of competition expected at the section and state tournaments."

The WEM/JWP girls compete in a tournament at St. Paul Harding Jan. 2 at 3 p.m.

Gymnasts put on a show in first home meet

The Waseca High School gymnasts put on a show against Marshall for their first home meet of the season last Friday.

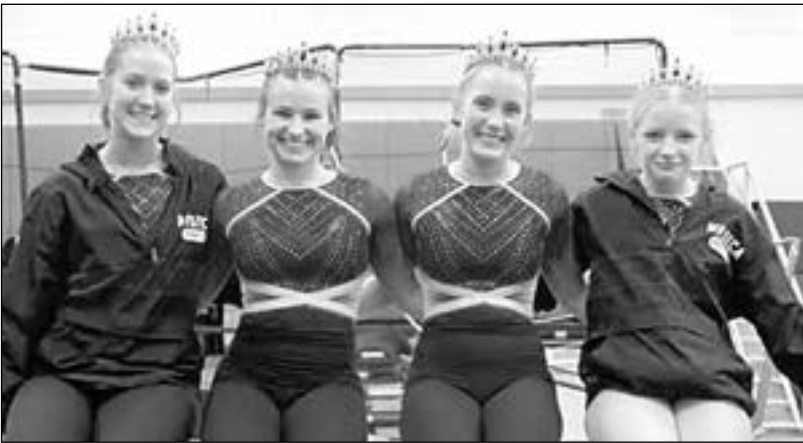
The varsity scored 129.55 points, sweeping the all-around competition.

Layla Keith finished first with 34.8, followed by Katelyn Weber, 31.7; Ellie Clark, 31.4; Hanna Parks, 30.475; and Avery Carda, 30.425.

The Waseca junior varsity took the first three places in all-around, led by Sydney Hayes at 24.4. Adelynn Kruger was second at 22.6, Lindy Bergdale third at 21.5.

The JV totaled 93.55 points.

"Congrats to Kyla Morgan on her first gymnastics meet ever," said WHS coach Kim Wendland. "And lastly, our four beam queens Nora Flatness, Weber, Keith and Aubrey Peterson."



BEAM QUEENS — From left: Nora Flatness, Katelyn Weber, Layla Keith and Aubrey Peterson.

NRHEG boys rally to win at Bethlehem Academy

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

It has been said that Bethlehem Academy is one of the toughest venues to win in the Gopher Conference.

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School boys' basketball team pulled it off Friday, upending the Cardinals 66-65 for the Panthers' first win of the season.

"BA always plays tough in their home gym, and tonight was no exception," said NRHEG coach Dan schmidt.

Thanks to some hot shooting by Brooks Gilliland in the first half, the Panthers jumped out to a 38-27 half-time lead. BA came out on fire in the second half, and took advantage of some turnovers and forced shots to come roaring back and took the lead.

Schmidt called a timeout with the Panthers trailing 60-52 with five minutes to play. It helped as started chipping away. A Calvin Nissen lay-up with 12.9 seconds to go made the score 65-63, BA. The Panthers got a turnover on the ensuing inbound. They got a good look at a three that rimmed out, but Brock Holland battled to secure the long rebound, kicked over to Brooks Gilliland on the wing, and he drained a three with 0.9 seconds remaining to win it.

"Brooks had a great game tonight to hopefully kick-start some things for him," said Schmidt. "He led all scorers with 24 points, going 6-for-12 on threes."

Individually for NRHEG: B.Gilliland 24 points, 3

rebounds, 3 assists, 1 steal; Nissen 13P, 2R, 1A, 1S; Dom Olson 9P, 2A; Brendan Schmidt 5P, 6R, 2A, 1S, 1 blocked shot; A.J. Deen 6P, 6R, 4A, 1S; Fynn Baumann 2P, 2A, 1S; Holland 5P, 6R, 3A; Sean Lassahn 2R, 1A, 1S; Zander Hanna 4R, 2A.

"Olson and Deen bounced back with great games tonight, providing a spark and battling on both ends of the floor," said Coach Schmidt.

The Panthers hosted a strong Maple River team last Tuesday and fell 79-42.

"We took on a Maple River team that continues to play with intensity on the defensive end and efficiency on the offensive end," said Schmidt. "They jumped us from the start, and we could never recover. It was a tough night on both ends of the court, and our inexperience showed. It gave us some obvious things to work on in practice the next few days, as we prepare for our next game."

NRHEG individual statistics: Deen 3P, 2R, 1A; Olson 1R, 1S; Nissen 13P, 2A, 2S; B.Gilliland 7P, 2A, 2S; Baumann 3P; B.Schmidt 5P, 1R, 1A, 3S; Mack Gilliland 2P, 2R, 3A, 2S; Holland 3P, 3R, 1A, 1S; Lassahn 6P, 3R, 1A; Hanna 1A, 1S, 3B.

After a Tuesday game at Medford, the Panthers host JWP Thursday, Dec. 18 and Martin County West Dec. 22; they travel to Waseca Dec. 23. After the Christmas break they play Jan. 3 at St. Clair and Jan. 6 at home against United South Central.



TAKING IT TO THE HOOP — The Panthers' Calvin Nissen drives to the hoop during NRHEG's game against Maple River last Tuesday.
Photo by Jim Lutgens



WINNERS — Wyatt Larson, left, gets his hand raised by referee Neal Skaar after pinning his opponent at 215 pounds during last Thursday's home dual meet against Westfield. Owen Schlaak, right, throws his opponent at 107 duuring his 12-10 victory against Westfield. The meet drew the biggest crowd in recent memory for NRHEG wrestling. The Panthers took the consolation championship in Saturday's Cougar Duals at Lakeville South.



Photos by Jim Lutgens

Good show NRHEG matmen battle Westfield

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The biggest home wrestling crowd in recent memory turned out for last Thursday's dual meet between visiting Westfield and NRHEG in New Richland.

They didn't go home with a win, but they saw a good show.

The Razorbacks, a co-op between Blooming Prairie and Hayfield, defeated the Panthers 39-24 in a hard-fought battle.

"The wrestlers competed hard at every weight class and worked hard to score points," said first-year NRHEG coach Krey Cory. "I'm really proud of the effort they put forth and how well they attacked."

The Panthers' Owen Schlaak had a gritty 12-10 win at 107 pounds and Dakota Schlaak stayed in control of his match for a 5-1 decision at 139. Wyatt Hendrickson, 160, Ryan Schlaak, 189, and Wyatt Larson, 215, all had pins for the Panthers.

"Due to some injuries and open weight classes, we had we had to ask some kids to wrestle up a weight class and they did well," said Cory.

"The energy from the fans in the gym was really great, and it was a fun dual to be a part of. We will look to continue to improve tomorrow when we head to Lakeville South for the Cougar Duals."

In the first round the Panthers fell

to eventual runner-up team Goodhue 44-29.

"The whole team battled tonight," said Cory.

The Panthers got wins coming from Owen Schlaak, 107, fall 1:53; Tucker Flatness, 114, technical fall 16-1; Jacobson, 121, fall 1:14; Chase Johannsen, 139, fall 3:22; and Ryan Schlaak, 189, fall, 2:28.

The Panthers bounced back in the second round, defeating Westonka 39-36.

Match wins came from Riffiten Jacobson at 107 receiving a forfeit; Owen Schlaak, 114, tech. fall 19-2; Charlie Tufte, 127, fall, 1:20; Dakota Schlaak, 133, major decision 16-5; Johannsen. 139, fall, 0:55; Ryan Schlaak, 189, fall, 1:00; and Larson, 215, fall, 2:37.

In the final round the Panthers defeated Mankato West 44-30 to claim the consolation championship. Owen Schlaak, Dakota Schlaak and Johannsen all had falls for the Panthers. Hendrickson had a tech. fall and Jacobson, Tufte and Ryan Schlaak all received forfeits.

"The wrestlers continue to be aggressive and take chances and are finding new ways to score and get better every time they get on the mat," said Coach Cory.

The Panthers take the mat this Friday and Saturday at the Redwood River Riot in Redwood Falls.

NRHEG girls top Maple River, BA

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High school girls' basketball team faced Maple River at Mapleton last Tuesday and, despite a rather slow start on the offensive end, finished strong, defeating the Eagles 68-45. NRHEG led 30-14 at halftime.

"We didn't shoot the ball extremely well to start the game, but a couple of huge offensive rebounds and put-backs, especially from Ezra Boerner, helped get us going," said coach Onika Peterson. "Our rebounding continues to be a major strength for us; when you can create multiple shot attempts on the offensive end, it makes a huge difference."

The Panthers pulled away heading into halftime.

"In the second half, more shots finally started to fall, helping us secure the win," said Peterson. "Defensively, we had moments where we were a bit off, but we have two days of practice to regroup, recoup, and get better as we prepare for Friday."

Camryn VanMaldehem led all

scorers with 31 points. Her twin sister, Quinn, pulled down 14 rebounds, Clara Buendorf 10.

NRHEG statistics: Boerner 7P, 7R, 1A, 1A; Q.VanMaldeghem 12P, 14R, 1A, 4S, 1 blocked shot; Buendorf 8P, 10R, 2A, 3S; C.VanMaldeghem 31P, 3R, 1A, 4S; Savannah Farr 7P, 7R, 1S, 1B; Chloe Stork 3P, 2R, 1A; Emelia Stadheim 2S.

The Panthers blasted visiting Bethlehem Academy 79-25 Friday in New Richland. It was 10-0 early and 44-16 at halftime.

"The team did a great job attacking the basket, and making the extra pass to their open teammate," said Peterson. "We at times had some sluggish moments on defense and we could have rebounded better. However, it was a great team win over a conference opponent. We're looking forward to playing Jackson County Central tomorrow in the Maple River Showcase."

Camryn VanMaldeghem had another big night, totaling 34 points, six rebounds, five steals, one assist and one blocked shot.

Others: Gabby Schlaak 7P, 3R, 1A; Boerner 6P, 2R, 1A, 1S;



INTENSITY — At left, the Panthers' Ezra Boerner (2) grabs a rebound against Bethlehem Academy. At right, Quinn VanMaldeghem (4) eyes the basket. The Panthers won, 79-25.

Q.VanMeldeghem 10P, 8R, 2A, 3S; Buendorf 10P, 3R, 3A; Farr 2P; Stork 5P, 1R, 1A; Julieann Wobbrock 2R, 1S; Stadheim 3P; Alayna Groskreutz 2R; Hadley Roeker 2P, 1S.

The Panthers defeated JCC Saturday 86-59. They led 47-26 at halftime.

"It's never easy to go back-to-back nights for games, let alone on a

Saturday," said Peterson. "The girls worked extremely hard; we hit the boards hard tonight, with Quinn pulling in 12, Ezra 10, and both Gabby and Camryn eight apiece. That is huge for how we run our offense. Getting second and third-chance shot opportunities is key for us. We attacked their zone well and made the extra pass to find our open shooters. Our defense found our



Photos by Jim Lutgens

groove tonight, and we were able to create some havoc, causing them to turn the ball over 18 times."

Camryn VanMaldeghem scored a season-high 38 points, Buendorf 17.

Individual totals: Schlaak 6P, 8R, 3A; Boerner 9P, 10R, 1S, 4A; Q.VanMaldeghem 13P, 12R, 8S, 5A; Buendorf 17P, 4R, 1A; Kenley Gehrke 1R; C.VanMaldeghem 38P, 8R, 7S, 4A; Farr 1R; Stork 3P, 1R,

1S, 3A, 1B.

After hosting Lanesboro Tuesday, the Panthers, 5-2 overall and 3-0 in the Gopher Conference, play Friday at JWP.

"We have a challenging week ahead," said Peterson.

The Panthers host Waseca Dec. 23 and close out the year at the LCWM Holiday Tournament Dec. 29-30.

Minnesota State University Mankato Fall 2025 graduates

Waseca
Caylie Blowers, BS, Nursing
Daniel Bomsta, BS, Open Studies, Cum Laude
Morgan Bruhn, MSW, Social Work, Magna Cum Laude
Joshua Dickinson, MS, Mechanical Engineering, Cum Laude
Charli Harguth, BS, Management
Tanika Johnson, BS, Management
Tyler Klinger, BSME, Mechanical Engineering, Magna Cum Laude
Kenya Moallin, BFA, Art, Summa Cum Laude; CERT, Museum Studies, Summa Cum Laude
Jadyn Nelson-Spies, MSW, Social Work, Cum Laude
Braden Patterson, BS, Accounting, Cum Laude
Joseph Pfeiffer, MAT, Education, Summa Cum Laude

Victoria Possin, BS, Applied Leadership, Magna Cum Laude
Mary Stangler, GC, Business Leadership
Kendra Youngberg, MS, Biology
New Richland
Brenlee Knudson, BS, Nursing
Jamie Mcshane, BFA, Art, Cum Laude
Janesville
Crystal Gallagher, BS
Mara Richardson, BS, Accounting, Summa Cum Laude
Waldorf
Vince Russell Herrera, BS, Computer Information Technology
Faith Miller, BS, Accounting, Summa Cum Laude
Hartland
Taylor Parpart, BS, RN Baccalaureate Completion, Summa Cum Laude

Steele County Free Fair applications

Applications for the recognition of 2026 Century Farms in Steele County are now available at the office of the Steele County Free Fair. Century Farms will be recognized during the Steele County Livestock Hall of Fame program on Tuesday, August 18th. Farms that qualify for the Century Farm recognition are those that are at least 100 years old in 2026 according to abstract of title, land patent, original deed, county land records, court file in registration proceedings or other authentic land records. The family must have owned the farm for 100 years or more. Ownership must be continuous. To obtain application forms online go to MNstatefair.org or SCFF.org. Deadline for applications must be in the office by, March 2nd 2026.

Students of the Month:
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Nadia
Kindergarten

Fionnagh
1st Grade

Penelope
2nd Grade

Fyhn
3rd Grade

Charlotte
3rd Grade

Gemma
1st Grade

Hotel from Page 1

He says he chose the American Hotel because it is in a small town where he learned officials are approachable and supportive, as opposed to those in larger cities where he has sometimes found them to be inflexible. It was also important to him that his new property not be associated with a franchise. He explains his experiences with Marriott had shown him that the franchise sometimes makes decisions based on

public image rather than on sound business practices. He offers the example of being told to replace carpeting only because of its color, even though the current floor covering was still attractive and had years of use left in it.

Now that it's renovated, the hotel has two suites available: one has a large whirlpool bath along with a king-size bed. The other is of larger size and has two queen beds. Also available are 21 standard-sized rooms with two queen beds; 18 rooms with one queen bed; and a few rooms with a single king-sized bed.

Because less travel takes place in the winter, Patel describes having lower rates at this time of year; all year long, though, he says his rates tend to be lower than those at the GrandStay just a few blocks to the north—mostly because the American Hotel has fewer amenities, perhaps most noticeably, no swimming pool or spa. All his rooms have televisions, but most do not have refrigerators. Microwave ovens are in the breakfast room in the lobby and throughout the hallway on the first floor. In-room microwaves are available on request.

Manager Kristi Lester lives in an apartment on site and staffs the front desk. She says thanks to short-term events such as weddings or important athletic competitions, the hotel sees occasional surges in wintertime use, but is seldom very full this time of year.

Patel says he makes use of the winter lull to give back to the community by taking in "long" term tenants—people who stay anywhere from a week to a month at reduced rates. The individuals typically cannot be in their homes or apartments due to some sort of emergency: The problem might be frozen pipes, lack of heat, or some other circumstance that would likely otherwise leave people homeless. When a wall collapsed in a Waseca apartment building earlier this year, Patel says his hotel found room for some of those tenants.

Many hotels, he goes on to say, do not take emergency stays because tenants must usually bring their pets, if they have them, and because of the smell of smoke.

He explains smoking is not allowed in any room in his hotel, but when smokers "move in," they bring their clothing and some possessions with them that carry a strong smell which then permeates the space.

"And of course people who don't smoke find that unpleasant," Patel goes on to say, "and it can affect the reputation of the hotel."

He is willing to provide short-term housing, he says, mostly because it helps the community. He says he hopes those who come to stay recognize the circumstance and do whatever they can to preserve the integrity of his newly refurbished rooms. Long-term stays will not be available in the warmer months of the year, Patel points out, because the



Mike Patel

business focus of the hotel is to accommodate people staying a few nights at a time.

Now approaching the end of his first year as owner, Patel says he believes he made a good choice when he acquired Waseca's American Hotel. He is pleased with the way the first year went, and hopes for even better satisfaction in the second year, with remodeling and refurbishing complete and all rooms available throughout the busy season.

When the weather grows warmer, he is still looking at refurbishing the asphalt out front and making the painted parking lines more visible. He also plans to acquire a new, more attention-catching sign.

In the meantime, he invites anyone interested to come to the hotel for a visit and a look at some of the rooms. He also hopes people will speak up right away if there are any statements circulating about problems or flaws.

"If there is something wrong, I want to fix it as quickly as possible," he says. "We want people to feel comfortable and welcome here."

"My goal is, if people are standing at our counter, they will go ahead and check in for a stay."

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7 PEARL HARBOR DAY	8 7pm Post & AUX & Meeting	9 Burger night 5-7pm	10 6pm BAR BINGO	11 7pm HALL BINGO	12 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	13
14 VFW BREAKFAST CHEER LEADERS 8am to NOON Your	15	16 Burger night 5-7pm	17 6pm BAR BINGO	18 7pm HALL BINGO	19 WALLEYE OR SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 TO 7pm	20 TOM & JERRY NIGHT 4PM TO 7PM
21	22	23 Burger night 5-7pm	24 CLOSED	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS CLOSED	26 MEAT RAFFLE 5:30pm HORSE races 6:30pm	27
28	29	30 Burger night 5-7pm	31 6pm BAR BINGO			

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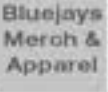
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BIG HEARTS - First responders from New Richland, Waseca, and the county sheriff's department participated in "Shop with a Hero," a national program which pairs kids nominated by their school counselors or staff with emergency medical responders and law enforcement officers. Children are given a gift card by the program to purchase gifts for themselves and their families, and then have the assistance of a "hero" as they shop.

Steele County decides to leave MNPrairie agreement

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

An agreement reached between Steele, Waseca and Dodge counties includes terms under which Steele County can withdraw from the joint powers agreement regarding the delivery of social services through an agency called Minnesota Alliance of Prairie Counties (MNPrairie). The Alliance was first formed in 2014.

In March, Steele County commissioners voted to terminate the agency, an action

which could not be taken without the cooperation of at least one of the other member counties.

Discussion among Waseca county board members over the intervening time indicated both Waseca and Dodge counties find MNPrairie an effective way to share resources, and neither has a desire to see the agency dissolved. However, county administrator Michael Johnson observed during the Dec. 2 meeting of the Waseca County board, it seemed beneficial to allow Steele County to remove itself as expediently as possible.

"It was unsustainable to draw it out," Johnson stated. "It was not a good working environment."

Among the numerous complicating factors is that MNPrairie manages funds which are provided by all three counties. Its 180 or so staff members each work out of any of three buildings located in the respective counties, and interact with clients in any of the three.

Under the newly reached agreement, Steele County will remain a member of MNPrairie through Dec. 31, 2026. Until then, it will continue to have representation

on the MNPrairie board and will retain its voting rights; the board has six members, two of whom are from Steele County. In June of 2026, Steele County will receive just over \$3 million, its portion of MNPrairie's equity fund balance. Another \$950,000 will be delivered in 2027. The agreement states that receipt of the money in 2027 serves as Steele County's acknowledgement it has "no further right to the MNPrairie fund balance" after Dec. 31, 2026.

The agreement also stipulates that desks and chairs purchased by MNPrairie but lo-

cated in Steele County will remain with Steele County, while computers, monitors and electronic equipment will be removed for use in Waseca and Dodge County facilities.

Beyond that, the agreement says the separation process will be overseen by the Steele County administrator and MNPrairie's executive director, with final approval made by the respective county boards and the MNPrairie board; all parties agree to act "in good faith" throughout the process.

■ Power

from Page 6

southeast corner."

The project, named "PowerOn Midwest" must receive approval from the PUC first for a "certificate of need" and then for a proposed route. Ellis and Frank expect open houses regarding a proposed route will begin in the summer of 2026, with final route approval given in the summer of 2028.

The PowerOn Midwest proposal is that the line would be capable of carrying 756 kV, calling for steel towers up to 175 feet tall placed up to 1,300 feet apart—which means fewer than 6 structures in every mile of line. In response to a question from commissioner Doug Christopherson, whose district includes the county's southeast region, Ellis stated that even though rights of way for the towers are 250 feet, it is typical for farmers to be able to work

land almost right up to the structures. When it comes to acquiring land, he said "It is always our goal to get voluntary participation."

The two spokespersons also explained the 756 kV line would be part of a massive grid. In comparison to more local lines, its capacity would be like "an interstate highway" in contrast to a two-lane road. They also explained that increasing the grid would expand the amount of power available in a five-state region, since it would allow power companies to switch seamlessly among the many types of power feeding into it.

"Electricity can't be stored," explained Frank. "So an individual area might be using power produced by a local wind farm or solar garden during one hour, then, with a change in the weather, might be accessing energy supplied by a nuclear power plant as far away as Manitoba or Michigan. "Consistency is built on diversity," he said.

■ Center

from Page 1

moved to the county level by 2022. Knowing that the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) "looks favorably" on projects which help with workforce training and retention, county planners began looking for a way to satisfy local and regional needs that would receive positive attention in the competitive federal grant process.

Among the appealing aspects which helped the project receive funding, he summarizes, are that it is designed to meet a range of needs, makes use of an existing flexible space, and is centrally located among numerous regional cities. Johnson and Wilson name a long list of agencies, organizations and businesses that have expressed an interest—and even excitement—about a dedicated space that can be booked both during and outside of typical business operation hours. When the grant was submitted in fall 2024, Johnson mentions, it was accompanied by many letters of support from area businesses and organizations ex-

pressing a need for a setting where both hands-on and classroom-type learning could take place.

Wilson suggests the space will also be valuable for activities and events meant to help area youth recognize they can find fulfilling employment and careers at local businesses and organizations, rather than focusing their plans for the future elsewhere.

As work on the center moves forward, Johnson says the plan is to accommodate as many ways as possible the facility can meet local and regional needs, get it built, and then hand over its day-to-day operations and scheduling to an agency yet to be determined.

"It doesn't matter whose name is on the door," says Johnson, suggesting area colleges are likely candidates. "What matters is that the space will be here and ready for use by our constituents. Local and regional needs will be met and we'll be helping support local economies and businesses.

"The prospects are truly exciting."

"If you are a local or regional business and you can see a way this training center will be useful to you," comments Wilson, "we want to hear from you."



WORKING TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT - From left: Waseca County facilities management director Brian Tomford, county administrator Michael Johnson and planning and zoning administrator Tina Wilson in the 10,000 square foot space which will become a regional workforce development center.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

■ Council

from Page 3

full-time, basically the biggest benefits would be to have a person in that chair five days a week. The other benefit would be, the regular planning and zoning duties that everybody else has been picking up and covering can be done by her."

Maas inquired about the small budget impact and Arnoldt explained that by having Kratz for an extra two days instead of three, the budget would increase by \$5,000 a year.

Council member Maas expressed concerns that Kratz might become less effective as the city planner if she were no longer connected with the larger resources of the CEDA organization, and so it might be better to leave her in the

position as a consultant.

"As some of you might remember, we weren't super excited with some of our CEDA representatives to start with," Arnoldt stated. "Now there's no guarantee that even if we renew with CEDA, that Katelynne's the one that stays here."

As an option, Rogers said the city could contract three or four days a week if anybody still wanted to maintain the CEDA resource.

If the position didn't work out for any reason, Arnoldt expressed confidence that CEDA would still contract with Janesville but also made his wariness known based on past collaboration.

"Even if we don't renew their contract, we could sign a new contract with them," Arnoldt said.

Since the council listed it as part of the same resolution, the council approved the delegation of general manager duties to Jakob Lehrke

since the city also was impressed with Lerke's handling of budgets. The council also believed, since Kevin Cumberland is still fairly new to budgets, it would be of a help to him. While Lerke would still assist Cumberland due to the character he's shown, Arnoldt said he thought Lerke should get compensated for his time.

The council voted to terminate the city's contract with CEDA. In the morning, Rogers said, he would call and inform CEDA of the city's official decision.

In other matters, the council approved putting up barricades for some work to be done along former Highway 14 as the county received some federal money to improve the shoulders on the road. The council determined no set time frame.

The council approved a request to place a fire pit at the bottom of the sledding hill near the city park.

The decision was made to have city hall closed all day both Christmas Eve and Christmas day.

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