



■ Inside:

- 2 - Progress Report
- 3 - Infamous
- 4 - New at TEAM
- 5-11 - Fall Sports
- 14 - Obituaries
- 16 - Sacred Heart
- 17 - Classifieds
- 18 - Nightmare

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2022-2023
FALL SPORTS



PREVIEW



Hunter Frank

Benefit set for Sept. 10

By **TRISTAN JENSEN**
Staff Writer

Hunter Alexander Frank, born in 2000, enlisted in the Navy immediately after his graduation from Owatonna High School in 2018 as an Aircrewman with the VP-26 Tritons. He was deployed to El Salvador, where he was killed in the line of duty on October 17, 2020. September 10, his brother, Brandon Flores, and sister-in-law, Maggi Flores, are hosting a benefit for Wounded Warriors Family Support at the Waseca American Legion in Frank's memory.

"He was pretty big into 4H. Pretty much anything outdoor recreational was, like, his life. He ran a demolition derby one year," Brandon said about his brother. "Hunter was a really quiet and reserved kid, but once you got him going he was really goofy," Maggi added. "Him and I got into a cupcake fight at his graduation party." The couple described Frank as loving, protective, and stubborn. In Brandon's words, "When he made up his mind, he made up his mind." Both Brandon and Maggi also note that Frank had a very close relationship with his younger sister, Indya Frank, and was extremely protective of her. He spent a lot of time at their grandparents' farm and loved his dog, Raven. "He was a good kid. Sucked at beer pong though. He didn't even drink or anything," Maggi said. "He just wasn't very coordinated," Brandon added, laughing.

Wounded Warriors Family Support, the charity which will receive the funds raised, is a non-profit which provides caregiver respite, veteran training, and mobility assistance, sends veteran families on retreats, and more. When Brandon decided he wanted to host a benefit to honor and remember his brother, Maggi immediately researched a long list of possible charities they could donate to. One of the main resources the couple used as they processed that list was the website Charity Navigator, which allows potential donors to see what a charity does with the money it receives. In addition to the stellar rating that WWFS maintains on the site, the organization appealed to Flores because it serves the families of wounded, injured, and killed veterans in addition to the veterans themselves. After the loss of his brother, that meant a lot to Bran-

Benefit continued on 12

A word from
The Word



Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Education in Waseca County

Waseca, JWP, NRHEG, WEM superintendents discuss upcoming year

By **DEB BENTLY**
Staff Writer

"It's okay to be where we are," says Waseca Superintendent of Schools Eric Hudspith. "It's just not okay to stay here."

Hudspith and the superintendents of the three other public school districts covering Waseca County have many observations about the hoped-for tipping point that the 2022-23 school year represents. "We are excited to get back to what we all regard as a more 'regular' year," agrees Ryan Jensen of Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (WEM) schools.

Over the course of the past few years, though, all four superintend-

ents agree that the meaning of "normal" has been in transition.

"We've learned that we don't necessarily want to continue with the status quo, even if it was very good," comments New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) superintendent Michael Meihak.

"We want to take what worked well before the pandemic, look at what worked well during it, and then mesh them together," observes Jer-



Hudspith

"The simple truth is, our job is to recognize where our students are and get them where they need to go."

— Superintendent Eric Hudspith

emy Erler of Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP).

"To say the kids are 'behind' is to compare them to some imaginary, indefinable benchmark," says Hudspith. "The simple truth is, our job is to recognize where our students are and get them where they need to go."

It's well known, of course, that student learning was disrupted during the pandemic, reducing learner opportunities for academic and social growth. All four superintendents

Education continued on 3

Back to Waldorf Celebration, all school reunion

By **MICHAEL ROY**
Publisher

Waldorf Days was more than just another festival in another small town. It was a chance for everyone in attendance to learn the rich history of the town and its school during the last weekend of August.

To kick off the festivities, the Waldorf Fire Hall hosted a burger and sweet corn feed with ice cream provided by Waseca's Mis Tres Flores the evening of Friday, August 26. The night ended with a Fireman's Dance featuring the band Red Dirt Road.

Saturday was the busiest day of the weekend, with activities both for those who wanted to move and mingle, and those who wanted to be more relaxed. The city's community center featured diverse offerings ranging from a silent auction, a church bake sale, bingo, and coffee and donuts.

Exhibits at the school were an important element of the celebration. Area resident Phil Marquardt had his train collection on display in the former computer classroom.

"I first played with trains back in 1953," he recalled. "My father bought them; my siblings and I were fascinated by them. I forgot all about them when I was in the service. But I found these sets and my love was rekindled."

Another exhibit at the school was a miniature model of Dale Groskreutz's barn. Interesting facts and history were also shared, including costs of materials back when the original structure was built.

Groskreutz, who crafted the model, stated that he was looking for a hobby after he retired. "I thought this would be a great project for me," he observed. "I used wood from the



LOCAL DIGNITARIES — A representative from Julie Rosen's office with Mayor Rob Wilkening during the Waldorf Days parade. Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

barn itself to recreate it to scale."

In the old cafeteria room of the school was a mini-museum dubbed "A Touch of Waldorf History." The display featured documents ranging from newspaper clippings to pictures of former buildings. A dedicated part of the exhibit was for the Plum Valley Creamery, which was named for the original settlement that later became modern-day Waldorf.

"People don't really understand how much history there actually is to uncover in Waldorf," said Grand Marshal Judy Joecks. "It is baffling how much there is, especially in this small town."

Information about area history and past Waldorf Days celebrations was shared in binders, some of them so full of pictures, briefs, and stories that they were difficult to close.

A major element of this year's Waldorf Days was an all-school re-

"This town has potential. I don't want to see it forgotten."

— Waldorf Mayor Rob Wilkening

union held Saturday afternoon in the now-repurposed school building. The Waldorf-Pemberton Colts mascot was featured on commemorative t-shirts sold throughout the weekend.

The emcee of the all-school reunion was Waldorf Class of 1954 graduate Arlan Burmeister. He shared memories and bits of humor as he introduced various individuals who stepped forward to share their experiences.

The first speaker of the night was Fauniece Witt, an English teacher at Waldorf-Pemberton from 1963 to

the school's closure in 1991. Witt later taught at JWP until her retirement in 2003.

She spoke about the many changes which occurred in her 40 years of teaching. She remembered when the teachers received brochures in the mailbox about new technology in the 1980s called "computers."

"We taught the students how to use computers without having any training with them," she claimed.

Waldorf continued on 13

From the Navy to the principal's office

By **JONAH STAFFORD**
Staff Writer

Many renovations are underway at Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP) High School as new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems are being installed, but that is far from the only change students can anticipate as they return this fall.

Many staff members for the 2022-2023 school year are new hires, including Grade 7-12 Principal Jake Hager, who hopes to foster a family-like school community as he enters this role.



Hager

After serving in the United States Navy, Hager decided to study education at age 22 and later graduated with a bachelor's degree from Winona State University.

His first position in education was as a social studies teacher at the Faribault Alternative Learning Center (ALC). Before becoming JWP's principal, Hager had spent 3 years as the coordinator at Waseca's ALC.

"I've truly loved everywhere I've been," said Hager, who has decorated his JWP office with student artwork given to him while in Waseca and Faribault.

While Hager looks forward to the start of the school year, he said that readjusting from a pandemic that created "chaos for students and families" will be challenging.

He notes that many high school students today are two years behind both academically and in terms of social and emotional learning; he is devising plans to address those issues as principal.

"To build the best academic program it all starts at relationships with students, staff, and families," said Hager.

As he has prepared plans for the upcoming school year, Hager says he has focused on connecting with teachers and other staff, especially those who are newly hired.

He regards this as crucial because "as a principal you're really working with everybody."

Though he has never before had a job in Janesville, Hager is familiar with the town, with his favorite spots being Wiste's Meat Market and the Prairie Ridge Golf Course.

One goal Hager has for the upcoming school year is to get on a first-name basis with every

Hager continued on 3

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My Determination: "To die is nothing; but it is terrible not to live."—Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

With that said, be sure to stay tuned for more local coverage from Waseca's locally owned, hometown newspaper. Thank you for being part of the adventure.

Managers



Varsity football managers, from left, Bianca Cavazos, Meraina Hiller, and Melanie Quintero delivered football poster schedules last week. In addition to acting as delivery persons, the girls said their roles include loading equipment for away games, field preparations and “making sure everything is there.” The girls were in agreement that their favorite part of the job, however, was driving the golf card. As for the pitfalls of their job, “C-Squad is the worst,” Cavazos said. “And us getting sprayed with the waterbottles.” Cavazo and Quintero, both juniors at Waseca High School, are each in their second year as managers; Hiller, a freshman, is in her first year. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Wielding weird words in Waseca

By MELISSA DUNN
Contributing Writer

Many Waseca High School students who have attended at least one of Mr. Marc Engesether’s language arts courses will agree that he is one of their favorite teachers. Mr. E, as they affectionately refer to him, has been at WJSH since 1999 and teaches sophomore language arts and literature, foundations of literature for grades 11 and 12, advanced placement (AP) English for juniors, and AP English for seniors.

Language arts classes are full of heavy material. They can quickly become mundane and colorless, but Mr. E definitely has a distinctive set of skills to keep his students engaged and learning. These tend to include finding ways to connect with each student, discussing various music concerts he’s attended (there’ve been a lot!), and sprinkling random humorous comments in his lectures. In fact, dropping unexpected statements throughout his class periods is a quirk one class in particular appreciated so much, five students collected those they regarded as the best over their two years and published the final list in a hardcover book. The five presented a copy to Mr. Engesether during the summer after their graduation. Making the cut for October 15 of 2018: “There’s a message on my phone, but I can’t remember my password. There’s been a message on there for three years. I hope it wasn’t important.” Or while discussing vocabulary: “Ambiguous, that’s like a frog. No, that’s amphibious. ‘Ambiguous’ is a really big frog.” The 2018 Google document was kept current through February of 2022. “I’m so proud of them!” says one of the founding students referring to the subsequent classes.

Marc Engesether claims it’s important to find a way to relate to each of his students, especially those who don’t care for English or find it difficult. He feels he can empathize with those students because he was once one of them. When he was in high school, he felt many of his teachers didn’t make a connection with him. Be-



BOOK OF WIT — 2018 students preserved some of Waseca English teacher Marc Engesether’s witty statements by publishing a hardcover book.

“Ambiguous, that’s like a big frog. No, that’s amphibious. ‘Ambiguous’ is a really big frog.”
— Waseca English teacher Marc Engesether

cause of that, he says he likes to teach in ways he feels his former teachers did not.

The students say Mr. E provides an environment that allows expression and growth, not only in language arts but for them as people. Those who are college-bound say they feel well prepared to handle their advanced courses. One former student of Mr. E’s, now a college senior, says she still references the comments he made on her old assignments while writing her papers. “What would Mr. E think about this sentence? What would he tell me?” She feels her papers are smoother and her grades are higher due to Mr. E’s teaching.

In their messages at the back of their book, the students of the class of 2019 repeatedly express their gratitude for the amount of time, effort, and passion Engesether put into his classes, their aspirations to attend at least as many concerts as he has (if not more), and to spread the “Engesetherian” way of writing and teaching— “What’s a hypophora? It’s one less than a hypofivea” (March 22, 2019).

People commonly use the phrase “you had to be there,” to appreciate the meaning and humor of Engesether’s statements. It seems that “being there” is both a privilege and a pleasure.

cilitate a learning environment at JWP where students graduate well-equipped to take on the challenges of adulthood.

“It’s not just a school, it’s truly a family between staff, families, and the whole community,” said Hager.

Hager

from Page 1

single JWP student. By promoting unity and strong relationships, Hager hopes to fa-

Meet your neighbor, Amelia

Name: Amelia Roessler

Town: Waseca

Age: 19

Family: Parents Shane and Matt Roessler, sister Elizabeth

Occupation: Reporter for Waseca County Pioneer and NRHEG Star Eagle, and Bartender at Our Place on Third

Hobbies: Sports, reading, and writing

My dream vacation would be: Alaska

The best thing about small town living is: Everyone is very kind and willing to help

Last Good Book I Read: First book of the Outlander series

Favorite TV show: *New Girl*

Favorite Food: Goulash

All Time Favorite Movie: either *The Princess Bride* or *Moonstruck*

Favorite Sports Team: Minnesota Gophers

My favorite activities when I was growing up: When my dad would pull my sister and me on a sled behind the four-wheeler during the winter.

My biggest pet peeve: Arrogance

The best advice I’ve ever received: Don’t settle

If I could have lunch with any one person, living or dead: My grandfather who passed away in 2013

Something about me that would surprise people: I may come off as shy, but I’m actually pretty outgoing



Neighbor Amelia applied to the Star Eagle this spring after one of her former coaches, Abby Bloomquist, recommended she do so. The Star Eagle had contacted area coaches for a spring sports preview saying, “We’d really like to start a Waseca newspaper. If you know anyone interested in writing...”

Cameras installed on bus stop arms

Intention to increase student safety

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Staff Writer

Thanks to a grant given by the state of Minnesota to Palmer Bus Service, two more Waseca Palmer buses will have cameras installed in the stop arms to catch footage of violators who illegally pass stopped buses. The stop arm cameras were put in as an effort to catch people who violate the law which states that if a school bus is stopped with its stop-signal arm extended, approaching vehicles must come to a stop at least 20 feet away from the bus and are not allowed to move again until the signal arm is retracted and the lights are no longer flashing.

Because the cameras are activated whenever the vehicle engine is running and because they have very high resolution, Palmer Bus Service is able to capture pictures and footage of cars which violate this law. Law enforcement officers can use the evidence to ticket offending drivers.

As manager of the Waseca branch of Palmer Bus Service, Audra Vereoven knows the dangers of these violations, which happen around two or three times a week. Vereoven even explained that one time she had three cars violate during one stop, with people thinking that the yellow flashing lights on a bus are similar to the yellow lights of a stop light. As those who have had to pay the \$500 minimum fine of the violation probably know, such is definitely not the case.

Vereoven, who has been a bus driver for four years and a manager since February, reiterates that the only time drivers can legally pass by a stopped bus with an extended arm and flashing lights is if there is a divided highway, and the bus is on the other side of the highway.

Along with increasing traffic violations, bus companies everywhere are struggling to find drivers, and Waseca understands the struggle as well. The company has already had to reduce the number of bus routes for Waseca students down from seven to five, and is still searching



Audra Vereoven has been a bus driver at Palmer Bus Service for four years and a manager of the company’s Waseca branch since February. Pioneer photo by Amelia Roessler

for drivers. Both Vereoven and the company mechanic have taken on driving duties while Vereoven continues searching for up to four more drivers.

Vereoven wants people to keep open minds as they consider the demands of the job. She points out that the work hours could align well for parents. As a previous driver and stay at home parent herself, Vereoven took her own children on her bus route, having them ride in the seat

behind her while she drove the bus. The connection with students is incredible, Vereoven explained, as the bus driver is the first and last person children see each school day; interactions can easily make or break either the students’ or the driver’s day. Most of the time, though, it makes it, as many bus drivers share wholesome stories of their adventures, and students leave with memories of the bus and their beloved driver.

Education

from Page 1

acknowledge that the job ahead of the education system includes many challenges. One that has received widespread attention is that, during the pandemic learners needed more support from their homes and families than in the past. Some students were in a position to receive reliable assistance while others became caregivers. Some were given consistent meals and a suitable workspace, others struggled to acquire either one. In short, those who were already socially or economically disadvantaged were limited in their opportunities for advancement compared to their peers, creating an increasing range of maturity levels even among students of the same chronological age.

Still, the pressures and shifts of the past few years have provided some “silver linings.”

NRHEG’s Meihak suggests that after hybrid and distance learning, after the cancellation of school activities and events, and after the temporary absence of the many services schools provide, there is a renewed appreciation that “Maybe school’s not that bad after all.”

JWP’s Erler concurs: “It doesn’t matter who, we’re seeing that the contributions of people in positions across the district are being recognized.

“Folks are acknowledging the important role we play in kids’ lives.”

This heightened appreciation has contributed to a sense of anticipation. “Rather than spending our time worrying when the next shoe is going to drop,” observes Waseca’s Hudspith, “we can apply our energy to doing what needs to be done.”

In short, from the perspectives of

families, students, support staff and teachers, after the many disruptions which have occurred over the past three years, a “normal” year will be greeted as something downright exceptional.

As teachers return to their classrooms this fall, the four superintendents note they are doing so with both renewed energy and enhanced skills.

“A sort of ‘unintended consequence’ of the pandemic is that we became more capable in our use of technology,” observes WEM’s Jensen. “System-wide, people have become more comfortable using it.”

Even those teachers who were previously hesitant to use virtual meetings and systems for delivering online instruction have now begun incorporating those features into their everyday teaching; others who were already using them have become more proficient.

All four superintendents noted this same circumstance. “Thanks to the pressures and demands of the past few years,” says Hudspith, “technology has become more of what it was designed to be, a tool to facilitate instruction rather than the somewhat abstract concept it might have been before.”

All parties have also proven their resilience, notes NRHEG’s Meihak. “Prior to the pandemic, if I had told my staff ‘I’m giving you two weeks to design an online curriculum. Ready? Go!’ it’s hard to imagine the reaction I would have gotten. But in the heat of the moment when their students needed it, staff members found the necessary resources and support, and they did it.”

“I think we all, students and staff, came to realize we are even more resilient than we may once have thought,” observes JWP’s Erler.

That resilience is likely to come into play again as area schools place more priority on individualizing instruction. “The individual differences among our students have been made

“We’ve come through a tough time, and we’ve learned from it.”
— JWP Superintendent Jeremy Erler

even more obvious to us,” observes Meihak. “We’re going to respond to that.”

“We are going to continue strengthening our ability to meet our students where they are and then help them move forward,” says Hudspith, suggesting that many of the tools acquired during the pandemic should be helpful in the process.

Another priority moving forward, according to Hudspith, will be increased communication with families and the community. Noting the results of a statewide survey which indicate that communities are less connected to their schools now than they have been in the past, Hudspith admits, “There were times when we sort of took it for granted that people knew about our plans or initiatives; it turns out, though, that they didn’t always know.

“We want to do something about that.”

A number of area superintendents note that they have been making a priority of increasing public contact, including revitalizing their websites. Now that public interaction is becoming more acceptable, in-person visits are also increasing. NRHEG held a community-wide open house last spring to allow area residents to see some of the projects that had been occurring, and has scheduled another open house prior to Labor Day. JWP and WEM are both just finishing construction projects which they anticipate will heighten community interest.

Hudspith mentions plans for a newsletter and increased collaboration with area newspapers.

As they consider the state of public education for Waseca County’s



Jensen



Meihak



Erler

students, area superintendents express optimism that the lessons and tools generated by and because of the pandemic will be beneficial. They want their communities to know everything possible is being done to assure the safety, well-being and academic advancement of their students.

“We’ve come through a tough time, and we’ve learned from it,” says JWP’s Erler. “We’re in an excellent position to move forward.”

“It’s impossible to add hours to the day,” observes NRHEG’s Meihak. “But we have heightened awareness of the need to get our students involved and engaged. We’re making that a priority on a district-wide level.”

“The world is ever changing,” says Hudspith. “We want our stakeholders to know we’re ready to change as we need to. We stand ready to follow through on our vision of empowering our learners to thrive. We have a plan to move forward.

“Our schools are in growth mode, not survival mode.”



Elizabeth Wellmann

New at TEAM Academy

Wellmann and Jones to teach kindergarten, music

By **TRISTAN JENSEN**
Staff Writer

TEAM Academy is a Waseca Charter School which began in 2003 by offering kindergarten and fourth-grade classes alongside the public middle school in the Central Building. Two more grades were added each consecutive year to continue serving the current students while welcoming more, until the school became a K-6 institution. One of the school’s stated priorities is to teach students responsibility, kindness, and community in addition to academic subjects. TEAM Academy intentionally stays small, offering just one classroom per grade level, with a maximum class size of 25 students. For the 2022-23 school year, enrollment is about 100 students.

Two new teachers, Elizabeth Wellmann and Taylor Jones are beginning with TEAM Academy this school year. Wellmann will be teaching kindergarten while Jones will be teaching music. In preparation for the first day of school, a Meet Your Teacher event was hosted on Tuesday, August 30, and all the school’s teachers spent a week in “boot camp” attending workshops and preparing their lessons and spaces.

During the first week of school, TEAM Academy’s staff and students will be participating in a Walk-a-Thon to raise money for new recess and physical education equipment. Organizing and supervising the event are Jalea Priebe, the physical teacher at TEAM Academy, and Jenna Auen, the school’s social worker and a member of the social wellness committee. Student participants will be seeking pledges from family and community members as they prepare for a one-hour walk the afternoon of Friday, September 9. For every five dollars they raise, they’ll receive an entry into a drawing for a brand-new bike. All staff will also participate, to support the students and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

Taylor Jones grew up and graduated high school in Reedsburg, WI and attended the University of Wisconsin-Superior for a BA in Vocal Music Performance. She enjoys hiking, reading, singing, and thrifting for clothes. She dreams of traveling to Greece. She found TEAM Academy while looking to move to the area to be closer to some of her family members, and says she didn’t expect to hear back but is happy and grateful for the chance she’s been given to start her official teaching career. She’s currently living in LeSueur with her dad and grandmother. Back in Wisconsin she has an older sister, two nephews, and a niece. Since graduating from college, she’s offered private voice lessons; for the last two summers she’s directed a children’s summer theatre program she “inherited” in her hometown.

Working with students through this program led Jones to an epiph-

any. “I started out of obligation, but I quickly fell in love and decided to stick with it because there is no better feeling than really connecting with and being there for students,” she said. Her teaching style is focused on kindness, respect, patience and communication. She wants her students to feel safe and comfortable coming to her with the highs and lows of their lives. “I hope every student comes to school and is authentically themselves. That is the greatest piece of advice I have. People are inherently fun and silly and kind, and if we all embrace that, we can make some really great art and have some really fun times. Music is such a healing thing, and I want everyone to get as much from my classroom as they can.”

Elizabeth Wellmann is originally from Fargo, North Dakota, graduated from high school in St. Clair, Minnesota, and currently lives in Mankato. After high school she attended North Dakota State University in Fargo, and graduated with a degree in English Education with endorsements in English Language Learner Education and Middle Education. Wellmann’s mother Wendy teaches at St. Clair High School; her father John is superintendent of the ADM plant in Mankato. Wellmann started her teaching career at Springfield High School teaching eighth- and tenth-graders, co-directing drama, running the yearbook, and co-coaching the speech team. For the past eighteen months, she’s had a change of pace working as a behavioral therapist at Caravel Autism Health in Mankato. She’ll be teaching kindergarten at TEAM Academy, which is quite the change from her previous teaching jobs. She said that her work at Caravel, where the kids she worked with were two to seven years old, showed her how enjoyable working with younger children can be. When she was looking to get back into education, the chance to interview for a kindergarten position was irresistible. Her classroom has a plant theme, a callback to the origin of the word “kindergarten,” which loosely translates to “child garden” and was coined by Friedrich Froebel because he wanted early childhood education to help cultivate children and help them grow as individuals and community members. Wellmann says she has an interactive, project-focused teaching style that aims to help children take ownership of their education as they learn how to be students and learners. “For students and parents, know that it’s okay to be nervous about what the school year will bring. Everyone gets a little nervous about new beginnings, some of us are just better at hiding it. But don’t get caught up in all the anxiety and forget to enjoy the moments as they’re happening. Life happens fast and if you get caught up with the little things, you might miss the big, magic moments.

Love for family, teaching and English literature

Tracy Kopetzki returns for year 23 as educator

By **AMELIA ROESSLER**
Staff Writer

In one of the glass-walled classrooms in the English wing of the Waseca High School it is possible to find the human equivalent to small town Minnesota. Kind, loyal, compassionate, funny. Having grown up in one of the closest communities in Minnesota (Nassau, population 72) and having taught in one for about 23 years, Tracy Kopetzki knows the close-knit atmosphere and lifestyle probably better than most.

Living in such a small town, Kopetzki learned to fill many roles and be involved in many things. In high school, she was in band and choir in junior high before focusing on academically demanding classes meant to improve her college experience. That focus left little room in her schedule for music. She played volleyball, competed in cheer, and ran track on the same team as a real life Olympian.

Kopetzki was also in a group called the Future Leaders of America (FLA) in high school, which is kind of like the FFA program now. Through that, she went to a camp every summer on the campus of the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University. Her time there helped her decide that’s where she wanted to attend college to pursue a career in teaching.

“I knew from [when I was] really, really little,” Kopetzki explains, describing how she used to play school in the family basement with her two younger sisters, using an old chalkboard and some cast-off desks. She says she still loves being a teacher, even though, “it’s more work now than when I was down in the basement.”

Among other things, Kopetzki credits her interest in the profession to her second-grade teacher, whom she describes as having been tiny, having hair that fell down to her ankles and was usually kept tied in a bun, and who ran marathons. This

“They’re not just students, they’re our kids.”
— **Waseca English teacher Tracy Kopetzki**

second-grade teacher was unlike any other, and would play songs on the piano as her students started the day. Kopetzki still remembers “Found a Peanut” and “On Top of Spaghetti” and has taught them to her own children, enjoying the fond memories of learning them as a child.

It wasn’t until middle school that Kopetzki fell in love with reading and literature. Her teacher at the time was also the librarian at the school. As Kopetzki puts it in a Beauty and the Beast manner, reading “was our only escape from that little tiny town. It’s the thing that made you want to go see the world and go explore.”

During college, Kopetzki studied abroad in Ireland. The summer before that, she had traveled to Europe and stayed with a foreign exchange student, visiting a number of countries on the continent.

Kopetzki graduated college and found a job as a long-term substitute in Malacca, Minnesota, teaching ninth- and tenth-graders. When her boyfriend (now husband) told her that three positions were opening up in Waseca where he was already working as a band director, she wasted no time applying. “I was lucky enough to get one of those positions and I’ve been here ever since. This is year 23— I think that sounds right,” Kopetzki laughs.

Kopetzki reveals that when she first began in Waseca, students could choose from a wider array of English electives. One of her favorites was Mythology, which she very much enjoyed teaching. Over time, the state began demanding certain requirements and standards, and classes were whittled down to what there are now—a set of required courses which everyone has to take. This reduction

also included losing the student newspaper, which had been offered through the business department.

At this time, Kopetzki teaches all of the ninth graders, although she says her husband Craig jokes that “one day he can retire because I’m going to be a famous author...and then he realizes that I don’t actually aspire to do that.”

Although book signings may not be part of Kopetzki’s future, she did write some poetry in college. In fact, “I restarted a literary magazine on campus,” Kopetzki said. “It was something that had been defunct for about 20 years.” Kopetzki did some writing for the magazine, but was mostly the editor. Which is what she still does now as a teacher, editing student essays all the time.

“I enjoy reading student work,” Kopetzki explains, “I’m finding that it’s harder and harder to find time to do so. To be honest, the technology slows me down.” Clicks and more clicks to get to each student’s paper or essay become time-consuming, she says, when there are 126 essays to read. Kopetzki says that students are used to written comments, but verbal feedback in the moment is much more valuable.

Offering feedback and interacting with her students in general were things that Kopetzki says she missed greatly during the pandemic “shutdown.” While some teachers chose to work from home, Kopetzki went to school every day. “The empty building was just— it crushed my soul,” Kopetzki said.

Working behind a screen, the integrity and level of expectations went down for the students, there were no “ah ha” moments for the teachers to witness, there were no students to in-



Tracy Kopetzki

teract with. Kopetzki had no choice but to sit at her desk and talk to her students virtually when what she really wanted was to be up and moving and interacting with everyone. “They’re not just students, they’re our kids,” Kopetzki says, mentioning how many parent-teacher conferences she’s had in a Wal-mart aisle.

Besides being a teacher at the school, Kopetzki has worn many different “hats.” When she first started in Waseca, she was part of the marching band staff as a woodwind instructor; now she is part of the band boosters. Kopetzki has been an eighth-grade volleyball coach, a speech team coach, and has served other roles as well. Every year, Kopetzki still plays piano for students at solo/ensemble contests for band and choir, running from room to room on contest night.

Outside of school, Kopetzki regularly serves as an accompanist at Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Most importantly, Kopetzki is a parent. “It’s really hard to separate the hats,” she says, but “I really enjoy getting to watch my kids go through school.” As her oldest child graduates next year, and her youngest child will be in her class this fall, Kopetzki laughed saying it is her God-given right as a parent to embarrass her kids in school.

Having come from tiny Nassau to Waseca, Kopetzki understands the importance of small towns and communities. Now that there are students back in the building and classrooms, Kopetzki is excited to be back as well.

Zidlicky joins NRHEG as new band director

By **MELISSA DUNN**
Contributing Writer

NRHEG Band director Colin Zidlicky brings with him six years of experience from Iowa, collegiate performance (or higher) experience on every band instrument, and a passion for helping others understand the importance of music. Zidlicky graduated Magna Cum Laude from Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, with a triple major in music education, organ performance, and trombone performance. “I actively perform in many groups and in solo recitals,” Zidlicky says, “but I feel most fulfilled when having a successful performance, or even rehearsal with students. My favorite moments are when students have an overwhelming sense of accomplishment and pride in what they have created.”



Zidlicky

And who does Zidlicky regard as the largest influencers of music of all time? “Any lifetime performer — because without them, there is no inspiration for music. Any music teacher — because without them, there would be no growth for music. Any music student — because without them, there would be no future for music.”

Zidlicky says that, after being in Iowa for his entire life (he grew up on a dairy farm in Decorah), he will need to make some alterations and adjustments. Teaching in Minnesota requires learning new procedures. But he is up for the challenge. He says his primary focus during his first year is to introduce students and community members to some changes and improvements he plans for the NRHEG band. “I am really hoping that, with time, NRHEG will be known as a premier school for its music department.”

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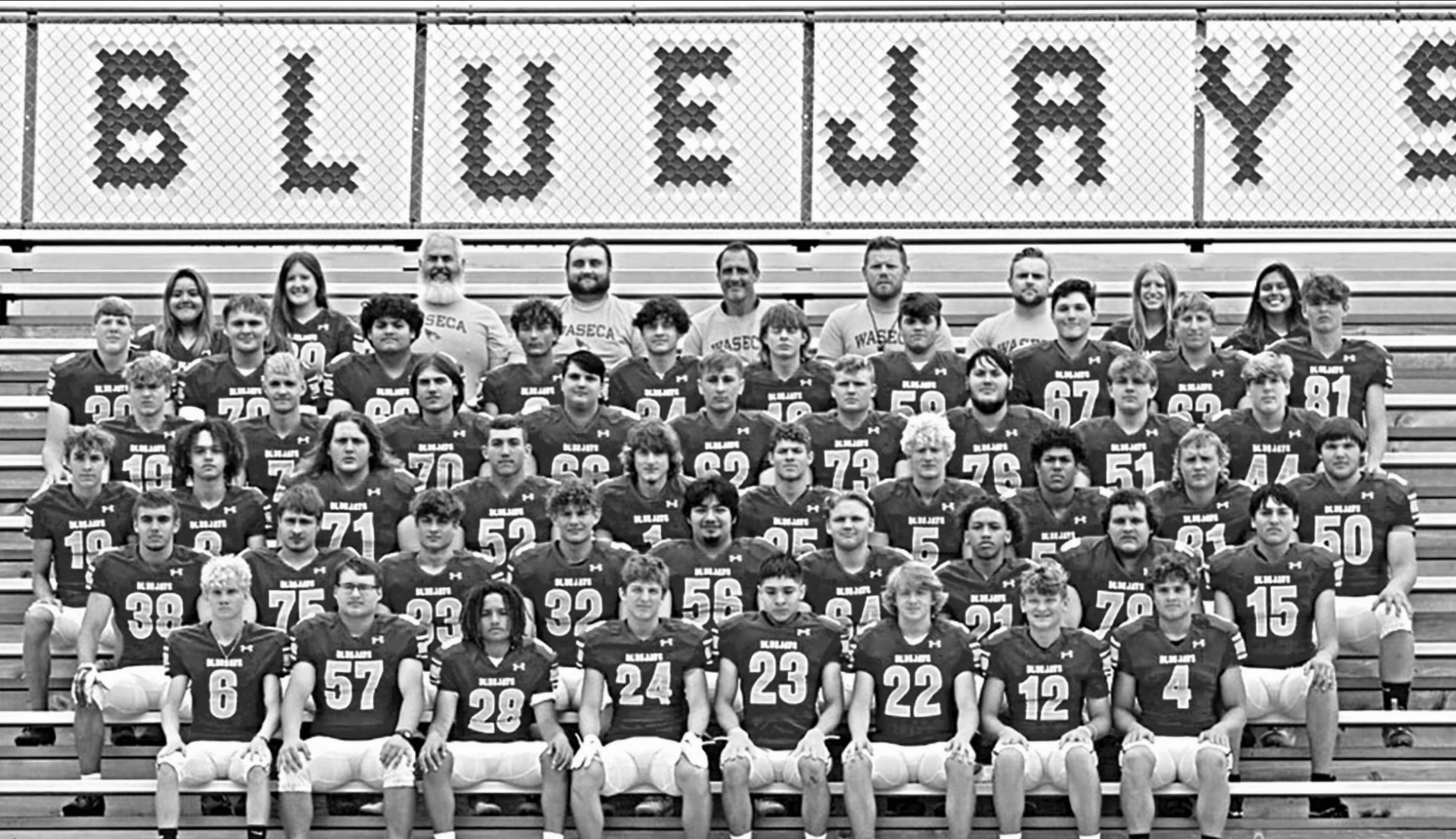
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FALL SPORTS

PREVIEW



2022 WASECA FOOTBALL — Front: Elijah Biehn, Cody Weber, Koylten Quillen, Bennett Ludwig, Jose Mixteco, Maxwell Wirtz, Keaton Roeker, and Max Neaves. 2nd Row: Christian Rodriguez, Shane Engel-Mueller, Nate Engel-Mueller, Tauston Rupe, Joe Mixteco-Perez, Mason Droog, Deron Russell, Korbin Schumacher, and Armando Balderas. 3rd Row: Carson Ohnstad, Damarius Russell, Brendan Brown, Payton Garza, Leo Harguth, Kaeden Johnson, Kyle Ahlschlager, Carter Ellis, Colton Ruedy, and Benjamin Hagen. 4th Row: Gavan George, Oliver O'Brien, Ethan Stenzel, Logan Hansen, David Hodgkins, Jacob Kehler, Xavyer Torres, Kyle McGuire, and Noah Thompson. 5th Row: Jacob Thompson, Josh Norman, Iven Rodriguez, Laird Keeton, Rudy Mondcada, Wyatt Hager, Brandyn Jascha, Andy Balderas, Andrew Robran, and Cameron Karsten. Back Row: Melanie Quintero, Meraina Hiller, Ken Andrs, Boe Lueken, Brad Wendland, Eric Teders, Connolly Turek, Olivia Ostreich, and Bianca Cavazos.

It's full speed ahead for WHS football

Wendland, Bluejays to follow the same winning formula that's worked in the past

By JIM LUTGENS
Staff Writer

The winning formula for football at Waseca High School is not all that complicated.

"Stay healthy and continue to improve," said coach Brad Wendland on the Bluejays' key to success.

It's worked in the past. Last year's squad finished 9-2, and the Bluejays have a 144-74 win-loss record in Wendland's 16 seasons as head coach.

He looks for more of the same this fall.

While the Bluejays graduated some talented players, led by Big South Conference Defensive Player of the Year Jarret Ahlschlager, who participated in the state's all-star game, they have a deep roster headed by quarterback Oliver O'Brien, a 6-foot-1, 175 pound senior who was named the Big South's Offensive Back of the Year in 2021.

Other returning starters include seniors Max Neaves, 5-7, 180, RB/LB; Kyle Ahlschlager 5-9m 180, RB/LB; Christian Rodriguez, 5-9, 175, RB/LB; Payton Garza, 5-11, 200, OL/LB; Brenden Brown, 6-0, 275, OL/DL; and Jacob Kehler, 6-1, 230, OL/DL.

The rest of the varsity roster includes

"I really like the leadership we are getting from our seniors. Their work ethic raises the bar for everyone."

— Coach Brad Wendland

seniors Elijah Biehn, 5-6, 130, WR/DB; Jakib Godtland, 6-1, 180, WR/DB; Gavan George, 6-0, 180, WR/DB; Eduardo Trejo, 5-6, 150, RB/LB; Mason Droog, 5-10, 210, OL/DL; Logan Hansen, 6-0, 270, OL/DL; Xavyer Torres, 6-0, 275, OL/DL; and Korbin Schumacher, 5-10, 300, OL/DL; juniors Laird Keeton, 6-2, 175, WR/DB; Amondo Balderas, 6-0, 165; QB/LB; Jose Perez, 5-7, 145, RB/DB; Jacob Thompson, 6-0, 190, TE/LB; Nate Engel Mueller, 5-10, 165, TE/LB; Carter Ellis, 5-11, 180, OL/LB; Andrew Robran, 6-3, 220, OL/LB; Ethan Stenzel, 6-1, 200, OL/DL; Javonn Rodney, 6-3, 300, OL/DL; Josh Norman, 6-1, 265, OL/DL; and Keaton Roeker, 5-7, 145, DB/QB; sophomores Carlson Ohnstad, 5-10, 150, WR/DB; Bennett Ludwig, 5-5, 145, RB/LB; Koylten Quillen, 5-5, 135, RB/DB; Colten Ruedy, 5-10, 190, TE/LB; Tauston Rupe, 5-10, 190,

RB/LB; Caden Danner, 5-10, 140, TE/LB; Micah Allen-Haas, 5-10, 175, RB/LB; Ben Hagen, 5-11, 230, OL/DL; Kyle McGuire, 6, 210, OL/DL; Cody Weber, 5-6, 185, OL/DL; Joe Mextico Perez, 5-10, 250, OL/DL; Braydyn Jascha, 6-2, 270, OL/DL; Andy Balderas, 6-2, 224, OL/DL; and Jaden Beck, 5-11, 225, OL/DL; and freshmen Deron Russell, 5-6, 150, WR/DB; and Jordan Johnson, 5-9, 155, RB/DB.

If you looked at the weights, you know the 2022 Bluejays will have plenty of size. Wendland said they have good overall team speed. He expects them to be balanced on offense and aggressive on defense.

Waseca and Fairmont, according to Wendland, are the top teams in the Big South Conference and the section.

"I really like the leadership we are getting from our seniors," said Wendland. "Their work ethic raises the bar for ev-



MANAGERS — Helping the Bluejays football team this year are Olivia Ostreich, Melanie Quintero, Biana Cavazos, and Meraina Hiller.

everyone. The coaching staff has done a tremendous job working with their position groups. We are excited for the season."

Wendland, in his 23rd year of coaching, is assisted at the varsity level by Eric Teden. The rest of the staff includes Connolly Turek, Boe Lueken, Matt Olsen, Jarius Volkmann, Ted Hammond, Chris Ahlschlager, Ken Andrs, Rick Wulf and Levi Poppe.

The Bluejays' student managers are Bianca Cavazos, Marina Hiller, Olivia Ostreich and Meanie Quintero.

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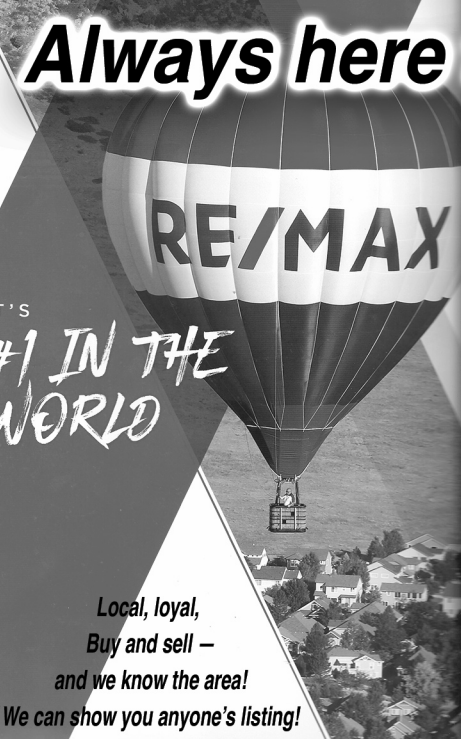
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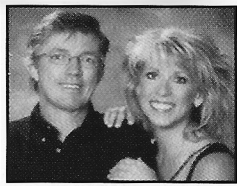
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2022-2023

FALL SPORTS

PREVIEW

New head coach takes over for WHS girls' soccer

Tomlinson, no stranger in Waseca, has high hopes for 2022 Bluejays

By JIM LUTGENS
Staff Writer

Don't ask first-year Waseca High School girls' soccer head coach Kyle Tomlinson about win-loss projections this season.

He'll give you a short answer.

"I don't have any particular expectations with regards to results," said Tomlinson.

How the Bluejays approach the game is another story.

"I expect us to work hard for every single ball throughout the season," explained Tomlinson. "If we do that consistently, then I have total confidence in these girls' ability to succeed."

The Bluejays, who compete in Section 1AA, finished 12-5-0 overall last year and 11-1 in the Big South Conference. Their last appearance in the section championship game was in 2017.

The 2022 Bluejays, according to Tomlinson, should be a fun team to watch. They're hard-working, have a balanced squad with plenty of talent, with the potential to be very successful despite changes to their coaching staff and style of play.

"I think that, with a consistently positive attitude, we can achieve great things."
— Kyle Tomlinson

"We have a hard working squad who have come into the preseason with open minds and a strong work ethic," said Tomlinson. "There are some changes this season with our coaching staff and our style of play, and the girls have adapted fantastically. We are blessed with a balanced squad and we have players all over the field who can score goals, keep the opposition out, and control games."

The Bluejays are not, however, blessed with big numbers.

"We are a relatively small squad," said Tomlinson. "So our players are going to have to work hard to remain fit throughout the season. However, the players are working hard in pre-



The 2022 Waseca Girls' Soccer Team. Front: Sophie Chawra, Khloe Fuller, Ashley Sanchez, Ava Bruhn, Camilla Marquez, and Emily LeMieux. Middle: Thyme Lang, Maia Bartelt, Samantha Azure, Ella Bulfer, Evelyn Nydegger, Ella Krautkremer, Gabriela Lopez. Back: Coach Kyle Tomlinson, Mallory Bruhn, Addison Wieseler, Anna Blatti, Lucia Mansfield, and Phil Bulfer.

season to get fit and conditioned for our upcoming season, so I am confident that we will succeed."

The key to success for the 2022 Bluejays? Never give up.

"Perseverance is going to be the key for our team," said Tomlinson. "We have had an intense start to the

season and the games come quick and fast. With our smaller squad size, our players need to be able to keep up with the demands of the schedule and stick with our new style of play."

Tomlinson, assisted by Phil Bulfer, Larry Nydegger and Michael Osweiler, has been impressed by what

he's seen from the Bluejays so far.

"This is my first year with the girls' program here at Waseca after a few years assisting with the boys," he said. "There have been a lot of changes that the girls have had to face and the season is coming fast, but I have been blown away by the

effort, talent and determination of the girls so far. I am massively excited to get this season underway and see how the girls adapt to our new playing style and I think that, with a consistently positive attitude, we can achieve great things this season!"

New players offer new hope for boys' soccer

First-year head coach J.D. Delgado welcomes Delgado Jr., James

By JIM LUTGENS
Staff Writer

Last year was a rough one for the Waseca High School boys' soccer team.

It's something the Bluejays are ready to put in the past and forget.

Waseca, 1-10 in Big South Conference games last season, figures to improve under the guidance of first-year head coach J.D. Delgado, who brings more than 20 years of experience with the WHS girls' soccer program.

The coach's No. 1 goal is a simple one.

"We would like to create a winning streak," he stated.

Delgado is no stranger to winning streaks, having served as the Waseca girls' soccer coach for 10 years after 10 years in various positions with the program.

Senior co-captains Israel Nelson and Jenaro Delgado Jr., the head coach's son, lead the Bluejays along with junior co-captain Logan Heyer and junior Raul Castaneda.

Nelson, according to Coach Delgado, possesses the ability to collect, control and manipulate the ball with both his feet, legs and chest.

"Israel is very efficient, both with and without the ball, as he must maximize the soccer impact with balance and coordination. His agility, balance and coordination are vital for the team. Israel has the ability to deal with the constant stop and start nature as well as endurance during a game."

Last year, Nelson finished tied for second on the squad with 12 points on four goals and four assists.

Delgado, according to Coach Delgado, has been a blessing to the program after switching from football.

"It was definitely an ovation from his teammates," said Coach Delgado. "We needed a central defender who could match those quick, fast opponents. Jenaro played as a central defender during the summer to

"The boys have been working very hard trying to find the much-needed cohesiveness."
— J.D. Delgado

maximize his defensive attributes. 'Junior,' as he is called, is able to come out of the first third and move along with the ball through the middle, creating opportunities and spaces that his teammates could use to score. We definitely welcome his addition to the team."

Heyer moves to a new position this fall, playing defense after being one of the best goalkeepers in the conference.

"It is incredibly difficult to pick out one attacking player in a side with so much talent up front and on the center of the field," said Coach Delgado. "What makes this player so special is his ability to understand the field from different soccer position perspectives. His place, kicks, passing, finishing and control are all world class, and he has scored some incredible goals."

Castaneda, a midfielder, brings the Bluejays remarkable speed and quickness.

"He has a quality of acceleration of 95, and his reaction to the ball is at 93," said Delgado. "He is able to create beautiful plays by moving quickly to the ball. Raul moves the strings around the field. He is also at 90 percent when it comes to finishing. This younger player maneuvers around the finishing third looking for an opportunity to score."

Other players to keep your eye on are junior goalie Eduardo Delgado and junior attacker Alex James.



2022 BOYS' SOCCER — Front Row L to R: Raul Castaneda, Eli Nelson, Corbin Connors, Eduardo Gallegos, Christopher Badillo, Israel Nelson, Jorge Ruiz Middle Row L to R: Alex James, Ezra Skains, Noah Dahle, Lucas Vasquez, Mason Jes, Charlie Huttemier. Back Row L to R: Coach JD Delgado, Coach David Vasquez, Dominic Grunzke, Logan Heyer, JD Delgado, Coach Jesse Delgado, Coach Victor Feeley.

Eduardo (yes, he's related), has proven to be the Bluejays' best player in goal.

James, another welcome new addition to the team, brings the Bluejays even more athletic ability.

"He moves quickly through the field, leaving his opponents behind," said Coach Delgado. "He has the ability to understand the game, which is extremely important. We look for him to be on the front of our attacking line."

The rest of the boys' roster includes seniors Corbin Connors, Eli Nelson and Jorge Ruiz (who tied for second in scoring last year with four goals and four assists), juniors Mason Jes, Dominic Grunzke, Noah Dahle, Eduardo Gallegos and Lucas Vasquez, sophomores Adrian Arreguin, Christopher Badillo Lucas McQuery and Ezra Skains, freshman Isaac Bauleke, eighth-graders Henry Huttemiere, Nolan McQuery and Sunny Mel, and seventh-graders Carlo Driessen, Jacob Harguth and Matthew Nelson.

"The boys have been working very hard trying to find the so-needed team cohesiveness," said Coach Delgado. "The team has received a few new players who, along with experienced players, will maximize their options for a conference title."



CAPTAINS — This year's Waseca boys' soccer team has five captains. They are Eli Nelson, Logan Heyer, Jenaro Delgado Jr., Jorge Ruiz, and Israel Nelson.

Expected to lead the Big South this year are defending champion Worthington and Marshall.

"Our team has had a great preseason," said Delgado. "But I believe with a few more weeks we will have a highly competitive squad."

Another thing the Bluejays have is

numbers. A total of 24 boys are out for soccer, ensuring Waseca will field a varsity and junior varsity squad.

"The boys will be playing for sure," said Delgado.

Five coaches are assisting Delgado. Jerry Bauleke, the JV coach with four years' experience; David

Vasquez, two-year JV assistant; Jesse Delgado, who coached the Waseca boys' U-16 team this summer; Victor Feeley, long time member of the Waseca Soccer Club and a former Bluejay player; and Salvador Neaves, a six-year assistant making his debut as Delgado's top assistant.

2022-2023

FALL SPORTS

PREVIEW

The pieces are in place for WHS volleyball team

The pieces appear to be in place for the Waseca High School volleyball team to have a breakthrough season.

The Bluejays, guided by a knowledgeable, veteran coaching staff, return six letterwinners from a squad that finished 5-5 in the Big South Conference and 8-16 overall.

"We are striving to be towards the top of the conference, and push ourselves to be on the winning side for the season," said sixth-year head coach Jolene Hauger. "We have a lot of returning players."

The Bluejays, of course, graduated some talent from last year's crew, including team MVP and all-conference libero player Jadyn Olsem. Also graduated is Sophie Potter, who shared the Bluejays' setting duties a year ago.

Returning letterwinners are seniors Haylee Sommers, Kloe Wadd, Megan Kanewischer and Avery Madsen, and sophomores Siri Kuhns and Aliyah Taylor.

Sommers earned all-conference honors last year while Madsen received honorable mention. Wadd received her second varsity letter.

Hauger feels good about the Bluejays' varsity experience and the way they approach the game.

"We have a lot of veteran players," she said. "We have competitive, scrappy defensive players."

The coach's biggest concern?

"Being consistent and effective communicators on the court," she stated.

"We are striving to be toward the top of the conference."

— Jolene Hauger

That's the No. 1 key to success for the 2022 Bluejays, according to Hauger.

"Communication, trusting your teammates," she said. "Winning first contact. When we pass, good things happen."

The Bluejays will have a new look on offense, switching to a 5-1 after employing a 6-2 with Potter and Kuhns setting. This year, Kuhns will assume full-time setting duties. Another big change is transitioning Sommers to take over in the back row as libero.

"Last year Haylee played all-around as an outside hitter," said Hauger. "We have some new hitters and (defensive specialist) players being added to the lineup, but we are a team with lots of experience."

Hauger, who has a career 49-56 win-loss record with Waseca, is assisted by Nicole Sommers, Jalea Spies and Catherine Miller.

Hauger sees St. Peter and New Ulm as the teams to beat in the Big South, with Waterville-Elysian-Morristown expected to lead Section 2AA.



2022 WASECA VOLLEYBALL — Front, from left: Ellie Hoehn, Haylee Sommers, Erika Bowers, Takara Slatery, Shanece Brown. Back row, from left: Coach Jolene Hauger, Avery Madsen, Megan Kanewischer, Aliyah Taylor, Kloe Wadd, McKyla Hasselquist, Riley Ruedy, and Siri Kuhns. Not pictured: Tricia Cox.

Photo by Michael Roy



The 2022 Waseca Tennis team — Front row: Sarah Robbins, Vivian Mader, Lauren Drexler, Maddy Benson, Tailyn Kaput, Esme Pearce, and Takya Schoenrock. Middle row: Madilyn Larrabee, Addie Bomsta, Addie Pfeifer, Sarah Haley, Miranda Breck, and Paola Sandoval. Back row: Coach Kyle Collins, Pearl Moore, Paige Dufault, Lizzy Roessler, Cece Huttemier, Mia Kanewischer, and Coach Tim Anderson.

Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

WHS girls' tennis team looks to bounce back

Don't expect Jays to be winless again in Big South

By JIM LUTGENS
Staff Writer

The Waseca High School girls' tennis team has enjoyed plenty of success under coach Kyle Collins.

Last year was an exception.

The Bluejays finished 4-14 overall last fall and, at 0-5, went winless in conference play for the first time in many years.

It doesn't look like that will happen again.

The Bluejays, 210-129 in Collins' 18 season as head coach, are definitely looking for progress.

Key players graduated off last year's squad were doubles players Nicola DeJager and Jaidence Medina.

Looking to lead the 2022 Bluejays are seniors Cece Huttemier, Sarah Robbins and Miranda Breck. Huttemier was an all-conference singles player last year. Robbins played singles, Breck doubles.

"We have a good mix of veterans and new players which should make for a nice time," said Collins. "The girls are working hard at practice, but we have many things to work on. Consistency and finding out who to play where will be out challenges."

Collins will have plenty of players to choose from as the Bluejays return several veteran players, including eight letterwinners.

The rest of the roster includes juniors Sarah Haley, Addie Bomsta, and Elizabeth Roessler, sophomores Takya Schoenrock, Ashton Jenzen, Mia Kanewischer, Addie Pfeifer

and Esme Pearce, and ninth-graders Pearl Moore, Maddy Benson, Paige Dufault, Tailyn Kaput, Lauren Drexler, Vivian Mader, Madilyn Larrabee and Paula Sandoval.

Earning varsity letters last year were Breck, Huttemier, Robbins, Haley, Bomsta, Schoenrock and Kanewischer.

"Our singles lineup should be pretty good," said Collins.

The Bluejays are, however, still young, with many sophomores and freshmen battling to fill out the varsity lineup. Some of those youngsters will undoubtedly contribute. The team includes eight freshmen.

Collins is cautiously optimistic.

"If the girls continue to improve in practice and the early matches, we should be ready to compete in the conference and hopefully pick up a few wins," said the coach. "I think we will sneak up on a few teams and surprise them, if we play our best."

Collins, in his 25th year with the WHS girls' tennis program, is joined by fourth-year assistant Tim Anderson, who served as head coach at Maple River for many years.

The favorites in the East Division

"We have a good mix of veterans and new players which should make for a nice time."

— 19-year head coach Kyle Collins

Cross Country



BOYS — Front row: Sam Feldkamp, Tristan Godwin, Elijah Johannek, Bobby Mortenson, Cade Kalbow, and Jack Anderson. Middle row: Colton Schroeder, Colby Hoof, Isaac Feldkamp, Addison Sampson, Jacarl Jellum, and Tyler Jellum. Back row: Leah Scheffert, Grant Popp, Joe Feldkamp, Nancy Kaplan, and Heidi McCabe.



GIRLS — Front row: Abby Attenberger, Noelle Drake, Kelsey Draeger, Katelyn Weber, Violet Rowher, and Maren Schimming. Middle row: Ella Dufault, Melanie Krueger, Katie Olson, Callie Dufault, Stella Omtvedt, Kaylie Morrissey, and Josie Ross. Back row: Leah Scheffert, Grant Popp, Camille Ring, Kya Hoof, Norah Schimming, Taylor Markeson, Berkly Hinna, Nancy Kaplan, and Heidi McCabe.

Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

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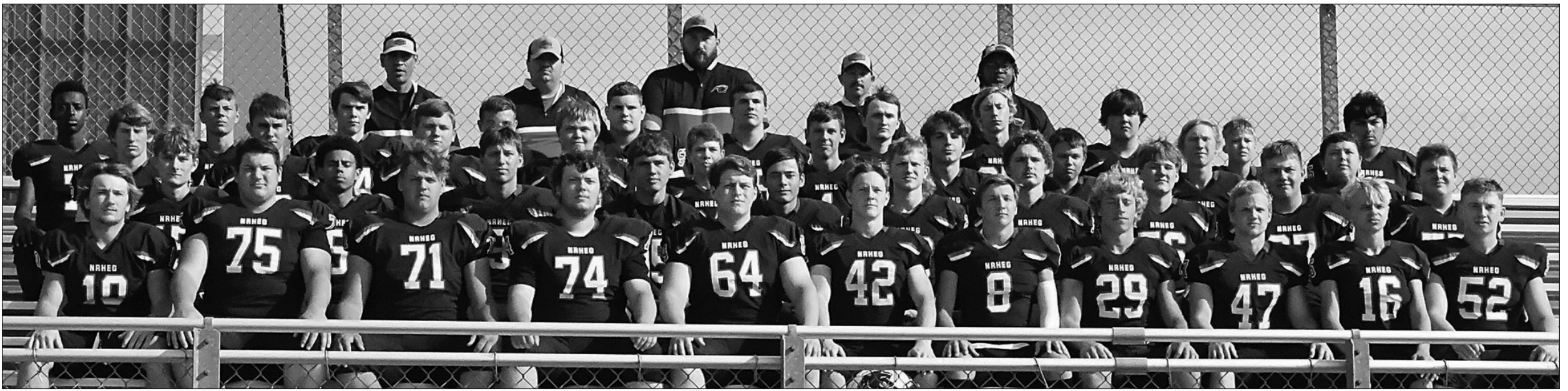
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NRHEG PANTHERS 2022-2023 FALL SPORTS PREVIEW



2022 PANTHER FOOTBALL — The 2022 NRHEG High School football team, led by head coach Marc Kruger (back) and assistant coaches Neil Fuchs, Jeff Jimenez, Chad Sykes and Shawn Larson. The team roster with jersey numbers in (#): Aidan Schlaak (1), Justin Beauvis (2), Jaylin Raab (5), Alden Dobberstein (6), Gavin Lewison (7), Sawyer Prigge (8), Sam Olson (9), Nash Howe (10), Owen Bartlett (11), Greyson Schaefer (15), Gavin Wilkenson (16), Kaleb Gostomczik (20), Lucas Loverink (21), Cohen Riewer (23), Seth Staloch (24), Aaden Hanna (25), Andrew Phillips (29), Deven Parpart (32), Reese Routh (33), Carter Flatland (41), Ethan Thompson (42), Noah Miranda (45), Aidan Deyle (47), Carter Martens (51), Corrie Warner (52), Devin Morkid (53), Jordan Brouwers (54), Trevor Selover (55), Zander Flatness (56), Jace Ikre (57), Evan Beckman (58), Logan Schiell (59), Jayden Fleming (60), Brayden Howe (62), Makota Misgen (64), Cole Hutchens (65), Garrett Deagen (67), Kaleb Hughes (70), Lucas Hanna (71), Jayden Tonkin (72), Wyatt Groskreutz (74), Brady Schlaak (75), Kaeden Neitzel (77), Jase Knudson (80), Wyatt Larson (81), George Roesler (85). Photos by Chris Schlaak

Ready to do battle

Football squad has size, speed to compete

By JIM LUTGENS
Staff Writer

Marc Kruger left himself a tough act to follow. And the NRHEG High School football team is still trying to get back there.

In 2018, Kruger's first year as head coach, the Panthers finished an impressive 9-3, blowing out rival WEM in the Section 2AA title game and reaching the state quarterfinals before falling to eventual champion Caledonia.

Since then, Kruger and the Panthers have dealt with COVID, interrupting seasons and leaving them wonder if or when they would play again. Finally, that's all in the rear-view mirror.

Kruger and the Panthers are looking forward to a full fall season in 2022, with no interruptions. It's doubtful they can match the success of the 2018 squad, but, like we said, that crew set a high standard.

The Panthers, 18-16 in four years under Kruger's direction, finished 4-5 overall and 2-3 in district play last year losing to St. Clair in first round play-off action. As usual, that squad graduated a number of gifted athletes in quarterback Porter Peterson, Bo Budach, Jack Olson, Clay Stenzel, Ben Schoenrock, Walker Thompson, Alex Dobberstein and Tyrone Wilson.

"They were all two or three-year starters for us," said Kruger. "They were an outstanding class that will be missed."

Leading the 2022 Panthers are returning let-termen Andrew Phillips, Sawyer Prigge, Wyatt Groskreutz, Nash How, Ethan Thompson, Makota Misgen and Lucas Hanna.

Phillips, an all-district selection last year, is a three-year starter at running back and was one of the most productive backs in the area.

"He has outstanding speed and strength," said Kruger.

Prigge, the Panthers' top returning receiver, is looking to step up after the graduation of three-year starters Olson and Budach.

Groskreutz is entering his fourth season as a varsity starter.

"He is like having a coach on the field," said Kruger.

The 2022 Panthers are looking like a group with a plethora of potential, possessing the size and speed to battle anyone on their schedule.

"We will be inexperienced," said Krueger. "But we have the size and speed to compete."

The key for this year's Panthers, according to Kruger, is to remain united despite some early-season challenges.

"We need to stay together," said Krueger. "We will see a lot of growing pains early."

Kruger lists NRHEG, Blooming Prairie and St. Clair/Mankato Loyola as conference favorites, with NRHEG, Maple River, Blooming Prairie and Blue Earth battling for the section championship.



RETURNING LETTER WINNERS — 2022 NRHEG High School football returning letters winners from left: Sawyer Prigge, Ethan Thompson, Makota Misgen, Jaylin Raab, Wyatt Groskreutz, Andrew Phillips, Lucas Hanna, Nash Howe, Sam Olson, George Roesler, and Brady Schlaak.



THE MEN UP FRONT — 2022 NRHEG High School football linemen, from left: Corrie Warner, Wyatt Groskreutz, coach Chad Sykes, Lucas Hanna, Makota Misgen, and Brady Schlaak.



NRHEG cross country runners include Annabelle Petsinger, Holly Bartness, Jacob Karl, Jackson McGannon, Mady Schlaak, Alexis McGannon, Conner Nelson, Gavin Sletten, Devon Nelton and Sam Christensen. New head coach Colin Zidlicky is at right. Photo by Chris Schlaak

New coach greets CC teams

By JIM LUTGENS
Staff Writer

With the resignation of Miles Otstot last spring, NRHEG High School found itself looking for a band director and cross country coach.

They found both in Colin Zidlicky.

Zidlicky is the new band director for grades 5-12 and new cross country coach for grades 7-12 at NRHEG.

Zidlicky is not new to coaching, having three years under his belt at St. Ansgar, Iowa.

He inherits a Panther squad not long on numbers but not short on enthusiasm.

The boys return five letterwinners in seniors Sam Christensen and Conner Nelson, sophomore Gavin Sletten, and freshmen Jacob Karl and Devin Nelton.

Junior Annabelle Petsinger, freshmen Holly Bartness and Alexia McGannon, and eighth-grader Madeline Schlaak earned varsity letters last fall.

"We focus on creating outstanding people."
— Coach Colin Zidlicky

Zidlicky said that while he'd like to see the Panthers become faster runners, the ultimate goal is to make them better people.

"Even though the goal in cross country is to be faster, we focus on creating outstanding people who have qualities such as perseverance, integrity, and unity," he said.

While both the boys' and girls' squads are, admittedly, small on numbers, Zidlicky said they are "mighty."

The key to success for the 2022 Panthers?

"Fight the beast," said Zidlicky.

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NRHEG PANTHERS 2022-2023
FALL SPORTS

PREVIEW

Panthers
expect to
battle to
the finish

New coach has
high hopes for
volleyball squad

By JIM LUTGENS
Staff Writer

What can we expect from the 2022 NRHEG High School volleyball team?

What we've seen in the past.

The Panthers, according to first-year head coach Ashley Tolzman, will field an athletic squad that battles to the end for every point and will always give it their all.

Tolzman, who replaces long-time coach Onika Peterson, is new to NRHEG and ready to take on her first season as head coach. She's assisted by Corrine Schuller.

So far, Tolzman has liked what she's seen from the Panthers in practice and hopes the community will come to watch them play.

"I expect every match to be good competition," said the coach. "These girls will fight for every point, so I hope to see lots of fans out to support these girls. They are working so hard and looking forward to this season."

The Panthers graduated an outstanding three-sport athlete last year, outside hitter Sophie Stork, along with right-side hitter Rhys Martin.

Tolzman looks for the 2022 Panthers to be led by Hallie Schultz, Sarah George, Bree



READY TO SHINE — Members of the NRHEG volleyball team take a selfie during the team's photo day. The Panthers, guided by new head coach Ashley Tolzman, look to field an athletic squad that battles to the end for every point and will always give it their all.
Pioneer photo by Chris Schlaak

"They are tough and determined."
— First-year head coach Ashley Tolzman

Ihrke, Erin Jacobson, Sidney Schultz and Bailey Ihrke.

"This group of girls have been putting in time during the off season to better themselves, and it shows," said Tolzman. "They show up every practice ready to give it their all."

Tolzman, for one, is excited for the season to start, so she can see how the Panthers measure up.

"This season, I expect our team to show up with high energy and ready to give it our all," she said. "We have a very large group of seniors who love this game and want to go as far as possible this season, and we are ready to do just that. We have a tough section

and our goal is to play hard. We expect good competition."

The Panthers should benefit from the fact most of their athletes are returning varsity performers. They're also gritty.

"They are tough and determined," said Tolzman.

The Panthers' biggest challenge is easy to spot: height, or rather a lack of it.

"Most teams will be taller than us," said Tolzman.

But it won't affect the Panthers' approach.

"Don't stop believing," said Tolzman. "This is the quote the seniors chose for the year."

It's doubtful the Panthers will.



HAVING FUN — Members of the NRHEG junior varsity volleyball team have fun during the team's recent photo day.
Photo by Chris Schlaak

Cheerleaders



NRHEG fall cheerleaders, from left: Malonna Wilson, Julia Churchill, Payton Bunn, Tru Thao, Madison Bogue, Ariel Anhalt and Addison Buenger.
Photo by Chris Schlaak

C-squad volleyball



The 2022 NRHEG C-squad volleyball team. Front from left: Chloe Riewer, Abbie Viktora, Nora Flatness, Aspyr Stenzel, Josie Klemmek, Tatum Thibadeau and Kayden Worke. Back: Coach VanMaldeghem, Sam Possin, Sierra Misgen, Meela Budach, Chloe Stork, Jozlynn Johnson and Kyera Eustice.
Photo by Chris Schlaak





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2022-2023

FALL SPORTS

PREVIEW

Program on the rise

JWP spikers look to build on best record in five years

By MICHAEL ROY
Publisher

The JWP Volleyball team was ready to hit the court this past week, starting their season off with a bang against Loyola on Thursday, August 25.

The win was exactly the way head Coach Jessica Keenan wanted the team to start. She is back for her fourth season and is hopeful that the team will play fantastic volleyball this season.

Expectations

“We debuted a completely new and fresh team at our first game,” Coach Keenan admits. “I have been extremely impressed with all our talent that showed up to the gym and know we are going to be strong.”

Keenan wants the team to take it one game at a time. “We will see how we hold up in our first match,” she explains. “From there, we will set goals to continue to improve as the season goes on.”

2021 Season

Last season marked a lot of new territory for this team. It meant a return to a strong Gopher Conference with powerhouses like Bethlehem Academy and Waterville-Elysian-Morristown.

However, 2021 saw the team have its best finish over the last five years with a 10-17 record (5-6 in-conference) and a chance to play in the Subsection 2A semifinals. They lost to a talented Cleveland team, but forced the Clippers to earn every point in four sets (25-14, 17-25, 22-25, 21-25.)

Key Returnees

The team will be returning a well-

balanced roster of experienced players and new ones with tons of potential: Seniors Jesse Westphal and Isabelle Rider; Juniors Lexie Dahlberg and Ali Olson; and Sophomores Brielle Bure, Brielle Dessner, Claire Walz, Paige Walz, and Aubrey Weedman. Westphal was voted team offensive MVP while Weedman was voted the squad’s most improved player of 2021.

Key Losses

While tons of talent and potential make up this year’s roster, it will be difficult to replace the production of last year’s seniors. Claire Adams was voted team MVP and won All-Conference honors, while Sydney Gahlon got an All-Conference Honorable mention and was named the team’s defensive MVP.

The other seniors, Mara Richardson, Alexa Cords, Andra Armstrong, and Ellie Meihak were always contributing kills, aces, digs, and assists whenever they were out on the court. “We have a lot of gaps to fill,” Coach Keenan states.

Strengths

One of the strengths of this team is their work ethic and open-mindedness. “The girls have a desire to be successful,” Keenan says. “They are extremely coachable and have been improving in the gym every single practice. They have a ton of fun together and it will be a great squad to coach and for fans to watch.”

Weakness

Despite a solid group of veterans, there are a lot of starters with little to no varsity experience. “We are a young team with a lot of athletes new to the varsity court,” Keenan ex-



SET FOR THE SEASON — The JWP 2022 volleyball team led by head coach Jessica Keenan and assistant coaches Tater Schmitz (JV) and Kayla Holden (C-Squad). Front row, from left: Brielle Dessner, Lilly Strauss, Ellah Oliver, Brielle Bure, Katie Olson, Nevaeh Weimert, and Lexie Dahlberg. Back row, from left: Raquel Fischer, Paige Walz, Claire Walz, Jessa Westphal, Isabelle Rider, Aubrey Weidmann, Presley James, and Ali Olson.

plains. “We will face our growing pains, but I know the team will continue to learn and improve every game.”

Key to Success

Keenan put it quite simply. “The girls need to work together and capitalize on each other’s strengths and weaknesses. Our older girls will be key in guiding and supporting their younger teammates on the court. They will need to trust each other. If they do that, we’ll be guaranteed to find some success this season!”

Other Comments

“We will be young and face our share of challenges,” Keenan summarizes. “But the girls are more than ready to face them and work to be a team that will be a force to be reckoned with.”

Keenan also described players on

the roster individually.

Seniors: Jessa Westphal has the most experience out of all the players on the roster with playing time on the squad since she was a freshman. She will be relied upon for her leadership, offensive production, and blocking at the net. Keenan describes Isabelle Rider as a “fun leader for the team” with an optimistic attitude to match her strong block at the net. Raquel Fischer, who was ineligible for varsity last season after transferring, will “have her time to shine on the varsity squad as a Bulldog.”

Juniors: Lexie Dahlberg will be a huge piece to the JWP defense in the back row. “She reads the ball impeccably well and will do whatever it takes to ensure it doesn’t hit the floor,” Keenan states.

Ali Olson is known as a great

“We will be young and face our share of challenges.”

— Coach Jessica Keenan

teammate who is “consistent and a reliable athlete that will do what it takes to ensure the ball stays in play.”

Sophomores: Aubrey Weedman saw some court time as a freshman last year due to some injuries to the team. She showed plenty of potential last season and will be expected to be a key leader in the offense. Brielle Bure is described as “quick and scrappy” as well as a “fun and encouraging player.” Lilly Strauss will be one to watch out for as one of the team’s big hitters this season accord-

ing to Keenan.

The Walz twins - Claire and Paige - will bring added height to the team. At about 5’10”, the both of them will be expected to be key blockers for the Bulldogs. (Keenan also noted that Claire has the largest vertical out of anyone on the team.)

Freshman: Nevaeh Weimert is the lone freshman on the roster. “She has a great set of hands and can play scrappy defense,” Keenan said. “We are looking to her to run our offense alongside Aubrey.”



2022 WEM-JWP Cross Country members for the 2022 season. Front row, from left: Oliver Dimmel, Ashlynn Wolff, Faith Olson, Mady Miller, Kwynn Krause, Makenzie Westphal, Makaela Westphal, Carley Kratzer, Samuel Hoehn. Middle Row, from left: Jon McDonough (WEM co-head coach), David Lamp, Ivan Pratt, Lydia Huelsnitz, Molly Snedrud, Ashlin Keyes, Maddie Heuss, Madeline Hoehn, Autumn Schumacher, Carson James, Eric Kehoe (JWP co-head coach). Back row, from left: Caleb Quast, Gavin Marinenko, Carter Hoehn, and Alex Kleve.

Repeating last year’s success a challenge for JWP CC

By MICHAEL ROY
Publisher

It will be difficult for the WEM-JWP Cross Country teams to repeat anything about the phenomenal season they had last year. Both the boys and girls won the Gopher Conference gold in 2021, the girls doing it for the fourth year in a row. In addition, the boys sent one to the state competition.

To put it quite simply, they have their work cut out for them this time around.

If they want to have any chance at the conference titles again, they will have to do it without any of their top runners or letter winners from last season.

A lot of new things are happening on this team. Mike Dimler is no longer the co-head coach for the JWP side of the team. Instead, Eric Kehoe will make his return after a few years off from co-head coaching. Jonathan McDonough (co-head coach for the WEM

side) will bring his three years of experience to help counteract all the changes to the roster.

Key Returnees and Losses

There will be a few athletes returning to the cross-country teams. For the boys, it will be Caleb Quast, Alex Kleve, Derek Gustafson, Carson James, and David Lamp. Ashlin Keyes, Faith Olson, and Kwynn Krause will return for the girls.

Almost all of the key losses are on the boys’ side. Landon Dimler, the team’s only state participant, transferred from Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton to Mankato West. Michael Adams, another key component to the 2021 team, graduated from Waterville-Elysian-Morristown.

Other significant losses to the team are Josh Bengston, Memphis James, Gavin Krause, and Jasper Morris. All of them played a huge role in the team’s performance

throughout the season and helped them win the Gopher Conference.

A key loss to the girls’ team due to graduation is Elizabeth White. White was one of the top five runners for WEM-JWP in the Gopher Conference championship. She helped the Grizzlies force a tie for first between them and New Richland-Hartland-Elendale-Geneva and eventually win the title for the fourth straight year.

Expectations

With cross country practically starting from scratch, co-head coach Jonathan McDonough only wants his team to do their best. “We hope that the girls’ team will finish high within the conference,” he states. “If we can get another girl or two out at the varsity level, we might be competitive within our section as well.”

The boys will have to really work to do well in meets. “The boys’ team lost its top six

“We hope the girls will finish high in the conference. Our boys’ team is really young or inexperienced.”

— Coach Jonathan McDonough

runners from last season,” McDonough says. “So our team is really young or inexperienced.”

Strengths and Weaknesses

One thing going for the girls is their depth. Although there aren’t any letter winners, there are a few girls who have plenty of varsity experience. On the boys’ side, their determination to get the gold again is a big strength. The biggest weakness for the boys is the lack of experience. For the girls, it’s the lack of summer running.

Key to Success

In McDonough’s eyes, it’s all about maintaining the pace throughout the early stages of the race. “Our girls are going to have to work really hard to maintain their first mile paces for the entirety of the race,” he explains. “Our boys are going to have to work on pacing and pushing themselves early in the race.”

In terms of other teams in the district and section, he states, “Both are always very competitive and will be a handful.”

2022-2023

FALL SPORTS

PREVIEW



The 2022 JWP football team is coached by Head Coach Jeff Wagner and assistants Kerry Lindsay, Sam Shruin, Jeff Kuball, Jack Morsching, and Rick Davis. Front row, from left: Rocco Scholl, Jaxon Miller, Max Davis, Austin Quast, Karson Lindsay, Matt VanRavenhorst, Jack Cahill, Nolan Morsching, Ethan Born. Middle row: Sam Carlson, Payton O'Brien, Michael Walker, Isaiah Berndt, Lucas Morsching, Gavin Krause, Ryan Kronbach, Austin Carda, Dalton Bauer, Avery Fall. Back row: Jayden Bailey, Ryder Thissen, Davien Weis, Logan Thell, Chase Gerdts, Ty Melchior, Nicholas Johnson, Dylan McWaters, Aiden Cummins.

Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

JWP football team looks to improve

By MICHAEL ROY
Publisher

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton football team is ready for another year on the gridiron. Returning for his fifth year head coaching the team is Jeff Wagner, with assistant coaches Kerry Lindsay and Jeff Kuball joining for another season. New assistant coaches are Jack Morsching (a 2021 JWP graduate and former Bulldog running back), Sam Shrine, and Rick Davis.

2021 Season

2021 was not kind to the Bulldogs. Having an inexperienced team already gave them a slight disadvantage. However, many perimeter players were injured, leaving the team with a tough season to deal with.

Their record was 1-8 with the only win against winless Alden-Conger/Glenville-Emmons at the end of the regular season. After beating the Knights 46-0, they lost to a solid Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop team 42-12 in the first round of section playoffs.

Expectations

Wagner expects a bunch of improvement from last season. “We think we will be more explosive this year,” he explains. “Everyone is a year older and stronger.”

What will help is bringing back many players from last season, including 15 letter winners and six seniors. “We return many young players who gained valuable experience last season,” Wagner states. “They played quality minutes on both varsity and JV squads.”

Key Returnees and Loss

Notable players are senior quarterback and defensive back Karson Lindsay, running back and linebacker Jack Cahill, senior wide receiver and linebacker Kelton Erler, senior linebacker Michael Vanravenhorst, senior guard and defensive lineman Sam Carlson, senior running back and linebacker Ryder Thissen, junior wide receiver and defensive back Ryan Kronbach, junior lineman Austin Quast, junior lineman Cole Schlueter, and junior wide



SENIORS — The 2022 football team is made up of a solid group of seniors with years of varsity experience. They are Nick Johnson, Sam Carlson, Ryder Thissen, Karson Lindsay, Jack Cahill, and Michael VanRavenhorst.

receiver and defensive back Nolan Morsching.

Lindsay won all-district honors, with Cahill, VanRavenhorst, Thissen, and Schlueter earning honorable mentions.

The team did lose another All-District player in Austin Westphal. He played running back on offense and was a defensive back on defense.

Strengths

One strength Wagner notes is the team’s work ethic. “We have a great group of kids who work hard,” he states.

Another strength is having talent at the perimeter positions. “We will gain talented perimeter players who missed varying amounts of last season,” Wagner says.

Weaknesses

Despite a core group of returnees on this year’s team, Wagner said they will still be relatively young on both sides of the ball. Another issue may be depth. “We will need to develop depth this year, especially at most interior positions,” he claims.

District/Section Favorites

Coach Wagner claims that both the district and section the Bulldogs are in have plenty of talented teams. However, one clear favorite in both is Mayer Lutheran. “They were the state championship team in Class A last year,” he explains.

In terms of other teams in the district and section, he states, “Both are always very competitive and will be a handful.”

Additional Comments

Wagner believes a significant

“We will need to develop this year, especially at most interior positions.”

— Coach Jeff Wagner

part of what held the team back from its potential is injuries. Junior Ryan Kronbach, one of the team’s taller wide receivers, only played two games before getting injured. District honorable men-

tion winner Ryder Thissen was also injured most of the season.

One younger player he states to keep an eye on this season is sophomore running back and defensive back Lucas Morsching.

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Hunter Frank served in the United State Navy right out of high school in 2018. He was with the VP-26 Tridents when he was deployed to El Salvador. He was killed in the line of duty on Oct. 17, 2020. Photos from various points in his life are displayed. Top, Hunter Frank with his grandfather Bruce Frank following his graduation from Owatonna High School. Second photo, Indya Frank, Hunter Frank, and Brandon Flores shortly after Frank's enlistment in the Navy.

■ Benefit from Page 1

don. Maggi adds that the charity has been working with them closely, including numerous personal conversations with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The September 10 benefit will consist of a motorcycle ride followed by a spaghetti dinner, and a silent auction. The ride will begin at 1:30 and travel from the Waseca American Legion to Meriden, the hometown of Frank and Flores, where they will pass by their grandparents' farm, their childhood home, and the church where Frank was confirmed. From Meriden, the route will travel through Owatonna, Faribault, Morristown, and Elysian, visiting each town's American Legion post. Before finishing, the riders will visit Woodville Cemetery, where Frank is buried, to pay their respects. The ride is expected to last about four hours and end at the Waseca American Legion in time for the spaghetti dinner. An

ambulance from the North Memorial Ambulance Service will accompany the riders. For non-riders, the American Legion doors will open at 5 p.m. and the dinner will begin at 5:30. Silent auction items will be available for viewing and bids; door prizes will be drawn for periodically. Donations in the lead-up to the benefit have been generous. Already, over \$2,000 in cash donations have been given, and 13 auction items have been collected with more promised. The items on the silent auction include a number of big ticket items: a guitar, a side of beef, and family passes for four to the attractions at the Mall of America. Most donations have been from individuals, but a number of local businesses and artisans have contributed, including Past and Present, Waseca Music, the Speckled Hen, Peace 'n' Time Candles, and Tim's Custom Engraving. Donation intake and ticket presales are continuing until September 9, the day before the benefit. Tickets are \$8 in advance or \$10 at the door. For both ticket purchases and donations, contact Brandon at 507-363-1569 or hafmemorial@outlook.com.

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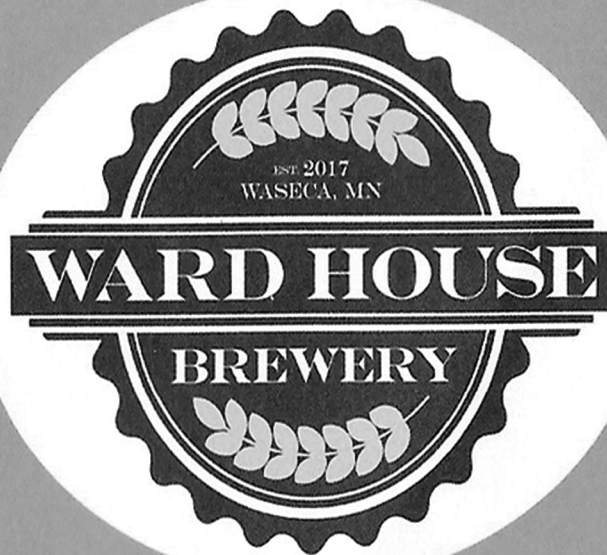
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Sportsmen's club archery range

By **TRISTAN JENSEN**
Staff Writer

A new archery range had its grand opening at the New Richland Area Sportsmen's Club Monday, August 22, 2022. The range consists of three targets at varying distances suitable for sporting arrowheads, one for shooting broadhead arrows, and one for cross-bow usage, and is located behind the treeline near the clubhouse. For its grand opening, the New Richland Area Sportsmen's Club held a ribbon-cutting ceremony, hired a food truck from Lucia's Cocina and Catering, and invited area folks to bring lawn chairs and drinks and enjoy the evening.

The location of the new archery range was, a few months ago, wild with trees and brush. The project to transform the space was conceptualized this past April, and funding was sought prior to commencing the four-month construction process. The New Richland Area Foundation provided a \$500 grant; New Richland Liquor donated lumber for the target stands. Remaining costs were paid from the New Richland Area Sportsmen's Club's own funds. Brush clearing comprised much of the heavy labor. Trees needed to be cut, and Jerry Ibberson reports three or four full truckloads of brush needed to be hauled away. Brush clearing fell to Ibberson and Robert Tackett and his family; David Wallin's Landscaping Design donated time and trucks for hauling. Lee Mendenhall worked with Ibberson to build the stands for the targets and planned and scheduled each phase of construction to keep the project on track and ensure its success. Rick Rugroden, owner of R-Strings and Cables in Waseca and third place winner in the 2022 Indoor Nationals, volunteered his expertise regarding the layout design and the making of the range's signage.

The archery range is open to all key-



POISED - Zoie Thompson, Rick Rugroden, and Jerry Ibberson poised to shoot at the new New Richland Area Sportsmen's Club archery range. Pioneer photos by Tristan Jensen



GRAND OPENING - Robert Tackett, Lee Mendenhall, Rick Rugroden, and Jerry Ibberson cut the ribbon on the archery range which they all worked to make.

carrying members of the New Richland Area Sportsmen's Club. Those interested can join the club for a yearly cost of \$20, plus an additional \$5 for a key, at Budach's Implements, New Richland Liquor, and Gamble's. Membership includes access to a trap shooting area and ranges for rifles, pistols, and shotguns, a covered barbecue patio, a lodge for indoor gatherings, and a natural plant and flower garden. The New Richland Area Sportsmen's Club also hosts classes on Concealed Carry of a Weapon, Basic First Aid, Self-Defense, and, newly, Archery, and sponsors many local outdoors events. The club meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month, and is always looking to expand its lineup of outdoor activities to meet the needs and desires of the New Richland Area community.



The team which performed the bulk of the labor to create the new range. From left: Jerry Ibberson, Robert Tackett, volunteer, (children) Melina Tackett, and Blayden Tackett. Not pictured - Ivan Osbeda and Owen Rivera.

Budget work session August 31

By **JESSICA LUTGENS**
Staff Writer

The New Richland City Council heard from a representative from the soil and water conservation district during its second meeting of the month on Monday, Aug. 22. Flooding issues, which have been a major problem in the city for many years, were discussed, along with the possibility of obtaining funding to address the issues in the future. In order to qualify for future funding, it is required that the city participate in discussions with the watershed district via an appointed city representative. With a motion, the council approved appointing the representative present as New Richland's representative for the Le Seuer River Watershed Program.

The care center report was read by Councilperson Loren Skelton, who stated that a contract has been signed with Advanced Health Institute, who will be on-call to send a consultant or other help as needed. The center's interim director is working on a five-year capital plan, and the census continues to be "a little low" as many referrals have had to be declined due

to health concerns that the center is not able to deal with, low staff, and lack of proper equipment.

"Staffing continues to be a huge problem," Skelton said, and it was noted that this is not merely a local issue, but a statewide one.

So far, no qualified individuals have applied for the care center administrator position, and staffing vacancies are as follows: 57% for CNAs, 13% for LPNs, and 40% for RNs.

The care center audit report was presented, having been delayed due to staffing issues within the auditing service. The audit showed roughly \$360,000 in losses from 2020-21, along with the highest ever nursing hours per resident per day. High staff vacancy rates were discussed, not only within the New Richland Care Center but throughout the state.

"At what point do we get concerned?" asked Mayor Gail Schmidt.

"I'd be concerned now," the representative presenting the audit report said. "I don't have any magic solutions, but you're not alone in this."

The care center report and audit report were approved.

NEW RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL

In PeopleService, Shell Johnson noted that she passed the MN Department of Health Water Supply System Operator Class C, and will be testing for the MCPA Wastewater Operator Class C in September. The report was approved.

In the water and street report, it was noted that 28 blue cards were issued in July, resulting in two shutoffs due to non payment. New tires for a tractor were approved at a cost of \$2,500, along with \$489.48 for street signs. The report was approved.

In new business, the council heard a lengthy proposal from Schwickert's regarding a yearly roof maintenance contract. A motion was carried with three votes for and one against to approve the contract at a cost of \$1,900/year with the option of up to \$500 for repairs. Full roof inspections will begin in the spring.

July financials, which were tabled at the last meeting, were approved with a correction, and a budget work session was scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 31 at 6 p.m.

Two letters were received by the council from local residents with concerns. The first was not discussed in any detail, though the council was given copies of the letter for review and possible later discussion. The fact that the letter was anonymously sent was a cause of some concern, though it was stated that it presented "legitimate concerns" with a "certain department."

The second letter addressed issues that occurred with rental of the community room at city hall earlier this summer, including doors being locked during the time of rental, unclear kitchen facilities, and the lack of return on a deposit paid prior to the rental. City Administrator Tony Martens agreed to look into the matter.

In the administrator's report, it was stated that interviews for the Chief of Police position have been scheduled, and budget materials along with preliminary budget information are being worked on. Martens also spoke to the police union representative regarding upcoming negotiations. The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.



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Al Batt’s fan club

ECHOES OF THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING
I have tendonitis.
I have tinnitus, too.
No, I have tendonitis.
What?

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I was at the gas station when a garbage truck pulled in. Those fellows do good work and stand behind it. Satisfaction guaranteed or my garbage back. I filled my car with gas and cleaned the windows and headlights with a squeegee, the poor man’s car wash. I wrote this column in my mind as I squeegeed and I’m sending it telepathically. If you smile for no reason, it might have been me. Or gas.

NEIGHBORS NOW AND THEN

I’ve lived most of my life in an area where rush hour occurs during the harvest season. The neighborhood had an 80th birthday celebration for Bruce Armstrong, who is the Bruce mentioned weekly in this column. That was right neighborly. It was a jollification, but I told Bruce I needed to go home before he got any older. Minnesota goodbyes take forever. I can spend an hour with your hand on the doorknob telling others I have to go. I wish Bruce another 80.

A good neighbor came over to cut up a fallen tree for firewood to heat his home when winter brings a shudder. The winds had been unkind to the tree, if winds can be unkind. I used a wood stove for years until it burned. I should have had a cast iron stove.

A good neighbor ran over one of his wife’s hens. It might have been one that laid blue eggs, which are like golden eggs except not worth as much. It was an accident. The hen hadn’t used the chicken crosswalk and it didn’t look both ways before crossing. I look both ways before crossing my living room. My neighbor didn’t tell his wife. He wasn’t trying to keep a secret. He didn’t have to tell her. She saw him carrying the dead fowl. There hadn’t been time to find a shovel and bury it before anyone missed the chicken, but my neighbor would never do such a thing. He’s no Tony Soprano.

A good neighbor hated to pay taxes. His dime was never your dime. His nephew thought he was cheap, so my neighbor left him a skunk in his will because he didn’t want to leave his nephew without a scent.

I’VE LEARNED
If I had a dime for every time I’m confused, I’d wonder where all those dimes came from.
I’m infernally grapefruit for autocorrect.
The Institute of Unfinished Research found 6 of 10 people.
To be frank, I’d have to change my name.

MUCH OBLIGED
My thanks to Brandon Irwin of Jensales for Creating and wearing the “Al Batt Fan Club, Manchester Chapter” T-shirt.

NATURE NOTES
In the movie “Field of Dreams,” Iowa farmer Ray (Kevin Costner) hears a mysterious voice in his cornfield saying, “If you build it, he will come.” Ray built a baseball diamond on his land. The ghosts of great players came from the field to play ball, led by Shoeless Joe Jackson. The Henderson Hummingbird Hurrah started in the late Dolores Hagen’s backyard in 2008. She had a beautiful garden and loved hummingbirds. Her yard was a buffet for hummingbirds. Flowers and feeders rang like dinner bells. Build it and they will come. The HHH outgrew her yard. The annual August event features hummingbird banding, garden tours, educational displays and windbags like me. Not one hummingbird wore shoes.

A GULL PATROLLED A PARKING LOT, HOPING TO FIND A CROP OF FRENCH FRIES GROWING THERE.
I walked the trail and then sat on a memorial bench. I’m drawn to those seats. I listened and looked, and heard killdeer, sometimes called the chattering plovers or noisy plovers. The collective noun for killdeer is “season.” I saw a bald eagle nest, constructed without the use of duct tape. Bald eagle nests are huge. They look like upside-down Volkswagen Beetles in a tree. I’ve never seen an upside-down VW Beetle in a tree, but I imagine it resembling an eagle nest. I saw a Falcon in a tree once. The nest is vast, but has little closet space. An eagle is an A-list guest. I suspect there is someone who keeps feeders filled with fish sticks in the hopes one might visit.
The Royal Guild of the Stable Fly Appreciation Club met. Only spiders were in attendance. There are two species of spiders in Minnesota—inside and outside. Truthfully, there are 406 species confirmed in the state.

MEETING ADJOURNED
Be kind and kinder.

When I moved out, people reminded me of that. It was great that we could joke about stuff like that.”
Kim Huxford, a 1973 Waldorf-Pemberton graduate, was the last speaker of the night and shared memories of playing around in Waldorf. “This town had it all,” he reminisced. “Two cafes, a nice park, and every kid had a bike. You felt safe in this town. There was a nice community.”
Mayor Rob Wilkening offered closing remarks and stated that he wants to keep the school in Waldorf. “It’s been difficult to do so,” he admitted. “With Covid-19, it’s been a struggle keeping this building. But when I came to this town, I saw the potential in this building. We can use it and keep it up and running.”
Waldorf Days concluded with a Polka service at the school on Sunday followed by a pancake breakfast.
The celebration showed that there are many things for citizens of Waldorf to take pride in: things that should not be allowed to fade into the past.
“This town has potential,” Wilkening concluded. “I don’t want to see this city be forgotten.”



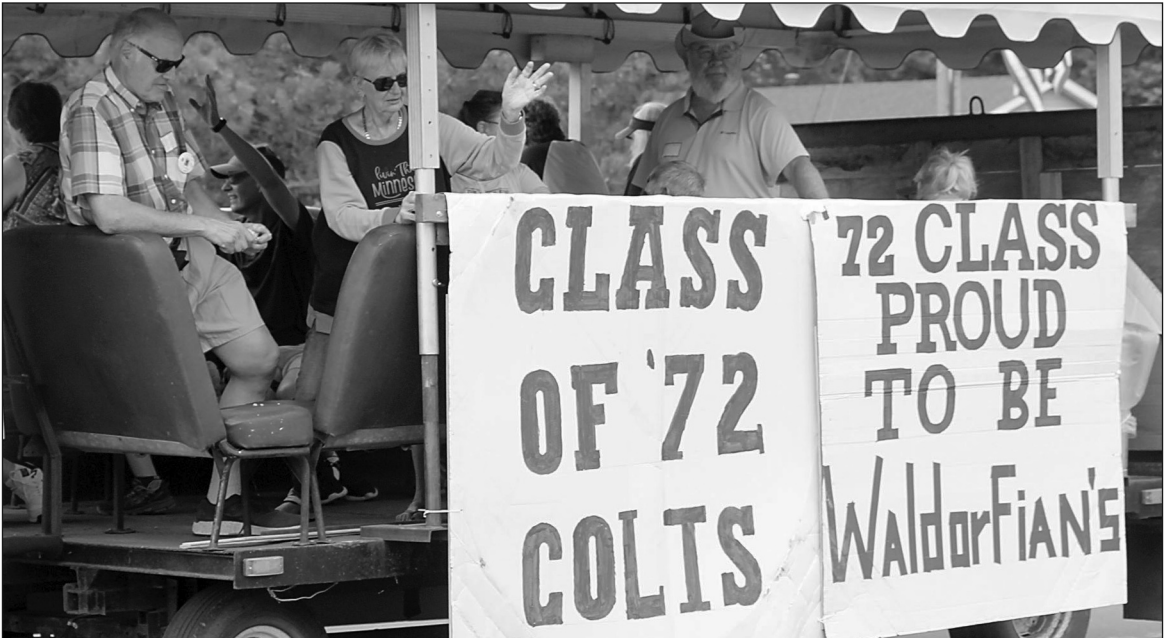
Waldorf Class of 1960. They were the last “Waldorf-only” class before the school consolidated with Pemberton.



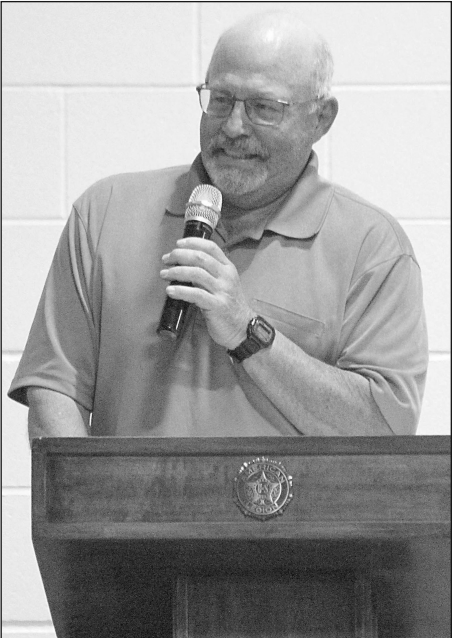
Parade Grand Marshall Judy Joecks, left, and her daughter Gail Joecks.



The Waldorf American Legion color guard headed the parade. Phil Marquardt, right, led the march.



The Waldorf-Pemberton Class of 1972 nicknamed themselves “The Waldorfians.” One of the members to the left is Dan Zander.



Former WP science teacher and former Waldorf Mayor Bruce Urbatch



Mike’s band, featuring graduates of Waldorf-Pemberton, is a quintet with two trumpets, a French horn, trombone, and tuba.



Dale Groskreutz spent about 30 hours making a replica of his barn. The project features wood straight from the barn.

■ Waldorf

from Page 1

As Witt repeated many times in her speech, “Times changed.” Even when it became clear that the Waldorf-Pemberton schools faced inevitable closure, she remembers that the communities held onto their school as long as possible, until 1991, when the district joined with Janesville.
One thing that didn’t change, however, was the coverage of the Waldorf-Pemberton school district by the New Richland Star. “Margaret Engesser was always around with her little notepad jotting things down,” Witt remembered. “She came every Tuesday to get the latest on what was going on at the school.”
The next speaker was former Waldorf mayor Bruce Urbatch, who was a junior and senior high biology teacher from 1979 until spring 1991. He shared fond memories of his time in the school and of the community itself.
“Since I’m from Iowa, people always joked I was an outsider.



Jim Britton displayed his Oldsmobile Cutlass at the Vintage Car and Tractor show.

Photos by Michael Roy



A few members of the Waldorf-Pemberton Class of ‘81, who nicknamed themselves the “Class Acts”



About 15 members of the Waldorf-Pemberton class of 1970 rode in the parade.



Keri Bohnert of Lipstick and Cattle, one of the vendors at Waldorf Days

OBITUARIES

John B. Slattery

John B. Slattery, age 75 of Waseca, passed away at his home on the morning of Thursday, August 25, 2022.

Born in Waseca on June 1, 1947, John was the son of Robert and Luella (Miller) Slattery. He attended school in Waseca and graduated from Waseca Central High School with the class of 1965. He served his country in the Army National Guard for seven years, and on July 24, 1971 John was married to his wife, Jean, in Morristown. He worked at Bird's Eye Foods in Waseca for 52 years, drove school busses for Clemons Bus Service for over twenty years, helped friends and family with spring and fall farm work, and spent his last four working years with the City of Waseca. He was one of the founding members of the Waseca County Sheriff's Posse, attended Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Waterville, and enjoyed snowmobiling, motocross, and caring for and riding horses.

John is survived by his wife, Jean of Waseca; six children, Jude (Krystal) Slattery of Waseca, Joe (Jeni) Slattery of Hastings, Johnny "Lenny" Slattery and his significant other Rachael Blumh of Janesville, Jimmy Slattery of Waseca, Jay Slattery of Waseca, and Julie (Dustin) Harkins of Apple Valley; thirteen grandchildren, Maddie, Carson, Emily, Ta-



John Slattery

kara, Shannon, Jackson, Shea, Jayden, Oscar, Caitlin, Irving, Gabriella, and Harper; and two brothers, Bill (Jackie) Slattery of Crosby, and Jerry Slattery of Shakopee; and many other special relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents; one sister, Dorothy Kaupa, and numerous others on both sides of his family.

John chose to donate his body to the Mayo Clinic Anatomical Bequest Program. A public visitation to celebrate John will be held from 4-6 p.m. on Saturday, September 10, 2022 at the State Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca. dennisfuneralhomes.com

Maxine Fern Burmeister

Maxine Fern Burmeister, age 94, formerly of Waseca, died on Sunday, August 21, 2022 in Golden Valley.

Born on December 27, 1927, in Humboldt, Iowa to Melvin and Fern (Fevold) Lind. Maxine grew up in Badger, Iowa where she was baptized, confirmed, and married at Badger Lutheran Church. Maxine graduated from Fort Dodge High School. On October 14, 1951, Maxine was united in marriage to Merlyn Burmeister. They lived in Wauke, Iowa before moving to Waseca in 1977. Maxine and Merlyn shared 57 years of marriage before Merlyn passed away on July 26, 2009.

Maxine's faith and family were the foundation of her life. She was most recently a member of

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Plymouth. She enjoyed tending to her flower and vegetable gardens, canning and baking, and any time that was spent with her family.

Maxine is survived by her daughter, Candace (Tony) Nelson and their son, Bridger Nelson; daughter-in-law, Brenda Burmeister and her daughter, Ashley (Chase) Ledbetter, three great grandchildren; sister, Eleanor Heitner; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Preceded in death by her parents; husband; two son's: William and Timothy Burmeister; brother, Harold (Helen) Lind; sister, Lorraine (Robert) Skinner; and her brother-in-law, August Heitner.

A private family graveside service was held at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca.

Develop champions, graduate leaders

New athletic director brings fresh perspective

By MICHAEL ROY
Publisher

New Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP) athletic director Paul Brunner describes the treatment he received from other JWP staff members during his first four weeks on the job as "kind" and "welcoming."

Brunner comes from a different world than the one of small-town Janesville, having grown up in Lakeville, Minnesota and having earned his Master's Degree in Leadership from North Central University in Minneapolis.

However, he can relate to the feel of a small school in a way. He attended a K-12 private school called Christian Life Academy (now defunct), a Class A school like JWP.

But working in a high school, let alone a small-town one? That's a different perspective altogether for Brunner. "Immediately after graduating in 2014, I worked at North Central University for eight more years before coming here," he explains.

During his tenure working at his alma mater, he was the head coach for the women's basketball team, an associate athletic administrator, and helped coach the women's golf team for two years. He considered coaching to be his first job and his role in administration as a secondary position. And it showed.

In his last year as head coach, the NCU basketball team had a 24-5 record and made it to the NCAA Division III National Championship.

And it's that same work ethic he's bringing to JWP.

So...why JWP instead of a place closer to the Twin Cities? "My wife is from Glenwood, a city that has the same small-town dynamic as Janesville," he explains.

According to him, he was open to all available options. But he does admit that the small-town feel was appealing to him. "I was especially interested because of the value that athletics can bring to a community like Janesville. High school athletics is supposed to bring people together."

Brunner also has a vision laid out for his role at JWP. "My overall mission and vision for our athletic department is to develop champions and graduate leaders," he states. "It's something I spoke to the coaches about, and that is what I want to do in this position."

How does he plan on doing that? Through the four C's: Classroom, character of students, community, and competition. "Those are the areas of emphasis for our department."

Brunner is definitely the right fit for the role, and he is excited to learn about JWP and its place in the Gopher Conference. His experience with the conference is limited as he never played against any of its schools. His only knowledge comes from recruiting students from member schools to North Central University.

"My job was to recruit students in high school to our college," Brunner



AWARENESS — New JWP athletic director Paul Brunner has enjoyed his first month on the job and already feels like a Bulldog.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

elaborates. "We recruited many students from the Gopher Conference."

Brunner emphasizes his gratitude and optimism for his new role as JWP's athletic director. "I am grateful to be able to serve the community of JWP, its students, and its staff," he states. "My role is to find ways to support everyone and enhance their experience. I want to make students' experience better."

He recognizes there is a lot to learn in his first year, from adjusting schedules to learning about the facilities at the school. "There's going to be a learning curve for sure," he admits. "But it's a group effort. It takes everybody to be successful."

Brunner told JWP coaches: "Winning is a goal we have, but that's not the purpose." He elaborates, "Our purpose is to develop young men and

women in school, build relationships, and provide an environment where they can thrive in activities."

What's made his new role easier is the relationship he's built with former athletic director Ryan Luedtke. "He's been great and kind to me," Brunner says. "He's open in helping me and answering my questions. He definitely added a lot of value during his time as athletic director at JWP."

After nearly a month in his position, Brunner is ready for the school season to begin. He is in the process of moving his family from the Twin Cities to Waseca. He will also have a son who will start preschool as a Bulldog. "Family is important to me, and I'm excited to bring my wife and kids closer to Janesville!"

From parent to staff member

Malzahn new assistant at Trinity

By MICHAEL ROY
Publisher

Trinity Lutheran School of Janesville has a new administrative assistant. Jacqie Malzahn is enjoying her first month on the job, and can't wait for school to resume this fall.

"This job has been a blessing," she states.

Malzahn is very familiar with the Lutheran school setting. She grew up in Truman and attended school at St. Paul's Lutheran, eventually graduating from Truman's public system. She attended the pre-med program at the University of Minnesota Duluth and earned her degree in biology with a minor in psychology.

"I was going to be a doctor," she explains. "But I decided that wasn't the path I wanted to take."

Instead, she withdrew from the pre-med track and went back to school to get her certified medical assistant (CMA) certificate and started working in the Mankato Clinic's endoscopy center in 2010. However, she still wasn't satisfied with the career path she took. "Working during the Covid pandemic wore me down to the point that I was ready for a break from the medical field. I wanted a change of pace."

As soon as she thought about taking a break, "God provided." Long-time office assistant Marylynn

Riesch decided to retire after many years at Trinity Lutheran Schools.

Malzahn was very familiar with both Janesville and Trinity. "My family and I have lived in Janesville for 12 years," she shares. "I preferred a small town with a Christian elementary school."

When she heard Riesch was retiring, she saw it as a great opportunity to change her life a bit. "The move made sense," she says. "My kids attend Trinity, and we live five blocks away from the school."

Malzahn accepted the position and started in early August. As an indoctrination, Riesch gave her two and half weeks of training before officially retiring.

"I like to joke that I learned all of Marylynn's secrets," she explains. "I thought about making a cheat sheet for when people ask me questions called, 'What would Marylynn do?' She's passed down a lot of great information to me. I definitely have big shoes to fill."

In her first few weeks as the administrative assistant, Malzahn has already felt the many changes. As she describes it, "I was working my tail off at the Mankato Clinic. Here, I am still very busy, but it's a different type of busy. I'm not exhausted to the point where I can't hang out with my family anymore."

While she's not doing as much



AWARENESS — New Trinity Lutheran School assistant Jacqie Malzahn used to work as a certified medical assistant.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

running around as she used to at the clinic, she still plays an important role in keeping Trinity Schools running. "I wait on the principal as much as possible," Malzahn explains. "I also help grease the gears of the school to help keep things flowing."

She admits that there have been quite a few things to learn. "I didn't know how much was involved in getting the school running. As a parent, you don't realize how much is needed to make it all run smoothly for the students, staff, and families. It gives a unique perspective going from a parent on the outside to a staff member on the inside."

She also has an added apprecia-

tion of the teachers and other staff at Trinity Lutheran. "They are a great group of people," she states. "They all have really good ideas and care about the kids. I have a lot more awareness about what the teachers do within a smaller school like ours."

Malzahn expects to acquire a more complete understanding of her position when school is in session. But so far, she's liking everything about her job and the closeness of the Trinity Lutheran community.

"Like I said, it's a different type of busy," Malzahn says. "But I love a good challenge. I feel like I'm fitting in pretty well."



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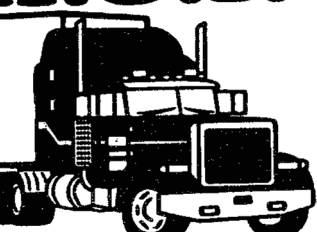
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Dahle takes over for Dahle

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Staff Writer

With the announced retirement of principal LeAnn Dahle from Sacred Heart Elementary School in Waseca in April of 2022, Sacred Heart teacher Chris Dahle stepped into the position July 1st for the upcoming 2022 school year.

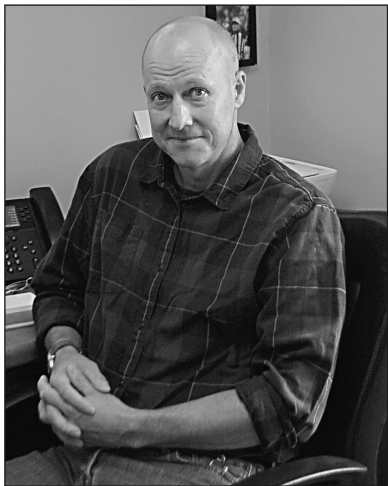
Dahle has been a teacher for about ten years after his time in the service as a Platoon Sergeant in the marines, spending six and a half years in the reserves and half a year in active duty. The instruction and teaching involved with the marines inspired Dahle to become a teacher. He got his degree at the College of St. Scho-

lastica along with a teaching license and master's degree. After a horrible first day teaching because the kids knew that Dahle was new, he found a love for the profession and kept on wanting to teach. Dahle started with a year at Hartley, long term subbing at WEM and finally landing at Sacred Heart teaching 3rd grade for five years and 4th grade for two. As for the principal position, Dahle thinks it seems like a natural progression although he expresses how much he is going to miss the classroom.

LeAnn, former principal at the school for twenty years, is there to help Dahle as he moves into this role

and challenge. With supportive staff working at the school, Dahle's first goal and short term plan is to just do things as Leann would do along with continuing her legacy. As someone who has been at the Sacred Heart School for multiple years now, Dahle believes that it was his duty to this place to step into this role and with the help and encouragement from LeAnn, become an outstanding administrator like she was.

With the new school year around the corner, Dahle and the 15 staff of teachers, paras, and new fourth-grade teacher Emily Myer, are busy getting ready and preparing with workshops, training, and professional devel-



Chris Dahle

opment days to get ready for the 100 kids coming into Sacred Heart for the school year.

Wisdom, understanding and love

By PASTOR KEN ANDRS
Contributing Writer

My Mom used to quote scripture at me when she was mad. I don't know if she did it on purpose or was just frustrated and trying to get her point across to me. She would say, "Are you listening to me? Pay attention." She usually said this when I was being a dumb kid, but she has been known to say it when I became an adult with my own kids.

There are times in our lives when we need someone to help us get our attention back up and running. There are things we need to learn and grow through to become better adults and better followers of Jesus. How do we know when we are lacking? How do we learn to be better followers of Jesus? The simple answers and most profitable are to read our Bible and pray, go to church, and learn from



The Pastor's Column

those more mature in the faith.

The harder parts of growth in faith are to ask the deeper questions. Once you are consistently reading your Bible, actively praying, seeking to be in fellowship, and being active in serving your community, both inside and outside the church, then you can start to ask, "Lord, where am I lacking?"

King Solomon in Proverbs 4 tells of how King David spoke to Him in a similar way to my mother speaking to me:

3 When I was a boy in my father's

house,

still tender, and an only child of my mother,

4 he taught me and said,

"Lay hold of my words with all your heart;

keep my commands and you will live.

5 Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them.

6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;

love her, and she will watch over you.

7 Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom.

Though it cost all you have, get understanding.

There is a warning to life and faithfulness from the proverbs that is meant to get our attention. We have been asked to gain wisdom and understanding. Wisdom takes time, intention, and resolve. We must pursue wisdom daily, we must purposefully ask God to grant us wisdom and to help us to understand where and how it is to be applied, and finally we must not forget the wisdom that was granted to us, rather we must use it with an intentional resolve.

I hope there never comes a day where I do not pursue wisdom and understanding, where I never fail to listen and pay attention, just as I was taught to as a child.

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History of Sacred Heart

The following was taken out of *The History of Sacred Heart Parish and Schools according to the Sacred Heart Schools All-School Reunion booklet of 1987.*

The first Catholic church in Waseca County was at St. Mary's, but, by 1869, the village of Waseca had been incorporated and four Catholic families met to organize a parish. The meeting was held on October 24, 1869, at the home of Thomas White with Jerome Madden, Sr., John Collins, and Gottlieb Buchler in attendance. Before this time the "parish" had been served by priests from Owatonna and Faribault, and Mass was said in private homes or a vacant store owned by Jerome Madden.

The first church, which faced south, was erected in the spring of 1874 under Father A. Hurley (or Harley, or Haley) of Faribault with the first resident pastor, Father Alexander Christie, arriving about 1876.

About this time the Sisters of St. Francis were asked to found a school in Waseca, and Mother Alfred visited to carry out the wishes of Archbishop Grace. However, agreement could not be reached with the parish as to the site, and the project was never carried out. Ten years later, according to Child's History, the "largest and most important building" erected in the year 1887 in Waseca was the Catholic Seminary.

Under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Child and Reverend Alexander Christie, the building was constructed on the present site of Sacred Heart School. The History of Steele and Waseca County says: "The west wing is 40 x 70 feet in size and well constructed of brick. The center of the edifice was built during the summer of 1887, is 30 x 60 feet in size, and is surmounted by a handsome belfry. It is the intention to complete the building in 1888 with a wing the exact counterpart of the other. The academy is in charge of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, an English order, of which there are only four or five communities in the United States."

Father Christie was also responsible for the construction of the "old rectory" in approximately 1880.

A two-story frame building, it continued to serve as Sacred Heart rectory for 70 years or more.

In 1890 Father Christie moved from Waseca, and Father James J. Treanor, then pastor of St. Mary's, came to Waseca to assume the pastorate of Sacred Heart. During his stay in Waseca, the present church building was constructed. The cornerstone was blessed in 1899, and the building completed in 1900. Child's History states: "This year (probably 1898) plans were made for a new church building by the Catholics of Waseca. It is planned to be 50 x 134 feet — the architecture to be Romanesque in treatment; to be constructed of pressed brick, the tower to be 125 feet in height, the total seating capacity 1,000, and to be one of the finest churches in southern Minnesota."

In 1905 the administration of the academy was transferred to the Sisters of St. Francis. They continued to operate the academy until the 1923 when, with the constant growth of Sacred Heart Parish and School, came the need for more education space. Under the direction of Monsignor J.J. Treanor, the "old" school was built in 1923 and dedicated on December 26, 1923 by Bishop Heffron. Serving as both grade school and high school, the building, which was much larger than was needed at the time it was built, was adequate for a quarter of a century.

The 1950s showed another spurt of growth in the parish with the construction of a new rectory, an addition to the grade school, a new convent, the addition of the church hall, and the building of the new high school. The first of these was an eleven-room rectory built in 1950-1951. The two-story building was built of brick veneer construction under the supervision of Reverend John McShane. It has been the residence of four successive pastors: Monsignor A.E. Kuisle, Reverend Donald Leary, Reverend Francis Kunz, and the present pastor, Monsignor Joseph McGinnis.

Also in 1951 came a \$30,000 addition to the present Treanor-Campion Center. It included two additions, one on the east end of the building and one on the west, providing a room on each floor.

As the school continued to grow, so came the need for larger, more

adequate housing for the Sisters who taught here.

The old convent, which was located southeast of the present Treanor-Campion Center, was deteriorating badly; in 1955, the new (present) convent was added to the Sacred Heart building complex.

It consisted of fourteen bedrooms, a full basement, a chapel, as well as community rooms, a kitchen, and a dining room. In later years with fewer Sisters living here, parts of the building were remodeled to serve as C.C.D. classrooms.

In 1956 the church hall was added at the basement level of the church to serve as a parish dining hall and school cafeteria.

Prior to that time, school hot lunches had been served in the school gym with what is now the Treanor-Campion dining room serving as a kitchen.

The church building remained much the same until 1966 when Vatican II changes were implemented. At that time the large, wooden altars were dismantled, the decor greatly simplified, and the altar placed to face the congregation. This process was completed in 1967. Several years later, additions were made to the altar which brought the decor to its present status.

The present elementary school was erected in 1957-1958 to serve as the high school to approximately 120 students. The brick building with eleven classrooms was completed before the opening of school in 1958. It included a chemistry lab, a home economics lab, and a faculty lounge on the second floor with a library and an office on the first floor.

The high school remained as such under the direction of the Sisters of St. Francis and additional lay faculty until the spring of 1971.

In October, 1967, the Parish Council, composed of a general council and five separate commissions, was formed under the guidance of Reverend Donald Leary. The Education Commission undertook the task of evaluating Sacred Heart and considering its future. Although the grade building was outdated and overcrowded, it was decided to continue its high school. Under this plan, Sacred Heart students were able to participate in classes not offered at Sacred Heart such as art, foreign languages, and industrial arts. In 1971 it was the opinion of the Parish Council that it would no longer be feasible to continue the operation of both a high school and a grade school. Plans were made to close Sacred Heart High School, and the last class graduated in the spring of 1971. Grades 5 through 12 were transferred to the public school system, and the high school building was adapted to meet the needs of grades 1 through 4. The old grade school building was used for grade school physical education classes, and part of the building was used by the Day Activity Center.

The last addition to the parish came in September of 1979 in the form of the Treanor-Campion Center which is housed in the "old" school building. Named after Monsignor J.J. Treanor, under whose direction the old school was built, and Dan Campion, who left a large sum of money to the parish for educational purposes, the Treanor-Campion Center provides beautifully remodeled classrooms for the C.C.D. program, physical education facilities for the grade school, and meeting places for the members of the parish.

Presently Sacred Heart Elementary School has an enrollment of 176 students in grades 1 through 4. Still under the direction of the Sisters of St. Francis, and with additional, excellent lay faculty, the school strives to keep student-teacher ratio at a minimum. The staff includes specialized instructors in reading, math, and physical education. The basic curriculum includes reading, math, religion, science, social studies, physical education, and music in facilities consisting of eight classrooms, library learning center, and gymnasium. Support services include a school psychologist, a Title I reading and math program, a speech therapist, a school nurse, a hot lunch program, and many volunteers in various areas.

Compiled by: Karel Miller Norton ('65), Phyllis Lynch Poehler ('35), and Barb James ('61)

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Ridiculous but valuable

Nightmares serve useful purpose

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

Editorial Note: The graphic to the right was created by Star Eagle Production Manager and famous artist, Reed Waller, at the request of Deb Bently. Deb spoke with instructors from four area schools, including NRHEG, about the types of dreams they have prior to the start of a new school year. Here is what she learned:

“On any given day, it’s impossible to guess what might happen,” says one area classroom instructor.

Waseca language arts teacher Karen Pfarr Anderson remembers the day her ceiling-mounted projector crashed to the floor during class. JWP sixth-grade instructor Jace Emory points to his newly remodeled classroom where desks, books, and decorations are stacked on top of and among each other. “Teachers do a lot more than teach,” he observes.

WEM secondary school counselor Bridgette Reuvers mentions sleeping with Post-it notes next to her bed. “I don’t want to ever again wake up in the middle of the night with a fantastic insight, and then forget it before morning,” she explains. NRHEG middle school language arts teacher Mark Domeier shares a similar sentiment: “I had this fantastic epiphany, “ he remembers, “and I thought I would remember it. But it’s just gone.”

Turns out, starting conversations about sleep and dreams with any group of teachers will lead to an inescapable conclusion: What they do is truly inseparable from who they are. One teacher observes, “People think we have our summers ‘off,’ but almost as soon as one year ends, I’m getting ready for the next one.”

Her point is perhaps best illustrated by “summer nightmares.”

“I think every teacher has had the one where they wake up and their clock says it’s 8:47 a.m.,” mentions JWP’s Jace Emory. “The principal or the superintendent calls and says they’re watching the class, but why isn’t the teacher there...”

“Then there’s the overcrowded classroom: There are supposed to be 20 students, but there are 45.

“Or the ‘sass-back’ dream, where everybody’s talking back.”

Another standard among elementary teachers, mentions Steph Watts of JWP is “I have to take my students somewhere and I don’t know where I am in the building. So we just keep wandering around.”

In an alternate version, WEM’s Carrie Brown has dreamt that, “There’s a fire, and I don’t know where the door is, so I end up breaking a window.”

Or a rather universal nightmare: “The copy machine’s not functioning, and I won’t be able to get my materials ready for class.”

As a junior high girls basketball coach, JWP’s Emory recalls that, “In a dream, your team never wins. It’s like they’re wearing concrete shoes. Every shot misses.”

For many teachers, the “start-of-year” nightmares begin in August. Others report having them all year. “In what other position,” asks NRHEG family and consumer sciences teacher Kelly Delacruz, “do people have a ‘first day of school’ every week?”

Because her classroom equipment includes sewing machines and cooking equipment (read as “needles and knives”) there is plenty to be concerned about. “I think the dreams are my brain doing everything it can to make sure things go right,” says Delacruz. “By giving me these vivid dreams about what can go wrong, it’s making sure I stay alert.”

JWP’s Tammy Barnes concurs. “[Teaching] is more than a job. It consumes your thoughts.

“We’re always trying to think 10 steps ahead,” she says. “Sometimes we need to make quick-pivot, turn-on-a-dime changes, and we’re doing what we can to be ready.” Barnes remembers a dream in which, on the first day of school, she began reading off her roster of students and no one in the classroom was responding. Her solution, in the dream, was to tell her elementary students to “choose a name you like.” Each of them was to take one of the premade name

tags and “be that person for today.”

In a similar vein, another common teacher nightmare is arriving at school on the first day completely unprepared. “I’m in my classroom,” one NRHEG secondary teacher describes. “The kids are milling around and I don’t know what their names are. I don’t know what class it is, so I don’t know what materials I’m supposed to teach them. The bell rings, for some reason after only a few minutes, and the next set of kids comes in. I don’t know who they are, either, or what subject they’re here to learn.

“Finally, I thought to myself, ‘I would never let this happen. This must be a dream!’ And I woke up.”

JWP’s Emory remembers, even though he is a sixth-grade classroom teacher, dreaming one time that he was the choir director: It was one week before a big concert, and he had no idea where to begin.

And why all these dreams? “In our heart of hearts, we want things to go right,” says Emory. “Maybe the dreams help us be more adaptable. After all, adapting is what we do all the time.”

“It’s the excitement of starting a new year,” declares JWP band director Adam Hille, who admits his start-of-year nightmares are pretty mild. “Oh, the kids forgetting their music and things like that,” he describes. “But really, I think it’s my mind saying, ‘Okay, let’s get ready to do this!’”

“We’re completely connected to what we do,” says WEM teacher Lisa Becker. “We care about our students, and that doesn’t change over the summer.” Becker describes one dream in which a student escaped her and was lost after running out of the building. “I woke up sobbing,” she remembers. In contrast, she also dreamt about one of her real-life students who was wheelchair bound and unable to walk or talk. In the dream, the student “got up and walked across the stage to receive her diploma,” remembers Becker with a smile. Then, smiling even more broadly, she adds, “She also spoke to me. I can still hear it: ‘Hi, Mrs. Becker,’ she said with this perky voice and this big smile. It was a fantastic dream.”

WEM’s Carrie Brown says, “I’m both a teacher and a mom. I know how much trust I place in my children’s teachers. I want to be worthy of that same trust.”

When it comes to back-to-school dreams, perhaps the most vivid is one recalled by JWP’s Liz Winters. Now a Title I coordinator, she had the dream while still teaching third grade, about 10 years ago. Remembering it still makes her laugh.

In the dream, she arrives in her third-grade classroom on the first day of school only to be informed that the school has implemented some new policies. One of them is that, in order to increase their understanding and appreciation for each others’ jobs, teachers are being randomly assigned to other levels of instruction. She is now in charge of the kindergarteners.

“But I don’t have a circle time rug!” she protests.

The superintendent is not won over, and Winters is sent to the empty kindergarten room. There she is informed of a second new policy: Teachers are now required to pick up their own students. In their own cars. Without mileage reimbursement.

“How will I fit them all in my PT Cruiser?” she asks the superintendent. He is still unyielding, so Winters sets out to pick up her students. After some pandemonium, in the way of dreams, the students are all present.

Doing her best to take control despite feeling completely out of sorts—and still with no circle time rug—Winters is just getting started when the superintendent arrives to explain one more new policy. The school has implemented the use of “therapy” animals, and the kindergarten room has been assigned a puppy. A very young, untrained puppy.

“And it’s recommended that he should be let out every 15 minutes,” recalls Winters, nearly collapsing with laughter. “It was all so vivid, and so completely ridiculous. But it felt very real at the time.”



Advice for helping at-risk youth

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

Surveys and research among school-age students show that between 35 and 40 percent of them talk about and consider suicide. “I know that seems high,” says licensed therapist Samantha Boyer, who regularly works with school-aged students. “But it’s what’s been reported.”

In addition, rates of suicide attempts among young people are not only rising, they are spreading downward. Boyer explains that, in the past, suicide attempts were most prevalent among people 18 to 30 years of age.

“Those numbers have been expanding even down into the middle school years,” says Boyer. “The rates of attempts and completion have been rising.”

It is well known, of course, that adolescence is a tempestuous time when students are moving from childhood into early adulthood. The resulting changes lead to uncertainty, confusion, and vulnerability. “Some become very anxious or depressed. Many of them have experienced some type of trauma.”

At the same time, their classmates and companions are prone to thoughtless actions. “They don’t actually recognize the impact of their words and behaviors,” says Boyer. Social media can also be a contributing factor, since users are often more likely to say cruel or unkind things in an anonymous setting than they would face to face.

For adolescents who feel bullied, Boyer shares this advice: “Don’t be afraid to set boundaries and keep them. You don’t have to be ‘friends’ with someone who makes you feel bad. Block them from your contact list, then leave them blocked.”

She also suggests, “Take breaks from social media. Interact in real time with people who care about you.”

She warns adults that adolescents are unlikely to tell them about any self-destructive thoughts. “They have a mindset that, if they say any-

thing, they will be locked away,” she explains.

“The first step is to be vigilant,” Boyer advises parents. She suggests that caregivers and family members watch for changes in usual behavior, and especially for any tendency to self isolate. They should also truly consider any statements about self harm or feeling useless, rather than dismissing them as “just a phase.”

“Be present. Ask questions. Get at specifics,” advises Boyer. Parents should also consider asking to see their children’s social media accounts and the messages that are being sent and received. “Have open and safe conversations with your children. Do what you can to curb harmful messages before they get out of hand.”

She also wants caregivers to know “they don’t have to take this on

“Be present. Ask questions. Get at specifics.”
— Licensed therapist
Samantha Boyer

alone.

“There is no stigma in reaching out for help,” she says. She also suggests any discomfort adults might feel about contacting a mental health agency should be balanced against the pain they would experience if “the worst” were to happen.

Boyer shares that a brand new resource has recently been created. Caregivers and others can reach out to the number “988,” in much the same way they could use “911” in another type of emergency. The number can be reached by telephone call or texting 24 hours a day.

She explains that the line is for use

at any time. Those considering suicide can call to share their feelings and fears to be “talked down.” People who are concerned about others can make contact for advice and to learn about available resources.

Another resource is Crisis Response for Southeast Minnesota. This consortium of regional mental health providers also offers over-the-phone counseling, and will even go so far as to send a team to callers’ homes. Crisis Response can be reached at 844-274-7472 or online at www.crisis2southeastmn.com.

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