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WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY

No. 50 Vol. I \$2

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■ Pages 10-12



Sports



Senior Christian Rodriguez and head coach Brad Wendland embrace following the Jays' season-ending loss to Fairmont.

Photo by Eli Lutgens

One more game

Rodriguez plays in MN all-star game

By **MICHAEL ROY**
Editor

Although the Waseca football team's year was cut short in the Section 2AAA championship, senior running back Christian Rodriguez had the honor of stepping onto the field one last time with some of the best football players in the state.

Rodriguez represented the Waseca Bluejays in the 49th Annual All-Star Game at US Bank Stadium Saturday, December 10. The game was sponsored by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association and the Minnesota Vikings.

Rodriguez was one of 88 players and 12 coaches to be named to an all-star team. He received the news that he was being invited just before Waseca's November 4 section title game against Fairmont.

"I was excited when I got the news," Rodriguez said. "It was really cool to hear that I made it. I wanted to represent Waseca by working hard and doing well in the game and practices."

His head coach Brad Wendland was not surprised. "When he was chosen, I knew that he would be a great ambassador for Waseca and that he'd fit in well as a player and a teammate," he said. "He is very coachable and unselfish."

Rodriguez was part of the south all-star team, which featured members of schools as small as 9-Man Renville County West to as big as 6A Rosemount. He was one of four running backs on the team. Coach Wendland had some experience coaching the south team in 2019 and gave Rodriguez some sage advice. "I told him to have fun and to develop as many relationships as possible. It will be a good experience to prepare him for college football."

Rodriguez claims the mood

Rodriguez continued on 5

A word from
The Word

A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.
Proverbs 15:1

A string of "coincidences"

Lutheran churches reach out with live nativity panorama

By **DEB BENTLY**
News Editor

Anita Nelson believes there is a point past which "coincidence" is no longer an adequate explanation.

"It's a God thing," she says.

The live outdoor nativity scene which was presented the evenings of Friday and Saturday December 9 and 10—and which was also presented in 2020 and 2021—is definitely a challenging endeavor. With ten different scenes covering Biblical moments from Genesis to James distributed along two blocks' worth of sidewalk, and with 22 actors and many more behind-the-scenes volunteers, the demands and needs might be considered overwhelming. But guess what?

"It always comes together," says Nelson, who conceived the idea back in 2019 when she looked at the brick canopy over the entry to her church, St. Paul's Lutheran, and thought to herself, "Wouldn't that make a nice manger scene?"

Unable to let go of the idea, she asked others for their opinion. "Some thought it couldn't work out," she remembers.

"It's a God thing."
— Anita Nelson

But after receiving permission from her church's pastor, Nelson decided to see what could be accomplished.

"Bit by bit, it all just fell into place," she remembers.

There was a lot of "it all" to keep track of. Backdrops and set pieces had to be

Nativity continued on 3



In one scene of the live nativity panorama, angel Linda Seifert delivers the news to Mary, played by Cindy Kolander, that she will be the mother of the savior.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently



The Waseca County Food Shelf celebrated moving into its new location Thursday Dec. 8, 2022 with a ribbon cutting. From left: Jim Ferch, Ed Frederick, Kristie Biehn, Garry Huckfeldt, Theresa Sunde, Jim Britton, Bernie Gaytko, Kevin Walter, Niki Schaffer, Tom Sankovitz, Bev Herfindahl, Gretchen Priebe, and Sofia Clayton.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

New facility brings new opportunities

By **MICHAEL ROY**
Editor

As Waseca County Food Shelf volunteer and Chamber of Commerce member Bev Herfindahl put it, "It was a long time coming." But the Waseca County Food Shelf found its home Thursday, December 8, next to the Neighborhood Service Center at 203 Third Ave NW.

The food shelf celebrated the move with an open house, a ribbon cutting at 4 p.m., and some brisket served to the public prepared by food shelf volunteer Jim Britton.

Waseca Chamber member Bernie Gaytko highlighted that the food shelf has weathered some difficult complications in its recent past, dealing with ceiling issues in its former home, trusses falling off, and even a fire that set it back from investing in its future. The service had to move temporarily from its one-time location on Second Avenue to Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Herfindahl summarized the food shelf's journey to its new facility. "We've rented a lot of space until now. When we moved to the church, we knew it wasn't handicap accessible. So we needed to be more proactive."

Out of the vacant spaces available in town, the food shelf was unable to find a space which met all its needs and was within its price range—which, Herfindahl admitted, was "pretty minimal." "We decided we had this lot by the Neighborhood Service Center and we would build," she said. "Jim Britton stepped up to make this happen. It's really going to be nice for us in this building."

Britton distributed many thanks, starting with the contractors. "They bent over backwards to get this done," he explained.



AWARDED — After the ribbon cutting, Waseca Chamber of Commerce member Theresa Sunde presented Jim Britton with an award for his dedicated service to the Waseca County Food Shelf and the community.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

It was as if building at the new location was meant to be. Now connected to the thrift store next door, both places can serve as a one-stop shop for those in need of food or clothing.

Britton shared a story about special clothing.

Facility continued on 3



CHRISTMAS - Lucy (left) and Elizabeth King visit with Santa Claus during his second annual trip from the North Pole to the Mill event center in Waseca on Dec. 10.

Pioneer photo by Melanie Piltingsrud

Second annual Christmas at Mill

By **MELANIE PILTINGSRUD**
Staff writer

The Mill Event Center in Waseca was thronging with people on Saturday, December 10 for Christmas at the Mill, an event which took place from noon to 6 p.m., and the ensuing band performance by Los T's from 6 – 9 p.m.

The event, organized by the Matthew R. Petsinger American Family Insurance Agency of Waseca, is an annual event that the community anticipates with eagerness.

Toys-for-Tots was there to accept new, unwrapped toys for needy children, as well as to receive applications for children to receive gifts. The local Toys-for-Tots organization covers the Mankato, Waseca, Blue Earth, Le Sueur, and Nicolette areas. Dave and Nancy Frye, who have been representing Toys-for-Tots for ten years, came from Mankato to participate in the event, handing out goodie bags to both adults and children. Distribution of

Christmas continued on 7

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Finance change for probation services

By **TRISTAN JENSEN**
Staff Writer

It's possible that when the framed county map leapt from the wall at the December 8 meeting of the Waseca County Board of Commissioners, nearly landing on the head of County Attorney Rachel Cornelius, it was to ensure everyone in attendance was still paying attention. Thankfully, Cornelius was unhurt, and the meeting was able to proceed normally.

The Board's meeting was rescheduled to Thursday from Tuesday as the board members attended the annual convention of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) from December 4-7. The highlight of the meeting was an issue from this convention which the commissioners brought to their boardroom — state funding for probationary services. The State of Minnesota requires its counties to provide certain probationary services, including supervision for persons sentenced to community service, and the same regulation outlines state reimbursement for those services. Based on population and services provided, Waseca County should be receiving reimbursement at a rate of 50%, however, according to Jon Shiro from the Court Services Department, it's been between 15 and 20 years since that's been the case. Last year, he reported, the county received approximately 24% reimbursement. Waseca County is one of 87 counties from the AMC intending to support a collaborative work group to address this funding issue with the state legislature; commissioners voted to make their support official. The work group will aim to create an entirely new system—from the formula used to the delivery of funds—to assure funds of this type are handled correctly at the state level and that counties are reimbursed the money they're due. Depending on the outcome of this process, Waseca County may be able to expand its probationary programs, Shiro said.

A retroactive amendment was made to Waseca County's drug court contract with Steele County, effective from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, to account for \$8,223.99 of unexpended funds from the previous year. Much of the agenda consisted of approvals to move funds between expense and reserve accounts for Public Works

County continued on 5



Compostings

by Al Batt

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Days zooming by on jetpacks

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

I need to find a better place to hide the Christmas gifts I've purchased.

It's that time of the year.

And my family can sense my presents.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. If I had some ham, I'd have made myself a ham and cheese sandwich if only I had some cheese. I couldn't complain about the weather. The sun was shining. The days are wearing jetpacks. They zoom by. I don't mind cold weather. What would I do with all my winter clothing without cold weather? Grandma said she could feel the cold in her bones. On a cold, damp day, I find I have inherited that capability.

Meteorologists messed with my mind. They predicted mostly weather—mostly cold, mostly snowy, etc. Weather worries were probable. The problem with meteorologists is they are usually right.

I'd been unable to find watermelon pickles. I thought they played pickleball with beet pickles, but the sport has become so popular, I figured they'd used all the watermelon pickles in pickleball. I needed alternatives and ended up in a convenience store, where I became part of the wrong end of a long line, far back near the roller dogs. Hotdogs and bratwurst in a greasy log—rolling competition on heating elements. I mustered up enough willpower to pass on those delicacies.

My wife and I attended a Christmas party at the home of friends. It was a potluck, which is another word for "yummy." One couple made fruitcake cookies. I enjoy fruitcake and they were delicious. Fruit and cake—what could be wrong with that? One caveat, you shouldn't eat fruitcake in months that begin with an R.

I rang bells for the Salvation Army. A store employee suggested I dispense with the bells and just shake my head. The truth hurts. I tried to convince other men to ring because chicks dig bell ringers. Those guys dismissed me as a ding-a-ling.

CHRISTMAS ODDMENTS

My neighbor Crandall has no Advent calendar. He makes do. Each day, he opens the refrigerator and eats whatever is inside.

Does Santa drive a Holly Davidson?

Do not sit down to wrap Christmas gifts without a plan on how to get back up.

All televised football games end the same way—me waking up.

A combination salad fork/backscratcher is a wonderful gift be-

cause it's not something people buy for themselves.

Mannequin feet are great stocking stuffers.

Nothing says Christmas like someone saying Merry Christmas.

OK, having my dental x-rays made into Christmas cards wasn't my best idea ever.

I watched Santa smoke a cigarette outside a store during my formative years. He said he could blow smoke rings in the shapes of reindeer. He lied. He couldn't. He lied about bringing me a new bicycle, too.

GLAD TIDINGS FROM GENEVA

DeWayne Jensen told me he'd sold his business (Jensen Heating, AC & Plumbing) after 44 years in business. I wish DeWayne and Lauri many years of blissful retirement. They deserve them.

NATURE NOTES

Talking to people from around the state, I'm reminded that deer have never been uniformly distributed across Minnesota. I see many of them in my neighborhood. Watch out for jaywalking deer.

I marveled at the beauty of a tiny eastern screech-owl. It was a red one. This species comes in three colors: red, gray and brown. I've heard it called a shivering owl because of the trembling cry it makes. For years, a few times each week, I saw a red owl. It was a sign on a building. Red Owl was a grocery store chain that opened its first store in Rochester and operated 441 stores in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota. In 1988, the rights to the Red Owl name were secured by the grocery wholesaler SuperValu. The title sequence of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" featured the lead character in a Red Owl meat department.

I love honey. It makes my taste-buds buzz and dance. Bees in France made honey in shades of blue and green, alarming bee-keepers and inspiring scientists to discover the reason was the bees had developed a taste preference for the residue from containers of the candy M&M's processed at a nearby plant.

In another bee story, I learned elephants are terrified of bees. Bees sting elephants around the eyes, behind the ears, in the mouth and inside the trunk. That would scare anyone. Active beehives are used as fences to protect farm crops from foraging elephants in some African and Asian countries and the experiment has had substantial success.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for."—Epicurus.

So, I did something I never thought I would ever do in my entire life.

I bought a planner and started writing things down.

Now, to most people that's just something you do—not that big of a deal. But for some reason, during school when we received planners at the beginning of every year, I hated them. I think I used them for the first few months, but by Christmas, I wanted to get rid of them.

I've come to the decision, though, that planners are necessary. There's a reason Walmart has a whole section devoted to them. If you try to keep every single event in your head, you'll explode. That's a lesson I've learned from working at a newspaper. You need to write as much down as possible.

See, when I joined the newspaper, I thought most of my writing would be for stories. While about 60 percent of that is true, I didn't take into account the other 40 percent of writing: taking notes, writing down important dates and appointments, taking subscriptions, penning contact information onto a random scrap sheet of paper.

Eli, the Pioneer's publisher, has up to five different lists of things he's carrying around all the time. I don't know how he keeps it straight. (Note from Eli: Neither do I) He says he is able to keep a lot of things in his head. But I just don't know how that's possible some-



Music to my Ears

by Michael Roy

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times. (Hence the notebooks designated for stories, advertising, day-to-day, and business management - Eli) I have a hard time keeping lists of assignments straight for two papers. I can't imagine owning two of them. (Three publications total. Mike has forgotten "The Southern Minnesota Golden Link." What's important is having a system that works for me. I generally keep all of the work related to any one publication in one place. So, when I am working on said publication, everything is there, staring me in the face. That's why I need three different "to do" lists: All three sometimes have things happening on the same day.)

The Minnesota Vikings have to be one of the hardest teams to watch with a 10-3 record. That Jets game made me lose my mind. The Lions game? Like, Detroit's getting better and has now won five of their last six games. But come on, guys. You had a chance to clinch the division and you do that?! (Comment from Eli: Hey, Detroit is the

best 6-7 team in the league and we're the worst 10-3 team in league history.) I'd rather talk about high school sports. So, that's what I'm going to do.

It looks like the St. Clair girls' team is hungry to do great things this season. They won their conference last year just to lose to Waseca in the first round of playoffs, so I know they're wanting a chance to reconcile last season. It felt like it was cut too short.

The JWP boys are looking pretty good so far. They upset Bethlehem Academy to get a 2-0 record to start the season. The girls seem to be trending in the right direction. Hopefully with a tough schedule lasting until the end of the year, they can come out of it with a few wins. They have potential to be a good team.

WEM-JWP's wrestlers had a big weekend, defeating some teams that were considered top tier in their own right. Check out how they defeated Byron and Westfield in the sports section of this week's paper.

Waseca's boys' basketball team is working to return to 2020-21 form after a tough season last year. (Eli again: They finished strong last year, knocking NRHEG out of the playoffs and competing with top-seeded Maple River in the second round.) They made their wins against the two teams they've faced so far look way too easy. Hopefully, some competitive teams from bigger schools will provide a true test to see how they can hang with the better teams around the region.

I hope these teams do well this season. I'm especially rooting for JWP because, of course, I graduated from there. But both basketball teams have potential and the wrestling team has a solid chance to have a phenomenal season.

This Week in Music

The Eagles released their fifth studio album, and their biggest one to date, "Hotel California." The album topped the US chart for eight weeks (non-consecutively) and at the 20th Grammy Awards, the Eagles won Record of the Year for it. Worldwide sales now stand at over 32 million, 26 million of those from the US. Singles from the album "Hotel California" and "New Kid in Town" topped the US charts while "Life in the Fast Lane" reached #11.

A final here, a final there, finals everywhere

Welcome to finals week. At least for some unfortunate college folks. For the lucky ones already back home from college, I hope your finals went well—but I am seriously jealous that you are already done with classes and finals.

This semester, I only had finals in one class (although it was actually two finals for the one class) but I had some final writing projects. Because Wednesday was our last day of in person class and lecture, my friends and I decided we wanted to go skating on Thursday. The 3M arena has free skating some days, and it's only five dollars for students. I'm not going to lie, I was extremely excited to go skating again because it's been years (or feels like it's been years) since I've been ice skating.

I remember the free skate days in Waseca at the hockey rink, but I never went. My sister went quite a bit though, so I lived the skating, fun lights, and



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

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crowded spaces through her.

But I've said it before and I'll say it again, I love watching hockey now thanks to being in pep band. Getting in free to big hockey games on a consistent basis is literally the best. So now, being able to go free skating at the same place that the Gopher men's hockey team plays is really exciting. I will have skated on the same ice as Cooley and Knies. The same ice on which the Minnesota Gophers kicked the Badgers'

butts. Watching them win against Wisconsin two days in a row was a great experience, especially as it was my last pep band game of the year, which is really sad, but Spain will be fun.

Although I wish I had played hockey at least once as a kid because I wonder how good I could've been (at least my DI dreams didn't get crushed because I never had them), I remember thinking that I didn't mind being the only cousin who didn't play hockey. Seriously it felt

like everyone else played hockey in my family, but it was fun.

Besides using skating as a stress reliever during this stressful finals week, there's other stuff too. I don't know how other people decide their best way to relax, but I'm going to say mine is napping since I always have to get my daily nap in. Or maybe I nap every day because I'm sleep deprived?

Okay, I looked up ways to stress and here are five: exercise (my daily walk to class, thank you); practice mindfulness (what?); keep a journal (I'm going to say my column is my journal); spending time with pets and loved ones (sadly, my dogs are at home); and laugh every day (ha.ha.ha.).

My determination: "A failure is not always a mistake, it may simply be the best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying." - B. F. Skinner

Monster over my shoulder

Unless you've worked in a newsroom or someplace with similar practices, I'm not sure you can ever truly appreciate the meaning of the word "deadline." It's as if some intimidating monster is circling, drawing in closer and closer. And while you know it can't really hurt you, you also can't forget it's there.

The weekly approach of the monster is in my blood now. I can sense its approach. In fact, it's a whole line of monsters. Work for the next week's issue is already well underway before the current week finishes. The longer I cope with this, the further ahead I can see. At this point, I'm looking at our issues simultaneously in terms of weeks, months, and years. I recognize that many of the decisions I make, many of the new projects I start, are likely to have repercussions far into the future.

Now, while that may sound like a tremendous source of anxiety for some, it's not for me. Quite the opposite.

When I first became an editor at 19, I threw myself into the fire. Dad went into the hospital, and I told myself, due to my upbringing, that when Dad couldn't do the paper, I would. And that happened at 19.

I didn't really have anyone to teach me all the practices, expectations and conventions of the craft, so I taught myself the program Quark, which is specially designed for assembling complex publications. (Note, Dad was and still is incredible in teaching me writing, reporting and much more). Then I went from there. However, I did have mentors and guides to help. Dad wasn't in the hospital forever obviously, so after a couple months I got help from him. In that meantime it was our office production manager Reed Waller and my mother guiding me along the way. Looking back I didn't know how babied I was, even at 19, doing,



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

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well, in my opinion, the most important part of the newspaper—that is, assembling the finished product.

My mother, our do-it-all office helper, would put every story in my inbox and print out every email that needed responding too. Every ad that came in would come across my desk. Simply put, by putting everything literally "right in front of my face," she made sure everything that was supposed to get in the paper, did, indeed, get in. Boy, do I miss those days sometimes. It was fun pressure, because none of it was actually real pressure. I got paid a paycheck and my responsibility was putting the newspaper pages together, writing stories, and a few other tasks, but that was it. I didn't have to run the business. That, in my father's absence, was done by my mother, and when Dad was there, by him. Having my parents as my bosses was almost like having no boss at all—until I wanted things done a different way. I didn't have the unilateral authority that I do now to simply make the decision and make the change.

My approach to managing a newspaper is somewhat different from that used by my parents. Dad was never a numbers guy, but rather an incredible reporter, writer, photographer, interviewer, honestly, the best newsman I know. And mom was the accountant, ad salesperson and office manager (oh and an excellent photographer). But darn is she good at ad sales. A single person possessing their combined skills would make a

near-perfect publisher. But there's a reason they divorced when I was a one-year-old.

So, I joke I got the best of both worlds, professionally, with them as my parents.

Not being a numbers guy, Dad never really planned out a budget. Mom never saw a reason for one either—perhaps her focus was more on getting what was needed to keep the paper running smoothly.

In contrast, I budget out every single expense and know exactly how much the newspaper costs each week, down to what each inch of each issue costs me. So much so that I know how much we have to charge per column inch for advertising. I sometimes joke that, with this formula, the newspaper could easily be run as a non-profit supported by local businesses, because, with it, the more businesses that sign up for advertising, the lower their price would be. It's a simple premise: the more advertising there is, the lower prices need to be to break even. Fantasies aside, Margaret Engesser, longtime publisher of the New Richland Star said publishing was her community service.

Yes, the paper brings in enough to keep operating. Someday, I figure, there might even be enough for me to get a vacation and some time off, but let's just say that monetary profit, at least for now, is an on-again, off-again accomplishment. Regardless of that, I remain incredibly grateful to everyone who makes it possible

for me to do what I do. I heard it said the other day that the greatest priority a person can have is to live in service to others. I hope working on this paper qualifies.

To clarify, when I say "everyone who makes it possible for me to do what I do," I'm talking about our readers, our local advertisers and sponsors, and our incredible staff.

I ran into my great uncle Russell Tesch at the Pheasant Cafe this week. He walked by, said hello and then came back a moment later. He told me, "I prided myself on working 80 hours a week. Looking at your paper, I'd argue you're working more than I did."

Yes, I work a lot. But I love it. They say, you'll never work a day in your life if you love what you do.

It's true, but I do have one caveat. The newspaper is not a one person job. We work with thousands of people, communicate with thousands of people throughout the year. Inevitably, mistakes are made. People don't return a call, an email is accidentally overlooked, or a proper noun doesn't get capitalized. And up until the moment I send the pages to the printer, "throw the dart" if you will (that's our inside joke at the paper), I try to let as few mistakes as possible slip through. Right up until the inevitable moment when I have to stop obsessing and send the finished product to the printer, I continue to search for ways to make every ad, every news article, every headline, an integral part of a valuable, useful, enjoyable, thorough finished publication.

The demands of that task, alongside the need to become financially profitable in order to stay in business, constitute the two biggest weights I feel working as a publisher. So, if you ever wondered what being in newspapers is like, there you have it.



SERVING THE WHOLE OF WASECA COUNTY
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Bits and Pieces

by Dave Zika

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Listing Waseca’s biggest fans

I’m a huge fan of Waseca and everything it has to offer. Its parks, swimming pool, walking and bike trails, and a fantastic school system make the community second to none. The people here are friendly and Waseca is a safe place to raise a family. Oh yes, Clear and Loon Lakes are great places for all-season recreation.

Christmas is coming, so I best not forget; I’m the biggest fan of my wife, Lisa.

Jim Panzram is the ultimate local sports fan. He is retired after working years at Birds Eye, the Fire Department, and as an EMT with North Ambulance. So what does Jim do in his spare time? He goes to ball games. Jim graduated from St. Clair High School, where his dad was a teacher and coach; growing up, he developed a passion for sports.

This fall Jim attended every Waseca home football game. When playoffs began he followed his alma mater, St. Clair-Loyola in all of its playoff games. He also attended a Waseca and Mankato West playoff game.

On Saturdays, he attended all of the MSU Maverick football home games. Over the years he has driven to watch them play at places like Sioux Falls, Winona, and Northern Iowa.

Basketball is also one of his favorites. This winter he will attend almost every Bluejay boys’ and girls’ home game. For big games, he will even travel as far as Lake City and Minneapolis North.

He’s also a gigantic fan of both MSU Maverick boys’ and girls’ basketbal. Jim travels over to Mankato to watch Waseca’s Willingham, Malik and Kyrese, star for the Mavericks. Jim really looks forward to the boys and girls playing on the same day so he can enjoy both games in a single trip. On the girls’ team, Joey Batt from New Ulm is a player he follows; Batt was always a thorn in the side for our Bluejay girls. Jim is also a very knowledgeable student of the game. He can give you a play-by-play of the action and summarize what determined the outcome. He is the ultimate local sports fan.

Edna and Kevin Burns are retired, Kevin from many years at Brown Printing, and Edna from Sacred Heart rectory. They are both still big fans of the Waseca Marching Jays, of which their two children, Jenny and Nathan, were both members. As all good parents should, Edna and Kevin found time to be involved. You name it—sewing uniforms; loading, unloading and hauling the trailer; traveling to competitions—they were involved.

After the kids left the nest, the Burns took time off from the band. Mary Williams beckoned Edna to come back to the Classic, and she decided it was time. Edna has been president of the Marching Jays Classic for the past 12 years and has a passion for the event. She does it all: lines up bands, buses and parking, the parade, the hosts, the field competition, the list goes on.

Edna praised her committee members who make the Classic possible. Mary and Jack Williams, Les and Karen Tloutan, Dan Kimball, graduate band alumni, and a host of others make the fall classic the best show in southern Minnesota. Sometimes the classic may encounter a hiccup, bad weather. Rain and wind haven’t hindered the Classic from being a success; the bands compete indoors and the kids get to perform.

Edna prays to the rain gods for great fall weather before every Classic.

This year’s Marching Classic was special. Covid has affected us immensely the past couple of years. Edna stated it was heartwarming to see people together from all over, watching the parade, field competition, and the kids perform.

Connie and Jim Christiansen are Waseca Public School fans. They are both retired. When I taught sixth grade, Connie was my para. For years she made a big difference with students in my class and the kids all looked forward to working with Commie. When their children, Mark and Amy, were in school, Jim and Connie became involved with Marching Jays. They both helped with the flags, uniforms, and chaperoning band trips. They were also huge basketball fans, going to all of the home games and traveling with friends to many away games.

Back in the day, I was coaching girls’ basketball with John Hanson. It was a special season for me because my daughter, Katie, was a point guard on the team. We finished a basketball game at Mankato East and the team stopped in Mankato for pizza—which had been donated anonymously. I found out later that Jim and Connie were our benefactors. The Christiansens donated more than once. I’ve always wanted to acknowledge the two: Connie and Jim, a heartfelt thank you!

Covid has made it difficult for Connie and Jim and they no longer attend basketball games. They both have health issues and can no longer climb the bleachers. They are still heavily involved with grannies and attend their events at school. They haven’t given up Bluejay basketball. Connie and Jim still listen to Don White and Kugie as they call the play for every game broadcast on the radio.

Tim Loonan is a Farmers Insurance agent here in Waseca. Tim and his wife Dorothy raised four children; all graduated from Waseca, and were involved in sports and extracurricular activities. Tim’s dad was a big sports fan and played some professional baseball. His dad taught him one thing about sports: always give back. That’s what Tim has done in Waseca.

Tim was instrumental in the rebuilding of the community baseball field after it was destroyed by a fire. He also co-coached our Waseca Braves baseball team for five years and was involved in the youth baseball association. Fundraisers, burger fries, spaghetti feeds, youth baseball tournaments, coaching youth baseball, Tim was involved.

Tim’s resume also includes other Waseca sports. He was co-president of the Waseca Basketball Association and coached youth basketball at all levels. Recording stats on the sidelines for the varsity Waseca football team, a youth coach, an official, helping build scoreboards and fields for youth: Tim left his mark in football.

Tim was a huge fan of his father, Jigs, who is now in heaven, smiling down on Tim because he gave back. In today’s world there is a problem getting people involved. “I’m just too busy” seems to be the norm. Maybe we can all learn a lesson from Jigs: Be a fan, get involved, and give something back to our youth.

Meet your neighbor, Barb

Name: Barb Buker	from DQ
Age: I’m not telling	All Time Favorite Movie: Forrest Gump
Hometown: Waseca	My Favorite Activities When I Was Growing Up: Swimming in Clear Lake
Occupation: Shop owner for 30 years	Best Advice I’ve Ever Received: My mom always told me, “Pray daily.”
Family: 3 children and 8 grandchildren; grandparents were entrepreneurs	If I could have lunch with any person throughout history, living or dead, it would be: The first pioneers of Waseca County.
Hobbies: Playing the piano since I was 4	Something about me that would surprise people: I start my flowers early under grow lights in February.
My Dream Vacation Would Be To: Alaska	Favorite Quote: “A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger,” Proverbs 15:1
The Best Thing About Small Town Living: The smiles are recognizable	
Last Good Book I Read: The Bible	
Favorite Food: Ice Cream Cone	



Neighbor Barb said her favorite movie quote is from Forest Gump: “Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re going to get.”



Shepherds Jackie Tieg and Jennifer LaCroix listen as angel Gabe LaCroix advises them to go to Bethlehem.

■ Nativity from Page 1

painted, found, or built. Costumes needed to be acquired.

Two other churches, Christ the King and next door neighbor St. John’s, joined the effort. Seamstresses Jennifer Ross, Audra Ryan and Gwen Johnson agreed to make the costumes—at their own expense. Artists and craftspersons contributed their skills and supplies.

“We started this,” Nelson explains, “because we wanted to reach out to people who might never have set foot inside a church. We wanted to find a way we could comfortably introduce them to the Christmas story.”

From the first, “comfortable” has worked very well. “People can just drive by slowly in their cars and see everything. Children can be in their pajamas. And we can bring the story alive for them.”

This year, nearly 600 cars and about 1,000 people came to the two nights of the event.

There, too, Nelson sees more than coincidence.

“We were blessed with such nice weather,” she says. “It wasn’t par-

ticularly cold, and there was no wind.” Which was good news, of course, both for the 22 “character” volunteers and for the number of spectators willing to spend time outside.

Also beyond coincidence, according to Nelson, was this year’s addition of a live camel. In July, Nelson was on a trip for her company, Accelerate 100, in North Carolina. She had taken a local woman along as an assistant, and one day the woman showed her a text which featured a photo of a baby camel which had just arrived on her neighbor’s - Jim Borchert’s - Ellendale farm.

One phone call later, arrangements had been made. Not only was Borchert willing to make the camel part of the performance, he insisted on being there too, to supervise. Furthermore, he would transport the animal at his own expense. Oh, and one more thing—was there a place for a zebra? While the first response among planners was, no, how could a zebra fit in, one team member pointed out that the first scene of the panorama is creation, and man’s fall into sin. So, yes—there was definitely a place for a zebra, and the donkey, too.

Still, even with the “inexplicable” number of blessings, bringing the live nativity scene to fruition each



This 6-week-old zebra was loaned by the Jim Borchert family of Ellendale. The zebra and a donkey were part of the scene from Genesis, in which God’s promise to send a savior is first shared.



Mark Buker played the role of the Biblical prophet Isaiah, who repeated the promise of a savior. Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

year is demanding and exhausting. About 60 volunteers set everything up beforehand—this year in particularly frigid weather.

“Just when I think to myself, ‘I’m never doing this again,’ a car full of children comes by. They have their

faces pasted to the window, and they have these huge smiles.

“Or someone says, ‘Thank you. This was very meaningful.’ “

“And then we can’t help deciding it was all worth it.”

■ Facility from Page 1

cial needs kids packing food for the school district’s backpack program. “They were helping an old lady, and I just had tears in my eyes,” he said.

There was another situation when Britton was working at the food shelf and he asked a lady if she needed help. “Her husband was a breadwinner who was injured. The family didn’t have any food. I said, ‘That’s what we’re here for.’ ”

The food shelf may have gone through some tough times. But according to Herfindahl, neither supply

nor demand have decreased. “We have unbelievable amounts of food that come in every day,” she claimed. “We can’t keep on top of it all. But it goes out just as fast as it comes in.”

Chamber member Bernie Gaytko asked both Britton and Herfindahl what the biggest need is for the food shelf.

“It will always be money,” Herfindahl replied. “We are still raising funds to pay off costs for constructing the new food shelf. But we appreciate every piece of food or clothing, whatever anyone can donate.”

“Be can buy a lot for a dollar from our non-profit partners like Walmart and Kwik Trip,” Britton added.

Another partner for the Waseca County Food Shelf is Channel One

Regional Food Bank, which works with Waseca and 13 other counties to supply food to local food shelves. Representing the food bank at the open house was its Programs and Agency Services Director Jennifer Belisle.

“We’d like to congratulate you on your new location,” Belisle said. “We’ve been cheering you on through your fire and move. We are grateful to have it as one of our partner food shelves in our 14-county community.”

Before the celebration concluded, Britton gave special thanks to Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Trevor Kanewischer for allowing the food shelf to use their freezers to store items. He gave an additional, tearful thanks to the Waseca Bantam AA

boys’ hockey team.

“We couldn’t have done it without them,” he said. “The boys did most of the work and the adults more or less guided them. It was a tremendous move done within hours.”

If in need of food or clothing, the food shelf encourages area residents to visit the Neighborhood Service Center. “The food shelf has no income guidelines,” Herfindahl assured. “All we ask is that you are in need of food.”

The food shelf is thankful for the community support and hopes it can relay its thanks in return by providing adequate support for those in need. “It takes a whole community,” Herfindahl concluded. “And that community isn’t just Waseca. It’s the whole county.”



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City levy approved

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

The Janesville Council approved the city's 2023 budget and tax levy of 9.9 percent Monday, December 12. It was a goal of the city council to try to get the levy as close to a single digit increase as possible despite inflation and other cost increases which threatened to take the levy into double digits.

City Administrator Clinton Rogers praised everyone for doing their part in putting together the budget. "Thanks to the council, utility, and general fund employees for putting this budget together," he said. "Thanks to city employees who helped with this."

Rogers noted that the cost per capita to pay for the city's general fund would be \$2.40 a day or \$73.44 a month. The number was based on a population of about 2,450 Janesville residents.

He observed that 40 percent of the city's revenue comes from local government aid, much like it does for other towns of Janesville's size. Only about 25 percent of this year's general fund revenues will come from taxes.

Expenses for public safety rose from 34 percent to 39 percent. Rogers explained that the city is now required to include building inspections as a public safety expense. "It's because inspectors are looking at building safety and making sure things are up to fire code," he said. "It's why the city hall expenses went down to 24 percent in 2023."

Public works is anticipated to take up 26 percent of the budget, while the cost of elections and pay for council members and administration will make up about 7 percent. The library and cemetery expenses will make up 4 percent of the budget.

Public Forum

Janesville resident Ron Bruegger questioned the council about allowing the Janesville Area Golfers' Association (JAGA) to sell golf carts at Prairie Ridge Golf Course without the council voting to give them permission.

"It was stated at the November 14 meeting that the council suggested letting JAGA sell the golf carts," Bruegger pushed. "But I looked back as far as 2011, and there was never a vote taken on it. It was never suggested."

The council admitted they did not know the dealings that took place back in 2017, when it was speculated the council gave JAGA permission to sell golf carts that they leased for the golf course. Bruegger felt that the city should be reimbursed \$48,000 by JAGA for the sale of the golf carts.

"Something was done on the sideline," Bruegger speculated. "We need more transparency on this deal."

"Which is exactly what we were doing at the last meeting," Mayor Andy Arnoldt said.

City council member Jim Mulcahey felt that the money made from the golf cart sales technically wasn't the city's money. "We lease the golf carts, and when the lease has expired, we have no fiduciary responsibility on those carts. Apparently, it was understood that if JAGA wanted to take those carts and resell them and pay off the lease company, they could."

Mulcahey said he agreed with Bruegger that any money JAGA makes from the golf carts going forward should run through the city books to "take away any opportunity of underhanded dealings." But he felt that the council couldn't go back.

There was back and forth between Bruegger and the council until Rogers suggested they stopped arguing. "All he'll do is argue with you," he added.

Other Business

JANESVILLE CITY COUNCIL

An old business item dealing with some heating issues with a property on Main Street in Janesville was removed from the agenda as both the residents and the owners "were reaching an agreement." This issue was discussed at the last council meeting on November 28 but was tabled at the advice of City Attorney Jason Moran.

Jason Nieson of Waste Management talked to the council about switching pickup days from every Wednesday to every Monday for garbage, with recycling moved from odd-week Wednesdays to even-week Mondays. The council approved the change, which will be effective beginning the week of January 1. Nieson assured the council that notifications to customers would go out right away.

Rogers asked Nieson if Waste Management would be able to take care of billing for recycling, which is currently managed by the city. "It does confuse residents, especially new ones."

Nieson had no problem with the change. However, the council will need to hold a public hearing since they would need to amend the city code to make the change happen.

The council initially looked at two bids acquired by Public Works Manager Joe Ziemke toward the purchase of a new Workman vehicle for his department. However, the council was not satisfied with the options. While a bid from Toro for \$28,085.83 had "all the equipment needed" according to Ziemke, one from Arnold's did not include some equipment the department needs.

"This isn't apples to apples," Mulcahey expressed. "I'm disappointed that Joe wouldn't bring in a bid with similar items. I don't have an issue if he wants a Toro. But I want a more comparable bid."

Fellow council member Melissa Kopachek agreed and suggested the council table the issue. "I want to ask a few questions about this and have a better bid option."

Other items approved included some transferring of fund balances, appointments to boards and commissions, and a deferred assessment for a property on Allyn Street.

Reports

Both Mayor Arnoldt and Utilities Manager Nate Zimmerman reported that the Light and Power Board has approved budgets for water and electricity which include power plan upgrades.

"We will continue on with the substation," Zimmerman told the council. "We are looking for a more permanent solution to replace it. We need to get it out of the plant before it goes more catastrophic."

The board is looking for possible grant opportunities to cover future substation expenses. "The sky's the limit on grants," Zimmerman said. "We just want to get our name in the hat for that."

Administrator Rogers reported that the city received its second-half property taxes which totaled about \$593,000. He also shared that the state updated the city on its status with the Safe Routes.

"The federal grant will be more than originally said," he added. "We're moving the project to about spring of 2023."

To date, the city has accrued \$141,500 in expenses for the Safe Routes project. Rogers told the council he will get a report from City Engineer Jason Femrite that details where the money has gone.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m. The council decided not to have a second meeting in December and will meet again January 9, 2023.



The combined fifth- and sixth-grade choirs, presented by director Angela Andreen at the close of their performance.

Pioneer photo by Tristan Jensen

'Snowflakes Fall' intermediate concert

By TRISTAN JENSEN
Staff Writer

The fifth- and sixth-grade choirs from Waseca Intermediate School, directed by Angela Andreen, held their winter concert on Monday, December 5 in the high school's Performing Arts Center. The concert was titled "Snowflakes Fall" and centered around the picture book by the same title, written by Patricia MacLachlan and Steven Kellogg. As the lights went down the audience was shown a recorded reading of the book.

Throughout the program, student speakers presented Snowflakes Fall again, line-by-line. The speakers were fifth-graders Lilly Muff, Charles Galle, Kiyanna Gwilt, Norah Swindle, and Miles Popp and sixth-graders Maurice Lopez, Sophiel Weber, Madalyn Halla, Avery Roessler, and Levi Behm. Andreen explained that, with five speakers to be selected from each choir, students

had the option to visit her and "audition" by reading selections. "They all read so wonderfully that it was hard to narrow it down," she said. "But I also had back-up readers ready because of this. I hope that as they continue in school they keep trying and auditioning for things because they will all be awesome!" The combined choirs also sang a repeated chorus of "A Million Little Snowflakes" by Teresa Jennings, which was written to accompany the book Snowflakes Fall and served to tie the choral performance more closely to the story.

In addition to "A Million Little Snowflakes," the fifth-grade choir sang three songs and the sixth-graders sang four before the concert closed with some numbers performed by both groups together. The fifth-graders presented "Winter in America" by John Riggio, "Christmas, Christmas" by Mike Wilson, and "Winter Walk," also by John Riggio.

Story readings were given between songs to progress the story; the moods of both were intertwined. The sixth-graders offered "Winter Waltz" by Karl Hitzemann, "Sugarplum Dancing" and "Warm Winter" by Teresa Jennings, and "Candy Cane Twis" by Andy Beck and Brian Fisher. Snowflakes Fall was completed before the combined choirs took the stage to close the concert. After a final rendition of "A Million Little Snowflakes," the combined choirs presented "Celebrate with Joy" by Teresa Jennings.

Andreen is in her third year in her position as choir director and general music teacher at WIS, and came to Waseca with twelve years of teaching experience. She says she plans to stay with Waseca and help grow the music program in the district. The fifth-grade choir performed just last year under her direction, with the goal of allowing the students to keep singing. The fourth-graders at WIS

have a spring program, but prior to the formation of the new choir the fifth-graders had only general music, which focuses largely on instrumental music. Andreen said the program has thus far been very successful in terms of participation and teaching students how to be a part of a choral community.

In response to praise for the performance, Andreen enthusiastically agreed that the students had done an excellent job that night. In her address to the audience, however, Andreen emphasized how much fun the kids have participating in choir and singing together. The WIS choir students are still young, and while there is no way of knowing whether any will eventually find a career in music, it is safe to say that if participating in the choir enriches their lives with joy, it is a worthwhile endeavor.



Volunteers at the Hope-Waseca Order of the Eastern Star French toast breakfast were, from left, Scott Newman, Harlean Bloomer, Melissa Newman, chef Mike Lee, Crystal Young, Alyssa Kilmer, Jolene Kilmer, and Marian Keller.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

Fantastic French toast fundraiser

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

Waseca's Tuscan Lodge #77 was busy with customers coming in for a French toast breakfast Sunday, December 4 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The meal was \$12 for adults and \$5 for kids ages 5-12. The event was hosted by the Waseca-Hope Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Stars, a sister organization to the Freemasons.

The Grand Lodge of Minnesota - a branch of the Freemasons - has been around for 165 years, before Minnesota was made a state. The Order of the Eastern Stars was founded over two decades later and is a fraternal organization with both men and women as members.

Marian Keller, Order of the Eastern Star Secretary, explained that Hope-Waseca Chapter #34 formed over 125 years ago, right around the same time Waseca's Masonic Lodge organized near the turn of the century. The Masonic Temple, named the Aughenbaugh House, where the French toast breakfast took place, was built in 1902.

"We have been doing the French toast breakfast for several years," Keller explains. "Our profit can be up to several hundred dollars if, of course, we have good attendance."

For over a century, the Waseca lodge has held fun events like the breakfast to raise money to preserve its history and give back to the com-

munity. Profits made from the event go to good causes. "The Hope Chapter looks for areas in the community that are in need," Keller elaborates.

Last year, the Order of the Eastern Star donated over \$3,000, which included some "very generous" donations from area residents to the Waseca dog park. The Bethlehem Inn was also a recipient. This year,

the organization has chosen the Waseca Neighborhood Service Center Food Shelf as the recipient of profits from the French toast breakfast.

Hope Chapter #43 of the Order of the Eastern Star plans on having another breakfast on the first Sunday of December next year. The recipient of the profits will be decided then.

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BONDING TIME — About five pairs of Big Brothers and Big Sisters gathered for a social, including hot chocolate and crafts, at Thyme on Main Monday, Dec. 12.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

Big Waseca

By MICHAEL ROY
Editor

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Minnesota is looking to get more people involved. To do so, they invited current members of the program and the public who may be interested to an open house at Thyme on Main in downtown Waseca Monday, Dec. 12.

Five pairs of Big Brothers and Big Sisters attended and enjoyed hot chocolate, crafts, and socializing.

Executive Director Michelle Redman helped serve hot chocolate. She has been with the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program since 2008. “It’s a great thing that we do,” she says. “Children need mentoring, and the Big Brothers and Big Sisters provide a way for them to connect with someone who can provide advice.”

The southern Minnesota branch of the organization serves four counties: Steele, Rice, Dodge, and Waseca. In the past, the coverage area only consisted of Steele and Rice. But the organization felt it would be a great idea to expand into neighboring counties.

Jason, one of the Big Brothers in the program, said that he met his mentee in 2018. “At first, I wasn’t sure if I could handle it,” he admitted. “But one of my friends was part of the program and he already had a kid. I figured if he could fit it in his busy schedule, why not me?”

When he met his “little brother’s” parents, it was an easy connection. “We’ve gone to base-

ball games, gotten root beer floats, and done other things together,” he said.

Redman has her own memories of children and mentors who have gone through the program. She’s known some who have entered the program from the moment they were eligible at five years old and others who were in high school.

“There was even a bond made between the Big Brother and the child where they were at each other’s wedding,” she claimed. “One was a part of the other’s wedding party, and then when the one got married, the other officiated. It’s crazy the stories you hear about because of the connections made through the program!”

The organization has made some headway into getting members together. An event on Sunday, December 11, in Owatonna drew more than 150 attendees. Still, the program is looking for more people in the four-county area to join, especially in Waseca

“We are always trying to get the word out,” Redman states. “That’s why we wanted something a little more relaxing for an event here at Thyme on Main. We want people who are interested to see what we’re all about.”

Those who wish to know more about the local branch of Big Brothers and Big Sisters can visit bbbsofsouthernmn.org. If interested in donating, use the link and click “donate today” at the top right of the site.

■ County

from Page 1

operations. Five such items were approved without discussion. Public Works also asked the board to approve the renewed contract identifying MnDOT as the financial bridge between Waseca County and federal aid funds. The approved contract is almost un-

changed from last year, the only changes adding Title 6 language in places and allowing for the use of “e-signatures” on documents. The latter change concerned Commissioner Blair Nelson, who expressed the belief that people often don’t read things as thoroughly when “signing” them digitally. Also accepted without discussion was the annual memorial donation from the estate of Lowell Nelson, whom Sheriff Milbrath described as a “concerned citizen,” in the amount of \$2,796.37.

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Levy, water, and the 2023 budget

New Richland resident Bruce Meyer appeared at the November 28 city council meeting to address an unusually high water bill he received in September of this year which charged him for more than 18,000 gallons of usage in that one month, but reflected no usage at all in the previous 24 months. City Administrator Tony Martens explained that the error occurred because of a system update at the utility billing company, and the issue has since been fixed.

Council members decided to remove charges from the time the meter was not giving an accurate reading - in other words, disregard the bill that charged for over 18,000 gallons of water.

Bob Johannsen presented the Care Center report, stating that, for the month of October, the Center’s average number of residents was 38.5. The reason for the census being low, Johannsen said, is due to ongoing staffing issues. “It’s hard to care for people when we don’t have enough staff to make things work,” he said. “We’re working on staffing continuously.”

Other reasons for declined referrals to the center were discussed; it was reported that some residents with mental health or substance abuse issues had gone elsewhere because current staff is not capable of caring for them. Council

member Jason Casey asked whether the center plans to look into more training to enable a higher level of care.

“Yes, but we need more staff first,” Johannsen responded.

Staffing vacancy numbers have fluctuated since September, with the vacancy rate for CNAs falling from 50% to 39%, LPN vacancy increasing from 13% to 55%, and RN vacancy decreasing from 40% to 33%.

A change was made to allow the center’s advisory board to have fewer board members: five are now required, rather than seven. The center is now also allowed to advertise publicly to recruit new board members.

“Other than staffing, operations are good,” Johannsen said, noting that the center is working on maintaining levels of care for residents and staff to prevent employee burnout. He also noted that the center saw a \$55,000 decrease in losses from September to October. The public is also notified that only two visitors will be allowed per resident during the busy holiday season.

The streets and water report stated that snow removal equipment is ready, a booster pump is set to be installed soon, and a new boiler has been installed. A purchase of salt-and-sand composite for roadways was approved along with the report at a cost of

NEW RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL

\$1,365.

The 2023 budget was discussed, with the tax levy increase at the time of the meeting being 5.68%. Increases in next year’s budget include \$20,000 to wages and benefits for administration as well as \$5,000 to wages and benefits for the street department. The police department is expected to receive a \$9,900 decrease in wages and benefits: this stems from a reduction in hours for Police Chief Tanyce Bruegger’s position: Bruegger had agreed to the reduction when she accepted the position.

A more in-depth report on the budget will be provided during the Truth in Taxation portion of the next council meeting on Dec. 12. A new ambulance member, Laura Beckman, was approved. Beckman previously served on the ambulance, has passed a background check, and will be able to cover day shift hours that have been difficult to fill as of late.

In the administrator’s report, it was noted that a variance permit for the wastewater treatment plant is underway. City Administrator Martens was also recently elected vice president of

Advance Waseca County, formerly B.E.S.T.

Finally, a discussion took place regarding city ordinances, which have been an ongoing concern for Mayor Schmidt. Specifically, she says she would like to see five ordinances updated, beginning with one that addresses nuisances.

The complaint process was discussed, as there appeared to be some confusion on how a complaint for ordinance violations can be submitted. Martens noted that complaints can be made online via a form on the city website or in person at city hall.

Local resident Larry Goehring echoed Schmidt’s concerns regarding ordinance violations, and agreed that the council should be doing more to ensure ordinances are enforced. Schmidt also noted frustration at repeat offenders - those who resolve issues only to commit the same violation again, leading to a cycle of unresolved difficulties.

The council agreed to further discuss the matter at an upcoming work session, and a motion was made to reach out to the city attorney as well as increase the budget for ordinance review, which was approved.

Official coordinator at the writing center



Looking in the Mirror

by Jonah Stafford
copyright © 2022 by Jonah Stafford

I am glad that I have been writing about my life experiences in a printed format that will live on for generations because I would not be dedicating any time to record keeping otherwise. Things were pretty boring last year, but everything fell into my lap in the best way these past several months, so I am glad to have a way to look back and keep track of what happened when. I’m also excited to write about the future.

What’s next for me is likely more of the same but better. I have zero job shakeups, aside from dropping one dining hall shift compared to this semester. That doesn’t sound like a lot, but that freedom could come in handy later when more projects and career opportunities pop up. I’m continuing everything else the same way I was doing it before; except I now have the official Marketing Coordinator title at the Writing Center.

I am hoping to declare an entrepreneurship minor in the early days of next semester, which will hopefully add more logistical knowledge to my preexisting passions. I don’t really think starting a successful business on my own is in the cards for now, but hopefully it can be a possibility by graduation. I don’t know if any other young people out there can relate, but I don’t really want to tie myself down to one title or career path. I don’t ascribe to hustle culture, but having more talents and passions is never a bad thing. Hopefully over Christmas I can think about these types of things more and go into this next semester ready to take on the world!

■ Rodriguez

from Page 1

was fairly relaxed the day of the game. “When we arrived at the stadium, we were there for about two hours before the game started,” he explained. “We were allowed to go on the field and throw the ball around for a little bit and be in the tunnels.”

With four running backs on the team, Rodriguez said coaches tried to give each of them as equal a number of snaps as possible. “We did limited time compared to a smaller team like Waseca,” he elaborated. “But I got to play a good amount.”

Since there wasn’t anything on the line like a section title, Rodriguez focused on having a good time with all the other seniors named to the team. “It was more of a cool thing we all did,” he said.

But that didn’t stop them from being competitive. When the south and north teams faced off, it wasn’t even a close game. The south team shut out the north 29-0. While Rodriguez didn’t score any touchdowns, he felt that he had quality carries that helped his team get the win.

The all-star game was the final cap to an over decade-long tenure with

the Waseca football program for the senior. Rodriguez has been playing tackle football since third grade and played flag football before that. “I liked being active and hanging out with friends,” he said. “Having something organized like that as a kid was nice. As I grew older, football became less of a game and more of a passion.”

It was partially thanks to his brother Hunter, a 2019 Waseca graduate, that football became a passion for Rodriguez. “I went to the morning training sessions with him,” he said. “Seeing kids much stronger than I was helped me get better.”

He added that getting to do strength conditioning and lifting in junior high boosted his interest in the sport. “You get to be more serious when doing those things because you can improve a lot more in the offseason.”

Football has given Rodriguez an outlet to build toughness and commitment. He’s also learned a lot about leadership, especially during his time this season as a captain.

“Being a captain is a big undertaking,” he admitted. “You have to commit a lot of time to it. But I was willing to do that. It was fun to celebrate when the team did well and hold everyone accountable when you didn’t. I liked getting better at the



ALL-STAR — Christian Rodriguez holds the All-Star Showcase trophy after defeating the north team 29-0 on Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022

Photo by Debbie Rodriguez (Mom)

game with all the players.”

Aside from his time in the all-star game, Rodriguez’s favorite memory was getting four touchdowns against conference rival Fairmont. “It was great to beat up on them a little bit in front of the home crowd,” he said.

When asked what advice he’d give, he reiterated what he told the sixth-grade football team earlier this week. “Be active, commit to things, find what you like to do, and be a leader. You don’t have to be a captain to be a leader. We had plenty of guys this year that didn’t have the title of captain but took that leadership role anyway. If we could’ve had ten captains, we would have.”

Coach Wendland believes that Rodriguez was a tremendous role model for young players working their way through the Bluejays football program. “He excels at everything he does,” he said. “He is an excellent student and a leader in the classroom.”

Wendland pointed out that in addition to being a football captain, he also holds the position in wrestling and will do so in track this spring. “At the end of the day, it’s only a title,” Rodriguez claimed.

But Wendland feels he’s earned that title. “Christian leads by example and is well respected by his teammates. He is a humble player who is just as excited to block as he is to run the ball.”

Rodriguez has narrowed down his college choices to Gustavus, St. Olaf, and Bethel. He plans to play football after high school at one of those colleges. Although his choice is still unmade, one thing is certain: he and his fellow seniors will leave behind a great legacy in Waseca. His all-star appearance is only the cherry on top.

“I’m thankful for all of my teammates and everyone who has helped along the way,” he finished. “I hope I helped them one way or another.”

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Waseca Area Foundation Awards



Royal Villa Apartments in New Richland received a \$1,600 grant for a raised garden project during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. "I'm not usually on the receiving end of grants," New Richland Mayor, Royal Villa manager, Gail Schmidt shared as she accepted the award. "Thank you." Schmidt said the tenants love to garden, including vegetables. The facility already has four raised gardens, but that isn't enough. "We applied for funds for three more, and we're thrilled to find out we got awarded the grant." Schmidt said she contacted the high school shop class and asked to have students build the three gardens. The grant will pay for the materials. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Waseca Community Education received two grants, \$3,000 for Summer Youth Theatre, and \$10,000 for youth development scholarships during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. The theater program put on two plays this past year, one in June and another in July. These additional funds will allow for a third production, this time in the spring. The WAF Youth Development grant provides discounts for numerous programs and activities to Waseca public school students. Nearly 100 students, determined by their qualification for discounted lunches, are eligible for discounts for community ed classes and other offerings. "We're getting kids in programs because of this grant," Paul DeMorett of community education shared after he accepted the award. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Junior Achievement received \$3,000 for Waseca Schools Programming during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. Vanessa Jensen from Junior Achievement is the district manager serving students in Owatonna, Waseca, Medford, and New Richland. Jensen has spoken at several local functions, most recently giving a presentation at a Waseca City Council meeting. This grant will be giving \$3,000 to fund programs in local classrooms for students in grades K-12. Their programs include topics about financial literacy, entrepreneurship, college planning, post secondary opportunities, or for soon-to-be graduates, the decision to enter the workforce. "We want those students to be ready for their next step and we're excited to partner with the community to make that happen," manager Jensen shared after accepting the grant. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



The Waseca Neighborhood Service Center received a grant for \$3,000 to purchase food for the new food shelf during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. The food shelf is in the process of relocating to its recently finished new facility, located just west of the thrift store in Waseca. But, stocking a new building is expensive, so these funds will be used for purchasing food. "On behalf of the residents of Waseca County, families who come and get food on a regular basis, on behalf of those in need, thank you." - WNSC Board Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Infants Remembered in Silence received a grant for \$5,000 during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. Michelle Preibe, who lost two children in the early 2000s, has been working with IRIS ever since. "This is near and dear to my heart," a teary-eyed Preibe said after accepting the grant. "This is very timely. I can't say who because of confidentiality, but there is a well-known, well-liked resident of Waseca County who used our services within the past 24 hours... IRIS does help people right here." IRIS provides clients with bereavement packages, clothing sets for infants, and "IRIS came and took molds of my baby's hands and feet. Those are among my most treasured keepsakes." Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School received a grant for \$1,000 for its 3-D printing class during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. High School science teacher Eric Kehoe, who accepted the award, said that enough students expressed interest in 3-D printing after the school purchased a 9-year-old printer, a year ago, that they dedicated a whole class to it. Students are already asking about an upper-level class. The course teaches kids how to use the printer and at the end, students earn a certificate allowing them to use the school's 3-D printer without supervision. Kehoe boasted that he is so impressed with the students' progress that he already believes one of them can run the machine without him. Going forward, there will be careers in this field, according to Kehoe, so this class provides an opportunity learners might not have outside of school. Also part of the class was research into purchase prices for personal 3-D printers. As the equipment becomes more affordable, students will have the chance to purchase and use them outside of a school setting. Funds from this grant will be used to purchase a 3-D scanner, a device used in conjunction with the printer. As their class, school, and students become more accustomed to the printer, Kehoe plans to work with community education to offer courses, as well as working with elementary kids for design ideas. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



NRHEG High School received a grant for \$1,000 to purchase novels for the special education department's English program taught by Melissa Dunn, who accepted the award during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. Some of the students in this 9-12 program remain in special education classes for that entire time. So, according to Dunn, the curriculum has to change and evolve; these funds help purchase new books for students. "I want students to leave school not hating to read," Dunn emphasized. "There's so much good literature out there. I'm just trying to get it in their hands... By the time they leave my room, many of them leave saying, it's not so bad after all!" Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



Life Work Planning Center received a grant for \$2,200 for workshops/training for women in transition services during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. Above, Jean Keenan accepts the grant. This non-profit organization serves a nine-county area with a mission to increase self efficacy of women and families, as well as provide family stabilization through trauma care. LWPC provides workshops covering a variety of topics including trauma victims, decision making, re-entering the workforce, and many more. During Covid, many families were forced to opt for at-home workshops and part of this grant will go to setting up/buying internet hot-spots to expand the accessibility of these workshops/trainings. Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens



JWP Community Education received a grant for \$3,000 for youth and development scholarships and preschool program support during the Waseca Area Foundation's annual awards program November 9, 2022. Director of JWP community education Andrea Kronbach, who accepted the award, said these funds provide traditional support for families. "Help like this allows us to not turn away families." Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

Argus archives

1922
-Congressman Anderson has been notified by the postoffice department that three names eligible to appointment as postmaster of Janesville have been certified to by the civil service commission - Mathew W. Keeley, the present postmaster, Fred B. Volz and Fred G. Fratzke. The examination was held last June. A selection will be made within the next two or three weeks. In the meantime, the supporters of the respective eligibles are putting in their work.

-Several towns along the line of the Northwestern road affected by the train service have taken up the matter of restoring the trains suspended last July. It is not overstating the fact when we say that Janesville is probably interested to a greater degree than any other town. The two trains referred to are No. 6 that passed this point at 1:54 p.m. and No. 507 due here at 7:00 p.m. these two trains more than all others combined gave to Janesville and its people opportunities unexcelled in getting to Mankato and return and to Waseca and return.

-Thursday afternoon the Town Hall was completely filled by an audience, some of whom came from as far as Pemberton, to hear Colonel Dan Morgan Smith, commander of the "Battalion of Death" in the great war. The speech had been extensively advertised through posters sent out by the National Anti-Saloon League from its headquarters in Ohio. Letters to many people from the same source also heralded the event. This was supplemented by readers and display advertising in the local paper, contributed for the good of the cause.

-The editor does not want anyone to send him any more copies of his paper in which they find mistakes. If they find a perfect copy, however, he will pay a big price for it. If the fool critic who hunts for mistakes in the newspapers would find them all, he would be kept busy. We will be pleased to buy copies of any paper which can be proven entirely free from errors, either typographically or in statements of fact.

-Like all its preceding events, the supper and bazaar given by the ladies of St. Ann's congregation held on Wednesday, the 6th, at the Town Hall, was a great success. Hundreds availed themselves of the privilege and opportunity to partake of the supper served from five o'clock. Later the various articles upon which chances had been sold were disposed of. It was as genuinely a happy even in this respect as it was alluring and enjoyable.

1947
-Lads were "hot" - Waterville defeated by score of 41-27 - after losing to New Richland High School in basketball, the Golden Bears jumped right back into the win column Tuesday night by trouncing the fast Buccaneers of Waterville High School by a good point margin, the score reading 41-27 when the final whistle sounded. Coach Chiodo's lads showed a marked improvement over the ragged play displayed at New Richland when they lost 26-19.

-The Janesville Water and Light Board is offering \$50.00 in prizes for a combination of outside and inside Christmas lighting of Janesville homes over the Christmas season as follows: 1st prize, \$20.00; 2nd prize, \$15; 3rd prize, \$10; and 4th prize \$5. The contest will be open to all residents of the community except members of the Water and Light Board, their families, and employees of the local Municipal Utilities.

-In a setting of white tapers and white chrysanthemums, a Twilight Recital was presented by the piano pupils of Ruth Vivian Westby at the high school auditorium. Pupils taking part in the musical program ranged from six years of age to adults, as follows: Laura Ewert, Alverna Berndt Schroeder, Lois Erdman, Kathleen Galler, Oloris Dugan, Patty Janson, Beulah Britton, Ardis ?Heath, Joan Gardner, Louise Galler, Chucky Arnoldt, Diane Sommer, Kyle Glynn, Joanne Strom and Jeanine Strom of Elysian, Roger Wister, Fern Priem, Jean Claire Pedersen, Jane Strunk, Mary Helen Galler and Sally Schoenstedt.

-Once again no accidents of loss of time or serious injury have been reported in the county this week. About one third of all accidents occur in our homes, and falls are the most numerous of these accidents. Right now ice is probably the worst hazard. Gravel, ashes, or salt should be scattered generously over all slippery places as soon as they are discovered. When salt is used, the ice melts rather quickly so that it can be cleared off the sidewalk.

-Chuck Scheuneman, Janesville lightweight amateur boxer, will again be a co-headliner on the amateur boxing card sponsored by the Mankato Junior Chamber of Commerce scheduled for Saturday night, December 13, in the Mankato armory. Scheuneman, runner up to Dick Mays for the district lightweight crown a year ago and considered the likely contender for the title this year, will be matched with John Hennessy of Rochester in one of two main event fights of the evening.

1972
-How's the artificial Christmas tree business affecting the sale of fresh trees? That's the question the Argus set out to answer by visiting the Joe Britton and Rod Searle farms. Both area men sell "real" Christmas trees. The Britttons buy their trees up north; the Searles have been growing trees for the past 10 years. Both men are aware that some people are turning to artificial trees for a variety of reasons, but neither has any trouble selling fresh trees. "We can't see where artificial trees have cut in that much," Britton said. "We get 100 trees every year and don't have any trouble selling them. Of course, I would hate to try and sell 200!"

-Robert Hendricks, who has been serving as a Vocational Adjustment Coordinator in the Waseca County Schools has resigned effective January 1, 1973. He developed Vocational Rehabilitation plans with handicapped students who were preparing for work while they completed their secondary education in various community schools. Mr. Hendricks will be assuming a position as Placement Director at the University of Minnesota Technical College, Waseca.

-For sale - 1973 Berters 44 Nitro Snowmobile. Jerel Cowdin, Phone 234-5321. So reads the classified advertisement Jerel Cowdin placed in the Argus this week after completing his short, and not so sweet, snowmobile season. The Janesville man went out riding his brand new Nitro G machine on Lake Elysian Saturday when he decided to turn around. The machine his a ridge of ice, turned over and dumped its rider. The snowmobile didn't get so much as a scratch, but Cowdin limped away with a dislocated shoulder and several pulled ligaments. His doctor told him, "No work for three weeks and no snowmobiling for three months!" "It was only my third ride on the machine," Cowdin said, "but what else can I do but sell it and start over next year?"

-The District 830 School Board learned Monday night their application for the "Right to Read" program had been accepted for the second phase. This means Janesville will become one of 200 Minnesota schools to become involved in the new reading program during the coming months.

-Steve Erdman of Janesville will be participating winter quarter in an internship program developed by the Mankato State Accounting Department. Steve will be working for Elmer Fox & Company of Minneapolis. The internship program is designed to give accounting majors on-the-job training at public accounting firms throughout the area. The students work full-time and are salaried at the same level a new employee would be.



Brooklyn Harmer and Piper Arens coloring during the second annual Christmas at the Mill, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022.

■ Christmas from Page 1

the toys to qualifying children will take place Dec. 17 at the Mankato Armory from 8 a.m. to noon.

Similarly, the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center was there to accept unwrapped toys and food for the local Santa Anonymous program.

Sean Farley represented Free Flags 4 Vets, an organization that installs flag poles and donates free flags to veterans. "Usually, the Boy Scouts come out and do a ceremony with us," said the affable Farley, describing the presentation of flags to area vets. The organization was founded by Jeremiah Miller, a U.S. Army National Guard member, who has toured Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. For more information, go to freeflagsforvets.org.

For those who arrived hungry, Lucia's Cocina had just the solution with street tacos, tamales, and nachos. Mona Cocina and Sophia Montenegro had their hands full with orders coming in for the delicious food.

In addition to that, each child who came to Christmas at the Mill received a ticket to decorate a cookie of their choice with tubes of colored frosting. Janet Walechka, Matt Pet-singer's mother-in-law, generously donated her time to help the children. The cookies were donated by The Waseca Area Men's Shed. Karen Prange was busy all after-

noon, helping kids make their own Christmas ornaments for "The Sign-ery." Kids picked out an image they wanted from the selections offered, Prange transferred the design to a round disc, and the kids painted it. When the paint dried, Prange provided a bead and a hanger for each ornament.

A table of coloring pages was available to kids, who had fun putting their own twist on familiar Christmas-themed images.

For those children who just wanted to expend some pent-up energy, Robert Tackett, also of American Family Insurance, tended to a fun bouncy house, in which groups of children took turns frolicking.

At 2:45 the Team Academy Choir sang winter-themed songs, directed by new choir and band director Taylor Jones. "This is our first year doing band and choir," said Jones, whose student performers will also host a "Winter Program" at 6 p.m. on Thursday, December 15 at the Waseca high school Performing Arts Center.

Of course, one of the biggest attractions was Santa Claus, who listened to kids tell them their biggest Christmas list dreams. Each child went away with a toy from Santa's sack, and each family went away with photos to remember it by. For families who wanted a whole group photo, Santa had a solution: they sat on a couch with Santa standing behind them. Santa Claus was played by David Buker of Little Falls, Minn., who is quite familiar with the Waseca area, having grown up there.



Decorating cookies are, from left: Elijah Anderson, Erious Flores, and Armany Romano.



This was the second year of Christmastime at the Mill and the first visit from Olaf. Pioneer photos by Melanie Piltingsrud

With another Christmas at the Mill event in the history books, it is certain that attendees – kids and grown-

ups alike – made memories to last a lifetime.

Waseca Archives

25 Years Ago – Waseca County News, December 9, 1997

- Fifty-one Waseca homes and five businesses have entered the 1997 Great Holiday Lighting Contest in Waseca. Judging will take place Thursday night between 8 and 10 p.m. Participants are asked to have their lights on during those hours. Homeowners will participate in three different categories: religious, traditional, and contemporary. First place winners will receive \$100 savings bonds, second place winners will receive \$50 savings bonds, and third place winners will receive \$20 city utility credits. In addition, all participants will have a chance in a drawing, in which 20 \$10 utility credits will be given away.

- In its first title defense of the year, a veteran Waseca gymnastics' team had no problems. The Jays, coming off a 10-0 season that included winning both the South Central Conference dual and tournament titles, rolled past St. Peter 137.45 to 123.25 Thursday. Waseca swept the vault and floor exercise, while placing first and second in bars and first and third on the beam. The Jays' best event was the 35.5 they scored in the floor exercise.

- A man named Homer Land kept local authorities busy after he escaped from a TransCor America prisoner transport vehicle in Owatonna at noon Thursday. The Waseca County Sheriff's department had five officers involved in the manhunt. Sheriff Ed Kubat said that his office coordinated with Steele County authorities to assist in the search. Although Warden Jim Tippy wouldn't comment on what the Waseca Federal Correction Institute's transport policy was, he did say that it would probably have more guards than TransCor America had. The private company had only two guards for 11 prisoners. The escape occurred when one of the guards went into Burger

King to buy lunch for the 11. Three of the inmates overtook the remaining guard and left with the van.

50 Years Ago – Waseca's Daily Journal, December 6, 1972

- Kevin Kanne, Barb LaMont and Gary Reinhardt, all of Waseca, have just finished participation this fall in the Mankato State College Warrior Marching Band. The band, under the direction of Dr. Clayton Tiede, played at two home football games and made its annual trip to Sioux City, Iowa, where it performed in the Morningside-Mankato State football game. It concluded the season with the third annual indoor marching band concert.

- Two accidents were reported in Waseca Tuesday with the first heavy snowfall of the season and Chief of Police Earl Halleck said both accidents could have been avoided. Both fender benders occurred at intersections. Halleck said that "people must know that intersections with stop signs are going to be slippery after a fresh snow." He said that with many cars stopping at the signs it causes the snow to become compacted and form a slick layer of ice. He added that not only the stop sign intersections but all streets become slippery after numerous cars have traveled over them. Halleck said that if each person cut his driving speed by at least 10 miles per hour it would stop a lot of needless accidents.

- The board of education met in a special noon session Tuesday at Central Middle School. The meeting was primarily devoted to authorizing bids for capital improvements. The first consideration was the proposed site plan for the new Waseca High School. The board had previously requested Foss, Englested & Foss, the architectural firm for the building, to go ahead while designing a master-plan for the high school site. The idea is to insure that the site is not developed in a piecemeal or haphazard

fashion, but rather progresses logically as funds become available. Also requiring capital improvements are the elementary and middle school libraries which are in need of various types of revamping.

75 Years Ago – The Waseca Herald, December 11, 1947

- Some 2,500 small pickerel which were stranded in the creek between Watkins and Rice lakes, have been saved by the efforts of sportsmen and are now in Clar lake growing into bigger and better fish. There were several hundred transferred last summer and over 2,000 were saved in the last 10 days when members of the Sportsmen's Club and others got busy. The ice was broken in the creek and the fish trapped, put in cans and taken to Clear Lake.

- Fox hunting has turned into a real sport this fall in Waseca county and hunters have turned out to make an extra dollar while they enjoy the sport, according to Art Brisbane, county auditor. Monday two hunters brought in six red fox pelts to be checked by Toy Tollefson, deputy game warden, who authorizes payments of bounties by the county auditor. They were Ervin and Marvin Flitter who had the six red fox pelts as proof of their hunting luck. The six were half of the 12 killed in the past three weeks by a group. Foxes bring \$6 bounties, \$2 from the county and \$4 from the state, and about \$1 for the hides.

- The American Legion Sunday afternoon observed December 7, 1941, the day that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and World War II started. [Note that the war had been going on for awhile at that point.] The American Legion firing squad formed at the Legion hall and marched to the corner of State and Elm. Following three volleys and a minute of silence, taps were played.

100 Years Ago – Waseca Herald, December 7, 1922

- "Tell the people we have the biggest and best poultry show in southern Minnesota." That was the statement made last night by Dr. Edmund Mackey, president of the Waseca County Poultry Association, to the editor of the Herald. You may or may not take the Doctor's word as final, but a visit to the Lewer, Wood-hall, Cunningham garage will convince the most skeptical that this year's poultry show is certainly the best ever. There are over 1,000 birds on display, representing the finest specimens of the most popular breeds of turkeys, ducks, geese and chickens to be found in Minnesota.

- T. F. Slattery has opened a new cash and carry grocery store in the building formerly occupied by Tom Hagerty's lunch room. Mr. Slattery had several years' experience in conducting a store at Greenland, le Sueur county, and is well equipped to care for his customers.

- M. J. Broderick returned last week from northwestern Minnesota with a fine bunch of high grade dairy cows which he bought from farmers who could not afford to keep them over winter. He bought the animals in Red Lake, Pennington and Marshall counties and got them at very reasonable figures considering the quality. He says the farmers up there had a big crop of potatoes and can get nothing for them. He was told that one man who shipped a carload East was notified that the shipment didn't bring enough to pay the freight. About the only marketable product these farmers have is their dairy cows and they must sell some of them in order to meet necessary expenses. Many farmers who bought land at a high figure two and three years ago would sell at most any price now but can't get a buyer. Southern Minnesota farmers are on easy street in comparison with a lot of those in the northwestern part of the state, Mr. Broderick says.



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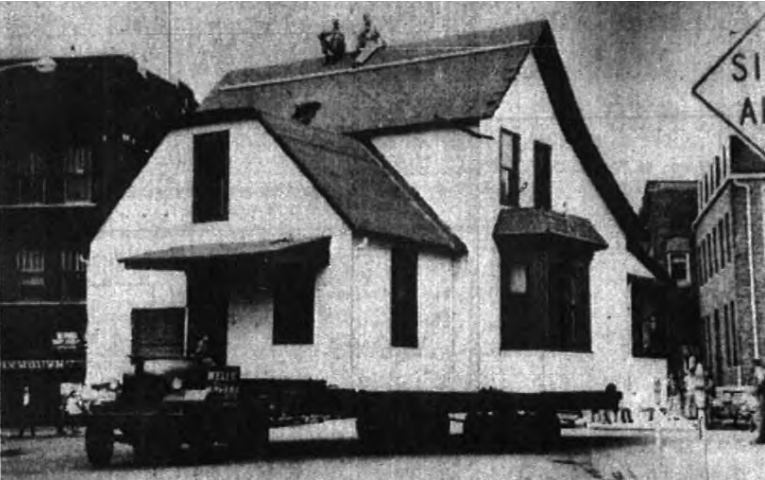
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Where'd it go?



Dec. 4, 1959 - Moving houses and buildings was quite common back in the day. This home was moved from 211 East Elm to 628 6th Ave. SW to make room for a new drive-in restaurant to be built by Lyle Nelemans. Lyles Drive-in was demolished in the early 1990s to make way for a parking lot.
Waseca County Historical Society

The Pastor's Column

Do you have Christmas hope?

By PASTOR KEN ANDRS
“It is not the same.” “Christmas doesn’t feel like Christmas anymore.” “I don’t have presents for the ones I love.” “I miss...”

Over the past few years it seems like everything has changed in our world; just as things seem like they are getting back to “normal” we realize that it is just not the same anymore. No matter what we do, it won’t go back to what it once was. Those days are gone; the kids are growing, people have left us, and our financial situations have changed. People often talk about creating a “new normal” in life, but nothing is normal in this life except the setting on my dryer.

The sad part is, there is no going back to what once was and no return to simpler times. We live with the memory of the past and the fear of the impact the changes time has wrought upon us. How do we combat this change? What can we do to celebrate Christmas this year? How can we find Joy when life has been hard?

Through the season of Advent we prepare our hearts for Christmas. Over the past few weeks we have discussed Hope, Peace and now Joy. It is hard to talk about Joy when we remember how joyful the past was or wasn’t and knowing the same holiday is just around the corner. Yet that is the great part about celebrating Christ’s coming. The truths of the season build upon themselves.

We cannot take individual weeks of advent by themselves; we must prepare. There are truths that we can only get to if we have the proper foundations to rest upon.

Dear Editor,
“Long after I’m gone I want to make an impact on this community.”

This simple yet profound thought process is what led a long-time Waseca resident who wishes to remain anonymous to establish a fund within the Waseca Area Foundation (WAF). The Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center (WANSC) Food Shelf Fund was established in 2022, and will now distribute a yearly grant to the WANSC Food Shelf.

Our community has a variety of needs; this individual has always tried to support the local food shelf in a variety of ways. “The simple needs of air, water, and food will always be there. I know I can’t do much about the air or water in my lifetime, but I can do something about the food supply,” stated the donor. Food insecurity has always been a concern, and recently it has been on the rise. Thinking long term about making a positive im-

pact on a large population, an endowment to the food shelf is a natural fit for this particular donor.

This is the first fund created in the WAF Family of Funds that is designated strictly to support food insecurity in our county. The donor hopes that fellow Waseca County residents and other possible contributors will share in the desire to support this cause and donate to this fund over time. Anyone can donate any time to this newly created fund. Donate online (wasecaareafoundation.org) or send your donation to the WAF office, designating the purpose of your donation. As the fund grows, the amount granted to the WANSC food shelf will grow; in turn, food insecurity concerns in our county will decline. The generosity of this donor will have a positive impact for years to come; providing food for those in need.

Amy Potter
Waseca Area Foundation

More than \$7,500 raised by concerts

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

“Look how powerful it is when we share our light,” commented performer Gavin Berg as he watched the 150 or so people in the audience reach from person to person to pass along flames for handheld candles. “It spreads and shines, and shares beauty.”

Watching with him as the light was distributed was Adam Moen, singer and performer. The two, with the help of NRHEG High School senior Eva Wayne were just finishing Saturday’s two-hour concert performed to benefit the New Richland Area Foundation (NRAF), a non-profit group which distributes funds to organizations throughout the NRHEG community. The two concerts were held at Trinity Lutheran Church in New Richland.

Funds raised by the two performances on December 10 and 11 totaled about \$7,500. And speaking of “spreading light,” all funds raised those days, and any further amounts donated to the NRAF through the end of the year will be matched by New Richland State Bank, up to a total of \$10,000—doubling the weekend’s success.

Sources of income for the concerts were the free-will donations for admittance and two “audience participation” challenges. On Saturday, audience members were asked to “vote” during intermission whether Berg’s or Moen’s father, Burton Berg or Michael Moen, would be invited up to the stage for an impromptu performance. “By the way,” mentioned Berg, “neither of us cleared this with our fathers beforehand.”

As Berg and Moen looked into the audience, joking that they were checking to be sure neither father was sneaking out, Michael announced that he was not leaving—he had simply gone into the lobby to deposit \$100 into Burton’s basket. Throughout intermission, audience members enjoyed each others’ company and quietly slipped over to the donation baskets to deposit cash. It was announced just prior to the “command performance” that a total of \$789 had been collected—and that the vote was close enough that both fathers should come to the front.



Two lively and engaging concerts featuring "homegrown" musicians Adam Moen and Gavin Berg raised about \$7,500 this past weekend in support of the New Richland Area Foundation. Audience members were treated to humor, nostalgia, tradition and heartwarming music. During the concert, it was announced that State Bank of New Richland will be matching all funds donated to the NRAF through the end of December.
Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

Despite a few jokes about “no Christmas present for you this year,” and “you’ll find the door locked when you get to the house tonight,” both dads consented. After being given a few pointers—which were well received by the audience, but perhaps not quite so well by the fathers—on how to “lead” an audience, the two shared the lime-light for a Christmas carol singalong.

During Sunday’s concert, which drew nearly 200, the “lighthouse” was focused on siblings of the two performers. Audience members were asked to donate toward having either Grant Berg and Kelsey Pederson or Josh and Alex Moen dragged....invited...to the stage. Winners Josh and Alex were reluctant but brave. The challenge raised nearly \$1,000 in “votes.”

Another singalong during the concert was “Oh Come All Ye Faithful,” for which Berg played the church’s pipe organ, Wayne played grand piano, and Moen acted as leader.

Based on the consistently enthusiastic applause and the long line of well wishers who greeted the performers after the performance ended, it would be impossible to name an audience favorite from the concert.

Banter between Berg and Moen provided humor. The two mentioned that they both live in downtown Minneapolis, and even remarkably near each other: across the street. Moen mentioned that he could look over and see Berg’s Christmas tree. “I have three trees in my apartment,” Berg elucidated. “Adam can only see one of them.”

The audience laughed when Moen responded, “Right, of course you have three trees. It’s not like your mother is Connie Berg or anything...”

Upon which Berg admitted that his mother has seven trees...so far.

In another element of audience participation, Berg announced that Audra Nissen-Boyer, who had once been his babysitter, was in the audience. He invited her to select any hymn she wished from the church’s hymnal, and offered to create an impromptu arrangement of it.

After a false start when Nissen-Boyer selected “Angels We Have Heard on High,” which was already on the program, a second choice of “In the Bleak Midwinter” was decided upon. Berg first played the notes as they appeared in the hymnal, then followed with an embellished version. He explained that, as a church accompanist who typically plays the music as written, he was delighted to have the opportunity to demonstrate what the music “sparks” in him by interpreting it on a more emotionally charged level.

On Sunday, Berg chose former NRHEG teacher and girls’ basketball coach Mindy Chevalier to select a hymn: her choice was “Away in a Manger.”

A source of both humorous banter and a well-received performance was a version of “Jingle Bells” made popular by singer Barbra Streisand. Berg explained that both he and Moen had created their “wish list” for inclusion in the concert.

He informed the audience that Moen had selected three numbers in the key of G Flat major, meaning that every black key on the keyboard was played, and even two white keys were made “flat” by playing the key next to them. In exchange for the demands of playing those songs, Berg joked that he had gotten even by selecting this particular version of “Jingle Bells,” which he asked Moen to describe.

The word “torture” was his first response, quickly downgraded to “challenging” and “difficult.”

Though the tempo and volume changes of the piece quickly made it clear why Moen chose the words he did, the audience saw no evidence of suffering as Moen brought the piece alive.

A serene and uplifting highlight was also a piano solo of “Oh Holy Night,” played by Wayne.

Other numbers included were “Home for the Holidays,” “Joy to the World,” “All I Want for Christmas is You,” “The Christmas Song,” and “Where are You Christmas?”

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FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m.	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 1221 8th St SE, Waseca 507-835-2213 Sunday worship 10:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m.	VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Brian Schanil Pastor Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship; 9 a.m. Sunday School Tuesdays: The Shepherd’s Robe Ministry, 1-3 p.m., 6-8 p.m.; Bonfires and Yard Games, 6 p.m. until dark	JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 401 N. West St., Janesville Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship
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ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH 401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca 507-833-1703 Sundays 9:00 a.m.	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School, Choir and Choir; 10:30 a.m. Worship Monday - 1 p.m. Quilters Wednesday - 7 p.m. Worship	FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Rev. Michael Mathews, pastor Sundays: Sunday School 9 a.m., Bible Study 9:20 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m.	ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH 307 W. 2nd St, Janesville Father Brian Mulligan 10 a.m. - Mass
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH 314 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-2647 Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m.	ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Otisco, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship	IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship	FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 Owen St., Janesville Interim Pastor
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-4548 (office email: 1cwaseca@hickorytech.net) Worship Sunday 10 a.m.	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Mary Iverson Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting	ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Pastor Ava Adams-Morris Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday — 9 a.m. Worship	ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH Alma City, Minnesota Vacancy Sunday = 1 p.m. Worship
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m.	FIRST CONGREGATIONAL New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Pamela Jensen Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship	ST. JOSEPH’S CATHOLIC Waldorf, Minnesota Father Brian Mulligan Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Smiths Mill, Minnesota Vacancy Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca 507-835-1222 Worship Saturday 5:15 p.m., Sundays 8:00 and 10:00 a.m., weekdays 8:30 a.m. Tues., Wed. and Fri., 7:00 a.m. Thurs.	LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota	TRINITY LUTHERAN Wilton Township Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship	NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE WASECA COUNTY PIONEER.
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LEGAL

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF WASECA

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No.: 81-PR-22-790

In Re: Estate of
MICHAEL L. HECHT,
Decedent

NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEARING
ON PETITION FOR FORMAL PRO-
BATE OF WILL AND APPOINTMENT
OF PERSONAL REAPRESENTATIVE
IN UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION
AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

It is Ordered and Notice is hereby given that on the 18th day of January, 2023, at 9:15 a.m., a hearing will be held in the above Court at Waseca County, Minnesota, for the formal probate of an instrument purporting to be the will of the above named decedent, dated June 29, 2015, and the First Codicil dated October 28, 2019, and for the appointment of Mark J. Hecht, whose address is PO Box 362, Elysian, MN 56023, as Personal Representative of the Estate of the above named decedent in unsupervised administration, and that any objections thereto

must be filed with the Court. That, if proper and no objections are filed, a Personal Representative will be appointed to administer the Estate, to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate. Upon completion of the administration, the representative shall file a final account for the allowance and shall distribute the estate to the persons thereunto entitled as ordered by the Court, and close the estate.

Notice is further given that ALL CREDITORS having claims against said Estate are required to present the same to said Personal Representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or said claims will be barred

Dated: 12/09/2022

/s/ Carol M. Hanks
Judge of District Court

/s/ Shannon Asselin
Deputy Court Administrator

PATTON, HOVERSTEN & BERG, P.A.
William L. Hoversten , #47478
215 E Elm Ave, PO Box 249
Waseca, MN 56093
Phone: 507-835-5240

(Published in the Waseca County Pioneer /dates/)

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SWEET-SOMMERS VFW POST 1642 CALENDAR EVENTS

December 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7pm Bingo	2 Meat Raffle 5:30pm	3
4	5	6 BURGER NITE 5-7pm	7 PEARL HARBOR DAY 6pm Bar Bingo	8 7pm Bingo	9 Meat Raffle 5:30pm	10 Fire Dept. X-mas party
11 All you can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am to Noon Your Host Waseca Boy Scouts	12 7pm Post & AUX Meeting	13 U.S. National Guard Birthday BURGER NITE 5-7pm	14 6pm Bar Bingo	15 7pm Bingo	16 Meat Raffle 5:30 WALLEYE OR SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 to 7:00 Kozan karaoke at 7pm	17 Tom & Jerry nite 4:pm Meat Raffle 5:30
18	19	20 U.S. Space Force Birthday 2019 BURGER NITE 5-7pm	21 6pm Bar Bingo	22 7pm Bingo	23 Meat Raffle 5:30pm Horse racing 6:30pm	24 Open 11am to 5pm
25 CHRISTMAS	26	27 BURGER NITE 5-7pm	28 6pm Bar Bingo	29 7pm Bingo	30 Meat Raffle 5:30pm Horse racing 6:30pm	31 NEW YEARS EVE 6pm Bar Bingo MEAL Available

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Sun. - Mon. Closed
Tue. - Wed.- 3pm to 11pm Tue. is Lady's nite 2 for one - Men Busch Light \$2.50 from 4 to 6pm.
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Fri. - Sat. - 11am to 1am
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Lady Panthers win home opener

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The NRHEG girls' basketball team moved to 2-0 after a 58-43 home opening win over Kenyon-Wanamingo Friday, Dec. 9.

"Tonight was not the prettiest game, but it's nice to get our first conference win of the season at home," NRHEG coach Onika Peterson said. "It was a game of runs. We would pull ahead, they would hit a couple of threes, and we would try to play a little too fast with our passing and shot selection."

The game was closer than the final score indicated, as Peterson said.

Senior Sidney Schultz started hot for the Panthers, hitting an opening possession 3-pointer. The two teams went back and forth early, with four lead changes over the first 10 minutes. Good passing created open shots for the Panthers all night, the first example leading to a wide open 3-pointer from Erin Jacobson putting the Panthers up 8-7. Another open three from Faith Nielsen with 8 minutes left in the first half put the Panthers ahead 11-10. This was the final lead change of the game. The Panthers went on a 10-2 run over the next three minutes with baskets from Nielsen, a great baseline driving layup, a steal and score from Camryn VanMaldeghem, a 3-pointer from VanMaldeghem, Jacobson fast-break layup, and capped off by 2 free throws from Schultz.

This game was indeed a game of runs. The Knights outscored the Panthers 7-4 over the final minutes of the first half. The Panthers led 24-17 going into the break.

It took a minute and a half for the Knights to nearly close the gap, opening the second half with a pair of open three-pointers.

Jacobson scored three straight points for the Panthers on a fast-break layup, assisted by Schultz,

"It was a game of runs. We would pull ahead, they would hit a couple of threes."

— Onika Peterson

and a free throw after she was fouled on an offensive rebound putback.

Schultz and Jacobson led all players, feeding off of each other all night. On their next possession Schultz was fouled shooting a three-pointer, and put the Panthers up by 6, going 2-for-3 from the line. The Knights went on one more run, cutting the Panthers' lead to one 7 minutes into the second half.

Out of a timeout, VanMaldeghem took the game into her hands. She rebounded a missed 3-pointer, put it back for two and hit a 3-pointer on the next possession, putting the Panthers up 6. The game did not get closer than that margin over the remaining 10-minute period.

"Tonight was a great game to learn from and adjust for next week," Coach Peterson concluded.

Individually for the Panthers: Jacobson 17 points, 10 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 steal; Schultz 16 points, 6 rebounds, 6 steals, 3 assists; VanMaldeghem 10 points, 3 rebounds, 3 steals; Hallie Schultz 7 points, 9 rebounds, 2 steals, 1 assist; Faith Nielsen 5 points, 2 rebounds; Preslie Nielsen 3 points; Quinn VanMaldeghem 7 rebounds, 1 steal.

The Panthers traveled to Le Sueur-Henderson Tuesday. They travel to Triton on Friday, host Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton Tuesday, Dec. 20, and host St. Clair Dec. 22.

Inexperience plagues young Panthers team

Boys begin season with three losses

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

Fouls, free throws, and inexperience loomed large for the NRHEG boys' basketball team during its second game of the season as the Panthers fell to St. James 73-55 Tuesday, Dec. 6 in New Richland.

The Panthers held their first lead of the season jumping to a 16-10 advantage early in the fast-paced first half. But St. James got hot. The Panthers sent them to the free-throw line far too many times, while only shooting 4-for-12 on their own foul shots.

"The offense was far better in our second game," NRHEG coach Dan Schmidt said. "We had great balance, spark from 3 points from Alden Dobberstein off the bench, and the return of Will Tuttle in the middle."

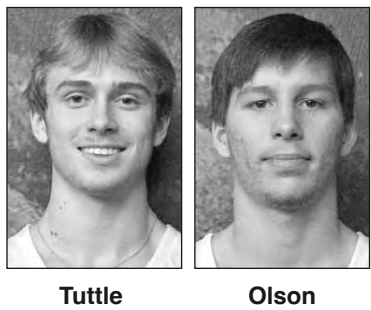
The Panthers trailed 41-36 at halftime. Fouls plagued the Panthers all night and continued in the second half. St. James shot 22-for-30 from the free throw line, outscoring the Panthers by 18 in the category, coincidentally, the same point total St. James won by.

"Fouls really started to affect what we wanted to do," Schmidt explained. "We could never really settle in during the half."

The Panthers' leading scorer through two games, Daxter Lee had to sit for a considerable stretch in the second half due to foul trouble, which didn't help the Panthers, who were outscored 32-19 in the second half.

"Defensively, we gave up a lot of open looks," coach Schmidt thought. "Offensively, we had a handful of player control fouls that contributed to our issues, and the ball movement got a little stagnant against St James' zone. And give credit to the Saints for taking advantage from the floor and making their free throws."

Anthony Sletta from St James led all scorers with 24, followed by Brennan Kern with 17. The Panthers were led by Tuttle with 14 points and 7 rebounds. Also hitting



double figures were Dobberstein and Lee with 10 points apiece. Tuttle paced the Panthers with 7 rebounds, followed by Jackson Chrz with 6 boards to go along with his 4 points. Lee pulled down 5 rebounds.

The Panthers' woes continued Friday night with a 75-66 loss at Kenyon-Wanamingo, dropping NRHEG to 0-3.

Again, the Panthers came out slow, falling down 12-1 early. A timeout settled the nerves, but the Panthers went into the half trailing 35-22.

"We played a much better game in the second half, executing our offense a little better, and tightening up our defense," Schmidt said. "We continue to see some improvements as the game progresses, and we will look to keep building off of that. I need to do a better job at having us settled in from the start, so we can avoid those early holes. That really made the difference in this one."

The Panthers outscored the Knights in the second half 44-40, but it was too little too late. Poor free-throw shooting and fouls again plagued the Panthers. The Knights shot 14-for-17 from the stripe versus the Panthers 6-for-14.

Individually for the Panthers: Olson 19 points, 9 rebounds, 4 assists; Lee 17 points, 3 rebounds, 5 steals; Jackson Chrz 11 points; Jaylin Raab 6 points; Dobberstein 5 points; Tuttle 4 points; Lukas Lovrink 4 points.

The Panthers hosted Waseca Tuesday. They host Triton Friday, and travel to Janesville Tuesday, Dec. 20.

NRHEG 58, Kenyon-Wanamingo 43



NAVIGATE - Faith Nielsen goes baseline, avoids the defender and finds the basket.



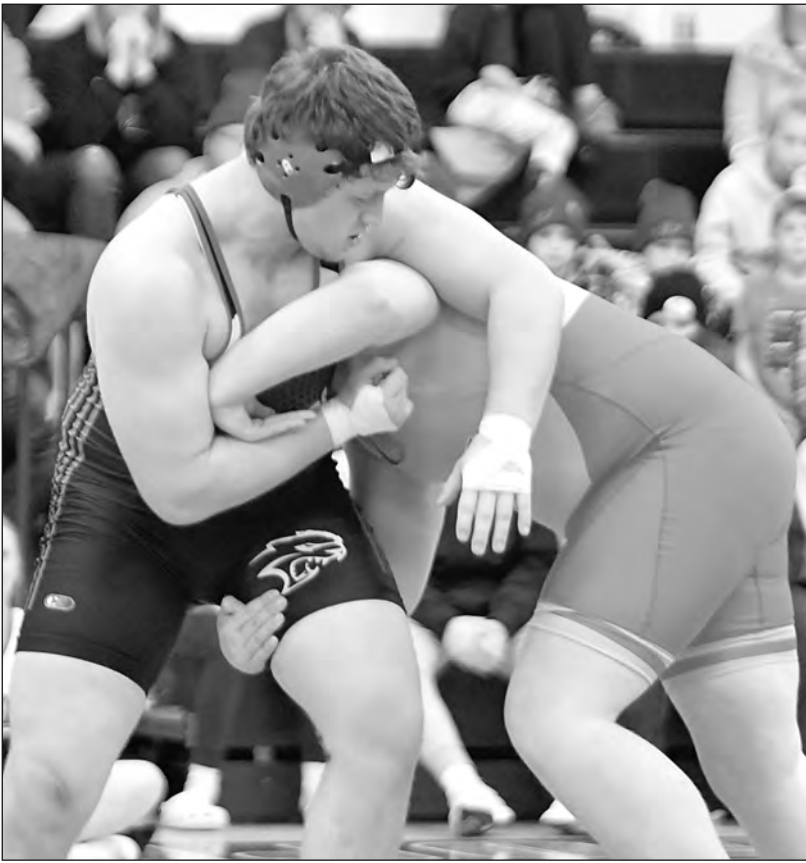
DUO - Seniors Erin Jacobson (#5), and Sidney Schultz (#12) led all Panther scorers with 17 points and 16 points, respectively. Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens



FAST BREAK - After securing a steal, Camryn VanMaldeghem scores on a fastbreak attempt by the Panthers.



Kenyon-Wanamingo 75, Panthers 6



HOME - Competing in their first of two scheduled home competitions this season, in New Richland on Thursday, Dec. 8 were, top left Parker Bunn; bottom left Harbor Cromwell; above Makota Misgen. Pioneer photos by Chris Schlaak

Misgen continues to impress

Grapplers' woes continue, Panthers team remains winless on the season

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The NRHEG wrestlers remained winless after losing to Kenyon-Wanamingo 75-6 in their first of two home meets scheduled for this season. Their woes continued Saturday as the Panthers placed sixth out of six teams in Byron at the Dave Scharberg Memorial Tournament.

"This was a very difficult night for us," NRHEG coach Shawn Larson said after the home meet. "We do not have the experience to compete in a dual like this. If I am being honest, we are very new up and down our lineup. Although it is factual that they are an older team with much more mat time, it is not an excuse for us to not compete. We are working at getting better, and there were some

situations in which we have shown a little improvement from even last week. Our focus in the coming weeks will be on first period scoring, and reducing the amount of bonus point wins we are allowing."

The lone bright spot Thursday evening was senior Makota Misgen, who wrestled well, earning a fall and the team's only points.

"Makota has worked hard in the off-season, and it is paying off right now," Larson said. "Hopefully the team will look to Makota for some inspiration."

The Panthers turned around quickly to wrestle Saturday in Byron, losing to Rochester Mayo 59-18, Westfield 54-24 and Byron 51-25.

"Although our team lost three times today, our effort was much

better than what we were putting out last week," Larson said. "We will continue to focus on making improvements in several areas of our wrestling, but mostly our focus will be trying to reduce the bonus points earned against us. When we are able to win more matches like today, and reduce the number of bonus points against us, we will be competitive and may have a better chance to win."

It was another big day for Misgen Saturday. He remains unbeaten on the season, earning three falls on the day. With those falls, Misgen sur-



Misgen

passed the 50 career falls milestone and now stands at 51 career pins.

Against Rochester Mayo, Ryan Schlaak and Misgen earned falls and Annabelle Petsinger and Harbor Cromwell won their matches. In the match against Westfield, Aidan Schlaak, Ryan Schlaak, Jace Ihrke, and Misgen all earned falls. Parker Bunn, Devan Parpart, and Misgen earned falls against Byron as Petsinger and Aidan Schlaak also had wins.

The Panthers' next competition will be Thursday, December 15, in Wells when they wrestle Maple River/USC, and Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial. On Friday, Dec. 16 and Saturday, Dec. 17, the Panthers travel to the Redwood Riot in Redwood Falls.

Road warriors

Bulldog boys 2-0 in away games; long-awaited home opener Dec. 16

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

The JWP boys' basketball team is starting the 2022-23 season with three road games. The Bulldogs were able to go undefeated in two of them this week, defeating Nicollet 77-43 and getting a massive come-from-behind victory against Gopher Conference rival Bethlehem Academy 64-63.

Nicollet was already on a three-game losing streak to start the season. But when JWP visited them Thursday, Dec. 8, it was an even tougher night. The Raiders allowed the Bulldogs to score the most points they've allowed an opposing team. Junior Memphis James was one of the leaders with 23 points.

It was a good start for the Bulldogs, but they found games will rarely come that easy when they faced Bethlehem Academy Friday. JWP fell behind by nearly double digits by the end of the first half. It took change-of-game planning and aggressive offense to get back into it.

James again put the team on his back, scoring 26. His performance along with the help of his teammates helped the Bulldogs snatch victory from the jaws of defeat and escape Faribault with a 64-63 win.

The Bulldogs traveled to Lester Prairie Tuesday. They finally host their first home game Friday, Dec. 16, when defending Class A state champion Hayfield comes to town.



TWO-FOR-TWO — The JWP boys' basketball team won twice on the road last week. Above: the Bulldogs' Ryan Kronbach (14) drives to the basket. Left: Memphis James (15) brings the ball up court. Bottom right: Daulton Bauer (1) looks to pass the basketball. Pioneer photos by Leanne Kavitz



JWP girls put up 76 in home opener

Faith Olson named Player of the Week

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

The JWP girls' basketball team went 1-1 last week against Gopher Conference opponents. After taking a 57-49 loss on the road at Medford, they had one of their best offensive performances under coach Cory Jans in their home opener against Bethlehem Academy Friday, Dec. 9, winning 76-58.

Medford 57, Bulldogs 49

It was a battle to the end. But just as JWP found it difficult to stop Waseca's Kloe Wadd last week, one Medford player had a 33-point night: Andrea Bock. Her performance ultimately gave Medford the victory.

"She had a great night against us," Jans commented. "We just couldn't find a way to contain her on defense."

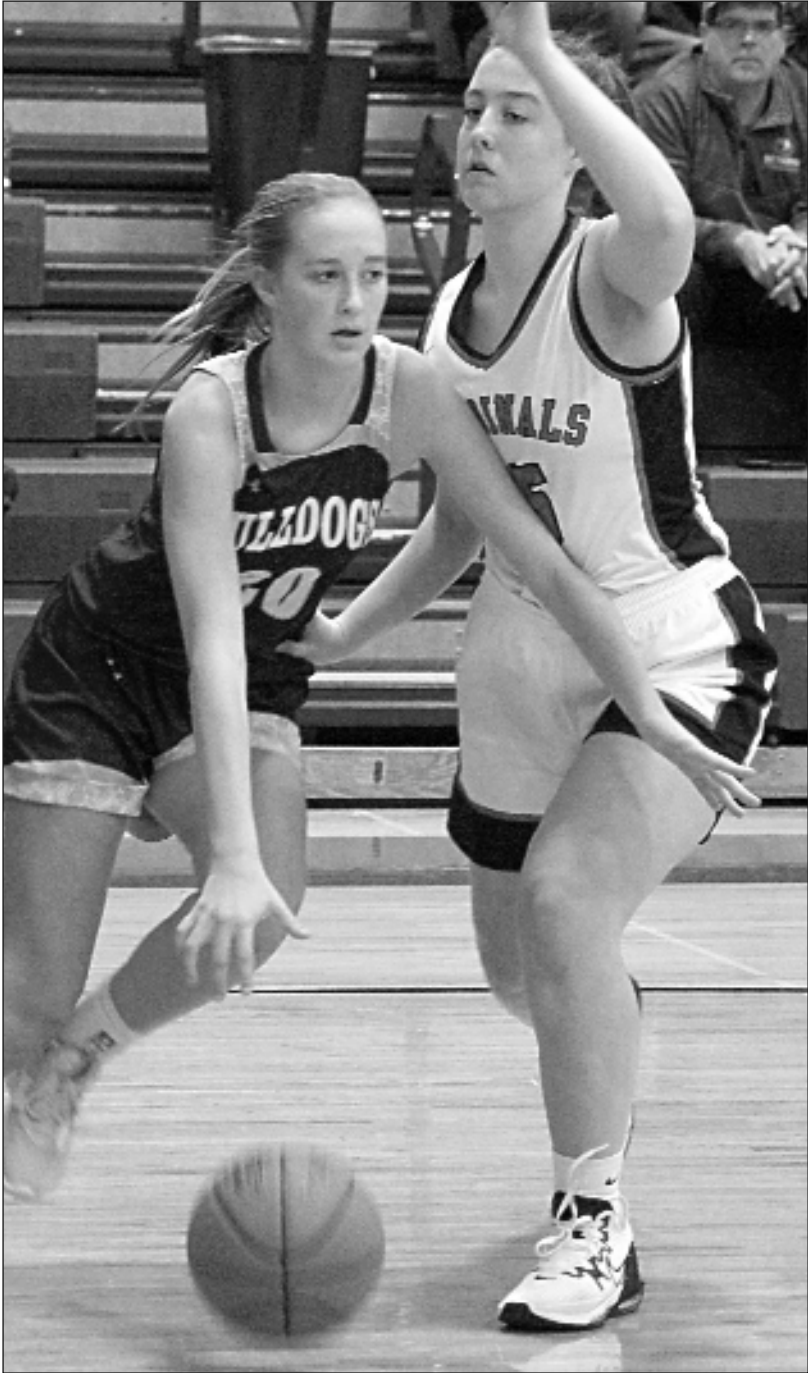
Despite Bock's night, the Bulldogs kept it close. Freshman Katie Olson, sophomore Presley James and senior Faith Olson turned in double-digit numbers on offense. But it wasn't enough.

"I talked to the girls about cleaning up some areas of the game like our defense," Jans said. "That way, we're in better positions to be successful."

Individually: Katie Olson, 12 points; Kwynn Krause, 2 points; James, 10 points; Faith Olson, 10 points; Lilly Strauss, 5 points; Alison Olson, 3 points; Paige Walz, 6 points; Lexie Dahlberg, 1 point.

Bulldogs 76, Cardinals 58

It was evident the Bulldogs were willing to do anything to get their first win of the season the second they hit the court for their home opener.



HOME OPENER — The JWP girls' basketball team had a great performance in its home opener Dec. 9, defeating Bethlehem Academy 76-58. Top left: the Bulldogs' Claire Walz (20) drives to the basket. Top right: Faith Olson brings the ball up court. Bottom right: Ali Olson and Nevaeh Weimert battle for a rebound. Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

The Bulldogs tied their best offensive performance since Jans started coaching the team in 2020-21.

"I loved watching the intensity and hustle throughout the game," Jans said. "The girls knew how close things had been with the first two losses of the season. We were very hungry for our first win of the season."

Within two minutes, they scored

14 points before the Cardinals called a timeout. The closest BA got was 43-34 at halftime.

Senior Faith Olson scored 20 points, 18 on three-pointers. Olson's performance helped her win the Bulldog Player of the Week award.

Olson's sister, Alison, scored 10 and was praised for her defense along with freshman Nevaeh Weimert and Strauss.



Grizzly matmen third at Byron

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

The WEM-JWP Grizzlies are finding their groove early in the wrestling season. After dropping two matches at Medford, they turned things around with a win at Triton and a third-place finish at Byron last weekend.

WEM-JWP 57, Triton 24

The host Cobras were already at a disadvantage, giving up four forfeits for a free 24 points to the Grizzlies. Even with the 24-point head start, WEM-JWP still won six of the 10 matches wrestled and outscored Triton 33-24.

Parker James lost by fall to Triton's Theo Kispert in 4:31 at 106 pounds. After two forfeits, WEM-JWP jumped ahead by 11 when Carson Petry defeated Alex Ortiz by a 16-1 technical fall in 3:48 at 126.

Other winners: Gavin Krause (152), 12-1 major decision; Lucas Morsching (160), fall, 3:58; Jack Cahill (182), forfeit; Maddox Moreno (195), forfeit; Avery Fall (220) fall in 1:45; and Keegan Kuball (285), fall, 1:15.

Byron Invitational

The Grizzlies historically struggle at the meet, but this year the team went 2-1 against opponents that co-head coach Adam Roesler considered very respectable teams.

The first team they faced was Byron, a team that always gave the Grizzlies trouble. This time, it was the other way around.

James and Brady Murphy won by fall, with Petry's win by major decision giving the team a 16-point lead.

Byron chipped away at the lead with wins by fall in four out of six matches. Zach Quast, 132, defeated his opponent by fall, but Krause and Isaac Quast won by decision, allowing the Bears to narrow the lead.

Cahill's win by fall gave the Grizzlies an eight-point lead, but Byron won by fall and by forfeit to take its first lead. It was up to Kuball.

All Kuball needed to do was win the match, even if by decision. He instead won by fall.

Dover-Eyota shocked WEM-JWP back to reality. Only Murphy and Cahill won. Murphy won by fall in 3:59 while Cahill took a 16-5 major decision. The dual ended with a rare loss for Kuball in 1:11.

It put the Grizzlies in the third-place match, and they easily handled Westfield 54-18.

Winners: Murphy, James, Petry, Kelton Erler, Krause, Cade Christianson, Morsching, Keegan Lamont, Quast, Cahill, Fall and Kuball.

Current records

Roesler provided current stats for the varsity. As a whole, the team is 61-62 in matches. Individually: Kuball 8-2; Petry 8-0; Murphy 7-3; Krause 7-3; Cahill 5-1; Max Davis 4-3; Morsching 4-7; Kelton Erler 3-5; Fall 2-3; Zach Quast 2-5; Jaxon Hulsing 2-5; Isaac Quast 2-7; Carson James 2-6; Parker James 1-3; Lamont 1-0; Maddox Moreno 1-3; Trey Richards 1-1; Charles Adams 1-0; Ben Root 0-3; and Patrick Adams 0-2.

The Grizzlies travel to Glencoe-Silver Lake Friday, Dec. 16 for a tournament.

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EASY OUTING — The Waseca High School boys' basketball team defeated NRHEG 65-49 at New Richland Tuesday night. From left: Addison Sampson (1) goes to the hoop as Sam Olson (4), Daxter Lee (3) and Sawyer Prigge (23) give chase; Lee finds tough going against the Bluejays' Zach Hulscher and Tyson Reger; Damarius Russell (3) drives to the basket; Deron Russell (right) shoots while Jaylin Raab (5) defends.

Pioneer photos by Eli Lutgens

Fast-starting Waseca boys cruise at NRHEG

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The Waseca High School boys' basketball team did whatever it wanted to Tuesday night in New Richland, defeating NRHEG 65-49. The Bluejays started fast and hot, with open three-pointers from Tyson Reger on the first two possessions. Sophomore Damarius Russell assisted on a layup to Andrew Robran, and just like that the Bluejays were up by eight, just two minutes into it. The Panthers

got within five after a circus layup from William Tuttle made it 10-5. From that point, the Jays went on a 17-4 run, with seven points coming from Russell on a pullup 3-pointer and two acrobatic layups. Russell scored four more points, on a wide open layup and a pair of free throws, as the Jays took a 31-13 lead at halftime.

The second half started the same way as the first, with Reger connecting from deep. At one point the Jays led by 28. All night,

until that point, the Jays successfully applied a full-court press, which seemed to stymie the Panthers, which, when they could get shots off, missed many. Not to help things, the Panthers have shot well below 50% from the free-throw line, a trend which continued.

The Bluejays improved to 3-0. The Panthers remained winless on the season.

Individual scoring for the Bluejays: Damarius Russell 13; Tyson Reger 15; Laird Keeton 8; Carson Ohnstad 9; Addison Sampson

5; Zach Hulscher 7; Deron Russell 5; Robran 4; Noah Thompson 1.

"I think we have a bunch of guys who are willing to share the ball and create good shots," said Waseca coach Seth Anderson. "We have some really high-character guys on our team this year."

And they have some offensive ability.

"Damarius has been solid and he comes back with some experience from last year," said Anderson. "We just want him to make

the correct read and the correct pass or shot every chance down the floor. He's great at creating scoring opportunities for himself and others."

The Bluejays play Friday at home against Jackson County. On Tuesday, Dec. 20 they host Hope Academy and on Thursday host JWP.



HEAD OVER HEELS — The Bluejays' Katelyn Weber dismounts the balance beam during their meet against New Ulm.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

WHS gymnasts, 6th at Mankato, fall to New Ulm

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

The Waseca High School gymnastics team started its season at K&G Gymnastics in Mankato Saturday, Dec. 10. They faced six schools: Big South rivals St. Peter and New Ulm; Mankato East, Mankato West, Austin, and Glencoe-Silver Lake.

As one of the smaller schools at the meet, it was a tougher day for the Bluejays gymnasts who placed sixth with a score of 128.900. Mankato West was the winner with 142.100. St. Peter placed second with 136.000, Mankato East third with 131.525, New Ulm Area fourth with 131.525, Austin fifth with 131.525, and Glencoe-Silver Lake last with 120.800.

Despite being one of the smaller schools at the meet, Waseca was still competitive. Junior Hadyn Lynch led the team, tying for fifth on the floor with a 9.025 and taking fifth on the vault with a 9.0. Freshman Layla Keith took fourth

on the vault with a 9.025. The JV team had a good showing, too. Senior Katheryn Kofstad took first in the vault with an 8.75 and 8th-grader Angelica Lopez took third in all-around with a 26.05.

The gymnasts returned home Tuesday, Dec. 13 for a meet against New Ulm.

It was a great night for Layla Keith, who led the Jays in scoring, winning the floor event with a 9.225 score, taking second in vault, fourth on beam and bars and second in all-around with a 33.475. Senior Kara Doyle took 5th on the beam with a 7.5.

The junior varsity shared in the great night against New Ulm. Seventh-grader Maddie Root placed second in the all-around with a 25.5 and second in the vault with a 7.9.

The Bluejays host a meet against Kasson-Mantorville Tuesday, Dec. 20.

WHS girls top Triton, WEM

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

Although the Waseca Bluejays team enjoyed outstanding offense in the girls' basketball season opener, their wins against Triton and Waterville-Elysian-Morristown proved how outstanding their defense can be too.

Neither the Cobras nor the Buccaneers could score more than 32 points against the Bluejays last week, resulting in convincing wins at Triton and against WEM.

Waseca 57, Triton 32

Waseca dropped the Cobras to 0-4 at Dodge Center. By halftime, it was 32-12.

While the Bluejay offense did well, the real story of this game was defense. If it wasn't for a lucky three-point buzzer-beater, Waseca would have held the Cobras to nine points in the first half.

Waseca 63, WEM 32

It looked like a potentially competitive game Dec. 13 when WEM visited Waseca. The visitors kicked off the game with two straight field goals before seniors Kloe Wadd and Sam Azure replied.



DEFENDERS OF THE HOOP — Waseca's Callie Dufault (1) and Samantha Azure (2) defend against WEM's Addyson Taylor (3) and Emma Woratschka (13).

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

It took a while for the Bluejays to get it together offensively before taking a double-digit lead by halftime. The score went from 11-10 in favor of the Bucs to 16-11 Waseca halfway into the first half, thanks to sophomore Callie Dufault supplying four points and Azure adding two.

After a 28-17 halftime lead, Waseca ramped up the pressure and aggression. Senior Avery Madsen

scored three straight three-pointers to give Waseca a significant lead.

The Lady Jays improved to 3-0. They travel to Jackson County Central Friday, Dec. 16. The girls travel to Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial, a team ranked ninth in Class AA, on Tuesday.



TOUGH NIGHT — It was a tough night for Waseca wrestlers against New Ulm. From left: Lucas Selthun; Carter Ellis; Jacob Root.

Pioneer photos by Michael Roy

Waseca wrestlers endure challenging week

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

It was a tough week for most of the Waseca High School wrestling team as the Bluejays lost 61-18 to New Ulm Dec. 8 and had some troubles at the Jackson County Central Invitational the following Saturday.

New Ulm 61, Waseca 18

Waseca fielded a full team to face a Big South Conference rival. Although the Bluejays had the home-mat advantage, that didn't mean much for them.

Aside from a forfeit at 126 pounds,

Waseca's other 12 points were victories by fall for Payton Garza and Matthew Veroeven.

New Ulm won the first three matches in quick succession. After the Eagles forfeited, they took seven victories by fall or technical fall. Payten Haack was the longest to last,

eventually falling in 2:50.

JCC Pizza Ranch Invitational

The Bluejays traveled to Jackson County Central on Saturday for the Pizza Ranch Invitational. The Bluejays had one placewinner. Veroeven was sixth at 220.

WHS hockey girls fall 3-1 to Minnesota River

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

After a tough 6-0 loss to a strong Luverne team, the Lady Jays hockey team hoped to get a win against conference rival Minnesota River on Thursday, Dec. 8. But it wasn't meant to be.

It was a quiet first period where each team took seven shots. In the second period, senior Cece Huttemier opened things up with a goal thanks with an assist by Izabela Slechta 2:53 into it. That did not

make the Minnesota River players happy at all.

The Bulldogs outshot the Bluejays 14-5 in the second period, and they cashed in on two of those shots 6:22 into the period and over ten minutes later.

Minnesota River skated to a 3-1 win.

Waseca goalie Illamay Draheim stopped 30 of 33 shots.

The Bluejays' record fell to 4-4 overall and 3-3 in the Big South.

WHS hockey boys bounce back

By MICHAEL ROY
Staff Writer

Sometimes, when you're feeling good about yourself, you're going to get humbled. The High School Waseca boys' team got a piece of that humility when they took an 11-1 loss to Luverne on Dec. 3.

However, it's how you react to that humility that matters, and the boys responded by taking two games in the Big South Conference, winning 9-4 at Worthington Dec. 6 and shutting out Windom at home 4-0 Dec. 8.

Waseca 9, Worthington 4

The Bluejays opened with a goal 5:59 into it by Brayden Hesch-Priem. After Worthington responded with a goal, Kyle Ahlschlager scored the tiebreaker two and a half minutes later. Keaton Roeker scored his first goal of the season to give Waseca a 3-1 lead after the first period.

Ahlschlager opened the second period with

another goal before Worthington got one in net 40 seconds later. After the Trojans scored a third goal, Ahlschlager completed the hat trick while Hesch-Priem scored his second goal 12 seconds later. Lucas Groll and Griffin Krautkremer added two to the Bluejay tally.

Waseca totaled 44 shots on goal to Worthington's 24. Bluejay goaltender Eli Wetzel stopped 20 shots for a .833 save percentage.

Ahlschlager had a seven-point night. Charlie Cariveau had two points from two assists, Hesch-Priem had two points from two goals, Lucas Groll's two-point night included a goal and assist, and Brayden Hoof contributed an assist.

Waseca 4, Windom 0

After what looked to be a scoreless game to end the second, Waseca broke it open with a goal. Who else to get the ball rolling than Ahlschlager?

Ahlschlager scored another 1:25 into the third period. Krautkremer scored twice in the third.

Wetzel denied all of Windom's 32 shots on goal



BOUNCEBACK — The Bluejays' Griffin Krautkremer (15) eyes a Windom opponent.

Pioneer photo by Michael Roy

Krautkremer and Groll had an assist on the night while Ahlschlager had two.

Waseca's record moved to 4-1. The Jays host LaCrescent-Hokah on Saturday.