



Compostings

by Al Batt

‘I’ll become a bouillionaire’

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING

It’s a great day. What happened? The bulb in my car’s “check engine” light finally burned out.

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. Each year, I suffer through an agonizing phenomenon called winter. I know it’s been a prolonged cold spell when people stop asking me if it’s cold enough for me. The degrees below zero are louder than the degrees above zero. The blessing is that the numbing temperatures boost long underwear sales. There were rumors of the temperature hitting 40 degrees in a few days. Palm trees moving in a tropical breeze danced in my mind on a day so cold the pipes froze in my snow globe. One day, in an endless glacial spell, I dug out a scarf my mother had given me when I was in high school. It still fits. It was good to make it through another January. I grew up with an out-house. The worst part of January was that the outhouse mystically moved farther from the house.

I wished for friendlier weather. I wished hard and it warmed enough to snow. Acres of lonesome ground became an arresting vista of snow-fields. It was lucky that there was room for it. The snow hadn’t made a reservation.

I’VE LEARNED

An opinion should not be used as a battering ram.

It shouldn’t take much for something to be a big deal.

I had to give away my old Operation game because my insurance company denied coverage.

I stopped to eat at a Cracker Barrel in Missouri. It’s a place to make America grits again. I stumbled around and through a staggering selection of merchandise in its gift shop while waiting a few minutes to be seated. Once inside the restaurant proper, I was greeted by walls and a ceiling adorned with old signs, farm equipment and household items. The chain is trying to reduce the clutter presented for my enjoyment. They need not do that for me. I welcome the clutter as long as I don’t have to eat it. There, I enjoyed a savory meat-loaf dinner while staring up at a fence wire puller. I asked the server if part of her job was being able to identify the implements hanging on the walls and from the ceiling. It wasn’t part of her job de-

scription.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

I got fired from my job because I kept asking my customers whether they would prefer “Smoking” or “Non-smoking.” Apparently, the correct terms for a funeral director to use are “Cremation” or “Burial.”

A bus station is where bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. I have a workstation.

Why don’t you ever see hippopotamuses hiding in trees? Because they’re good at it.

I’ve started investing in stocks. Chicken, beef and vegetable. I know it’s risky, but with any luck, I’ll become a bouillionaire.

I accidentally sprayed men’s deodorant in my mouth. Now I speak with a weird Axe scent.

I bought a dog from a blacksmith. He seemed to like his new home, but the minute I turned my back, he made a bolt for the door.

NATURE NOTES

The January day was headed for perfection, but it was a long trip, even if it knew a shortcut. It was -20 degrees and it was windy. That’s an invitation to stay indoors. Mama didn’t raise any fools, so I waited until it warmed up to -18 degrees, a less than drastic improvement, before heading outside. I tried to do the right thing by my neighbors by feeding the birds. Birds are my neighbors. It was quiet as I trudged along briskly, if a person can trudge along briskly. Then, I heard the voice of a harbinger of hope. A white-breasted nuthatch sang its spring song—a rapid, nasal, “way-way-way-way.” The bird gave voice to an appreciation for a new day.

Some owls commonly forage at the same height as vehicles, making them prone to vehicle collisions. Spilled grain, bags of chips, half-eaten cheeseburgers and beverage containers litter the edges of our roadways. Rodents love to snack on discarded food scraps and grains, and the owls love to snack on the rodents that love to snack on those food scraps and grains. Once an owl zeroes in on a mouse or vole, it doesn’t notice traffic. Owls hunt at low altitudes at night, flying close to the ground where vehicles are traveling.

MEETING ADJOURNED

“The very nature of kindness is to spread. If you are kind to others, today they will be kind to you, and tomorrow to somebody else.”—Sri Chonmony.

Arriving in cold-snapped Florida

If I were a suspicious person, I might begin to believe I am the victim of a nationwide conspiracy having to do with the weather.

I am currently on a trip to Florida, my first in about 30 years. As I write this, I am at a hotel with my sister-in-law Joan anticipating a day at Disney World which will begin after breakfast tomorrow.

The trip began with a drive from Minnesota to the northern suburbs of Chicago, where Joan lives. I have no complaints about the beginning. When I drove away from home, the temperature was -5 degrees: 15 degrees warmer than the overnight low had been the morning before. As the drive continued, the temperature reached the low 20s, but most importantly my car heated up nicely and all went smoothly during the six-hour drive.

I listened to a “books on tape” version of some of C.S. Lewis’ essays. Lewis wrote the Namia series of books, and wrote books and essays on various topics having to do with Christian faith. One of his books which has provided continued meaning and insights for me is “Mere Christianity.” A rephrasing of the intent of the title might be “Christianity at its simplest.”

The essays were richly engaging, and helped the drive fly by.

The next day, our flight was scheduled to leave from O’Hare International Airport just prior to 3 p.m. Joan is a very detail-oriented individual, and so we got ourselves to the airport about noon. On the drive, we encountered some nerve-racking moments on the eight-lane road that took us down. It had been snowing lightly at Joan’s house, but it did not seem threatening. Once we left on the one-hour drive, the snow became thicker and thicker. For about 20 minutes of the drive, the snow was so heavy we could barely see other cars on the freeway. Drivers were slowing sharply and putting on their flashers.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

Fortunately, it was for only part of the drive. When we got to the airport, it wasn’t snowing at all.

But then it was, and eventually visibility became a problem.

Without going into tedious detail, it was past 5 p.m. when our pilot was in place and we were able to get on board. Then our plane had to wait its turn to be de-iced.

It was practically 6 p.m. when we got in the air, changing our arrival time from 6:40 (which included “losing” one hour as we changed to the Eastern time zone) to essentially 9 p.m. It was a relief to finally be in the air, but frustrating to know our planned schedule had been shoved harshly askew.

One fortunate thing—thanks to modern interconnection, Eli—who was scheduled to pick us up at the Orlando airport—was able to access on-going current information about our status. He knew exactly when to be at the airport to meet us, despite the repeatedly delayed times.

Back when we were planning the trip, the 6:40 arrival time was “okay” for our other plans. We were going to travel together in Eli’s vehicle to a hotel in the Everglades. The 11 p.m. arrival time we had originally figured on became 1 a.m.

At least the traffic was light at that time of the night. We got to our hotel and bedded down quickly, since we were all quite tired.

The next morning we took the scenic route to “Captain Jack’s Airboat Tours,” located at the fringes of Everglades National Park. There we had

three different types of rides arranged for. The first was an airboat through the “Mangrove Tunnels,” waterways that run between thickly wooded islands covered in mangrove trees. The second was through the “grasslands.”

Both rides were filled with variety. We saw alligators, passed through a no-wake zone where manatees are known to swim, and moved at paces fast and slow among the trees which did, in some cases, create roofed-over “tunnels.”

Our drivers were obviously used to thrilling and fascinating their riders, both by stopping to look at special views of wildlife or forest and by racing at top speed—an estimated 50 m.p.h.—through some of the tunnels.

They added narrations about the setting, the wildlife, and their personal experiences.

Everything about it was enjoyable—except the weather.

Joan and I had arrived in Florida during the worst cold snap in about 15 years. Though it almost never does, the state experienced overnight lows in the upper 20s. The high was around 50 degrees. Worst of all, it rained during our airboat rides.

When it was raining and the boat was moving fast, the raindrops felt like icy pellets hitting our faces. It wasn’t a heavy rainfall, so it took a while for our clothes to get soaked through. But the wetter we became, the colder the wind would feel.

It rained the most during our second airboat tour. I was wearing a hooded sweatshirt and a short-sleeved shirt un-

derneath. My jeans were dripping wet. Eli and Joan had fared slightly better because Eli had a somewhat waterproof jacket and Joan had purchased a rain poncho. The poncho helped a lot, until the speedy, windy pace of our ride started to whip the plastic around and start tearing it.

So, that’s the “victims of a weather conspiracy” part of the narrative.

More importantly, the day was still magnificent. The airboat drivers knew how to swing the boat around in exciting ways, we saw fascinating and beautiful wildlife, and we were in good company together.

After two and a half months of planning and anticipation, we were in the Everglades, passing through a fascinating, even surreal environment. We didn’t let the weather spoil our delight in the day and the nature of the experience.

When we left the Everglades on Sunday, we returned to Orlando to begin the adventure Joan and I have planned at the amusement parks. We had to walk through a large shopping area called “Disney Springs” to get to the customer service area and “activate” a pass that had been purchased online. As we walked, we passed numerous flowerbeds that had been covered over to protect the plants from freezing.

Perhaps most strikingly, a large fountain had icicles hanging from it—something Florida “never” sees. The same record-setting overnight lows are due to flavor the days we will be spending at the park. We have acquired some additional items of warm clothing in preparation. Joan had packed only one pair of long pants—all her other items were summer wear, short-sleeved shirts, shorts, and sandals.

We don’t “like” it, but we’re not going to let it spoil our time, either. We’re looking forward to the fun and thrills we anticipate over the next few days.

The wonder of Preschool Olympics

Recently, I finally got to attend an event related to my work at the magazine and let me tell you, I had a blast.

It was a tremendous privilege to attend the Preschool Olympics. On Friday morning, I woke up early to beat the morning traffic heading to Boulder, where I stopped at the Boulder Country Day School which has the students from PreK through eighth grade.

I was there to talk with the director of marketing, who had invited me to attend. As I waited for her, I watched as a teacher opened the door for students and greeted each by name. As we walked to the gym, the director was constantly engaged in conversations with parents and other teachers as we passed. It was like a little family the way the community felt so close, and I found it very endearing. It reminded me of my time at Sacred Heart.

After asking the director questions about the Preschool Olympics, I took my seat in the gym and waited for the event to start. I watched as parents and grandparents filtered into the gym to find the best spots to capture their little



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

one’s athletic feats.

The Preschool Olympics was exactly what it sounds like. A handful of preschool classes dressed in different colored team t-shirts and wearing the flag of their country (hand colored, mind you) came in as a procession. The opening ceremonies featured a lot of waving children whose faces lit up once they saw mom or dad in the crowd. A few had to be carried in or hold the hand of their teacher. I get it—opening ceremony is scary in front of so many people.

Then the games began. First was the relay, where kids ran to one end of the gym and back, tagging in the next person on their team. They were adorably

cute as they ran. Especially when the younger preschoolers gave up racing and proceeded to play tag in the middle of the relay.

Then came another relay, but with a hurdle involved. After that was soccer, volleyball, a “marathon,” and basket racing, and breakdancing. For breakdancing, they laid out gym mats in a circle, and a seventh grade student came out to “compete” against them. He actually knew how to breakdance and the entire gym was impressed as he proceeded to spin on his head and do funky breakdance moves. Then it was the preschoolers’ turn; they wiggled and moved their legs in a circle and put their head down and honestly

got pretty close to breakdancing.

In the end, every preschooler lined up and was given a gold medal by the eighth graders, who were passing down their legacy from when they once participated in the Preschool Olympics.

It was very sweet, and the whole atmosphere made me wish for a school like that for the kids I hope to have one day. But as a mom dropped a giant Versace bag in the seat next me, I realized I should maybe dream a little smaller. My kids can take the bus to public school as I did and become great human beings. I just hope they won’t have to do as my boyfriend did and take the public city bus to school with, as he claims, “the crackheads.”

That is far into the future, so I will be happy to sort through photos of cute kids and their athletic feats and write a story appreciating community and growth until then.

My Determination: “If you want to survive, you need to laugh at weird things. Especially things like this.” —Tina Belcher, Bob’s Burgers

Final leg of trip leading to Everglades

I am returning home this week after a relaxing, event- and friend-filled vacation, with the final leg the weekend of Jan. 31 bringing me and company to the Everglades.

This past weekend I picked up editor/writer Deb Bently and her sister-in-law Joan from the Orlando International Airport. Their flight was quite delayed, from 6 p.m. to until after 9 p.m. when I picked them up. A four-hour car ride south brought us to a Florida City hotel around 1:15 a.m. I had a horrible time sleeping and only managed three or so hours of sleep.

Saturday morning we departed around 10 a.m. or so for the Everglades. We enjoyed a scenic drive through ‘the heart’ of the Everglades as we drove to Everglades City where two air boat tours, a “swamp buggy” ride and an alligator show awaited us.

Rain started early and lasted until the buggy ride. During the airboat rides, I felt as if I was being pelted in the face with icicles. Repeatedly.

The first ride was a smaller boat which held only about six passengers. The second ride was on a larger, 20-person boat. Both rides were scenic and a little bit of a roller coaster ride as the drivers liked to do spins and go fast.

Oh, and don’t let me forget. Cold and painful. Thankfully, I brought sunglasses for the second ride so I could



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

keep my eyes open while we were moving.

Still, a very fun tour. Oh, and the smell. Our operators said the smell was not feces, but mud. Did I forget to mention Florida is built on a swamp?

Our swamp buggy ride was last, where our driver explained that during the summer we would have been driving through four feet of water in addition to the 12-foot-tall grass which gives the Everglades its name: “forever grass.” However the tires of our extra-tall, combination bus and all-terrain vehicle only touched water occasionally because Florida is experiencing a drought. The road was clear enough my truck could have driven down it.

The tour guides were excellent, giving us information about our surroundings along with a bit of history.

An alligator ‘wrestling’ show and tour of a small zoo completed our day of activities. Oh, and Deb and I each held an alligator. It was odd. They are

not supposed to be pets and I don’t enjoy seeing animals look sad/out of their natural habitats. That said, the tiger we saw did come up to the edge of the cage and purr as he rubbed his face against the fencing.

The night concluded with a seafood dinner before a return trip to the hotel. I fell asleep promptly by 9 p.m. or so, utterly exhausted. Thankfully the cold rain kept me wide awake during the daytime hours.

Sunday morning, after a breakfast of waffles, we made the decision to drive most of the way to Key West, to see the beautiful highway into the ocean. It was scenic, and after driving slightly further than we originally planned, we stopped at “Anne’s Beach” along the ocean to enjoy the morning views, and beautiful, baby blue water.

A five or so hour drive from there returned us to Orlando, where we enjoyed dinner at Disney Springs, a large outdoor Disney Mall unlike any in the

world. Joan recommended an excellent Mexican place for dinner. Our trip ended with hugs as I dropped Joan and Deb off at the Shades of Green resort.

Deb and Joan were excellent company this entire trip. Notable car-conversations included talks of C.S. Lewis, his works, the “most American” foods, favorite restaurants, the subject of dying, religion, a little politics, and many many life stories.

I’m grateful for their company and shared experiences. And I would be remiss if I did not mention the old-timey Polaroid film camera I purchased which prints out photographs. I don’t like bringing a camera with me to places, but I wanted a physical representation of the trips I take. So, this camera allows me to snap a photo at the beginning of the trip and go on enjoying my time and the views, with my eyes and mind clear.

We snapped group photos at the Everglades and along the ocean at Anne’s Beach.

For now, the day is Tuesday: Kyle and Anastasia and I are spending our last day going to a Disney Wildlife Preserve to spend the day hiking, before enjoying smoked salmon for dinner. Wednesday and Thursday I will spend commuting home.

“A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles.” - Tim Cahill

WASECA COUNTY PIONEER

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PHONE: 507-837-6767

email: news@wasecacountypioneer.com

Address: Office at 111 Elm Avenue West

Mail: PO Box 578, Waseca MN 56093

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ELI LUTGENS
DEB BENTLY
AMELIA ROESSLER
JIM LUTGENS
JON LUCCA
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Publisher
News Editor
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Sports Editor/Dad
Ad Design
Staff Writer
Advertising Sales
Staff Writer

Contributing writers/photographers: Dave Zika, Al Batt, Darin Reese, Payge Rosacker, Rachael Jaegar, Rachel Loverink, Jessica Lutgens, Cassie Rupe, Debbie Rodriguez, Pastor Michael Coggan, Rev. Glenn K. Frerichs, Pastor Michael Granis, Pastor Rick Wulf, and Pastor Jillene Gallatin

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OBITUARIES

Pat Hanson

Pat Hanson finished her nearly 98 wonderful years here on Earth the same way she lived it, surrounded by her family. Pat was raised in Sioux City, Iowa as an only child, and vowed to have ten children. She attended Morning-side College and Iowa State University, but left a year before graduating to marry her husband, Bill. Bill was apparently undaunted by the plan for a large family and he and Pat began their married life together in 1949. They had nine children and moved throughout the Midwest until they settled in Waseca in 1966. Pat loved her home near Clear Lake.

When Bill became ill with emphysema, knowing he would become disabled at some point, Pat went back to college at Mankato State University to complete her teaching degree. She then joined the Waseca School District in 1972 as pool director and physical education teacher. She taught for twenty years in the most supportive school district with colleagues who were, and still are, dear friends. She retired from teaching in 1992, but Bill died just three months later. She responded in the indomitable way that Pat Hanson always does, and filled her life with friends, gardening, and spending time with her family, near and far.

Throughout her decades in Waseca, she headed the Waseca County Red Cross Swimming program, training instructors and teaching swimming to literally generations of kids. She life-guarded the early morning lap swimming at Waseca High School until she was 83 years old, when she decided it was probably best to turn in her whistle and pool keys.

Pat was most proud of her nine children, their families, and their many accomplishments. Pat was a strong proponent of education, hard work, accountability, and overcoming minor obstacles without complaint. Pat left her family a legacy of handling the adversity that life can bring with the support of family, and the ability to see humor in nearly all situations (especially the ability to laugh at ourselves). She will be sorely missed.

Pat is preceded in death by her husband Bill, her granddaughters Tristan Derringer and Megan



Pat Hanson

Hanson, two infant grandchildren and one infant great-grandchild. She is survived by her nine children and their spouses, Andrea Hanson-Cruz, Bill (Sheryl Garner), Cindy, Jim (Carol), Rick (Hope), Laura (John Koenen), Jill (Andrew Worsey) Tricia Mercier (Steve), and John (Lori). She is also survived by sixteen grandchildren, Adriana Cruz (Andrew Ramirez), Brett Hanson, Laurel Hanson (Eric Edelo), Mariel H.C. Folk (Zac), Ben Cox (Karolina Blaszcuk), Joe Hanson, Brian Hanson (Kayla), Hillary Markiewicz (Ben), Hayleigh Hanson, Will Koenen, Sonja Hanson, Elsa Hanson, Briece Mercier, Halle Mercier, Emily Simmons (Erik), Nick Hanson (Bailey) and eleven great-grandchildren, Ethan Derringer, Olivia Derringer, Mason Hanson, Riley Hanson, Ruby Hanson, Watson Hanson, Madelyn Markiewicz, Harper Simmons, Remy Simmons, Archer Hanson, and Finley Hanson.

The family expresses special thanks to the current and former staff members of Latham Place (Lakeshore) Assisted Living for their care and kindness. The family is also grateful to the staff of Lakeshore Rehabilitation Center for their excellent and compassionate care.

A public visitation will be held from 11:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 7, 2026 at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca. A private family service will be held and interment will follow at Calvary Cemetery in Waseca. Memorials may be directed to Waseca Area Foundation. dsouneral.com

Esther Wolfe

Esther Marie Wolfe of Waseca, MN, passed away January 20th, 2026, at the Lakeshore Rehabilitation Center in Waseca.

Esther was born on January 28, 1933, on a farm near Deep River, Iowa, to Raymond and Beulah (Eliot) Wolfe. In 1939 the family moved to Waseca, where she attended Waseca Central High School and graduated in 1950. Esther went on to college, graduated with a teaching certificate, and spent about 17 years teaching. She married Cal Pooler in 1953. They lived in Preston, Minnesota, then Newton, Iowa, and then to Charles City, Iowa; with Esther teaching school in each town. They had two children, Sandy and Randy and in 1972 adopted siblings Mike and MariLi, from South Korea. After Cal passed away in May 1983, Esther moved to Wichita Falls, Texas and worked as a

nanny for 6 years. Continuing her work as a nanny she then moved to Portsmouth, Virginia, where she also met and married Bill Outten in July 1992. Together they rescued and cared for many tropical birds with special needs.

Self expression and creativity were very important to Esther. Whether it was dying her beautiful white hair in nearly every color of the rainbow, wearing sequins and sparkles, bright colors, bold jewelry, or outfits that would light up, she wasn't afraid to stand out, in fact, she loved it! She was a gifted artist with painting, sewing, writing and much more. Esther was also very proud to be a member of MENSА. Additionally, she was an accomplished songwriter. She wrote the song, "Jesus Put A Yodel In My Soul," for the famed country singer Wanda Jackson, who became a close friend.

Esther was a huge fan of country-

western music. Johnny Cash even handed her his harmonica during his show. For a couple years she was a DJ on a local country-western radio station. While living at Lakeshore she was famous for playing a country-western channel on her television 24 hours a day.

Esther is survived by her daughter, Sandy Williams; son-in-law Keith Williams; son, Randy Pooler; daughter-in-law, Theresa Pooler; son, Michael Pooler; brother, Larry Wolfe; sister-in-law, Iva Lee Wolfe; granddaughter, Mary Williams and her partner Ang; granddaughter, Alice Williams; granddaughter, Rhiannon Pooler; grandson, Quentin Pooler; and granddaughter, Mazaron Pooler.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Norm Wolfe; her daughter, MariLi; her husband, Cal; and her sister-in-law, Gerri; and her grandchild, Jabel.

Esther Marie Wolfe will be



Esther Wolfe

greatly missed by everyone that has ever known her. May the echoes of her beautiful spirit continue to shine in all of our lives.

Services will be held at Deep River, Iowa on a later date.

WEM/JWP Grizzlies Youth Wrestling

The Mill Event Center in Waseca was buzzing with energy as the Waseca Bluejays and Waterville Grizzlies squared off in a one-of-a-kind youth wrestling showdown that felt more like a Friday night main event than a typical tournament. Hosted by the Waseca Wrestling Club, the Highway 14 Border Battle wasn't just a competition—it was an experience.

Under the lights, with a DJ spinning music and wrestlers walking out to their own personalized entrance songs, nearly 100 youth wrestlers from kindergarten through 6th grade took to the mats. From first-year wrestlers getting their very first exhibition matches to seasoned young grapplers putting on clinics, the day delivered 75–100 action-packed matches that showcased just how strong—and fun—the future of wrestling is in our area.

And yes, for the record, no birds



BORDER BATTLE - The Mill Event Center featured a youth wrestling tournament involving the Waseca Bluejays, Waterville Grizzlies and a lot of success.

or four-legged furry animals were injured in the Highway 14 border battle. Just a lot of sweat, smiles, and hard-earned victories.

The event was designed with the purpose of raising funds for the Waseca Wrestling Club, creating a welcoming environment for new wrestlers, and introducing a unique K-3 and K-6 dual-meet format that kept the crowd engaged from start to finish. Judging by the packed house and nonstop cheers, it

worked.

The fun didn't stop when the final whistle blew. As the mats were cleared, adults took center stage with a bean bag tournament, complete with pool play and brackets that stretched the celebration well into the evening. It was the perfect way to turn a successful day into a full-blown community night.

One of the most memorable moments came at the end, when every participant received a medal—

handed out by the Waseca cheerleaders. The result? Grins from ear to ear and memories these kids won't forget anytime soon.

A huge thank-you goes out to the volunteers, parents, coaches, wrestlers, and many local businesses that made the day possible. The silent auction featured everything from homemade cookies and apparel to gas cards, softer salt, and even the coveted firetruck ride to school.

■ Frosty

from Page 1

– must be present to win.

Five names are drawn to win \$50.00 – attendance at the unmasking is not necessary.

Contest rules Clues are published by the Waseca County Pioneer; NRHEG Star Eagle, Facebook; and Waseca County News; Waseca Chamber of Commerce; KOWZ/KRUE radio; Waseca Sleigh & Cutter Festival.

2. One guess allowed each week.

3. Each entry must have name and complete address of person making the guess. Entries without complete information are not valid.

4. Entrant must live in Waseca County and be over 18 years of age.

5. If there are multiple correct guesses, a drawing will be made to determine the winner.

6. If there are no correct guesses, a drawing will be made from all entries received.

7. Entries must be received before 3:00 p.m. February 27, 2026.

8. Submit entries to:
a. WASECA: Submit entry at Waseca Music; 111 South State, Waseca, MN 56093; or via mail.

b. JANESVILLE: Mail or drop off at Waseca Music; mark your entry as Janesville.

c. NEW RICHLAND: Drop off at NRHEG STAR EAGLE NEWS; or mail to Waseca Music - mark your entry as New Richland.

Frosty sponsors: iWealth – Brad Connors; Domino's; Latham Place; Mediacom; Lake Shore Inn; and Xcel Energy. Please thank these sponsors for supporting the 29th Annual Frosty Contest!

Frosty: Week 3 Clue

A few guesses have been entered

Meaning theories are in the works

Frosty's information released slowly

Studying and following along offers perks

Frosty is more than a character

A long-time member of the community

Their mixed skills and personality

Brings about meaningful opportunity

Away from the area

Degrees were obtained

But once they returned

Many careers were gained

■ Awards

from Page 1

the paper this year," Pioneer Publisher Eli Lutgens stated. "And worked with Ben, our newest reporter, to help improve our overall photography. Those were two of the areas we focused on improving from the year prior."

Judges' comments included, regarding the Editorial page, "A true page I'd want to be looking for in my newspaper every week."

On Advertising Excellence, "The advertising is nicely balanced throughout the publication making it part of the reader's experience and not an interruption. Copy is sharp."

Photography as a Whole, "The photos used were eye catching, and there were plenty of photos."

Regarding Sports and General Reporting, "Articles are easy to read. Loved all the stories and local content."

Newspapers from across the state submitted entries for consideration in a wide array of categories. The Pioneer's work was compared with publications of similar frequency and circulation, referred to as "non-multi day" and with 1,000 or fewer subscribers.

More than 4,100 entries were submitted to MNA for consideration this year.

Of the roughly 50 categories, writers Deb Bently, Jim Lutgens and

Eli Lutgens earned five individual awards.

Bently earned three awards, a second and two third places in Human Interest, Social Issues and Business Profiles categories. Her winning stories were May is Foster Care Awareness Month, Maybe two "wrongs" can make a "right" and It was Never Just About Hair - A profile on stylists Stacey Schroeder and Hilary Johnson.

Judges comments regarding the stylist story were, "Really exceptional storytelling. I can feel the world of the subjects and can tell that you spent a lot of time with them in understanding both their business and their personalities."

Regarding the Two Wrongs story about Hicks, "I was hooked right away with the lede of this story. Hicks' past and goals to improve other's situations and access. Hicks personality pops through the writing, and his story is told with empathy and thoughtfulness."

These stories can be found on the Pioneer website from the following pages:

<https://wasecacountypioneer.com/news/may-foster-care-month>

<https://wasecacountypioneer.com/news/maybe-two-wrongs%E2%80%9Cright%E2%80%9D%E2%80%9Dcan-make%E2%80%9Cright%E2%80%9D>

<https://wasecacountypioneer.com/news/never-about-hair>

Jim Lutgens won third place honors for a story on Waseca Tennis capturing a section championship,

advancing to state.

Comments included, "The lede drew my interest early, which was good, and I appreciated the author conveying the importance of the lineup choices through quotes."

Eli Lutgens won second place honors for sports photo, capturing a bloodied photo of Carson Petry winning a state wrestling championship.

Eli Lutgens has accumulated 10 statewide awards from MNA: four first-place finishes, two seconds and four thirds. He was also featured in the 2024 Editor and Publisher magazine's "25 under 35" edition; was named 2024's Young Reporter of the Year by the Minnesota Society of Professional Journalists (MSPJ) and earned a first-place finish in the Investigative Reporting Category in 2022 from MSPJ.

The Pioneer has now earned 14 awards as a publication over the past three years: seven firsts, five seconds, and two third-place honors.

Bently's acknowledgments from MNA now total nine: one first, five

seconds, and three thirds.

Jim, as a sports editor with a lifetime in the journalism field, has earned more honors than he can recall. He has many first-place finishes for his sports reporting dating back to the 1980s. His sports sections earned two first and one third-place finishes for the Pioneer over the past three years. He has authored three first-place stories in Sports Story and Sports Feature Story categories over the last three years and now a third place.

"My dad is my favorite writer," Eli Lutgens states. "Thank you to our incredible team of writers, staff, graphic designers, delivery drivers and volunteers. And of course our readers and advertisers. None of this could be done without an excellent community of people. There truly is no better part of the world than Southern Minnesota."

All of the articles referenced here can be found online at wasecacountypioneer.com.



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ETHANOL

Meet the Teacher



WARM WELCOME - Mercy Detter from Brandon, S.D. is now a long-term substitute in the JWP Elementary art department, and is the new Grizzly cheer coach. She had previously completed a student teaching practicum with Mrs. Siebert at JWP. Detter went to college at Minnesota State University of Mankato. She graduated in December with a K-12 Art Education Degree; she was a cheerleader at MSU all her years of college.

Local students earn accolades

More than 4,100 students were recognized for their outstanding academic performance over the fall 2025 semester at South Dakota State University by being named to the dean's list. To earn dean's list distinctions in SDSU's colleges, students must have completed a minimum of 12 credits and must have earned at least a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

Claire Walz of Janesville, College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions.

Maia Bartel of New Richland, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

Kia Buendorf of New Richland, College of Education and Human Sciences.

Erin Jacobson of New Richland, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

Ayla Smith-Holcomb of Waldorf, College of Education and Human Sciences.

Lindsey Kopetzki of Waseca, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Elizabeth Manthe of Waseca, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Ridgewater College Dean's List for Fall Semester 2025

Emilee Bade, Janesville

Alden Dobberstein, New Richland

North Dakota State University Graduation List for Fall 2025

Jarret Ahlschlager of Waseca, Construction Management

Marco Cruz of Waseca, Mechanical Engineering

Jacob D. Hertzog of Waseca, Criminal Justice

North Dakota State University Dean's List

Jarret Ahlschlager, Waseca

Reed J. Anderson, Waseca

Hertzog, Jacob D., Waseca

Cody J. Weber, Waseca

Iowa State University announces fall 2025 Dean's List

Hallie Schultz, Architecture, New Richland

Morgan Elizabeth Ebnet, Interior Design, B.F.A., Waseca

Bemidji State University 2025 Deans List

Kyle McGuire, Waseca

Milwaukee School of Engineering congratulates the following students named to the Fall Semester 2025 Dean's List:

Benjamin Diedrich of Waseca was named to the Dean's List with High Honors. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering.

Oliver Rohwer of Waseca was named to the Dean's List. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Dean's List

Rachel Horejsi, Ellendale, MN, College of Arts and Sciences

Lauren Dimler, Janesville, MN, College of Arts and Sciences

Kirsten Thell, Janesville, MN, College of Arts and Sciences

Alexandria Technical & Community College, Dean's List

Elyse Bucholz of Waldorf, MN

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls 2025 fall semester Dean's List

Lily Sonnek, Janesville, MN

Mya Sutton, Waseca, MN



BREAK A LEG - Drama participants at NRHEG School competed in section competition Saturday, Jan. 24, placing fifth. They also offered a public performance for NRHEG area residents the evening of Friday, Jan. 30.

One Act play brings big laughs

By MELISSA DUNN
Staff Writer

The NRHEG high school drama program delivered quick wit and sharp timing in its Friday, Jan. 30, performance of *The Rules of Comedy* by Peter Bloedel. The one-act play tells a fast-paced story that explores what happens when humor is taken far too seriously.

The play centers on a group of performers who attempt to follow strict "rules" about what makes something funny, only to discover that comedy refuses to be neatly contained. Through exaggerated situations, physical humor, and clever dialogue, the cast highlighted how laughter often comes from mistakes, surprises, and unmet expectations.

A cast and crew of sixteen students showcased strong comedic skills, particularly in their use of cabbage, real-time translation, and rubber chicken sword fights while performing an abbreviated version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in 35 minutes. Co-directors Holly Pederson and Solveig Sundblad said the NRHEG performers placed fifth out of the

seven schools in their class when performing at the regional contest last weekend.

The performance was well received, with frequent laughter throughout. More than just a comedy, the production reminded viewers that humor is unpredictable, personal, and sometimes funniest when it bends the rules.

■ Boss from Page 1

County emergency management director Denise Wright observes, "Michael creates a calm work environment; he is willing to listen. His aim always seems to be making the county a better place to live and work."

Public health nurse Sarah Berry comments, "He seeks to understand where my team is and what their needs are, then supports us in our work."

Commissioner Brad Milbrath says, "Administrator Johnson's leadership is grounded in a philosophy of collective success and regional cooperation. He consistently emphasizes collaboration across cities, counties, and state partners, viewing local government as an interconnected system rather than a collection of isolated departments. His approach encourages shared problem solving and reduces siloed decision-making, strengthening Waseca County's role as a constructive regional partner."

A native of New Ulm, Johnson began his career after earning a degree in accounting and business management at Maranatha University in Watertown, Wisc. Soon after, he began working as part of the auditor's office in Rice County. "I like numbers; I like analytics," he said of his work there. "What was missing for me was the aspect of collaborating, interactions with more people and the public."

By 2017, he had completed a Master's Degree in public administration through Hamline University. He had also moved to the staff of Dakota County, where the population is so much larger that seven

people were needed to complete the tasks he alone could manage at Rice County.

When he learned of an opening in Waseca County late in 2019, he applied and was selected, coming on staff Feb. 3 of 2020. By Feb. 25 of that month, the national Center for Disease Control (CDC) was warning a large-scale shutdown was approaching due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Of that time, Johnson says "I remember it clearly. Was it an ideal onboarding experience? Certainly not. But it was an immediate catalyst for innovation and collaboration."

He remembers leaders of area towns, townships, and school districts would "touch base daily."

"We were learning alongside each other in real time," he says. "I became introduced to the community quickly and in a way that would not have happened otherwise."

"So whatever else it was, it was a tremendous learning experience. Even people who had been department heads for 20 years were seeking support and reassurance. It was a huge unifying experience for our staff."

Of that time, Milbrath observes, "Michael's steady, factual communication was exactly what staff and residents needed during a time of uncertainty. He also managed the financial impacts of the pandemic, including federal relief funds, with the same fiscal discipline that defines his broader leadership."

Malterer comments, "Although Michael joined Waseca County six weeks before the Covid shutdown, allowing such a short time for us—Waseca County and Michael—to get to know each other before the world changed, it was enough."

"A few things became clear in very short order. Michael didn't panic and he didn't try to do it all himself. He worked collaboratively and trusted staff to know their jobs and figure out ways to do them in very unusual times, but he also led...with intelligence, transparency, practicality, and humility that helped staff trust him in return."

Having just passed his six-year anniversary with the county, Johnson says he is happy to be where he is. He is a member and has served in various leadership positions with the Minnesota Association of County Administrators. In speaking with others who hold similar roles across the state, he says, "I have to tell them, 'I don't understand what you're going through,' because it seems they're encountering some types of problems we just don't see here."

One thing leaders are encountering, he says, is that "trust in government has never been lower."

"Knowing this, we have to pay attention to what we do and say."

The problem is simplified in a smaller, rural setting, he suggests, where county employees are often interacting with people they know and even people they grew up alongside.

Still, he says, "We have to approach our role mindfully. We want to be purposeful about connecting with people."

"The more they know, see and hear, maybe the more they're willing to trust us."

Administrative coordinator Beth Weimert shares, "Michael is very intelligent and recognizes that employees often wear multiple hats, not only at work but outside of work. His ability to be a genuinely kind human and express interest in his employees is priceless. Not only does Michael anticipate obstacles, have analytic decision making and adaptability but he genuinely cares about the people he works with. As employees when we spend more time at our jobs than we do with our own families, I find these traits to be more valuable than money. I truly care about the people I work with and we are truly blessed to have Michael as our leader here at Waseca County."

County commissioner Doug Christopherson observed, "Michael is a well rounded individual, who not only has vast knowledge in public service, he also has the personality to lead and inspire people. He lets the staff know they are important. The things I admire most about him are his deep faith and his ability to handle tough situations in a calm and respectful manner."

Director of Waseca County Property and Election Services Tammy Spooner relates, "Michael is not only an amazing boss, but he is also a wonderful family man with strong Christian values. The impact that Michael has made in my career and life is immense. Every day I want to be the best person I can be and do all I can for Waseca County. It does not go unnoticed by 'the boss,' he is always quick with a compliment or a word of encouragement. I am blessed to work for a great person."

In his private life, Michael and Lindsay, who have been married nearly 17 years, live in Owatonna. Their son Levi is 15; daughter Allie is 13; Reagan, 3, is in her first years of preschool. Lindsay is a skilled piano player and teacher who currently devotes most of her time and energy to the role of parent.

Michael helps coach high school soccer for the Owatonna school district and is president of the community soccer organization. He traveled to Sweden with the group last year, where young athletes were taking part in an international event.

A gardener, golf player and someone who enjoys being outdoors, he suggests lightheartedly that an ideal retirement for him would be as a groundskeeper on a golf course. "For me, it would be a combination of many different things I enjoy," he jokes. "Just hanging out on a lawnmower appreciating nature."

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The Pastor's Column

Get wisdom

By REVEREND MIKE COGLAN

In the early hours of a very cold Christmas morning in Great Falls, Montana, the police and fire departments were called to a park to rescue a grown man who had gotten himself stuck in a plastic toddler swing. To make things worse, the man was completely naked.

The swing and its occupant were removed and transported to the nearest firehouse. Trained rescue workers went to work to free the prisoner. First, they tried a hacksaw, but that was too dangerous. Bolt cutters didn't work either. They tried warm cooking grease from the firehouse kitchen. Finally, someone brought in a steel grinder to remove the rivets holding the swing together. That did the trick. The Fire Captain was quoted, "It was way more torture than he deserved for what he did." So, he was released without charge, and his name was not revealed. The man never explained why he did something so dumb.

King Solomon wrote in Proverbs 13:16,

Every prudent man acts out of knowledge, but a fool exposes his folly.

This was not a prudent man in Great Falls. He did not act out of knowledge. Not only was his folly exposed; it was frostbitten. We enjoy hearing stories about other people's folly. But toddler swings aren't the only things we can get stuck in. A careful reading of Proverbs might help you avoid being stuck in financial ruin. You might avoid the snare of a toxic relationship. The trap of chronic inactivity can bring permanent health consequences. Some of us are enslaved by addictions. We can be stuck in loneliness, anger and depression. Among the signs that we are trapped is that we blame others. I might blame my parents, or my boss, or the government or some mysterious powerful system. If I can blame someone other than myself, then I can avoid the hard work of change.

Proverbs 15:32 He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.

A careful study of Proverbs has always been a good investment, but our world today is starving for wisdom. A provocative article was written a few years ago by Jonathan Haidt called Why the Past 10 Years of American Life Have Been Uniquely Stupid. Haidt argues

that Americans have descended into tribes that no longer have rational and civil dialogue. We feed our minds on junk food such as oversimplified soundbites and even conspiracy theories. Algorithms record our preferences and reward us with more assurances of our biases. This process insulates us from opposing viewpoints. Instead of trying to free ourselves, we identify with the trap we are in. "My blue swing is better than your green swing." "Never trust someone stuck in a yellow swing."

To break free, we need to enter the "school of wisdom." This requires study, reflection, and vulnerability. Unlike knowledge, wisdom is not instant. Wisdom is gained slowly though experience and pondering and communal discussion. Our church is widely studying the wisdom writings in the Bible. Many are dedicated to a yearlong study of the Book of Proverbs. We begin each day with a devotional reading and short journal entry. Then we meet regularly in small groups to compare our thoughts and journeys.

Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Our world suffers from information overload, while wisdom has become increasingly rare. We know more than ever, yet struggle to live well. Scripture makes a careful distinction between knowledge and wisdom, and it consistently calls God's people not merely to know more, but to become wise. Biblical wisdom is not optional for the Christian life; it is essential for faithful living, sound judgment, and spiritual maturity.

Proverbs 4:7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom.

Though it cost all you have, get understanding.

Wisdom required effort. Wisdom is costly. If this sounds intimidating, take heart. Wisdom is seeking you.

Proverbs 8:4-5 To you, O people, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind.

You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, set your hearts on it.

This proverb tells us that wisdom is a person. The New Testament reveals Jesus Christ to be wisdom itself. He calls to all of us. Even the simple can gain wisdom. Even those previously foolish can change. Set your heart on wisdom. Get out of your swing.



CELEBRATION IN SONG - Sacred Hearts Cherub Choir, which contains students from grades 1-4 performed during the 10 a.m. mass in celebration of the school's open house on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026. Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Sacred Heart kicks off Catholic Schools week

By BEN REVERMANN Staff writer

An open house at Sacred Heart Elementary School in Waseca began a week-long observance of Catholic Schools Week on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026. For Sunday morning church, God sent plenty of sunshine through the stained-glass windows, giving the parishioners plenty of light to see and sing by. Music was provided by the Sacred Heart school's Cherub Choir, which includes children from grades 1 to 4.

At the end of the 10 a.m. mass, Father Frerichs, before releasing everyone for the week, asked them to remain seated. Mary Williams and Tammy Seys approached the podium, Williams stated, "It may be cold outside, but when you walk through the doors of our church you can feel the warmth." Williams, who

is a member of the Sacred Heart Education Endowment Board added, "We've raised 2 million dollars since 1995 for education, our fund grows through earning, leaving the principle alone."

Seys, who has been the Sacred Heart School principal since November of 2025 said, "It's been my great honor to serve you in this way. Please, for those of you with children, or if you know children who would be a good fit here, join us at the school across the street for coffee until noon for hot chocolate and donuts. Take a tour of our school, grab a bite to eat and ask any questions you need."

Williams, on behalf of the Education Endowment Board then presented Father Frerichs with an oversized check in the amount of \$135,000, made out to the Sacred Heart Parish. The parishioners then

gave a round of applause. Father Frerichs reminded everyone there was a bake sale going on in the back of church and to check it out on their way to the door.

Inside the school there were children running hither and thither, along with parents moving from classroom to classroom. Kelsey Schiefelbein, fifth grade teacher said, "Today has been busy, I haven't kept track of the numbers of people coming through my classroom but there's been a lot. They've been asking questions about my class. Next year we'll be adding a sixth-grade class to our roster." There was background music playing in many of the classrooms; in some were screen-saver-style videos playing to relax the mood with teachers in each class there to answer questions.

Seys, who was standing at the front entrance of the school welcom-

ing her son and his brand-new baby said as she gently picked up her grandchild, "I am very happy with today's turnout, and a special thank you to Hy-Vee for donating the donuts."

Celebrating Catholic Schools Week doesn't end there for the students. Monday it will be, "wear clothes to celebrate Bluejay pride day" and a start to the Penny Wars, which is a school fundraiser. Tuesday will be pajama day. Wednesday will be a special mid-week mass with each grade wearing a different color. Thursday is a 'Celebrating Vocations' day where the students dress for what job they want to do when they grow up. Friday will be an effort for the students to celebrate the Sacred Heart staff and a close to the Penny Wars, with all proceeds going to support the school.

Council

from Page 1

with preliminary estimates for construction costs. The project has been on pause, and the council would like it to resume.

Waseca Engineer Nathan Willey spoke about terminating an aeration agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and ceasing winter aeration operations on Loon Lake. Brandon Eder of the DNR said the majority of the fish in the lake are bullheads. Thus, continued aeration isn't needed. Instead, a die-off might help the lake to reset, allowing game fish to be restocked in the spring. Eder states the DNR prefers to stock Loon Lake with northern pike and yel-

low perch; both tend to thrive in shallow lakes. Loon Lake has been aerated in Waseca since the 1960s.

Councilman Arndt asked about reinstating the two-mile radius of the city's subdivision regulation authority. This would give Waseca the ability to control how land surrounding the town is developed to a distance of two miles outside the city limits. This issue has been taken under advisement.

Christopher Weber was reappointed to the Waseca planning commission for another three-year term.

An off-site gambling permit was granted to the Waseca County Trail Association.

Councilwoman Stacy Schroeder added this reflection, "We do indeed live in a good community, a small slice of a larger society where we still have something

precious, the ability to choose how we treat each other. Here in Waseca we can choose to see each other not as opposing sides, but as neighbors. As vital threads in the fabric that makes our city strong. Whatever is happening within or without our city limits, whatever political storms swirl around us we still live here together. We share these streets, this weather and this community and that matters more than we sometimes remember. The energy of the world right now is focused on what's wrong and believe me there's no shortage of things to point out. But what if we choose differently, what if we looked around and saw all the things that are going right, right here in Waseca. What if we made better choices right where we're at with our neighbors at hand. Our neighbors are our business owners, our

friendly workers and our students. They are the people we see at the store, at Friday night games and at community events. I encourage each of you, my fellow council members and everyone here tonight and those listening to see your neighbors as an extension of yourself. Regardless of where they stand on any issue. Check in with them and offer to be a light in their lives, this time of year is cold and dreary for many. When the world feels chaotic and divided it's easy to retreat inward and isolate ourselves or draw battle lines. The truth is we need each other, that connection, that willingness to show up for each other, even when we disagree. That's what makes our community truly resilient and prosperous, not our political alignments, but our commitment to being pillars of support for each other."

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CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-835-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m. * * *	507-833-0017 Sunday worship 10 a.m. * * *	New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship * * *	12-18 * * *
4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m. * * *	CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS 1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca 507-835-4640 Sacrament meeting 10:00 a.m. * * *	VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Brian Schanil Pastor Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship; 9 a.m. Sunday School Tuesdays: The Shepherd's Robe Ministry, 1-3 p.m., 6-8 p.m.; Bonfires and Yard Games, 6 p.m. until dark * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 412 N. Main Street, Janesville Pastor Jason Wolter Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:30 a.m. Worship * * *
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 School 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. * * *	ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Father Glenn Ferichs Friday - 10 a.m. on 1st, 3rd and 4th Fridays p.m. Mass Sunday - Mass at 8 a.m. * * *	JANESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 401 N. West St., Janesville Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Worship * * *
CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH 309 6th St NE, Waseca 507-835-9176 Worship Sundays traditional 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Sunday School/Fellowship; 10:45 a.m. contemporary service * * *	CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY 900 14th Ave SE, Waseca 507-833-1082 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m. * * *	FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Larry Sipe Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class * * *	BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 43089 180th St., Morristown Pastor Kathy King Sunday - 8:15 a.m. Summer worship hours, (10:45 a.m. Worship, winter) * * *
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 * * *	IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship * * *	ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH 307 W. 2nd St. Janesville 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 * * *	ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Pastor Ava Adams-Morris Waldorf, Minnesota Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship * * *	FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 Owen St., Janesville Pastor Sarah Krolak * * *
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 * * *	ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC Waldorf, Minnesota Father Brian Mulligan Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship * * *	ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL CHURCH Alma City, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * *
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m. * * *	LESUEUR RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Dan Kordahl Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN Wilton Township Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor Services 6 p.m. Saturday * * *	TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Smiths Mill, Minnesota Pastor Robert Harting Thursday - 7:00 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship * * *
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca Father Glenn Ferichs 507-835-1222 Worship Sundays 10:00 a.m., Tues. and Wed. at 8:30 a.m. and Thurs. at 7 a.m.; Saturdays at 5 p.m. * * *	REAL LIFE CHURCH 620 W Elm Ave, Waseca * * *	THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS Brad Donner, Branch President Waseca, Minnesota www.lds.org Sunday - 10 a.m. Sacrament Mtg.; 11:20 a.m. Sunday School Wednesday - 7 p.m. Youth Activities, ages * * *	NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA 404 30 120th St. Waseca Pastor Sarah Krolak 507-234-6463 Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship, Second sunday "Young at heart" Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. confirmation * * *

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

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Janesville

25 years ago

- Mandi Barbknecht and Joy Kopischke were united in marriage on Saturday, Sept. 16, 2000, at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Janesville. Rev. Syl Brown officiated at the 2 p.m. ceremony. Parents of the couple are Mark and Lois Barbknecht, Darrell and Patti Kopischke, and DeVonna and Doug Nusbaum. Maid of honor was Abbey Barbknecht of Janesville. Best man was Dylan Kopischke of Madison Lake.



- Bill and Kathy Gessner of Janesville and Greg and Robby Hanson of Brooklyn Park wish to announce the birth of their granddaughter, Emma Kathleen Gessner, born December 27, 2000, at Regions Hospital, St. Paul. She weighed 6 pounds, 5 ounces and was 18 inches long at birth. Proud parents are Amy Sue Gessner and Scott Hanson.

- Lindsay Adams, daughter of Richard and Luane Adams, and Sara Prechel, daughter of Wayne and Linda Prechel, all of Janesville, have been accepted for admission at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato. Founded in 1927, Bethany is a private residential liberal arts college now offering a select number of four-year degrees. Adams and Prechel are both members of the 2001 graduating class of Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School

50 years ago



- Frank Jewison will be 90 years old this year. He was born in 1886 on the farm now owned by Clarence Jewison. He went to county school in District 86 and started high school in Janesville but did not graduate. When he was 15 or 16 years old he moved to the farm he now lives on. All the land was covered with trees. He said they had to cut down all the trees with an ax, saw and spade-there were no bulldozers back then. The timber was cut in cords and sold. The land was broken up with a two-shovel plow and one horse.

- Gary Hukriede, from the University, will be the guest speaker at the annual Waseca County Farm Bureau banquet to be held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Janesville on January 31, at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Hukriede will represent SPAN-Student Project for Amnesty Among Nations. Banquet tickets are available at the Farm Bureau office in Waseca, or from Armin Tesch, Waldorf. Most of the local directors also have tickets. Deadline for purchasing tickets is January 25. No tickets will be sold at the door.



- Four members of the JHS Junior Band concentrate during the Winter Band Concert Sunday. From left, they are Mike Galler, Scott Hendricks, Kim Santo and Nancy Prail

75 years ago

- Members of the Janesville Busy Bees Home Extension club and their husbands surprised Mr. and Mrs. Fred Fratzke on Sunday evening, Jan. 21, it being their 25th wedding anniversary. Pfeffer was played during the evening at eight tables with the pfeffer prizes awarded to Mrs. Raphael Cahill and Arthur Storjohann, high score prizes to Mrs. Wm. Blank and Ray Cahill, and the consolation prizes to Miss Marie Cahill and Julius Krause.

- Theresa Steffes of 1609 Fourth Avenue, Mankato became the bride of Orville Witt of Janesville at a wedding ceremony performed at St. Mary's hospital, Mankato, where the groom has been a patient since Jan. 3 when he was injured in a hunting accident. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W.G. Large of Grand Forks, North Dakota. The groom's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Witt, are residents of rural Janesville. Rev. William Petzke officiated at the double ring ceremony.

- A way is believed to have been found to raise the oxygen count at Lake Elysian, and with the aid of local sportsman, an effort is being made to save the game fish there. The local sportsmen's club has borrowed, and now has in operation, a machine which pumps the water from one part of the lake and enters the lake at another point, eliminating much of the stagnant water.

100 years ago

- The concert given by the newly organized Janesville band at the Town Hall Wednesday evening proved to be one of the year's most delightful affairs, the music by the band itself and the various numbers of the program combining to make up an evening of diversion that will be long time remembered. The big attendance was the stamp of approval given by our people to the new organization. It was a full house that listened to the program, and a full house means that Janeville is solidly behind the new director, Ed Goar, and his musicians.

- War, which is wholesale crime, theft and highway robbery retail crime, do not pay. Edward F. Kellar, famous in crime ten years ago, recently let out of prison, went to work in a bank, stole \$13,000, took it in a taxicab and was found dead. The doctor said fear killed him. Crime doesn't pay, or, as the striking anti-crime posters say, "You Can't Win."-Arthur Brisbane.

Waseca

25 years ago

- Marine Corps PFC Nickolas P. Mihm, son of Christing L. Trickey of Waseca, and Thomas J. Mihm of Waseca, recently completed basic training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot. San Diego. Mihm successfully completed 12 weeks of training designed to challenge new Marine recruits both physically and mentally. Mihm is a 1996 graduate of Waseca Senior High School of Waseca.



- Mike Harguth, a senior has been selected as Student of the Week by the Agriculture Department. Mike is the son of Todd and Brenda Harguth of rural Waseca. His father is a herdsman and his mother is self-employed. He has four siblings: Amy, who is in college, Steve, a tenth grader, Scott, a seventh grader and Bruce who is in second grade.

- Kyle and Jennifer Jensen of Waseca are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Allisa Morgan Jensen, born on December 27, 2000, at the Owatonna Hospital. She weighed 8 pounds, 1 ounce at birth. Maternal Grandparents are Eddy and Sue Richie of Waseca. Paternal grandparents are Ron and Pat Jensen of Owatonna. Great-grandparents are Lemoyne and Francis Jensen of Owatonna, Edward Ritchie of Waseca and Mary Ellen Musel of Waseca.

50 years ago

- Two men have been arraigned in county court concerning several thefts in Waseca in November and December of last year. David Eugene Johnson, 18 of Walnut Grove and Duane Merle Reineke, 19, Morristown have been charged with the thefts of tires and wheels from Pasbrig AMC on Dec. 8, larceny from Union 76 service station on Dec. 29 and the theft of a Craig tape player, two speakers and 12 tapes from Duane Helberg on Nov. 19. The arrest came after the police were tagging a car on 6th St. SW for parking over 24 hours and allegedly saw some of the stolen goods inside the car.

- Cynthia Joan Fowler of 309 12th Avenue NW, Waseca has been accepted at Bemidji State University for admission fall quarter 1976, according to E.J. Aalberts, director of admissions and records at BSU. Fowler, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Fowler, will join about 975 other new students at Bemidji State for classes beginning September 7. The university saw a 208 percent enrollment boost for 1975-76, bringing the total on-campus figure to 4,177.

- Two minor accidents involving no injuries were reported to the Waseca Sheriff's Department on Friday. At 3:28 p.m. a pickup driven by Joan Linda Bartz of R. 2, Waseca collided with a Volkswagen driven by Stephen Roger Erickson of 215 Ridge Road, Albert Lea. The accident occurred at the Miller Corner on Highway 13 just south of the city limits. At 10:45 p.m. in Alton Township seven miles west of Waseca a truck driven by Lowell Albert Wobschall of R. 1, Waseca went out of control, left the road and hit a power pole. The truck received moderate damage.

75 years ago

- The Waseca county selective service office said Wednesday that it will send 36 men to Minneapolis Feb. 21, for pre-induction physical examinations prior to induction into the armed forces. Names of the men will not be announced until they have been accepted for service. The heavy call for February is in addition to 10 men already accepted who will be sworn into service Feb. 13.

- The Rev. Birger Swenson, well known radio pastor and "Gospel in Film" evangelist will appear in Waseca, Sunday evening at the Salem Evangelical United Brethren church. The program will start at 7:45 p.m. and is free of charge. Rev. Birger will present the new gospel film, "Contrary Winds," an outstanding production among gospel pictures. Running time is 55 minutes and the film is packed with suspense and sparkling with romance, according to advance notices.

- George I. James, manager of Western States Utilities Co. in Waseca, and Franklin Stone, Waseca city attorney, drove to Omaha Wednesday to attend a meeting of the Northern Natural Gas Co., the firm which supplies gas for Waseca. There representatives of the company will meet with Federal Power Commission officials to discuss rate structures and other matters pertaining to gas problems.

100 years ago

- The parents of four young lads, who were injured by an electric shock when flying a kite near the city limits las May, have brought suit for a total of \$55,000 against the Northern States Power Co. and the City of Waseca. The boys are: Chris Gehloff, Harry Grunwald, Lloyd and Alvin Spies. They range in ages from 10 to 14 years. It is expected that the case will be tried at the March term of the Waseca county district court.

- A fire of unknown origin burned off the roof and damaged the machinery in the Erickson Concrete Products plant in the east part of this city last Friday morning. The fire was discovered shortly before six o'clock and had a good start before the firemen were able to check it. In addition to the damage to the building, the belting was ruined and the motors and other machinery damaged by water. The loss is estimated at about \$2,000.

- The Waseca All Stars will meet two of the fastest teams in the state at the high school gym when the Mankato Y.M.C.A. five comes here Friday evening and the Montgomery American Legion Goldies, composed of former All State College players, perform here Monday evening, Jan. 25th. Last year the All Stars and the Y.M.C.A. team had the most exciting games on the local floor and both quints are stronger this year. In bringing the Legion Goldies here, the All Stars will give the local fans an opportunity of watching the star basketball players of last year's college race.

New Richland

25 years ago



- Tony Schlaak and Jenifer Brouwers have been nominated as New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School candidates for the Academics, Art and Athletic Award. A girl and a boy are selected from those nominated in each region from both Class A and Class AA schools and are honored at a banquet during the Minnesota State high school basketball tournament. At the banquet four scholarships are awarded.

- Jim and Sandra Finseth of Albert Lea are the proud parents of a daughter born Tuesday, January 23, 2001 at 12:02 a.m. at Naeve Hospital, Albert Lea. Jayna Olivia, as she has been named, weighed 7 pounds 14 ounces and was 19 1/2 " in length.



- Helping to serve the Cancer Benefit supper at the American Legion Clubrooms, here, Friday night were Levine Paulson, Phyllis Peterson and Mary Ignaszewski.

50 years ago

- Gloria Smestad, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Lowell Smestad, formerly of New Richland, now of Pelican Rapids, is attending Konstanz University, West Germany this year.

- The New Richland-Hartland Junior High Wrestling Team placed second behind Ellendale-Geneva at the Junior High Wrestling Conference Tourney, Saturday, January 16, showing some of the strength the team is expected to have as they continue to practice and become a conference championship team in years to come.

- A daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Mark Dodge at Mitchell, S.D., Thursday, January 29. The little miss weighed 9 pounds and 13 ounces at birth and has been named Karen Lynn.

75 years ago

- Alan Moldenhauer, a relative of the Moldenhauer families of the New Richland area living in Lincoln County Colo., was honored recently by the Skelly Oil Co., for outstanding achievement in agriculture. He received the honor as a result of outstanding work in the field of soil conservation, beef raising as well as poultry management.

- Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Cannoles, nee Marie Christianson, of Chicago, are the parents of their first child, a son born Monday, February 26. The baby weighed seven pounds, four ounces and arrived on the anniversary of his father's birthday. He has been named John Carroll, and is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Christianson of this village.

- Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Scadden of Mankato have purchased the Bramer store at Matawan, from Mrs. A. F. Bramer, owner and operator. The new proprietors took possession today (Thursday) March 1.

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WHS gymnasts upend St. Peter

Keith sets school record on floor

Good things keep happening for the Waseca High School gymnastics team.

The Bluejays, who had their best team score in 10 years against Byron earlier this season - tying one individual school record - put together another memorable performance Friday with a home victory over St. Peter. The Bluejays totaled 133.225 points, the Saints 123.6.

"It was a great meet for the girls," said WHS coach Kim Wendland.

Senior Layla Keith provided the biggest highlight for the Jays, scoring a school-record 9.6 to finish first in the floor exercise. She was first on vault at 9.05 and first on the uneven parallel bars at 9.6.

The Bluejays captured four of the top five places in all-around, with Keith taking first, Hannah Parks third, Ellie Clark fourth and Katelyn

Weber fifth.

Other varsity highlights included Parks' 8.725 on the balance beam, which was good for second place, and Clark and Weber taking second and third, respectively, on vault with scores of 8.825 and 8.7.

The Waseca junior varsity also registered a big win, 100.4-61.7.

Miley Anderson led the JV, winning the all-around with 25.4 points. Sydney Hayes was second at 22.2, Lindy Bergdale third at 22.2. Nora Flatness was first on vault with an 8.2 and first on floor with an 8.25.

Kyla Morgan, competing on the floor for the first time, took fifth place at 6.3 to tie teammate Lydia Bjortomt.

The Bluejays host Blue Earth Area tonight at 6 p.m. The section meet is Feb. 13 at 5:30 at Mankato.



BEAM QUEENS — Crowned beam queens for the WHS gymnastics team Friday were, from left, Hannah Parks, Avery Carda and Kyla Morgan.

Waseca icemen win three

Jays go 2-0 on trip Up North

The Waseca High School boys' hockey team had a successful venture north, defeating Little Falls 5-0 Friday and Northern Lakes 4-2 Saturday. Combined with a 5-4 overtime victory at Owatonna earlier in the week, the Bluejays improved their overall record to 14-5-2 for the season. They're 5-0 in the Big South Conference Gold Division.

On Saturday, the Bluejays rallied from a 2-1 first-period deficit at Hallett Community Center in Crosby, shutting out Northern Lakes the rest of the way.

Jude Gehring scored the final two goals for the Jays, with Henry Huttemier and Jayden Gehring also putting the puck in the net. Assists sent to Otto Schoenrock, Aydan Kath and Owen Weiseler.

Josiah Schmidt was in goal for Waseca, which was outshot 29-26 on the day. Both teams served four penalty minutes on two infractions.

The Bluejays skated to a 5-0 shutout of Little Falls Friday at Exchange Arena in Little Falls. It was 3-0 after one period and 5-0 at end of two as Waseca outshot Little Falls 50-22. The Bluejays had three penalties for six minutes, Little Falls two for four.

Selvik scored first, on an assist from Griffin Storey, and Huttemier and Kath added opening-period goals, with assists going to Huttemier, Jayden Gehring, Schoenrock and Dahl.

Huttemier scored twice in the second period, the first goal assisted by Storey and Beckett Srp and the second by Kath.

Schmidt made 22 saves to secure the shutout.

It was back-and-forth last Tuesday at Owatonna's Four Seasons Centre, where the Bluejays trailed 1-0 after one period but led 4-1 after two.

Waseca overcame six penalties for 23 minutes, including a 10-minute game misconduct in overtime, while outshooting the Huskies 37-24. Owatonna served 16 minutes on eight penalties.

After Owatonna scored just 16 seconds into the game, the Bluejays answered with second-period goals by Schoenrock, Dahl and Storey, who scored twice. Assists went to Storey, Dahl, Huttemier and Weiseler.

The Huskies scored three unanswered goals in the third period to sent to overtime, where the Bluejays won it with a goal at the 6:12 mark by Schoenrock, assisted by Dahl.

Schmidt was again in goal.

The Bluejays have four regular-season games remaining. After hosting Windom Tuesday, they face Fairmont at home Thursday before traveling to Marshall Feb. 7 and Tartan Feb. 12.

WHS boys can't hold off Marshall

Russell reaches 2,000 milestone

What's it going to be like next year without a Russell on the Waseca High School boys' basketball team?

We got a preview of it last Friday. The results were mixed.

The Bluejays, with Division I football-bound Deron Russell not starting because of a sprained ankle, started strong enough with a 21-19 halftime lead, but it was downhill from there and visiting Marshall walked away with a 57-38 decision.

"We had trouble scoring tonight," said Bluejays head coach Seth Anderson. "But we had really a tremendous effort defensively in the first half."

One of the few second-half highlights for the Bluejays came when Russell took the court in the third quarter, but it was only long enough to find the basket once, and it lifted Russell to the 2,000 career-point milestone.

Earlier in the week, at home against Tri-City United, Russell appeared poised to not only reach the 2,000 mark, but break the Bluejays' all-time scoring record held by Malik Willingham. Instead, he went up for a three-pointer that missed and he came down on an opponent's foot, spraining his ankle and ending his night two points shy of 2,000 and eight away from Willingham - prompting many fans to leave the gym in disappointment, with signs in hand.

Toby Jeske finished as the Jays' scoring leader against Marshall with 13 points to go with five rebounds.

Others: Ethan Hiller 6P, 8R; Cyrett Long 3P, 3R; Kamerin Ferch 1P; Wyatt Hager 7P, 3R; Owen Honstad 3R; Brody Dufault 2P, 1R;



LEADER — Waseca sophomore Toby Jeske saves a ball from going out of bounds during the Bluejays' 57-38 home loss to Marshall last Friday. Jeske led the Bluejays with 13 points. Photo by Jim Lutgens



TOUGH POINTS — The Bluejays' Cyrett Long (2) drives against Marshall's Oliver Voigt. Photo by Jim Lutgens

Owen Rupe 2P, 2R; Darius Powell 3R.

Oliver Voigt led Marshall with 24 points.

The Tigers improved to 8-9 for the season and 6-3 in the Big South Conference Black.

The Bluejays blew out TCU on Tuesday, bolting to a 51-20 halftime lead while winning 87-41.

Russell ended his night with 21 points, 6 rebounds, 3 assists and 2 steals.

Others: Hiller 9P, 8R, 1A, 2S;



2,000 — Although he didn't start, Deron Russell (1) entered the Marshall game long enough to reach the 2,000-point milestone. From left: Deron's brother Saiveon, sister Kiarra, mom Bambi Jes, Deron and his brother Isaiah.

Long 14P, 5R, 1A, 4S; Hager 5P, 3R, 1A, 2S; Honstad 10P, 2R, 4A, 2S; Reger 4P, 1R, 1A, 2S; Dufault 7P, 4R, 1S; Rupe 6P, 2R, 3S; Powell 5P, 2R; Jeske 6P, 6R.

The Bluejays, 12-7 overall and 6-5 in the Big South Black, had a big

game Monday at JWP, the No. 1 ranked Class A team in the state. The WHS boys play Friday at Worthington.

Waseca wrestlers drop dual to KMS

The Waseca High School wrestling team traveled to Jordan last Friday for a triangular with Kerkhoven-Murduck-Sunberg and Scott West.

The Bluejays lost 42-19 to KMS.

Winners for Waseca were David Haley, 139 pounds; Slade Barnett, 189; Lucas Selthun, 215; and Matthew Veroeven, 285.

Veroeven, a senior, won by fall at the 1:33 mark, improving his season record to 26-1.

Seniors Barnett and Selthun won by technical fall, with

Barnett running his record to 32-1 while Selthun improved to 16-13. Haley, a freshman, improved to 8-4 with a 12-4 major decision.

Also wrestling for Waseca: Kole Nelson, 107; Owen Sommers, 121; Deven Parpart, 133; Nicholas Harguth, 152; Sam Selthun, 160; Alex Bethke, 172.

The Bluejays forfeited three bouts, KMS one.

No results were reported for the Bluejays' meet against Scott West.

The Bluejays are in action tonight with a 5 p.m. quadrangular at Madelia.

Bluejay girls endure challenging week

It was a challenging week for the Waseca High School girls' basketball team.

The Bluejays were up to it. At times, but not enough times and not for long enough.

The Bluejays dropped three games last week, falling 77-53 at home Monday, 64-44 at Tri-City United Tuesday and 72-23 to Marshall at home Friday.

The Bluejays played their best ball in the first half against BEA, leading by as many as seven points during the first 10 minutes. Unfortunately, it didn't last, and the Buccaneers went on to a 40-34 halftime lead and cruised as Waseca

shot 15 percent in the second half - after shooting 41 percent in the first.

"Blue Earth has some really good young talent and shoots the ball really well," said WHS coach Brian Rupe. "Unfortunately, they also played very well on the offensive end, longer than we did. They also brought some good ball pressure that we handled pretty well. We just wore us down as the game went on."

Individually for Waseca: Adrianna Willingham 8 points, 2 rebounds, 1 steal, 4 assists; Ava Miller 15P, 5R, 2A, 1S; Belle Miller 6P, 4R; Reese Rodriguez 15P, 8R; Libby Miller 2P, 4R, 1A; Hannah Sommers 2P, 8R, 3A; Styler

Tagman 1P; Shakiyah Powell 4P, 13R, 1A.

Slow shooting at the start - 17 percent in the first half - led to a 38-16 halftime advantage for TCU.

The Bluejays went on to outscore the Titans 28-26 in the second half.

"We struggled with their size a little bit, which we knew would be an issue," said Rupe. "We came out in the second half and changed some things defensively that helped out. We did shoot the ball better in the second half. We continue to work on the small things to become more consistent on a night-to-night basis. The girls are doing a great job taking things that we talk about

pregame and bringing into the game."

Individually: A.Miller 18P, 3R, 3A, 2S; B.Miller 3R; Rodriguez 13P, 7R, 1A, 1S; Maren Schimming 3R, 3A; L.Miller 1A, 1S; Sommers 10P, 10R, 1A, 1S; Alexa Weland 2P, 2S; Powell 1P, 7R.

The Bluejays lost to a Marshall team that improved to 16-3 overall and 8-0 in the Big South Conference Gold.

Waseca, 3-17 overall and 1-10 in the Big South Gold, play Friday at Worthington and Monday at home against LeSueur-Henderson.

JWP boys win 3, rise to No. 1

The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School boys' basketball team rose to No. 1 in last week's Class A state rankings.

The Bulldogs did nothing but enhance that standing.

They completed a 3-0 week Friday with an 88-54 triumph at Blooming Prairie, improving their season record to 20-0. They're 6-0 in the Gopher Conference West and 11-0 overall in the conference.

JWP led 48-20 while winning handily Friday.

The Bauer brothers, as usual, led the way, with Gavin scoring 33 points and Daulton netting 23. Jackson Wolff added nine.

Individual leaders: D.Bauer 23P, 5 rebounds, 5 steals; G.Gauer 33P, 7R, 6 assists; Caleb Quast 8P; Wolff 9P, 7A; Gavin Weedman 7P, 7R; Parker Gearity 6R.

A night earlier, the Bulldogs dominated Bethlehem Academy, taking a 51-23 halftime lead on the way to a 91-48 victory at Janesville.

Individually: D.Bauer 15P, 7A;

G.Bauer 25P, 7R; Quast 10P; Wolff 15P; Gearity 6R.

NRHEG gave the Bulldogs a battle in the first half Monday at New Richland, where they led 40-34 at halftime while winning going away 95-65.

Individually: D.Bauer 25P, 4R; G.Bauer 27P, 7R; Quast 9P, 6R; Wolff 12P; Zander Terbeest 9P.

After hosting Waseca in a non-conference game Monday, the Bulldogs have a big game Friday at Gopher Conference East leader Triton. They play Feb. 9 at Sibley East.

- Minnesota Class A state rankings**
By Minnesota-scores.net
- 1. Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (20-0)
 - 2. Pelican Rapids (14-2)
 - 3. Henning (16-0)
 - 4. Cherry (14-2)
 - 5. Red Lake County (16-0)
 - 6. Liberty Classical Academy (17-0)
 - 7. Central MN Christian (14-1)
 - 8. Southland (14-1)
 - 9. Dawson-Boyd (14-2)
 - 10. Hills-Beaver Creek (12-0)



THEY'RE NO. 1 — The JWP boys' basketball team rose to No. 1 in the latest Class A state poll. At left, the Bulldogs' Daulton Bauer drives to the basket as NRHEG's Calvin Nissen defends last week at New Richland. At right, Caleb Quast advances the basketball. Photos by Jim Lutgens



EYES ON THE PRIZE — The Bulldogs' Katie Olson (23) has her eyes fixed on the basket against NRHEG at New Richland last week. The Bulldogs lost 63-61 but went on to defeat Blooming Prairie and Bethlehem Academy later in the week. Also pictured: NRHEG's Quinn VanMaldegem (4) and Ezra Boerner (2). Photo by Jim Lutgens

Lady Bulldogs pull away from Blooming Prairie, BA

Upset bid at NRHEG falls just short for JWP girls

Last week was a good one for the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School girls' basketball team.

It was almost a great one.

The Bulldogs scored a pair of Gopher Conference victories, defeating Blooming Prairie at home Saturday and Bethlehem Academy at Faribault Thursday, after starting the week with a two-point loss at NRHEG.

The Bulldogs beat Blooming Prairie 60-48 despite not playing their best basketball. They led 28-27 at half-time.

"We had spurts of good moments today, where we played with energy and effort, but then times where we were not playing how we need to play to be successful in the postseason," said JWP coach Brandon Goebel.

"We found ways to get stops at the end, which ultimately led us to the win. We have to continue to get better at fighting through adversity, and controlling what we can control throughout the entire game."

Ashlynn Wolff, a freshman, scored 19 points to lead three Bulldogs in double figures. Katie Olson scored 15, Mikayla Wheelock 10. Nevaeh Weimert added 9.

Individually: Olson 16P, 8 rebounds, 7 steals; Weimert 9P, 4R, 4 assists; Wheelock 10P, 6R; Wolff 19P, 9R, Jacelynn Mulder 6P, 4R.

The Bulldogs took a 30-19 halftime advantage Thursday en route to a 52-47 win at BA.

Weimert had a big game with 20 points.

"This was another game where we came out sluggish," said Goebel. "We were not executing at a high enough level on either side of the floor. Our energy was unacceptably low throughout the entire game. We need to figure out a way to come ready to compete every single game. We are too inconsistent right now. It is a work in progress, but I am confident we will have it figured out by the time playoffs roll around. Our team is too talented to not play hard every single game, and it will be fixed."

Individually: Weimert 20P, 3R, 2S; Kwynn Krause 4P; Wheelock 6P, 4R, 4S; Wolff 8P, 5R; Olson 9P, 3R, 6A, 4S.

Monday's game at NRHEG was a wire-to-wire battle,

"We have to continue to get better at fighting through adversity."

— Coach Brandon Goebel

with the Bulldogs trailing 28-27 at halftime and coming up just short of an upset in a 63-61 loss.

"It was a back-and-forth game the whole night," said Goebel. "I really thought the girls did a great job executing our game plan, especially in the first half."

In the end, rebounding was the difference.

"We knew going into the game we had to out rebound them or we were putting ourselves in a very difficult position," said Goebel. "We did that in the first half, but in the second half they outrebounded us and outrebounded us in the game. We put ourselves in a tough position because we kept giving NRHEG too many extra possessions because of their offensive rebounding. Even with the rebounding margin they had, we had our opportunities."

Trailing 63-61 with 11 seconds remaining, the Bulldogs got off a good shot that failed to fall, but they scrapped and got the ball back on their end with 2 seconds left.

"We were then unable to capitalize in the end," said Goebel.

Olson finished with 20 points, Wheelock 15 and Mulder 12.

Individual totals: Olson 20P, 4R, 4S; Weimert 8P; Wheelock 15P, 3R, 3S; Wolff 6P, 11R, 6A; Mulder 12P, 11 R.

The Bulldogs, 14-7 overall and 4-2 in the Gopher Conference West, host Triton Friday at 7 p.m. They face Kenyon-Wanamingo Tuesday at 7 for Parents Night, and meet Southland Feb. 12 for Senior Night. They play Feb. 16 at Waseca.

Grizzlies end regular season with Roesler's 200th coaching victory

WEM/JWP girls first, boys sixth at Takedown on 22

The WEM/JWP wrestling team wrapped up its dual-meet regular season last Thursday.

But it was not just another meet.

The Grizzlies registered the 200th career coaching victory for co-head coach Adam Roesler as they defeated Triton 45-29 at Janesville. Parents and seniors were also honored as the Grizzlies wrestled before a packed gym.

Winning by fall for the Grizzlies were Brendan Masso, 119 pounds; Brady Murphy, 152; Charles Adams, 172; Trenton Huber, 189; and Kavan Sheehy, 215. Otto Root won by decision at 114. Receiving forfeits were Aiden Gruber, 139, and Kayle Langford, 145. Also wrestling were Jacksten Knish, 107; Trey Richards, 127; David Mielke, 133; Ben Root, 160; and Quinn Anderson, 285.

The Grizzlies, 10-12 overall in dual meets, finished 4-2 in the Gopher Conference and 6-2 against Section 2A opponents.

The Grizzlies traveled to Mapleton Saturday for the Takedown on 22, a boy-girl individual tournament.

The WEM/JWP boys placed sixth among 11 teams with 97.5 points. Watertown-Mayer won with 201.5.

The Grizzlies had one finalist, Richards, who finished second at 127 while winning two of three bouts.

Also placing: Masso, fourth, 121; Sheehy, fourth, 215; Otto Root, fifth, 107; James, fifth, 145; Huber, fifth, 189; Murphy, sixth, 139. Also wrestling but not placing: Ben Root, 152; Adams, 172.

The Grizzly girls finished first among seven schools with 106.5 points. Second-place Jackson County Central had 59.5.

Four WEM/JWP girls reached the finals.

BreAna Masso finished first at 118-130, Langford first at 136-142. Ivy Shaw was second at 118-130.

Payton Miller placed third at 112, Kirsten Amundson third at 136-142, and Anaelyse Skidmore fifth at 112.

The WEM/JWP girls made school history, becoming the first Grizzly girls squad to win the championship at an individual tournament.

"Congratulations to the girls on their accomplishments today," said Coach Roesler.

The WEM/JWP boys travel to Rochester Century Friday for the section tournament starting at 3 p.m. The tourney continues Feb. 12 and concludes Feb. 14 at 2 p.m. at WEM High School.

The Grizzlies host a junior high invitational Feb. 7 at 9 a.m.

First place



The Waseca Basketball Association 7th-grade girls' team finished first in the Waseca tournament Jan. 25. Front from left: Eliana Grannis, Macy Nelson, Madyson Bailey and Leilla Johannsen; back: coach Eric Teders, Peyton Teders, Charlyze Johnson, Brynda Rupe, Meah Hoy and coach Brian Rupe.

STANDINGS

Boys' Basketball		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Conf.	Ov.
Belle Plaine	8-1	13-2
St. Peter	8-3	13-5
Marshall	6-3	8-9
Waseca	6-5	12-7
New Ulm	5-5	9-9
Worthington	1-8	3-15
Tri-City United	0-8	0-15

Big South Conference - Gold		
	Conf.	Ov.
Fairmont	11-1	14-2
Jackson Co. Central	10-2	15-5
Luverne	7-4	12-5
Blue Earth Area	6-4	11-5
St. James Area	6-6	10-6
Pipestone Area	3-9	5-14
Redwood Valley	2-10	4-16
Windom Area	1-10	7-11

Gopher Conference - West		
	Div.	Ov.
Janesville-WP	6-0	20-0
New Richland-HEG	3-3	7-11
Waterville-EM	2-3	6-11
United South Central	2-3	3-12
Medford	1-5	5-15

Gopher Conference East		
	Div.	Ov.
Triton	7-0	17-3
Blooming Prairie	4-3	14-5
Hayfield	4-3	11-8
Randolph	3-4	7-13
Bethlehem Academy	2-5	6-10
Kenyon-Wanamingo	1-6	8-12

Girls' Basketball		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Conf.	Ov.
Marshall	8-0	16-2
New Ulm	9-1	13-5
St. Peter	7-4	11-7
Tri-City United	4-4	7-11
Belle Plaine	3-5	8-9
Waseca	1-10	3-17
Worthington	0-8	2-16

Big South Conference - Gold		
	Conf.	Ov.
Fairmont	12-0	18-1
St. James Area	10-2	16-4
Pipestone Area	8-3	15-3
Windom Area	6-6	15-6
Jackson County Cent.	5-7	9-12
Luverne	4-7	10-10
Blue Earth Area	1-9	5-14
Redwood Valley	0-12	0-20

Gopher Conference - West		
	Div.	Ov.
New Richland-HEG	5-0	18-2
Janesville-WP	4-2	14-7
Waterville-EM	1-4	5-14
United South Central	0-4	7-12

Gopher Conference - East		
	Div.	Ov.
Triton	7-1	13-5
Hayfield/Schaeffer Ac.	6-1	17-4
Blooming Prairie	6-1	12-7
Randolph	3-5	9-12
Kenyon-Wanamingo	1-7	7-13
Bethlehem Academy	0-8	5-13

Boys' Hockey		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Div.	Ov.
Waseca	5-0	14-5-2
New Ulm	3-3	12-8
Minnesota River	3-3	9-10
Marshall	0-5	6-16

Big South Conference - Gold		
	Div.	Ov.
Luverne	8-0	19-3
Fairmont	5-3	6-11
Windom Area	4-5	6-14
Redwood Valley	3-6	4-15
Worthington	1-7	2-19

Girls' Hockey		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Div.	Ov.
Marshall	5-1	22-4
Minnesota River	5-1	19-5
New Ulm	2-4	5-18
South Central	0-6	0-19

Big South Conference - Gold		
	Div.	Ov.
Luverne	5-1	16-9
Fairmont	5-1	12-9
Worthington/Fulda	2-4	9-14
Windom Area	0-6	5-16

Wrestling		
Big South Conference - Black		
	Div.	Ov.
New Ulm	6-0	13-0
Marshall/Lakeview	5-1	16-3
Tri-City United	3-2	11-8
St. Peter	3-3	11-7
Worthington	3-4	4-13
Waseca	1-5	4-10
Martin County	0-6	6-12

Big South Conference - Gold		
	Div.	Ov.
Jackson County Central	6-0	10-2
Windom/Mt. Lake	4-2	14-10
St. James-Madelia	4-3	13-7
Redwood Valley	3-3	11-11
Pipestone Area	2-3	12-5
Blue Earth Area	2-5	5-14
Luverne	0-5	7-11



BIG VICTORY — NRHEG's Quinn VanMaldeghem, left, drives the baseline against JWP last week. The senior went on to record her 1,000th career rebound later in the week against Kenyon-Wanamingo. In the middle, Quinn's twin sister, Camryn (12), passes after encountering JWP's Ava Krause (10) and Katie Olson (23). At right, the Panthers' Gabrielle Schlaak takes it to the hoop. Photos by Jim Lutgens

Lady Panthers pummel KW, edge JWP

Quinn VanMaldgehem secures 1,00th career rebound as NRHEG rises to No. 2 in rankings

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

It was business as usual last week for the NRHEG High School girls' basketball team.

The Panthers extended their winning streak to 18 games, defeating Kenyon-Wanamingo Thursday after holding on to edge Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton on Monday.

Senior Quinn VanMaldeghem achieved a milestone in the Panthers' 79-36 victory over KW, pulling in the 1,000th rebound of her career, becoming just the third NRHEG player to do so. It gave her a career double-double as earlier this season she topped the 1,000-point mark.

Unlike Monday's game against JWP, which was a real battle, the Panthers handily defeated KW while taking a 41-21 halftime lead.

"The girls pulled away in the first eight minutes and never looked back," said NRHEG coach Onika Peterson. "This was a game that we expected to win."

Camryn VanMaldeghem, Quinn's twin sister, had a big night on the offensive end, scoring 37 points. Gabby Schlaak also reached double digits with 16. Quinn VanMaldeghem scored nine.

Others: Clara Buendorf 9P, Chloe Stork 5P, Ezra Boerner 3P.

Monday's game against JWP, the first in a girl-boy doubleheader at

New Richland, went down to the wire, with the Bulldogs failing to connect on a last-second shot as NRHEG prevailed 63-61. The Panthers led 28-27 at halftime.

"A Gopher Conference win against a tough rival is a great way to start the week," said Peterson, who called it a game of runs.

"JWP came out hot to start the first half and we had to claw our way back a couple of times," said Peterson. "It was back-and-forth all night in front of a big crowd at home and it came down to the last couple seconds. The girls held their composure, and were able to come out on top."

The VanMaldeghem sisters again

led the way, Camryn finishing with 34 points and nine rebounds, Quinn with 15 points and 17 rebounds.

Individual totals: Schlaak 6P, 2R, 1S, 2A; Boerner 2P, 1R, 3S, 1A, 1 block; Q.VanMaldeghem 15P, 17R, 3S, 2A; Buendorf 6P; C.VanMaldeghem 34P, 9R, 5S, 4A, 1B; Savannah Farr 1A; Stork 5R, 2S, 1A.

The Panthers, 18-2 overall and 5-0 in the Gopher Conference West, hosted United South Central Monday for Senior Night and played at Southland. They're at Hayfield Friday at 6 p.m., at St. Clair Feb. 10 and at Alden-Conger Feb. 13.

"Tuesday and Friday will be

against two tough section opponents," said Coach Peterson. "It should be a fun week to see how we handle the competition."

- Minnesota Class A state rankings**
By Minnesota-scores.net
1. Mountain Iron-Buhl (18-2)
 2. New Richland-H-E-G (18-2)
 3. Mayer Lutheran (14-5)
 4. Hillcrest Lutheran Academy (17-2)
 5. BOLD (14-4)
 6. Sleepy Eye Saint Mary's (17-0)
 7. Hayfield/Schaeffer Acad. (17-4)
 8. Breckenridge (12-6) 87.7
 9. Hills-Beaver Creek (13-0)
 10. Chisholm (13-3)



TOUGH CHALLENGE — The NRHEG boys' basketball team faced a tough challenge against top-ranked, unbeaten JWP last Monday in New Richland. At left, the Panthers' A.J. Deen looks to pass while guarded by Gavin Weedman. At right, Brock Holland drives against Caleb Quast. Photos by Jim Lutgens

Panther boys rebound against KW

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

Two nights after facing the No. 1 ranked Class A squad in the state - with predictable results - the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva boys' basketball team bounced back.

Sparked by stellar first-half defense, the Panthers held off visiting Kenyon-Wanamingo 82-77 at New Richland last Thursday.

The win improved the Panthers to 7-11 for the season and 3-3 in the West Division of the Gopher Conference - second only to that top-ranked team, Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton - while KW fell to 8-12.

According to coach Dan Schmidt, tough defense helped his squad thrive on offense as they opened a 12-point halftime lead.

"We came out with great intensity on the defensive end of the floor, and it opened up our transition options," said Schmidt.

It continued in the second half as the Panthers assumed a 24-point margin, but things tightened up after that.

"Kenyon started pressing and we struggled to settle in and attack the way we had earlier in the game," said Schmidt.

A handful of costly turnovers allowed KW to pull within five points, but the Panthers settled down after a couple timeouts.

"The boys did a great job of gathering themselves in the last couple minutes and knocking down free throws to ice it," said Schmidt.

The Panthers were led by Brooks Gilliland with 25 points, 7 rebounds and 3 assists, with Calvin Nissen totaling 18 points and 5 assists. A.J. Deen had a double-double with 10 points and 10 rebounds.

"A.J. had another nice game in the paint," said Schmidt.

Dom Olson played great defense and sparked some transition opportunities while hitting a couple free

throws down the stretch. Brendan Schmidt made three free throws in crunch time.

NRHEG individual totals: Deen 10P, 10R, 1 steal, 1 blocked shot; Olson 8P, 1R, 3A, 1S; Nissen 18P, 4R, 5A, 3S; B.Gilliland 25P, 7R, 3A, 3S; Fynn Baumann 5P, 1R; B.Schmidt 3P, 3R, 2A, 1S; Mack Gilliland 9P, 5R, 5A, 1S; Brock Holland 4P, 8R, 2A.

Coach Schmidt knew what to expect from unbeaten JWP last Monday in the second game of a girl-boy doubleheader at New Richland.

"We knew we had an uphill battle," he said.

And it was, though the Panthers kept it close early before succumbing 95-65.

"We went toe-to-toe with them for the bulk of the first half, before falling down by 12," said Schmidt.

A great run towards the end of the half pulled NRHEG within three before the Bulldogs hit a three-

pointer at the buzzer.

The Panthers started the second half with intensity but, according to Schmidt, were plagued by some foul trouble that took the win out of their sails.

"The boys played extremely hard, and we saw some good things on both sides of the ball, considering how tough JWP is," said Schmidt.

The Panthers again had balanced scoring with three players in double figures, led by Mack Gilliland with 20. Olson scored 11, Nissen 10 and A.J. Deen nine.

Totals: A.J. Deen 9P, 5R, 3B; Olson 11P, 1R, 1S; Nissen 10P, 3R, 1A, 1S; B.Gilliland 4P, 4R, 1A, 1S, 1B; Baumann 1P, 4R; B.Schmidt 2P, 6R, 1A, 2S, 1B; M.Gilliland 20P, 3R, 1A, 2S; David Deen 2P; Holland 6P, 6R, 2A.

The Panthers play Friday at 7:30 at Hayfield and Saturday at 7 against Cleveland at Minnesota State-Mankato. They're at Madelia Feb. 10.

Forfeits costly for NRHEG wrestlers

Panthers 11th at Takedown on 22

TThere's a good reason the NRHEG High School wrestling team lost last Thursday in a dual meet at Kenyon-Wanamingo.

The Panthers gave away 36 points.

Due to illness, NRHEG forfeited six of the 13 weight classes while falling 59-15.

"In the matches we did wrestle, we went out and competed hard, even in the matches we lost," said NRHEG coach Krey Cory. "We were aggressive and working to score points. It was good to see us go out and compete."

The Panthers got wins from Owen Schlaak, 107 pounds; Ryan Schlaak, 189; and Wyatt Larson, 215.

The Panthers placed 11th in Saturday's Takedown on 22 at Mapleton with 66 points. Watertown-Mayer won with 201.5.

The Panthers had one finalist, Ryan Schlaak, who finished second at 189. Owen Schlaak was third at 107, Grahm Jacobson third at 114, and Larson fifth at 215.

On the girls' side, NRHEG's Josie Tufte placed third.

Finishing first among junior varsity boys were Riften Jacobson, Bo Holland, Wyatt Hendrickson, Chase Johannsen and Adrian Naser. Julian Naser, Tucker Flatness and Noah Weller finished second. Taking fourth were Hayden Ripka, Khaiden Madson, Hunter McFarland, Jacob Klaras and Cooper Cords.

The Panthers are in action tonight, taking on GMLOK and Maple River/USC in a 6 p.m. triangular at New Richland.

Southeast Partnership now accepting proposals for community-led sustainability projects

Southeast Minnesota residents with an idea to strengthen their community can now apply for a project partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (Southeast RSDP). Southeast RSDP supports local innovation by connecting community ideas to University of Minnesota resources. Community members partner with University students, faculty and or/staff to lead, research, design and plan their local sustainability projects

Southeast RSDP seeks ideas from diverse populations and encourages those who have not previously partnered with the University to consider applying. In 2026, priorities identified by the Southeast RSDP board and work groups include fostering a resilient food system, addressing climate change and other ecological impacts, increasing opportunities for energy efficiency and renewable energy and encouraging local community action that welcomes all residents and celebrates the region's rich cultural traditions, natural assets and vibrant local economies.

"We are seeking ideas and expertise from Southeast Minnesota residents that enable all who live in our beautiful region to thrive," said Southeast RSDP Executive Director Andi Sutton. "I encourage

people to get in touch with me to talk about their ideas for making our communities more sustainable places."

Applications are being accepted through February 14. Visit the link z.umn.edu/RSDPIdeaBrief to read more about the programs and download application forms. Community members are encouraged to contact Sutton at sutto364@umn.edu or 857-928-4196 or Danielle Piraino at pirai006@umn.edu or 630-797-8862 to discuss their ideas and ask questions. Successful projects are selected by the Southeast RSDP community-University governing board through a competitive process.

Examples of projects recently supported by the Southeast RSDP include working with local entrepreneurs in St. Peter, advancing clean energy solutions for affordable housing and researching the economic impact of farmers markets. For more examples of projects supported by the Southeast RSDP, visit z.umn.edu/RSDPProject-Examples.

The Southeast RSDP serves Blue Earth, Faribault, Dodge, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, LeSueur, Mower, Nicollet, Olmsted, Fillmore, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca and Winona counties and the sovereign Native Nation of Prairie Island Indian Community.

Child's History of Waseca County

CHAPTER VII, 1855. More settlers in March – Robbins brothers come with Chris Scott – "Bill" Robbins lost on the prairie, out two days and nights without food – A shooting affray

The latter part of March, after enduring all sorts of hardships, Chris Scott returned from his trip to La Crosse for provisions. With him came two brothers, George Robbins and Wm. Robbins, young and single men from Canada. They made claims on the east side of the river, opposite what was afterwards the village of Wilton, and where once was located a paper town called Waterlynn. Wm. Robbins, about this time, had a little experience in being lost on the prairie. He was employed to drive a team and take S.P. Child to Mankato for surgical treatment. That was in April. When they arrived at the Mansfield and Callens' cabin, they learned that the water was so high in the Le Sueur river that they could not cross it to go on to Mankato. So it was arranged that Child and the team should remain with Mansfield and Callens until the waters should subside, and then go to Mankato, and Robbins should at once return to the Sutlief settlement on foot and report the condition of affairs. He left there early in the morning, having with him a rifle and a small supply of ammunition. It seems that he went carelessly along, shooting at birds, until well along in the afternoon, when it occurred to him that he ought to be near home. He looked in every direction, but could see no object that looked like anything he had ever seen before. But he was on a wagon trail and thought that that would lead him home. He had thoughtlessly expended all his ammunition, and night found him upon the open prairie without food, fuel, or even a blanket. He

dared not move about much after dark for fear he would lose the wagon track. The next morning he was totally at a loss as to which direction, and again he spent the night upon the prairie, without food or fire. Fortunately on the third day he met some government land surveyors on their way to Mankato who, like good Samaritans, took pity on him, fed and warmed him, and carried him back to the Mansfield and Callens' place. It seems that when he left that place he took an old wagon trail leading south, instead of taking the Sutlief track leading east. Three days afterwards, he returned to our settlement somewhat wiser than when he left.

As soon as the waters subsided so that the Le Sueur could be forded, S.P. Child proceeded to Mankato, where his feet received the long-needed treatment. He then returned to the settlement about two weeks after Robbins' return.

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

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

Eli Lutgens



Students of the Month:
Brilliant Bluejays



		
Zoey Kindergarten	Isabella 1st Grade	Addison 2nd Grade
		
Jauhar 8th Grade	Egann 2nd Grade	Braylon 8th Grade



Staff of the Month:
Stellar Staff



		
Mrs. Lapides Family Services Coordinator	Mrs. Larkin Paraprofessional	Mrs. Selvik Special Education Teacher
		
Mrs. Henriksen 8th Grade Teacher	Ms. Daisy Paraprofessional & Food Service	Ms. Schmidt Special Education Teacher

Tom Sexton running for re-election

State Representative Thomas "Tom" Sexton of Waseca announced Feb. 1 he will run for re-election in 2026. As he is preparing for the start of the 2026 Legislative Session, Sexton is asking Steele and Waseca County voters to send him back to our Capital in St. Paul on November 3rd, 2026.

Tom is a Republican serving House District 19B who was first elected in 2024. Prior to his election, he served in the US Air Force for twenty-six plus years as a special operations and combat rescue helicopter pilot, staff officer, strategic planner, and as a US Army War College military professor prior to retiring in 2012. Next, he transitioned into the pipeline and facilities construction industry where he served for nine plus years prior to retiring



Sexton

Tom is currently assigned to the Energy Policy and Finance committee, State Government Policy and Finance committee, and the Capital Investment (Bonding) committee. According to Sexton, each committee member brings their unique backgrounds and expertise to each meeting. Thus, extensive preparation and advance negotiation with members on both sides of the aisle is necessary to advance a bill through the committee and onto the house floor. Fortunately, his background in federal government service as a senior leader in the US Air Force, as well as his background in heavy industrial construction prepared him to jump right in and engage testifiers by asking the necessary tough questions on behalf of District 19B constituents and every Minnesotan.

As the 2026 session begins on February 17th, Sexton reminds us of the current 67-67 tie in the House. If we intend to make progress in this session, we must compromise, we must find common ground. Three intertwined themes concern most Minnesotans; Affordability, Fraud, and Taxes. For starters, all of us feel the affordability squeeze every time we shop for groceries, pay our utility and insurance bills, and try to figure out how to make ends meet with the leftover portion of our paycheck. If we are going to make Minnesota more affordable, we must stop creating statewide mandates that only make life more expensive. Our cities and countries cannot afford it. Our school districts cannot afford it. Our businesses cannot afford it.

Got news? • 837-6767



President's Award Winners, from left, Jamie Beckstrand, Jodie Thompson and Jess Klinger



Lindsay and Michael Johnson. Michael was named the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce "Boss of the Year."



Neil Fruechte received the first ever "Lucille Youngberg Outstanding Lion Award," presented by the Waseca Lions Club on the evening of Jan. 26



Katie Gonzalez was presented with Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce "Young Professional Service Award" during a Chamber celebration the evening of Jan. 26.



The Waseca Rotary Club recognized Ted Hammond with its 2026 "Service Above Self" award during a community celebration Monday, Jan. 26.

■ Honored
from Page 1

the Year." Johnson, who was nominated by county employees, stated his new title is "an award of shared achievement," since no organization can be genuinely successful without contributions from all its members.

Chamber and leadership board members Jamie Beckstrand, Jessica Klinger and Jodie Thompson were recipients of a newly instituted Chamber President's Award. Also referring to them as "Chamber Champions," Rostislavovich thanked them for the "countless hours" they contributed "quietly behind the scenes, and sometimes not so quietly" to accomplish important Chamber goals, among them building Chamber membership by 20 over the past year.

An award named after decades-long Chamber leader Ed Frederick was presented to Marcy Buchele, who is a member of the Ambassadors. She has also helped lead numerous other local service organizations including the Waseca Area Foundation, the Rotary Board, and the Sacred Heart Endowment Board.

The Waseca Rotary Club recognized long-time Waseca teacher and coach Ted Hammond with its "Service Above Self" award. Criteria for

selection include that, whatever success selected individuals have achieved within their professions, they have also provided service in at least one other, unrelated field. By selecting him, Hammond's fellow Rotarians recognized "an extraordinary level of volunteerism" which has "contributed to the welfare of the community" over "an extended period of time."

The Waseca Lions launched the "Lucille Youngberg Outstanding Lion Award" this year. The title recognizes the leadership and dedication of Youngberg, who contributed richly to the organization for more than 50 years. The award's first recipient was Neil Fruechte, who worked side by side with Youngberg, and reportedly even made sure she received an occasional catch of fresh fish. The club credits Fruechte for starting its annual pancake breakfast and helping keep the club moving forward during some "lean membership years."

The Waseca Exchange Club recognized Mikhail Rostislavovich with its "Book of Golden Deeds," an award which is presented "to a person, whether an Exchange Club member or not, whose actions reflect a genuine commitment to strengthening the community through service." Of Rostislavovich, the club states, "He encourages dialogue between civic groups and government, encourages mentorship through service clubs,



Marcy Buchele received the Ed Frederick Chamber Ambassador Award at the Waseca Area Chamber's annual gathering Jan. 26.

and champions arts, culture and economic vitality in ways that bring people together."

Waseca school board chair Dave Dunn was surprised to find himself called to the stage to receive the Don Eustice Community Service award. It has been the custom to draw the Don Eustice honoree to the banquet under some sort of ruse. In this case,

"I had been led to believe for a number of weeks that this award was going to someone else," he said to explain his apparent confusion. "Someone I thought was very deserving."

As Dunn was introduced, presenter Linda Grant described his habit of visiting public areas in Waseca with the purpose of picking



Dave Dunn was awarded the 2026 Don Eustice Community Service Award during a recent celebration.

up trash and generally setting things right. Grant stated Dunn has been quietly cleaning things up for decades, including taking his own weed whacker to trim around historic markers. She also spoke light-heartedly about his habit of noting which streetlights are out in town and contacting city maintenance workers to let them know about them.

Said Dunn, "I've always said Waseca is a neat place to live, not just because I was born and raised here and pretty much stayed my whole life. It's a unique community in many ways. A lot of really good people live here and do good things. I just happen to have the good luck to be one of them."

IN BRIEF

Pizza and Puzzles Competition at Farmamerica Feb. 13

There will be a Pizza and Puzzle competition at Farmamerica starting at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 13. Teams in groups of 2-4 will compete with 500 piece puzzles. Pizza from Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm included. Registration required and tickets must be purchased online.

V-Day Crafts at the Waldorf Public Library Feb. 13

Make Valentine's Day crafts at the Waldorf Public Library during open

hours on Friday, Feb. 13. For all ages.

Trinket Dishes at Waseca Public Library Feb. 13

Transform a simple dish into a sweet trinket holder by adding pretty paper to the surface at 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 13. Ages 13-18.

Pour Some Brunch on Me at Starfire Event Center Feb. 14

The Starfire Event Center is throwing a Valentine's Day 'Pour Some Brunch on Me' eating event from 10-11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 14. Celebrate Valentine's in the morning with a spe-

cial hair band singalong. Cost is \$31.

Toners Lake Vintage Ride Saturday, Feb. 14

The Toners Lake Vintage Ride will take place from 11 a.m. through 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 14. Registration is at 9 a.m. till 10:30 a.m. For questions contact Marissa at 507-461-4501.

American Legion Riders of Waseca Ice Fishing Event Clear Lake Feb. 14

The American Legion Riders of Waseca Post 228 will hold an Ice Fishing Winter Adventure on Clear

Lake from noon till 4 p.m. on Feb. 14. No experience necessary, free hot dogs, chips and hot chocolate. Ice holes predrilled, ice fishing rods provided and warming houses available. Free will donations accepted.

Valentine's Dinner at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Feb. 14

There will be a Valentine's Dinner at the Indian Island Winery at 6 p.m. on Feb. 14. Includes wine tastings and glasses to win, three-course dinner featuring Chinese cuisine, live music from Indigo Moon, a rose for each couple and multiple gifts.

■ County
from Page 1

seek for those bonds, including the relative advantages of longer as compared to shorter repayment periods. As with the repayment of any type of loan, a shorter repayment period leads to lower total cost while a longer one allows for smaller payments across the term.

County commissioners weighed these and other topics while speculating about what terms and amounts legislators

are likely to find reasonable. They also stated concerns about leaving their options open to allow more flexibility during the bonding process.

After nearly two hours of consideration and discussion, board members voted to request legislative approval for a tax to cover up to \$45 million with a possible repayment period of up to 30 years. Their decision included the strategic recognition that actual amounts and terms are likely to be lower, given that county voters must also approve the terms of the sales tax before it can be implemented.

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NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the Waseca City Council will hold a public hearing on **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Council Chambers, 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093, to consider the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. 1134 – Amend Chapter 54.40 Lead and Galvanized Water Services

A complete copy of Ordinance No. 1134 is available for public inspection in the office of the City Clerk, 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

Julia Zuehlke
City Clerk

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SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642
February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Burger nite 5-7pm	4 6pm BAR Bingo	5 7pm HALL BINGO	6 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	7
8 Breakfast VFW 8:00am to noon WASECA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE	9 7pm Post & AUX. Meeting	10 Burger nite 5-7pm	11 6pm BAR Bingo	12 7pm HALL BINGO	13 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	14
15	16	17 Burger nite 5-7pm	18 6pm BAR Bingo	19 7pm HALL BINGO	20 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	21
22 BREAKFAST VFW 8:00am to noon	23	24 Burger nite 5-7pm	25 6pm BAR Bingo	26 7pm HALL BINGO	27 SLEIGH & CUTTER DINNER	28

HOURS OF OPERATION
SUN.– MON. CLOSED
TUE.– 1pm to 11pm Tue. Is Lady's nite 2 for one-Men Busch light \$2.50 from 4 to 6pm.
WED.– SAT.-1pm to 11 pm
POST & AUX MEETING 7pm club open 6pm MEMBERS only. Mn. Gambling license number 00385

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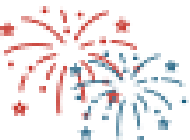
Clues
published
beginning
JAN 22



WINTER DISPLAYS & EVENTS

SLEIGH & CUTTER exhibit
Historical Society
DEC 17 → FEB 28

ICE SCULPTURE
by Sakatah Carvers
Courthouse lawn JAN 30

FIREWORKS SAT FEB 14  at dusk over Clear Lake

FESTIVAL WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

DINNER & MUSIC
FRI FEB 27 @ 5:00 VFW
6:30 Music by Los Tequileros
8:30 Frosty & Medallion winners

PARADE!
SAT FEB 28 @ NOON
DOWNTOWN WASECA
See website for parade route

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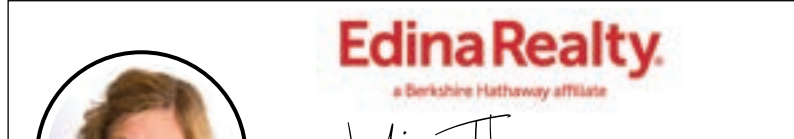
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