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WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

County support is last step of Marketplace funding

By DEB BENTLY

During their July 1 meeting, members of the Waseca County board of commissioners approved a \$250,000 grant of local housing trust funds to the Marketplace construction project, a 36-unit apartment building to be located south of the Waseca Walmart parking lot along Second Street Northwest.

According to discussion which took place during the morning's work session, securing the grant from the county was the final step in filling a "funding gap" for the \$7 million project. The City of Waseca had already approved a \$200,000 forgivable loan to help support construction.

The motion to approve the grant passed 4 to 1, with commissioner Brian Harguth dissenting.

Information summarized by planning and zoning administrator Tina Wilson indicates that, with all funding now in place, the City of Waseca will sell the property near Walmart to project developers for \$1. Groundbreaking is expected by Labor Day, with construction to begin soon afterward. Apartments are scheduled to become available for rent in the fall of 2026.

The project is eligible for the grant because eight of the 36 units will be designated for reduced-rate rentals to those who qualify under specific government programs.

The local housing trust (LHT) fund consists of money allocated by the state and distributed to county and municipal governments to help support specific initiatives, including the construction of housing.

"This is definitely more a marathon than a sprint," commented Chris Kennelly of Rebound Partners, the consulting firm working with local investors on the project, which had come to something of a pause in 2024 after falling about \$1 million short in funding. Rebound leaders Kennelly and Marc Basara appeared at the meeting to answer questions. Few were asked prior to the vote, however, because commissioners had received an extensive briefing from Wilson on the terms and conditions of the grant during a work session which had ended about 30 minutes before.

Concerns expressed during the work session included whether local taxpayers are supplying any of the grant money; the response made it clear the money had come from state allotments through two programs, Statewide Affordable Housing

County continued on 4

A word from The Word

"As long as the earth endures, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

Genesis 8:22



LOCAL COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEWSPAPER SERVING ALL OF WASECA COUNTY
No. 28 Vol. IV \$2 Office at 111 Elm Avenue West, Waseca Thursday, July 10, 2025

■ Page 4



Kite Festival

Waseca County Free Fair this week

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editorial Assistant

The Waseca County Free Fair will run from Wednesday, July 9, to Sunday, July 13, this year.

Free admission at the Waseca Fair Grounds, the fair has something for everyone – from baking, flowers and history, to livestock, shows and rides.

The fair is run by the Waseca County Agricultural Society and advertised as "summer's best party." Secretary and treasurer of the Waseca County Fair Board, Robin Dulas said this year the committee brought back the Dock Dogs events and added more rides. She said one of her favorite parts is seeing the smiles on kids' faces.

"It's always fun seeing everyone come together," Dulas said.

The one thing Dulas said people should know is that all the fair workers are volunteers, and the majority of them have full-time jobs. Thousands of hours go into planning the fair, with the board already working on 2026. She suggested, "If you see a worker around the fair, just stop and say thank you."

Dulas added that planners are always open to suggestions of how to change and improve the fair. The only thing they can't change, she said, is the weather.

There are a lot of events which can be found in the Waseca County Fairbook and on the website, wasecacounty-freefair.com. Some are listed below.

Thursday

Antique tractor display, all day

Indoor booths and food vendors open at 11 a.m.

4-H Dairy Goat Show, 12 p.m.

Freddie Justice Hypnotist, 4 p.m.

Kid Power Pedal Pull, 6 p.m.

Enduro Auto and Compact Car Race, 6 p.m.

Gen X Jukebox at the Beer Garden, 8:30 p.m.

Friday

4-H Swine Show, 8 a.m.

Kids and family scavenger hunt, 10:30 a.m.

Dock Dogs Big Air Wave, 11 a.m.

Demolition Derby, 6 p.m.

The Blue Ringers at the Beer Garden, 8:30 p.m.

Saturday

Open Class Dairy Show, 11:30 a.m.

Live Human-Sized pony races, 1:30 p.m.

Craft Beer Expo, 2 to 4 p.m.

Puzzles and pizza, 2:30 p.m.

Kiddie Coin Find, 3 p.m.

Midwest 6R Enduro Race, 6 p.m.

Zero Below at the Beer Garden, 8:30 p.m.

Sunday

Non-Denominational Church Service hosted by Faith United Methodist Church, 10 a.m.

iPolka Band and Pie, 11 a.m.

Auto and Cycle Show-n-Shine, 12 p.m.

4-H Parade of Champions, 4 p.m.



LAKEFEST FUN - First place for the adult Lakefest Freedom Run marathon was Cole Halla, (#77), second place was Michelle Baxter, (#101) on July 4, 2025. On the right (top), Lindsay Kate was taking a break from the heat to swim in Clear Lake. On the bottom, Bryce Leppert performing at Clear Lake Park.

Waseca Lakefest, 20th annual Freedom Run

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

With 91 degrees forecast to be the high for the day, the Lakefest Freedom Run kids' marathon took place at 8 a.m., fortunately missing the hottest part of Friday, July 4: There were 12 children ages 4 to 15 taking part. Their course was one mile in length, taking them through the Clear Lake parking lot, along the beach and around the tennis courts twice. Emcee for the day was Duane Rathmann; about 30 volunteers served in support and safety roles, standing on street corners or

mindering traffic for the marathoners.

In first place for the kids' round was Reed Coen, Owatonna, with a time of 6.59 minutes. Monty Revermann, Waseca, was second with 8.37, and in third was Danielle Coen, Owatonna, at 8.39. All children who completed the entire mile regardless of place received a medal. Sheryl Rathmann, wife to Duane, was helping to get people signed up. When asked why she was helping out today she replied, "To enjoy the wonderful fourth of July celebrations. This morning it's been a great turnout, all our vol-

unteers showed up and all of this benefits the Waseca Lakes Association." Refreshments of water and bananas were provided nearby to the thirsty children who were coming in hot.

With the children's race finished by 8:15 a.m., the 5.0 run around Clear Lake and the Wiggle Butt Dog Walk started on time at 8:30 a.m. Duane Rathman said, "Good luck to everyone" and sent them on their way. There were 70 people running the marathon and more

Lakefest continued on 5



Waseca broadband initiative receives national award

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has recognized Waseca County's "Broadband for All" initiative as being among the most successful in the nation in the category of Community and Economic Development in 2025.

Under the initiative, about 300 miles of fiber optic cable are being laid and 700 rural homes, farms and businesses in eight Waseca County townships will acquire the option of connecting to gig-speed internet ac-

ross the next 15 months, as service is established in their areas. The project was made possible by applying for and receiving \$7.5 million in grants through the state office of broadband development.

"I really am so very very proud of this work," comments Waseca County commissioner De Malterer. "It was such a joy to watch it all come together."

"The Achievement Awards shine a spotlight on the hard work and in-

Award continued on 8



BROADBAND FOR ALL - One of the many steps to the "Broadband for All" initiative which recently garnered Waseca County national recognition was to encourage members of the public to find out more about the process of installing the necessary fiber optic cable. Here, representatives from communications company Bevcomm gathered for a photo during a session this April.

ICAN celebrates 25 years of service

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

A large, cheerful crowd gathered at Northeast Park in Waseca the evening of Monday, June

30, to celebrate a major milestone—ICAN's twenty-fifth anniversary. But more than marking 25 years, the evening was labeled as a celebration of the dedicated ICAN employees and the impact they have made.

Founded in 2000, ICAN (Independent Counseling and Advocacy Network) currently serves about 90 individuals with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities, as well

as mental health diagnoses, across Steele and Waseca Counties. Their work requires the input of about 135 trained staff members.

"ICANs success story starts with

our employees," said Tiffany Lynch, the organization's chief financial officer. "They show up every day with heart, patience, and a mission to make a difference in the lives of the people we support. We couldn't do any of this without them."

In order to make their event employee-oriented, the organization encouraged participants to bring both the individuals they support and their own families to enjoy an evening of appreciation and fun.

Tracy Jevning, ICAN's founder who died in 2017, left a legacy that continues under the leadership of her husband Mike Jevning, who now serves as CEO and maintenance operations director. Mike said, "This isn't for me—it's for our employees, their families, and all the individuals we support every day."

Taryn Sack, ICAN's business serv-



ICAN ANNIVERSARY - Jen Williamson, Tiffany Lynch, Mike Jevning and Taryn Sack were present for the ICAN twenty-fifth anniversary celebration at Northeast Park in Waseca on Monday, June 30, 2025.

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann
ices director and daughter of the late Tracy Jevning, said she planned the celebration as she believes Tracy would have—with employees at the center.

ICAN continued on 8



Compostings

by Al Batt

Amazonesia problems

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING
I was in a rut, but I changed my life.

How did you do that?
I got a universal remote control. It changes everything.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I sat in a barbershop as a man had his beard cut—a process called pogonotomy. The growing of a beard is called pogonotrophy. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg wrote, “It is almost impossible to carry the torch of truth through a crowd without singeing somebody's beard.”

The weather came in carts and baskets

We've had weather before, but it's all new and different each day. It was hot enough to bake lasagna in the mailbox as I pushed my cart to where it could join a conga line of corralled shopping carts. I didn't get enough items to fill the cart. I'd have used a basket instead of a shopping cart, but baskets don't have wheels and combining that with how short they are makes baskets difficult to push.

I'VE LEARNED

Our smoke detector came with a guarantee. If our house burns down because the detector didn't work, the company will replace the smoke detector at no charge.

The loud sounds coming from an open window of a car passing in the night are never from motivational speakers.

The phrase “Rain follows the plow” falsely suggested that farming would increase rainfall in the Great Plains in the 19th century. This misconception, often propagated by land promoters, claimed that human alteration of the landscape would positively affect weather patterns, leading to more rain for crops. Drought and intensive agriculture practices, such as plowing up the native grasses that protected the soil, led to massive dust storms and erosion. The severe droughts of the 1890s and the Dust Bowl of the 1930s demonstrated the fallacy of the theory.

It's a good thing Friday the 13th never happens on a Monday.

I look at a person's face forever, and, eventually, I remember the individual's name. This process is called glacial recognition.

I enjoy a good breakfast. I like to believe there is some truth in what the character Ron Swanson of Parks and Recreation said, “There has never been a sadness that can't be cured by breakfast food.”

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT
Amazonesia is the inability to re-

member what you ordered when an Amazon package arrives.

When a daydreaming Uber driver drove past the destination, his backseat passenger gently tapped him on the shoulder. Startled, the driver drove through a red light and almost hit a bus before he pulled over. The passenger said, “I'm sorry I gave you such a fright.” “It was my fault,” said the driver. “This is my first day driving for Uber. For the past 25 years, I drove a hearse.”

A limbo champion walks into a bar, and his winning streak ended.

NATURE NOTES

Casey Madson of Hartland watched swallows hunt a farm field and wondered what kind of eyesight they have to be successful in catching flying insects. Barn swallows have exceptional eyesight, which is crucial for their aerial hunting style. They are two eyes with wings and have a bifoveate retina, meaning they have two areas of sharp focus (foveae) in each eye, one for distance and one for close-up vision. They share this trait with other predators like raptors, but most other songbirds have only one. The foveae are areas with a high concentration of cone photoreceptors, which are responsible for sharp vision and color perception. This allows them to track insect prey with precision while flying at high speeds. The elongated eye shape of barn swallows further enhances their spatial resolution, allowing them to perceive minute details and accurately judge distances while flying. Like many bird species, barn swallows can perceive ultraviolet light, which helps them find insects. The killing of egrets is often cited for inspiring the U.S. conservation movement, but it was the millinery trade's impact on barn swallows that prompted naturalist George Bird Grinnell's 1886 Forest & Stream editorial decrying the waste of bird lives. His essay led to the founding of the first Audubon Society.

Becky Schuhmacher of Glenville asked why some sandhill cranes she has seen have had many brown feathers. Sandhill cranes are typically gray, but their plumage sometimes appears reddish-brown due to the preening cranes do with iron-rich mud. That may act as camouflage. The adults have a distinctive red patch on their head, while immatures (colts) lack this feature and have a more uniformly rusty brown appearance.

MEETING ADJOURNED

“Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.”—Maya Angelou. Be kind

Kudos to the county commissioners

I wish to take a moment—well, a column, really—to commend the leaders of our county government. I could joke that I am practically a member of the county board, since I spend about as much time at their meetings as the commissioners do. The one or two times in the past two years that I have missed a meeting, I have reviewed the online recording of what took place.

Furthermore, the best way to ensure we understand something is to summarize and explain it to someone else. After every board meeting, I spend a few hours doing exactly that.

But after my lighthearted claim, I would quickly issue a disclaimer, since I am aware how many discussions, sessions and gatherings the commissioners attend in addition to the “regular” meetings which take place on the first and third Tuesdays of each month beginning at 9:30 a.m., and are frequently preceded by an 8 a.m. work session.

My selection of this topic is prompted by two things.

The first is the recent achievement award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for the “Broadband for All” initiative. Having been present for many of the summaries and reports which occurred as the \$7.5 million in funding was applied for, I have an inkling of the difficulties and disappointments which preceded the April 2024 announcement the county had received its first



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

grant.

It happened that the office of broadband development had scheduled its announcements within the time frame of a meeting. Commissioner De Malterer, the board member who worked most closely with the project, had mentioned early in the session she was watching for the announcement and claimed she would do a handspring if the news was good.

Even without the handspring, the delight was palpable when, a bit later, the news was received.

Still, despite the significant personal effort exerted to achieve the broadband grant, the commissioners extend credit to the community members whose statements of support helped make the efforts successful.

When it was mentioned NACo had chosen to recognize Broadband for All, the response was gratitude for being noticed and a statement of pleasure the county's citizens are being served.

I am also impressed by the com-

missioners' efforts to finally rectify a problem which has been “kicked down the road” for decades.

The county law enforcement building and the jail inside it were planned and constructed during the cold war era and have been gradually falling out of compliance with state Department of Corrections (DOC) standards for decades.

The complicated and costly nature of the project apparently kept previous boards from updating or replacing the facility, leaving this board to cope with “must-do” circumstances arising from a DOC statement the number of unmet standards could lead to the relatively sudden closure of the jail.

The search for the “best” solution has been difficult and complicated, and honestly is not over yet.

But I have respected the commissioners' genuine sincerity as they work toward a solution, trying to walk the tightrope between the “needs” and “wants” surrounding the plan against the amount of money it will cost taxpayers.

Don't be afraid to travel slowly, take it all in

Alright, so I missed saying “Happy Fourth of July” last week. Oops. I hope you all had a lovely weekend through the heat and celebrations.

I spent the weekend up in northern Minnesota, cruising around on the lake to stay cool. But I spent the previous weekend in Colorado, traveling down through the mountains — hiking, white water rafting, and enjoying the view.

All I'm going to say is I forgot how exhausting travelling is.

I flew out last week, a two-hour plane ride in the afternoon, and immediately hopped into a car for a six-hour drive. That was fine. I had just gotten there; it was fun and exciting and new, and I was at the beginning of my trip. Besides, we were driving through mountains, so how could I complain?

It was a bit different four days later on the way back, though. Leaving early in the morning, six hours of restless naps in the car, a quick stop for tacos, and then being dropped off at the airport. It was there that my plane back to Minnesota was delayed three hours before the two-hour



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

plane ride and an hour light rail ride back to my apartment, where I arrived far later in the night than I had hoped. The following morning I woke up and travelled to northern Minnesota to spend the holiday with the family.

Needless to say, I was exhausted. It made me think back to when I spent three months travelling when I studied abroad. I was in Spain, spending almost every weekend flying or taking a long bus ride to a new location in Spain, in Europe. And then during the week, it was exploring Madrid and the Spanish city I temporarily called home. I remember being tired, but not too tired — maybe it was all in the mindset. I haven't travelled extensively in a while, so I had forgotten some of the

downsides. Or maybe I just woke up this morning tired and now this column is all about me being tired because my columns are highly influenced on where I am and how I am feeling in the moment.

That being said, I've also realized that it could just be because I rely heavily on one factor that I tend to conveniently forget — age. I'm young and can do things easily with few consequences and no second thoughts.

Stay up late into the night, wake up early the next morning and be fine. Go drinking a number of days in a row. Eat junk food and not have it live with me forever. You know, the basics.

I used to wonder why people would choose to spread long car trips

I have to admit, even after hearing all I've heard and learning all I've learned, I would still be uncertain how to vote on the project if I were a member of the county board—but of course, all the details are still being worked out, so it is not currently time for a decision. In that regard, I have high respect for the knowledge and ability of county administrator Michael Johnson, whose job it is to acquire all the information board members are asking for and coordinate efforts with planners and architects. He has a remarkable ability to stay calm and seem collected, so that even though I assume he experiences considerable inner turmoil at times, there would be no way to prove that's true.

So, in Waseca County, I want to observe that “government by the people, of the people and for the people” is working beautifully. We have far-thinking leaders whose genuine goal is to serve their constituency to the best of their ability. Yes, each of us will have complaints about certain circumstances or expectations, and yes, our independent spirits object to the “red tape” government seems to always entail.

At the highest level, though, my confidence in human nature is supported. When it comes to Waseca County government, from what I have seen, we are fortunate to have good people doing good work for good reasons.

across a few days. I would think to myself the better way was to drive the 13 hours or more in one go—maybe down a can of energy drink or coffee when you're tired and you're good. Why waste more time?

But I've begun to realize that scenario requires a lot more energy and effort than previously thought. It's not that easy to travel all day, turn around the next and travel some more; maybe especially not when you're supposed to be civil and friendly once you arrive. It's going to end in a meltdown on the Fourth of July I've noticed. Not that I'm speaking from experience at all.

Basically, I'm just reminding everyone to make sure you take your time to travel, it doesn't matter how long it takes, you don't want to stretch yourself thin. Take your time, take the extra day, enjoy the view, and for goodness' sake take a nap. Or two.

My Determination: “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” — Jodi Picoult, Small Great Things

Six miles from the front line, far from home

Two of my best friends, Kyle and Anastasiia, (both in their 30s) were in town visiting Monday and Tuesday. They are now permanent Floridians, but still have family in Southern Minnesota.

Yesterday we had dinner together and spent the evening chatting. Anastasiia is from Ukraine. Her parents, Ihor and Alla, (both in their 60s) have moved here on a temporary emergency visa.

In Ukraine, Ihor and Alla ran a coffee shop, which they were forced to relocate to the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv. Their town is only six miles from the front line currently being held by the Russians. Kyle told me, their shop was hit by a missile after they left. Anastasiia's former high school was also hit by a number of missiles. She told me her mom graduated from the same school shortly after it was built. “Now it's leveled,” she said.

Speaking with Anastasiia after I wrote this column, she sent me this message:

“Mom and Dad had a coffee shop and several coffee vending machines set up in different locations in my hometown and in the neighboring town. After the full scale invasion, they closed everything down and moved their equipment into storage. Once they relocated to Kyiv, they reoriented and reopened their vending business - now they have two locations with self-serve coffee stations. Everything else remains in storage.

The missile hit directly on one of the spots where their coffee vending machine used to be (in my hometown).



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

The town is not currently captured by the Russians, but the front line is only about 6 miles away from it - and it is still moving. It is in range for artillery now, also, so it gets bombarded regularly.”

After much pleading, Ihor and Alla finally agreed to move in with Kyle and Anastasiia in Florida this year. (Although the process to move here actually started much sooner.) Ihor and Alla joined us at dinner. They do not speak English.

After an awkward minute, we all got to conversing. (Anastasiia is a professional translator/interpreter.)

I asked them about their arrival in the United States, what surprised them most, what hurdles they face, what they like/dislike and finally, I asked about some of their personal perspectives—their relationship and what they thought of the “American boy” flying across the world to see and eventually marry their only daughter.

Ihor and Alla met each other in college. Ihor was a “fifth year” and Alla was a “third year.” They met on a dance floor after Ihor had asked all of the other boys to let Alla dance with him. After dancing together, they became friends, and started dating.

Their biggest surprise was how large everything is in America. Por-

tion sizes, land, everything. They said people here talk all the time... to each other, strangers, even people at the grocery store. The fact that everyone smiles all the time surprised them. More shocking, they said, no one is in a hurry. Back home, everything is more rushed. Snap, snap, snap. Move, move, move.

The biggest hurdle feels obvious: language.

Their biggest dislike is the lack of vegetables in cooking. In Ukraine it is very common to have six or seven vegetables in a serving of soup. Here, everything is fried, they say. However, they did note that we have excellent access to fresh vegetables and high quality food in grocery stores... it just costs a little more, they said.

As she anticipated her parents arriving in the United States, Anastasiia says she felt worry, anxiety. Despite having pre-approval to enter the U.S., they could have been turned away for any reason upon landing in Florida. Thankfully, they answered the questions correctly, one of which was demanding the exact address of their residence. (Which they produced quickly.)

Finally, the last questions I asked were in regards to Kyle and Anastasiia.

Kyle met Anastasiia in high school when she was a foreign exchange student. Anastasiia claims she had a crush on Kyle right away. Part of her long story includes a vacation in Europe where she and her friend wrote the names of their crushes on a napkin with lipstick and threw it into the Black Sea. She wrote down Kyle's name.

Nearly a decade after high school, Kyle and Anastasiia connected online, via Facebook. The two started talking; Anastasiia dared Kyle to come visit her in Ukraine.

He did.

Alla came with Anastasiia to the airport the day Kyle arrived.

Their love story could fill pages, but today, this will have to do.

One trip led to a few more, including a trip where Kyle overstayed his visa and was interrogated at the airport for hours. Finally, Kyle sneaked a wedding ring through customs, fearing it would be confiscated or stolen by foreign customs agents.

The two moved to the United States, married, and nearly two and half years ago had their first child, Odin.

Alla said she was worried at first, but then Kyle arrived. She said his love for Anastasiia is great. This eased her heart.

Speaking with Anastasiia's parents is an experience I won't ever forget. I'm grateful for the great relationships I am blessed with in this life.

“If the only prayer you said was thank you, that would be enough.” — Meister Eckhart



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OBITUARIES

Betty L. Blasing

Betty L. Blasing, age 91 of Mapleton, formerly of Janesville, died on the morning of July 1, 2025 at the Beacon in Mapleton.

Betty was born on December 16, 1933 to William & Agnus (Lutz) Stoldt in McPherson township, Blue Earth County. She was baptized and confirmed at St. Johns Evangelical Church in Alma City and later graduated from Pemberton High School with the class of 1951. After graduation she worked as a waitress at Ellis Log Cabin, Village Diner, Heritage House and the Janesville American Legion.

On June 30, 1980 Betty was united in marriage to Willard Blasing. She enjoyed traveling, dancing, fishing, and spending time with friends and family.

Betty is survived by a nephew, Albert & Mary (Vogelpohl) Rosin of Raymond, three step-children, Scott Blasing of Cedar Hill, TX, Bruce of Waterville and Elizabeth of Janesville and several great-nephews and great-nieces. She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband Willard; a sister, Shirley Rosin; a brother, Arthur Stoldt; and her fi-



Betty Blasing

ancé, Ray Barta.

Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 at the Janesville Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service, and will continue for one hour before the service at the church on Wednesday.

Funeral services were held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Janesville, with Rev. Jason Wolter officiating. Interment followed at the Alma City Cemetery. dsfuneral.com

Merle Raymond Williamson

Merle Raymond Williamson, age 86 of Waseca, died in the early afternoon of Friday, July 4, 2025 at the New Richland Care Center.

Merle was born at St. Olaf Hospital in Austin on March 16, 1939 to parents Roy and Maxine (Carlson) Williamson. He graduated from the Claremont School District before serving his country in the United States Army. He was married to Alice Stiles in November 1968. They later divorced. Merle was married to Janette Eichhorst in November of 1995. A lifelong resident of southern Minnesota, Merle lived near Claremont, Hope, Owatonna, and Waseca. In addition to working on the farm over the years, he had a 32-year career at the Owatonna Tool Company where he began as a machinist and retired as a supervisor.

Merle is survived by his wife of nearly thirty years, Janette Williamson of Waseca; son Randy Williamson of Waseca; daughter Lori Williamson of Owatonna; step-children Rob (Daryl) Stiles of Brainerd, Brian Stiles of Owatonna, Jeff (Christine) Eichhorst of St. Paul, Julie (Paul) Evans of North Mankato, and Jodi (Robert)



Merle Williamson

Passer of Wells; fifteen grandchildren; ten great-grandchildren; and a sister, Eleanor (Jack) Wycoff of Finland, MN. He was preceded in death by his parents; a son; a great-grandson; and a nephew.

Funeral services were held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Waseca, with Rev. Eric Ishimaru officiating. Visitation was held from 9:00 a.m. until the time of the service at the church. Interment followed at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca. Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca handled the arrangements. dsfuneral.com.

City

from Page 3

cases from the Internet Crimes Against Children task force (ICAC) when the alleged offender resides in Waseca. ICAC is the central hub in Minnesota to receive and pass along tips to law enforcement about the creation or dissemination of explicit material involving minors. The resolution for the agreement was moved and unanimously approved.

A public hearing for an Urban and Rural Service Districts ordinance was presented by Willey. It involved the potential annexation of various properties near the Hwy 14 West interchange and allows the annexed properties to be taxed at the township rate instead of the city rate until they are developed.

Willey said this provides incentive for the properties to be annexed.

If approved, the future annexed properties that are currently agricultural would be designated as rural service districts and not pay taxes at the city rate until developed. The ordinance was moved and carried unanimously.

Sonnenberg discussed the Waseca County Outdoor Siren Policy in the City Manager's Report. He summarized that all city sirens in the county will become active at any sighting of a tornado within the entire county.

In announcements, Mayor Randy Zimmerman asked the public to extend some grace to the crews working to fix and adjust the flooding issues in town. He said he knows some basements have been flooded recently, but said they are "fixing problems that have been decades in the making."



TO THE SKIES - Families and crew were able to find some success with kites despite little wind at the Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Kite Festival at Farmamerica Sunday, July 6. Pioneer photos by Amelia Roessler

Kite Festival soars with no wind

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editorial Assistant

Sunday was a perfect day — unless you wanted to fly a kite. The bright sun and warmth was missing one vital ingredient, a consistent wind.

As hundreds of people walked around and relaxed in the shade of Farmamerica the afternoon of Sunday, July 6, for the Great American Kite Festival, workers and volunteers tried to figure out the best way to fly the world's largest American flag kite, "Old Glory."

The event was supported by the Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Festival Association, with Farmamerica acting as host. Originally planned for 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, the event was moved to Sunday because of the rain.

"I mean, between the rain yesterday — the first postponement, that made a big difference — and then

today, I'm hoping for more wind, which doesn't often happen in Southern Minnesota. Usually we want less wind," said Sleigh and Cutter president Scott Roemhildt.

The festival is celebrating its seventy-fifth year, making it the longest continuing parade and festival in the nation, Roemhildt said.

"We just thought that doing the summer event is another way to highlight the year that we've had," he said.

The Kite Festival is typically held in the winter on Clear Lake, a widely positive and popular event, according to Roemhildt. He added this year, he wanted to do something different and with the kite company having the large American flag, having it over the Fourth of July seemed fitting.

Coming in at 600 pounds and 10,000 square feet (the same size as the Farmamerica building), the flag

was laid out to fly numerous times during the five-hour event. Those in attendance wandered the Farmamerica grounds, bought food and drinks from a selection of food and vendor trucks, and found shade along the Farmamerica hill to sit and watch the various kites and flags.

Some families bought their own flags to attempt to fly high with the other larger, colorful flags.

"Just to see all these people out here, it's fantastic. Especially when we had to delay it a day and hoping that people would hear about it, doing all we could do to get the word out," Roemhildt said. "Just hoping we can get all the kites up."

Farmamerica executive director Jessica Rollins said the Farmamerica grounds were there as a location big enough for all the kites to fly, with their historic sites open in the back. The only thing left was the wind.

"It's almost always windy at Far-

mamerica and when we pulled in this morning there was no wind. I was like, 'Are you kidding?'" Rollins said.

She added if anyone missed the kite festival, the public is welcome to come out for self-guided or guided tours at Farmamerica.

Roemhildt said one of the Sleigh and Cutter Festival Association's goals is to give back to the community in different ways. Between a gambling association, donating money, the kite festival, winter fireworks and more, he said the group tries to benefit the community.

"Supporting the community that supports us," Roemhildt said.

A historic display of the Waseca Sleigh and Cutter Festival will be in Hudson Hall at the Waseca County Fair for any who wish to learn more about the history of the festival. More information can also be found online at sleighandcutterfestival.org.

Lions Club features golf tournament, more

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editorial Assistant

Founded in 1927 and one of the oldest of its kind in Minnesota, the Waseca Lions Club is hosting its annual golf tournament July 24 at the Lakeside Golf Course in Waseca. For \$100 per participant, a hopeful golfer can make use of a golf cart and enjoy a provided lunch. Businesses and organizations are welcome to sponsor a hole for \$125, prominently displaying their company name. Last year, the tournament included 15 teams. This year the Lions claim to have placed an order for ideal weather.

While this event may be one of two fundraisers the club hosts all year, they do a lot more that may go unseen.

The golf tournament and a pancake breakfast are the club's only fundraisers, and are very popular

events, according to past club president Diane Beckmann.

"A small group of people, but we get a lot done," Beckmann said.

Thanks to their fundraisers, the public service group is able to assist organizations and activities in Waseca. The Lions Club gives annual scholarships, supports the Scouts, provides dictionaries for all third graders, works with the Can Do Canines, and helps with Thanksgiving food baskets, Journey for Service, Project New Hope and they helped fund the Waseca High School Robotics Team.

The Lions also partner with Drs. Akre and Clark Eye Care to help provide around four students a year with glasses and eye exams; the club was instrumental in starting the fund drive for the March food challenge which donates to the Waseca Area

Food Shelf.

"Food insecurities have always been my passion," Beckmann said. "A kid can't learn if they're hungry."

The group started with supplying a snack for the Backpack program, with every Lion asked to bring in a package of Goldfish crackers as the program needed 100 for a weekend. The Lions came through with 600 packages.

"All you have to do is ask," Beckmann explained.

From there, the Lions challenged other service organizations and businesses in Waseca—the generosity of all working together brought in \$30,000 worth of food this past March.

Along with that, the club supports the diabetes foundation, hearing foundation and cancer foundation.

The Lions' mission statement is

"To create and foster a spirit of understanding among all people for humanitarian needs by providing voluntary services through community involvement and international cooperation."

The Lions Club does not meet during the summer, but meets every first and third Wednesday of the month starting in September. Beckmann said they are always looking for new members.

County

from Page 1

Aid and Local Homelessness Prevention Aid. It was also mentioned staff members from both the county and the city will need to approve expenditures of the money so that it can be ensured each one meets LHT requirements, one of which is that the money be spent only on construction.

Commissioner De Malterer expressed her support for the project saying she sensed excitement from many local agencies that new housing is in the works. She mentioned the school district, local businesses and the City of Waseca.

"We want to be sure everyone who needs a home has a home," she commented.

Also during the July 1 meeting, commissioners approved about \$430,000 for the replacement of a six-foot-square culvert under the south end of County Road 23. County engineer Jim Kollar reported the culvert had been poured in place "probably in the 1930s," later "extended using timber," and that it is in poor condition. With CR 23 due for resurfacing in 2027, he suggested performing the replacement now will help ensure everything will have "settled" prior to the roadwork.

Kollar mentioned funding for the project will come from local option sales tax receipts. Construction is expected to begin shortly after

Labor Day and continue for about three weeks.

An informal discussion regarding planned construction for a county justice center revealed work on a new design is ongoing. County administrator Michael Johnson termed his discussions with the architectural firm Widseth as "encouraging," with some preliminary cost estimates well under \$30 million, despite the recent setback of learning the current law enforcement center, located west of the courthouse along Third Avenue Northwest, cannot be remodeled.

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Seeking volunteers

Waldorf Veterans Memorial Parks looking for volunteers for addition

JANESVILLE JOURNAL

The Waldorf community will be excited for its city park, dubbed the Waldorf Veterans Memorial Park, to be finished soon. However, they are looking for volunteers to set up the latest addition to it: the Veterans' Gazebo. This Veterans' Gazebo will be located on the west side of the park between the mural of Waldorf on the western edge and the flagpoles on the east side. Anyone interested in volunteering should call Charlie Barnes, Waldorf American Legion Post 587 Park Director, at 763-286-2246. To date, the park has made significant progress. One of the features is a plaque underneath the center flagpole with a quote from CW4 Jeremiah Miller, a

Veteran of the Army from Waseca, honoring all those serving in the armed forces. The quote reads, "No matter what capacity served in Active Duty, the Guard, or Reserves, your service matters. Anyone willing to take an oath of enlistment in God's name and fulfill duty to the best of their ability deserves respect to be honored, cared for, and remembered." The City of Waldorf received a grant of \$25,000 for the work around the park. According to their newsletter, the grant was from the Taylor Family Farm Foundation, which helps small towns in Rural Minnesota get projects off the ground. The city plans to find matching funds to enhance its existing park.

'Ask a Trooper': lane splitting law

By SGT. TROY CHRISTIANSON OF THE MINNESOTA STATE PATROL

Question: I heard some talk about a new law of July 1st that allows motorcycles to drive through traffic. Can you explain this as a lot of my friends are talking but I can't get the same answer from any of them.

Answer: Motorcycle lane splitting and filtering are legal on Minnesota roads as of July 1. The new law, passed by the Legislature in 2024, allows motorcycles to share lanes with cars for the first time in the state, with notable restrictions on speed and where lane sharing can be performed.

It is the responsibility of motorcyclists to perform these actions safely and legally. Motorists need to be aware of motorcycles that are splitting and filtering and cannot get in their way, however they are not obligated to accommodate them.

Lane splitting allows a motorcycle to share a lane with and pass a vehicle in slow-moving traffic at no more than 25 mph, and no more than 15 mph over the speed of traffic. Once traffic gets back up to 25

mph, the motorcycle must go back into their own lane of traffic.

Lane filtering allows motorcycles to move through traffic that is stopped, such as at a stoplight or in a traffic jam. The motorcyclist cannot go more than 15 mph as they filter toward the front of the line of traffic.

Splitting and filtering are prohibited in roundabouts, school zones, freeway on-ramps and work zones where traffic has been funneled down to a single lane.

For more information: <https://dps.mn.gov/news/ots/lane-splitting-filtering-begin-mn>

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.

If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson — Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

■ Lakefest from Page 1

than 40 took part in the dog walk. Trish Mercier, another volunteer, was on a bike. She first showed the children how to navigate their run, then was kind enough to ride around the lake to show the adults.

In first place was Cole Halla, Waseca, with a time of 28.11. Halla said, "I'm doing this race for myself; I really wanted to be active on the fourth. I just got done with a half marathon in Cedarburg; I will be doing another marathon in New York in October

and all this is great training." In second was Michelle Baxter, Waseca, her time was 32.33. Logan Goettl, Mankato, was third with a time of 32.57.

The Waseca Lakes Association expressed its thanks to Discover Waseca, the VFW, American Legion Auxiliary, American Family Insurance, ICAN, Keen Bank, Jevning Properties, MPeters Enterprises Inc., Mayo Clinic, the Mill, Dennis Steffel Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Services, American Legion, Kiesler's Campground, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, Sons of the American Legion, Minnwest Bank and the Waseca Area Foundation.



BOATS, BOATS, BOATS - 10 boats participated in the Waseca Lakefest Boat Parade Friday, July 10. Prizes were awarded for the Best Party Barge and Most Creative. Below, Bil and Mary Jones were enjoying the Boat Parade from Clear Lake Park.

Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann

Lakefest Boating Parade, contest grows bigger

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Waseca Lakefest Boat Parade took place on the afternoon of Friday, July 4. A wind blowing off the lake helped beat back some of the midday heat, which reached into the 90s. Prizes were \$200 for first place, \$75 for second. Prizes were presented on the lower level of the Boathouse immediately after the parade. The event was organized by Tom Glaser with emcee Cory Harguth. Ten boats, each with a unique name, competed: Montego Bay, Christmas in July, Soaring Eagles, The Loon Pontoon, WTF (Where's the Fire?), Floatin' the USA, The Bluejay Boat, StarCraft and Stripes, Uncle Slam and Pontooning in the USA.

For the Best Party Barge category, first place was Christmas in July; Bluejay Boat took second. For Most Creative category, Where's the Fire? took first place,

with the Loon Pontoon in second. In the Most Patriotic category, Soaring Eagles took first place, followed by Montego Bay.

Glaser said this about the contest, "For the most part, every boat was a set of close calls. The boats this year were absolutely fantastic, really creative with a multitude of entries. I've got a whole list of compliments from everyone who was there. This will be our third annual contest, and I would suspect that, with this success, it will keep going. After covid we had just four boats, and last year there were seven, this year we had 10. One did not show and we don't know why. But other than that, we also had a great emcee, delivered a great performance, Cory Harguth, a meteorologist from KOWZ Radio. That, added with spectator attendance this year, puts this unmatched compared to any other year."



ROCK ON - Todd Michael Jameson performed at the Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm on Sunday, July 6, 2025. Pictured left are Jameson and Don Felder of The Eagles.

Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann



Todd Michael Jameson finishes three-day weekend at Pizza Farm

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff Writer

To wrap up the Fourth of July weekend, the Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm presented two musicians from 1 to 7 p.m. the evening of Sunday, July 6. Performing first was Todd Michael Jameson, followed by Fred the Bear.

Prior to the show, Jameson, a solo act, had a few minutes to talk as he set up his equipment. Regarding his playlist for the night, he said, "I play rock and country covers mostly, I also have some originals, but I don't know if those will go into the rotation tonight. I play based on who's in the crowd

and what people ask for when requests are made." He said he likes playing Pleasant Grove, "Because when this place gets going, there can be quite a few people here. I'll pull in at least a hundred people every time I come. I'd like to play here more than once a year, but later in the summer I get pressed for time."

On Sunday he got to play his music on stage in the shade. With 80 degrees as the high, the heat didn't seem to be bothering him. Since he didn't yet know what the crowd would want, he said, "I can play Merle Haggard and Waylon Jennings, classic country or I can do

way modern. I focus a lot on 70s rock as well. This summer has been busy, up to five or six shows per week. Last week was Hudson, Wisconsin on Tuesday; Maple Grove on Thursday; Wheeler, Wisconsin on Friday; Lake Mills, Iowa on Saturday and here today."

Currently a resident of Champlain, Minnesota, Jameson is originally from Albert Lea, "My mother currently lives in Ellendale, so I go through there quite a bit. Right now, I'm putting on 220 shows per year." He was asked about any big names he's played with recently and he replied, "In January, I opened for Don Felder at

the Treasure Island Resort and Casino; we had a crowd of 2000 people there, that was a great show." Last year at Rockfest in Wisconsin he played with Mike Tramp from the 80s glam band, White Lion.

Jameson got his game face on as people began showing up with lawn chairs and picnic blankets. The pizza farm staff manning the woodfired stove were assembling their dinner orders; the bartenders were mixing drinks. Anyone interested in hearing Todd Michael Jameson can find his music at www.bandcamp.com, or on Spotify.

Kimberly Meyer is new NRHEG principal

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

Dr. Kimberly Meyer joined the NRHEG school district as its new elementary principal as of July 1, taking the position held for the past three years by Craig Kopetzki.

Meyer comes to NRHEG from Jackson County Central, where she had been principal for the past five years. She says she is glad to be staying in a small-town atmosphere where people take a cooperative approach and focus on the well-being of the students.

"I've always heard really good things about the district," she observes. "I've felt welcomed, and I look forward to really getting to know the staff and the students."

Meyer is originally from North Carolina. She and John, whose family is based in the Wells area, have been married for almost 30 years, having met at a friend's wedding. The two of them have three children, Leah, Isaac, and Madison. Madison, the youngest, is a high school student at USC.

Meyer began her career as a teacher in North Carolina; when she

and John moved to Wells, she joined the staff of USC elementary. Her experiences in education span more than 20 years, and include elementary classroom teacher, elementary and middle school principal, and teaching in higher education at Waldorf University, and Gustavus Adolphus College. She completed her doctoral degree in 2015 at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Through it all, however, Meyer states she has remained a "school nerd" who loves the back-to-school season and shopping for school supplies.

Meyer says the most important job of a principal is to ensure "a safe, welcoming environment for students." Doing so, she continues, begins with making sure staff members have the resources, training and supplies they need to deliver instruction effectively.

She believes another vital element is strengthening the interconnections between the school and community. "The school is a center point," she observes. "We want people to feel they're part of what goes on here." She mentions conferences, concerts, performances and other events as op-



WARM WELCOME - Dr. Kimberly Meyer, formerly principal at Jackson County Central in Jackson, is NRHEG's Elementary Principal. She says she is "a real school nerd" who loves back-to-school shopping and the start of each new school year.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bentley

changes until I have a stronger understanding of the environment," she said. "This has been a successful school where the students are the first priority. I want to respect the people here and what they're doing."

"Then I will look for the ways I can be a good resource." She mentions recent changes imposed at the state level, including a new language arts curriculum to be delivered school wide.

"Things are always changing in education," she observes. "So you have to be flexible."

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Pastor's Column

Unnecessary pastor

By PASTOR MIKE COGLAN
Real Life Church is hosting our annual outdoor service and free picnic this Sunday at Clear Lake Park at 10:00 a.m. A lot of work goes into a service like this. Sound equipment must be rented, picked up and installed, then taken down and returned. Grills have to be transported. Signs are displayed. Greeters, cooks, musicians and game leaders must be recruited and managed. I'm grateful to be surrounded by volunteers who not only make all this happen, but have fun doing it.

The church is intended to be a team. None of us are indispensable. "There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:12)

I remember discovering how dispensable I am about 20 years ago. I woke up on a Sunday at 4 o'clock in the morning with a slight pain in my abdomen. I tried to get comfortable again, but the pain got worse. A few minutes later I was waking up my wife to take me to the emergency room.

Every bump on the drive to the hospital was agony. In the ER I was surrounded by medical technicians who taped various pieces of metal and plastic all over my chest and abdomen. In short order I had a bird's nest of electrical wires hooked to my chest and an IV in my arm. But a shot of morphine made it all seem kind of pleasant.

A few hours later I was told that I had pancreatitis, a painful inflammation of the pancreas. On admission to a hospital room, an intake nurse took down my personal information. When she asked me my occupation, I said, "I'm a pastor." She looked at me oddly. I said, "Really, I'm a pastor. I should be preaching right now." She continued her checklist.

"Do you practice any sort of faith?" (Duh.)

"Would you like to have a visit from our chaplain?" (Is he lonely?)

In the hospital I was treated with respect and courtesy, but I was anonymous – just another sick person. Meanwhile back in church things were going on fine without me. Our youth minister read my sermon to the congregation and some said that he did a better job than I would have.

At the time, I was reading a book by the late Eugene Peterson, The Unnecessary Pastor. That was how I felt – unnec-

essary. Everything on my schedule was suddenly dropped, and the world kept right on spinning.

Unnecessary is not a bad word according to Peterson. It doesn't mean worthless. Diamonds are unnecessary but very valuable. Likewise, a pastor's work is valuable and important, but ultimately unnecessary. Being "unnecessary" is simply remembering the good news that there is a Savior. And I'm not Him.

This runs counter to our egos. Pastors are like anybody else; we like to be necessary. The needs and wants of a congregation make us feel necessary. The more we meet the desires, the more necessary we become. Today a pastor is expected to study and preach, manage and lead, visit and console, counsel and pray – the list is almost endless. Our egos not only allow this, but encourage it.

Peterson describes this "busyness" as a disguised form of laziness. By running about meeting other people's needs, we avoid the unique responsibilities of a pastor. In his book, The Contemplative Pastor, Peterson wrote these embarrassingly accurate words: "I am busy because I am lazy. I indolently let others decide what I will do instead of resolutely deciding myself. I let people who do not understand the work of a pastor write the agenda for my day's work because I am too slipshod to write it myself... If I vainly crowd my day with conspicuous activity or let others fill my day with imperious demands, I don't have the time to do my proper work, the work to which I have been called. How can I lead people into the quiet place beside the still waters if I am in perpetual motion?" (pp. 28-29)

I stayed two days in the hospital. No cause for the attack was ever determined. When I returned to work at church, our Vacation Bible School ministry was underway. My only pastoral duty was to mingle through the crowd of parents and children.

I like being unnecessary. I'm blessed to be part of a team of servants who free me to study and write and preach. Most other things can and should be accomplished by others according to their God-given abilities. Then the church becomes the true "Body of Christ" she is intended to be.

This Sunday, I will do my part. Then I hope enjoy the food and activities. I would enjoy seeing you out there. Let's mingle.

■ Award

from Page 1

novation happening in county governments across the nation," said NACo President James Gore, "This year's winners highlight the dedication and creativity of county leaders to building thriving communities and providing the best possible services to our residents."

"Lack of rural broadband is a national problem. When one county is able to make such amazing progress, it gets people's attention," observes Bill Eckles, chief executive officer for Bevcomm, the Blue Earth based company which worked with Waseca County leaders throughout a number of lengthy and sometimes frustrating grant application

rounds. Eckles credits the county's unusual success to a number of factors: "In Waseca County, your leadership took an active role in helping to come up with solutions to get more and better broadband access," he said. The fact that the county had planned in advance and set aside specified funds to support the initiative was important, as was the work of American Connection Corps advisor Steve Kraus.

Eckles reports work to create the necessary underground infrastructure for the project is advancing ahead of schedule. A needed "hut" should be in place within the next 30 to 60 days; service will begin coming available in sections as work in each area is completed. He predicts some locations will have service beginning sometime this fall; others will have connections within a year.

■ ICAN

from Page 1

"They give so much of themselves each day, and tonight was just a small way for us to say thank you. They deserve to be celebrated."

ICAN currently operates 14 community residential homes in Waseca County, each housing up to

four individuals who receive personalized daily support. These homes, and the care provided within them, are staffed by employees whose assignment is "to ensure every person lives with dignity, safety, and joy. Whether it's teaching life skills like budgeting and meal prep or simply being a trusted, consistent presence, ICAN employees embody the organization's mission of providing person-centered, high-quality living."

Stuffed with love

Janesville holds stuffed animal workshop for an eager class

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff Writer

Children were invited to a stuffed animal workshop at the Janesville Public Library the afternoon of Monday, July 7. With high temperatures outside, the air conditioning was working just fine inside as a group of ten children seated around a big table were instructed on how to fill their animals.

With only ten animals available for stuffing, this activity was limited to those children who had previously signed up. All the kids got to choose either a dog, a red panda, a beaver, a bobcat, a lion, goat, monkey, polar bear or panda. While Kelly Koplen, who was in charge of the kids, opened stuffing packages and called out instructions, there was non-stop chatter from the little ones, including "I'm doing this for my sister," or "I can tell I'm going to need more stuffing for my guy. Do we have



MADE WITH LOVE - From left: Lincoln Stenzel, Nathan and Lydia Ewert were on hand for the Stuffed Animal Workshop at the Janesville Public Library on Monday, July 7, 2025.

Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann

any more?" The filling was a white, cottony material that came apart easily as it was fluffed.

One young worker expressed concern, "The leg is blocked off, but I think I can get my finger to push some of the stuffing in there." Koplen nodded her head with approval. Said Koplen, "This was all made possible because of a grant from the Janesville Area Foundation and the Pope Family Fund." While the head librarian was tending to a little girl having trouble with her red panda,

another child pointed at a little boy stuffing a beaver and asked, "Is your beaver trying to bite the table? And leave a big hole there?" To which the little boy responded assuredly, "It's not that kind of beaver."

Koplen went to her desk and soon returned with bags of little red cloth hearts and sheets of paper. She informed class members, "These hearts go inside of your animals before you close them up, think good thoughts when you do." After the hearts

were distributed, Koplen indicated the papers. "These are your animals' birth certificates." Children were allowed to write down the animal's name, and the date and time of its birth. Koplen added, "On the back, I want you to write a story of how your animals came to be here today, where they came from and how they ended up here." The room got quiet as all the kids began thinking about their animal's backstory. One by one, with looks of concentration on their faces, they began to write.

Keen Bank included in drop off locations

Keen Bank in Owatonna and Ellendale are drop off locations for school supplies for United Way of Steele County's Stuff The Bus K-12 School Supply Drive, now through August 10. All donations received will benefit the

four Steele County public school districts.

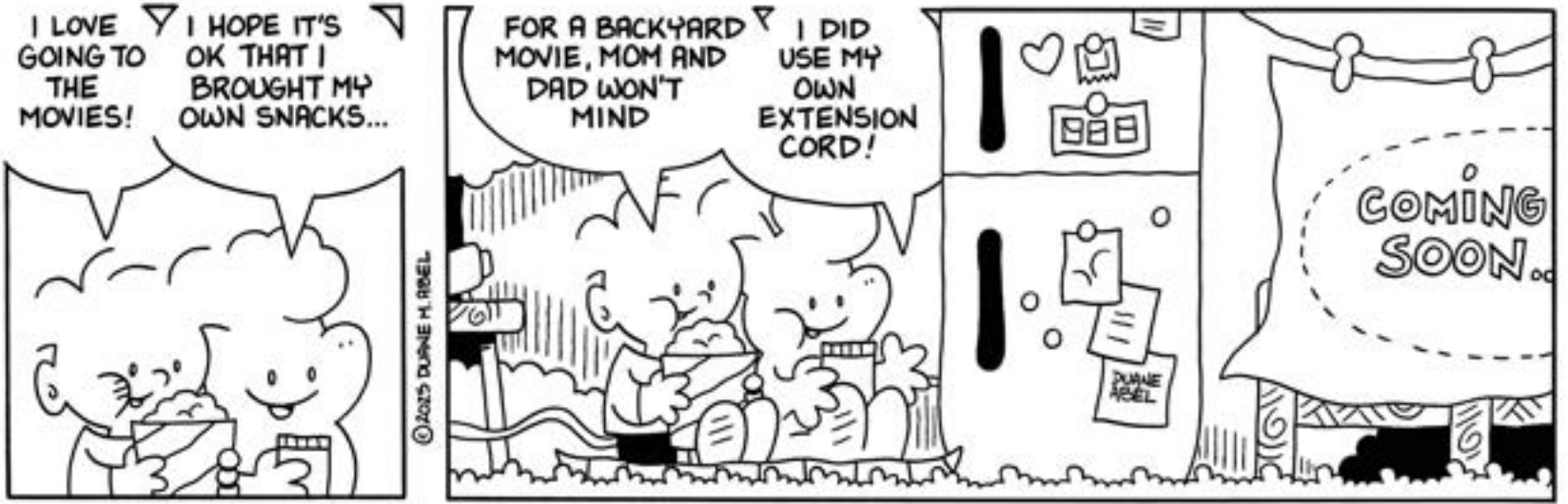
Suggested supplies include 3-ring binders (1"), backpacks, colored pencils, crayons, erasers, facial tissues, folders, glue sticks, highlighters, kids' scissors,

washable markers, notebooks, pencils, pencil boxes or bags, sanitizer wipes and watercolor paints.

Additional drop off locations include Blooming Prairie Public Library, First State Bank of Red

Wing – Medford, Target in Owatonna and United Way of Steele County. For more information visit www.unitedwaysteele-county.org/stuff-the-bus.

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SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH
111 4th St NW, Waseca
Father Glenn Ferichs
507-835-1222
Worship Sundays 10:00 a.m., Tues. and Wed. at 8:30 a.m. and Thurs. at 7 a.m.; Saturdays at 5 p.m.
* * *

REAL LIFE CHURCH
620 W Elm Ave, Waseca
* * *

507-607-8245
Sunday worship 10 a.m.
* * *

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS
1001 9th Ave SE, Waseca
507-835-4640
Sacrament meeting 10:00 a.m.
* * *

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
1221 8th St SE, Waseca
507-835-2213
Sunday worship 10:45 a.m.; 6:00 p.m.
* * *

CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY
900 14th Ave SE, Waseca
507-833-1082
Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m., Sun Evening 6:00 p.m., Wed. evening 6:30 p.m.
* * *

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
* * *

ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Otisco, Minnesota
Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor
Thursday - 6:30 p.m. Soup & Study
Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship
* * *

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
* * *

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
* * *

VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
* * *

Pastor Dan Kordahl
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
* * *

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
* * *

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.
* * *

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
* * *

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

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

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC
Waldorf, Minnesota
Father Brian Mulligan
Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship
* * *

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

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

12-18
* * *

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

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

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

ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH
307 W. 2nd St. Janesville
10 a.m. - Mass
* * *

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

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

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

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

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

Janesville

1925

- The Fourth of July celebrations throughout every section of the country Saturday will draw nearly everyone away from home. Out in Iosco town, at the Henry Seewald Grove, there will be a big affair to commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence, beginning at 10:30 in the morning. That there is a big time in store for all of us is evidenced by the excellent program arranged for the day. A ball game between Smiths Mill and Iosco will be a feature, considerable rivalry existing because of the close games played between the teams this year, particularly that of last Sunday when Smiths Mill was beaten by one score. Trap shooting will interest all the men who are devotees of the scattergun game. The married men will surely trim the single fellows in a kittenball game, though there is some possibility of an upset to this prediction.

- It was voted at the special meeting of the Janesville Shipping Association at the Town Hall Saturday evening to make every effort to inject fresh enthusiasm into the work by getting more solidly behind the cooperative movement and by making a real effort to secure new members. During the years that have passed since its organization, many members who were active in its support have retired from their farms, others have moved away and a few seem to have lost sight of the advantages. With the withdrawals and retirements, no attempt was made to enlist new men with the result that the association lost much of its vigor.

- The Standard Oil Company is building a station on the corner lot south of the E. E. Miller Co. store. This location is an excellent one, strategically situated so as to attract trade from No. 7 Highway and at the same time serve the needs of motorists of the village. John Peterson of Mankato is in charge of the building of the plant for the J. B. Nelson Constrution Co. of Mankato.

1950

- The Janesville Red Sox stretched their win streak to six games when they defeated Elysian 7 to 1 and trounced Waterville 28 to 3 on Sunday and Tuesday, respectively. The Janesville Red Sox winning honeymoon continued Sunday when the Red Sox added win number five to their consecutive win streak by downing Elysian 7 to 1. The Red Sox remained in a tie for second place in the fight for the South Le Sueur County League championship and gained a full game on Morristown, which lost its first game.

- Most of the Minnesota corn belt is now in a critical period of peak corn borer infestation. Egg mass counts have soared far above the average needed to make control measures pay, with reports in some fields going as high as 1,000 egg masses per 100 stalks. Young borers are now hatched in fields all over the state. "Shot hole" damage to corn leaves is becoming common. Cool weather has reduced moth activities somewhat, although huge flights are underway whenever a calm, warm night occurs.

- The Waseca County Chest X-Ray Survey, which was in Janesville last week from Monday through Thursday, completed x-rays for all but 249 people who either did not register or could not make their appointment. The figure was given out by Mrs. L. W. Scott, chairwoman. For Waseca County as a while, with the survey almost half over, some 1,399 people have not met their appointments or have not been registered for the free x-ray, according to Mrs. Gloria Bartelt, the county nurse.

1975

- No one leaves the farm home of Mrs. Severin Thissen (Grandma Thissen) without taking something with them. That's an unwritten law at Grandma Thissen's. When anyone stops in to visit, one of her daughters brings out lunch. When you get ready to leave, Grandma says, "What have we got to send with them?" That one sentence pretty much sums up Katy O'Leary Thissen, a 95-year old Irish lady who has become a legend in her own time.

- A St. Louis Park couple, Fred and Kelly McCann, are the new owners of Janesville Bowl. They assumed control of the business July 1, 1975 from Jack and Bert McGuiggan. The McCanns came to Janesville from St. Louis Park where Fred worked as a machinist. There are three children: Jennifer, 9; Gary, 7; and Colleen, 4. Mr. McCann is originally from Grantsburg, Wisconsin. His wife is a native of Hartsford, South Dakota. This is their first business venture. The family has purchased a home at 408 N. Main.

- Two northeast Iowa high school students and a ham operator from Carlisle, Iowa, drove to Janesville this past weekend to help the Janesville Radio Club compete in the annual Field Day. Brian Thompson, Wadena, Iowa, and Monte Helms, Elgin, Iowa (both towns are in God's Country near Strawberry Point) drove to Janesville in time to help set up Saturday at Sportsmen's Park. Mitch Schultz, a member of the Janesville Radio Club, speaks almost daily to the two Iowa boys on ham radio. Both Iowans attend Valley Community High School in northeast Iowa.

2000

- Fabian Villagra is heading home. Since January, Villagra has been in the United States as an AFS student, for a short time in South Dakota, and most recently, in the home of David and Sidonia Balke outside of Janesville. "Here I am, a city boy, living in the country," said Villagra. "The only thing I really don't like about it is the mosquitoes." Home for Villagra is the capital city of Paraguay, Asunción, a city of 500,000 people. His father works for the government, and as Villagra tactfully puts it, his mother works at home. He has four younger sisters.

- Father's Day was a little more exciting this year for Janesville resident, John Schmidt, and his wife, LaJune. It was the day his daughter-in-law gave birth to quadruplets. Melina Jo, Austin Hjelmner, Christian Robert, and Izik Arthur were born within three minutes of each other in a delivery room in Fargo, North Dakota. The delivery room was filled with 23 people, including the parents, Joe and Erika Schmidt. "It was absolutely amazing," said Joe. "The organization that went into delivering our babies was very impressive."

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• news@wasecacountypioneer.com
• Call (507) 837-6767
• Stop in person 111 West Elm Ave.

Waseca

25 years ago

- Ballot boxes for the "Civic Celebrities" of New Richland were collected from local businesses last week. Those receiving the most ballots for their contributions to the community were Bernie Anderson, Margaret Engesser and Pat Luna. There were 31 people nominated for the contest. The ten next most named were: Dale Halgren, Phil Lewison, Gary Billing, Vince Peterson, Elmer and Marilyn Quiram, Ruth Fischer, Anita Staloch, Janice Wear, Lee Mendenhall, Paul Stennes and Beth Wesselhoeft.

- Letters to the Editor, Senator Rod Grams says the "Freedom to Farm" is working. How can it with corn at \$1.74 and beans at \$4.74. If these prices would have gone up like everything else has gone up they should be corn at \$5.00 and Beans at \$10.00. The best way to get the prices back is to go back to the R.C.P. Program and leave acres lay.



- Opening a consignment store has been something Linda Wagner has wanted to do for quite some time. This year in May she opened the Country Corral in New Richland on Highway #13 south of Highway #30. Items from 30 consignors keep the store stocked with crafts, clothing and other interesting items.

50 years ago

- Empty Cities explore the jungle covered remains of cities with such exotic names as Chichen Itza, Tikal, Macchu Picchu and Uxmal. Photographed in the beautiful tropics of Southern Mexico, Guatemala and Peruvian Andes, Empty Cities examines the amazing achievements of the Mayan and Incan cultures in such areas as medicine, mathematics, engineering, architecture and astronomy. Observing the present day descendants of the accomplished civilizations we ask the question...can they be accurately referred to as "primitives"--untouched by the progress of civilization all around them?

- Lost: Coin purse, some change, valuable John F. Kennedy silver dollar, Benjamin Franklin silver dollar and County Sheriff's badge, no. 42; at Vivian's Cafe, Harland. \$5 reward. See Alfred B. Anderson in Harland

- A number of area students graduated recently from the University of Minnesota: Those graduating from Waseca were Sister Michael Byron, Ph.D. in Education; Bradley D. Kohnert, BA College of Liberal Arts; Carol A. Collings, with high distinction in Education; Daniel E. Driessen, MBA, Graduate school; Allen C. Oberg, Master of Social Work; James R. Gutfleisch, BS Biological Sciences; Michael D. Frazier, BA, College of Liberal Arts; and Steven G. Dietrich, BS. School of Dentistry.

- Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Pederson returned from an 18-day trip to Spokane, Wash. Where they visited Mr. and Mrs. Jim Bren and boys, (Janet), Virgil, also spent three days with the Brens. While they were there, they visited the Expo '74, for two days which was interesting



- A 60 foot by 70 foot fire hall containing not only room for the Waldorf Volunteer fire department's trucks, but also a meeting room, restrooms and kitchen will be erected on the lot in Waldorf, where the old village liquor store building is being dismantled, soon. A call for bids appears in this issue of the Star. Residents of the village voted 74 for the issuance of \$45,000 bonds and 16 were against at the special election, Monday.

75 Years ago

- Many Telephone Poles Necessarily Moved: Street improvements have made it necessary to move many of the poles of the Northwestern Bell long distance lines in the village. A force of linemen spent three days here the early part of the week making the changes. A power driven auger was used, greatly speeding up the work.

- Mr. and Mrs. Paul Collin, residents of the Waldorf Community since 1923, were here Tuesday forenoon when Paul had occasion to renew his subscription to The Star for another year. He thinks it's a fine thing for a local paper to stop when the time is out and he congratulated The Star on the method it uses of handling subscriptions, not attempting to force the paper on anyone. We haven't lost subscribers by it either, Paul, having the satisfaction of knowing that people take the paper because they really want it.

- Fifty-nine boys and girl attended the swimming program at St. Olaf lake last Tuesday. This is an increase of 15 over last week and there are still more coming in the future. The bus leaves the city park at 1:45 p.m and returns between 4:30 and 5:00 o'clock. Unless more interest is shown in the daily playground program, it will be dropped completely. To date, very few children have taken advantage of the program. The hours are 9:00 in the morning and 1:00 in the afternoon.

100 years ago

- Wanted Salesman: Ten men between twenty and forty years of age, with experience selling farmers preferred but not absolutely necessary. To sell a proposition in the country for old St. Paul Concern. Must own your own car or be able to secure one. See H. S. Peterson at New Richland on Saturday evenings or Sundays.

- Account 4th of July celebration at New Prague, Montgomery, Waseca and Albert Lea, the M. & St. L. Ry. will operate a Special Train for Minneapolis and St. Paul on July 4th, leaving Albert Lea at 9:45 p.m. Waseca 10:46 p.m., Montgomery 11:45 p.m. and New Prague at midnight. Regular passenger trains will run as usual and with the addition of the special will give excellent service to and from points where celebrations are to be held. Rate of fare and one-half for the round trip will be made between all stations. For full particulars ask the M. & St. L. Agent, S. E. Saffell.

New Richland

25 years back



- The 2000 Roger J. Wolfe Achievement Award was presented to Harold Ackman, Waseca, at MVAC's 34th annual meeting on June 19. Seated next to Harold is his wife Bonnie. Standing behind the couple are their daughters, Caryn Wendt (left) and Kathy Tichnar.

- Last week, the children attending Vacation Bible School at First Lutheran Church, Waldorf, studied some of the animal families God made in Australia, as well as learning how important it is that God made them part of his family through faith in Jesus. At the closing picnic on Friday, June 23, the children actually got to meet some of the Australian animals they've been studying: sugar gliders. Sugar gliders resemble flying squirrels but are more closely related to possums.



- Great great grandma Mary Wenzel is holding her great great grandson, Braden Routh in this family picture of five generations. At the left is Suzy Routh, grandma, and Mardell Robinson, great grandma, while Bradens father Travis Routh is pictured at the right.

50 years back



- New Richland-Hartland High School Band members are pictured here with their paraphernalia as they loaded the buses for their trip to Quadna Mountain near Hill City. They will spend a week of intensive music study at the camp with expert help from Lowell Schwalbe, local band instructor; Jon Degner, Freeborn High School band director; Debbie Degner, band director at Wells High School; Becky Smith, student at the University of Minnesota and Clinician Dave Kallman, Austin Public School band director.

- Mr. and Mrs. Marlin Schroader and family entertained at dinner and lunch in honor of his mothers, Mrs. Ida Schroader, 75th birthday, Sunday, at their home. Her children and their families who attended were Mr. and Mrs. Larry Hassel and dawn of Minneapolis, Gene Schroader of Kiester, Mr. and Mrs. Vernell Meyer of New Richland, Mr. and Mrs. Garry Walk, Stevie and Mickey and Mrs. Marilyn Moe and Debbie, both of Albert Lea.

- Engagement Announcement. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Billar of Waseca announce the engagement of their daughter, Jackie to Bruce Bakken, son of Mr. and Mrs. Junior Bakken of Hartland. Mill Billar is currently employed at St. Olaf Hospital in Austin. Her Fiance will be attending Albert Lea Vocational School in the fall. The wedding has been set for November 15.



75 years back

- The gravel batching plant which has been in the process of erection for a couple of weeks by Leo Eckart was completed last week and the concrete firm is now in full operation. Leo has been operating his company under handicap for a few weeks and is glad to be in full swing now as he has several important jobs coming up. The Eckart Concrete Service has a job of pouring the cement for the foundation in Lampert Yards new warehouse which will require over 18 hours of steady pouring to complete as soon as workmen get the forms lined up.

- The infant daughter of Dr. and Mrs. A. G. Flor was baptized Judith Ann, at the All Saints church service Sunday morning. Mr. and Mrs. Wm J. Cooper of Rochester were sponsors and with their family and Mrs. Albert D. Flor of New Ulm were dinner guests at the Flor home.



TO THE RESCUE - Janesville and other safety agencies responded to calls on the County Road 3 bridge over Hwy 14.

Overpass shuts down, life saved

JANESVILLE JOURNAL
On Monday, June 14, at approximately 2:15 p.m., the Janesville Police Department, along with several other public safety agencies, responded to two calls from someone who noticed a male standing on the County Road 3 bridge going over U.S. Highway 14. Both callers were concerned about the man’s safety; one stated he was looking at the sky, and the other claimed the man was “straddling the bridge.” A few minutes after the initial calls, Waseca County Sheriff deputies arrived and began shutting down traffic going eastbound. About an hour into the incident, Westbound traffic was also diverted. Throughout the incident, several agencies became involved, including the Janesville Police Department and the Minnesota State Patrol. North Memorial EMS and a Crisis team from Owatonna were also on the scene. According to timestamps from

the South Central Minnesota Public Safety Incidents, the crews on the scene were trying to determine how the male had reached the bridge, as there was no vehicle in the immediate vicinity. The apparent event that triggered the man to consider jumping off the bridge was a fallout with a close friend. Shortly after the Crisis team arrived at 3:09 p.m., the male’s family was contacted from Mankato. That seemed to do the trick, as things de-escalated soon after. According to a press release from the Waseca County Sheriff’s Office, the situation was safely resolved at about 3:55 p.m. with the male in custody and safe. Other units that responded to the call were the Minnesota DNR, MnDOT, and the Waseca County Highway Department. Unfortunately, we were unable to get the name of this individual, but we are happy to report that he is safe and sound.

‘Ask a Trooper’: kids and airbags

By SGT. TROY CHRISTIANSON OF THE MINNESOTA STATE PATROL
Question: Can you write about airbags? I know you just wrote an article about it being best for kids to ride in the back seat. I know airbags are an issue for kids in the front seat so I thought this would be a good topic. Thank you.
Answer: An airbag is a supplemental restraint system. Airbags work with seat belts to prevent injuries but are not designed to keep occupants from being ejected. For safety reasons, children under age 13 must ride in the back seat if it is available.
Airbag safety suggestions
♦ Try to keep at least 10 inches between yourself and the steering wheel. Keep your hands at the 8 and 4 o’clock or 9 and 3 o’clock positions on the steering wheel. Avoid the 10 and 2 o’clock position.
♦ Keep your thumbs turned

out on the steering wheel.
♦ Move front passenger seats as far back as possible. Read your operator’s manual before driving or riding in a vehicle with airbags.
♦ For more information about seat belts, airbags and car safety seats, visit the Department of Public Safety’s Office of Traffic Safety at ots.dps.mn.gov.
♦ You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.
If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson – Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901- 5848. (Or reach him at, Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

Weber-St. John holds concert at Waldorf’s First Lutheran Church

JANESVILLE JOURNAL
As Martin Luther once said, “Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise.” Faith and music have lived in harmony for centuries. And on Sunday, June 29, the duo of Weber/St. John hosted an evening concert that brought both together in a concert called “Harmony in Faith: A Lutheran Hymn Experience” at First Lutheran Church in Waldorf. The duo of Kurt Weber, piano, and Ash St. John, violin, came together to form a harmony of their own during Covid-19. Weber had an affinity for arranging hymns, mainly for piano and piano-violin duets. He explained that around 2019, he had worked with another musician who played violin before an injury prevented him from playing piano. Weber recovered during the Covid pandemic. However, after things didn’t work out with the violinist he had previously worked with, a Craigslist ad brought Weber and St. John together. The two are from the northern Twin Cities area, with St. John residing in the Hugo area and Weber in White Bear Lake. Together, they perform at several churches and senior homes, the latter of which they do

two to three times a week. Sometimes, we get reminders that it’s a small world out there. Reverend Larry Sipe, pastor at First Lutheran Church, shared a memory from four years ago about the first time he met Weber’s father when he was in university at Missouri studying theology. “We both attended the university Lutheran chapel, where a former pastor here is now a current pastor there,” Sipe explained. “Pastor David Kind, who served here a couple of years after graduating, who was a classmate of mine, is now at that chapel where Kurt’s dad and I met each other. That was a neat connection we didn’t know we had when they called to do a concert here until... about an hour ago.” An hour before the concert, the church hosted an ice cream social for those who wanted a nice dessert and conversation with fellow church members and other guests. The concert itself, which started at 7 p.m., featured an 11-hymn setlist split into five categories: three dubbed “Hymns That I Love” (their favorites), one labeled “A Christmas Journey” (a hymn usually played at Advent), one that will be featured in an Upcoming



HARMONY IN FAITH - Kurt Weber plays the piano as part of the duo with Ash St. John, who plays the violin, at Sunday’s concert at First Lutheran Church in Waldorf.

Music Project, two that they performed straight from the choral praise books at the church, and the rest from “Hymns for You,” a music book containing hymns arranged by Weber for piano and violin. Examples include the two hymn sing-alongs, the classics “Jesus Loves Me” and “Holy Holy Holy.” The former was the one that would be featured in the duo’s upcoming music project. The two closed the concert with “My Song

is Love Unknown.” It was a great concert for the about 50 in attendance to witness. Both musicians played their hearts out, Weber occasionally putting a hand over his heart and getting into the music, while St. John put as much expression into his lines on violin as he could. It was a great reminder of that fantastic Martin Luther quote, “Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise.”



BAD LUCK STRIKES - Pictured above (left) is the Public Works building after being struck in Eagle Lake. Pictured right is the Hillcrest Rehabilitation Center after 72 year old, Alice Laukkonen, ran into on County Road 33. Photos by the Janesville Journal

Two accidents, two buildings struck in same day

JANESVILLE JOURNAL
Thursday, June 26, was a day when some office workers in Blue Earth County had to stay on their toes. There were two separate reports of accidents involving vehicles crashing into buildings. The first came at 3:39 p.m. in Eagle Lake when Blue Earth County Sheriff deputies responded to a call at the Eagle Lake Public Works building on 90 Le Ray Avenue, claiming a vehicle had crashed into the southeast side of the building. According to the investigation conducted by the Sheriff’s office, Eagle Lake resident Nicole Marie Neubert, 28, attempted to park her 2006 Chevrolet Trailblazer on North Agency Street facing the Public Works building. The press

release stated that she panicked as the car began moving forward. Although she meant to hit her brakes, she instead hit the accelerator. Thankfully, Neubert sustained no injuries, and since the part of the building that was crashed into was unoccupied, no harm was done to any public works employees. After investigating, the Sheriff deputies concluded that Neubert wasn’t impaired and that the crash was purely accidental. Later in the evening, at 7:23 p.m., first responders were dispatched to the Hillcrest Rehabilitation Center on 714 South Bend Avenue in South Bend Township west of Mankato for another report of a crash into the building. 72-year-old Alice Lenora Laukkonen of rural

Mankato drove her 2023 Volkswagen Jetta northbound on County Road 33 when the vehicle swerved off the road and struck the west side of the building. This time, there were some minor injuries. One resident of Hillcrest was transported to the Mayo Clinic Health System hospital in Mankato for treatment. Laukkonen also sustained minor injuries in the crash and was transported to MCHS. Shortly after, though, she was processed and arrested for DWI. As of Friday, June 27, charges were still

pending, as investigators are awaiting the results of a chemical test. While one resident sustained injuries, all of them were able to remain at Hillcrest for the night after a relocation throughout the building. Additional agencies responding to this incident were the South Bend Fire Department, the Mankato Police and Fire, and the Mayo Ambulance. As of June 27, the Sheriff’s Office remains in contact with Hillcrest Management to offer any additional assistance that may be needed.



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Thursday: July 17: 8 AM - 5 PM
Friday: July 18: 8 AM - 5 PM
Saturday: July 19: 8 AM - 1 PM

- Antiques
- Furniture
- Dishes, silverware, glasses
- Kitchen items including utensils, cooking pots, and baking dishes
- Lots of miscellaneous items

CASH or VENMO ONLY

Make colorful mosaics at Janesville, New Richland and Waseca Public Libraries July 15, 16

Learn how to make a stained glass mosaic from artist Laura Ruprecht. Register at the library or at wasecalesueurlibraries.com/getregistered. On Tuesday, July 15 at 2 p.m. at the Janesville Public Library. On Wednesday, July 16 at 10 a.m. at the New Richland Public Library. Also on Wednesday, July 16 at 2 p.m. at Waseca Public Library. Geared for ages 10-14.

Spy School at the Waseca Public Library on Thursday, July 17

Do you have what it takes to be a spy? Based on the Stuart Gibbs book series, kids will test their spy abilities through a series of puzzles and obstacles at our Spy School at the Waseca Public Library at 10 a.m., Thursday, July 17. Geared for ages 7-12.

Emoji Painting at the Janesville Public Library Thursday, July 17

Paint your emotions into this simple and expressive piece of art at the Janesville Public Library at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, July 17. Geared for ages 8-12.

Polymer Clay Food Cuties at Waseca Public Library Thursday, July 17

Guileless Green will guide teens on how to make a clay creation of a food cutie at the Waseca Public Library at 1 p.m. Thursday, July 17. This event is free and geared for ages 13-18. Register at the library or at wasecalesueurlibraries.com/getregistered.

Virtual Author Event: Marie Lu at Waseca-Le Sueur Library System Thursday, July 17

Explore the intricate world of Legend with author Marie Lu as she encourages readers to look beyond the surface and reveal hidden secrets at a virtual Waseca-LeSueur Regional Library System event at 3 pm on Thursday, July 17. Explore the depths of deceit, battle for power, and the lengths characters will go to unmask the Truth.

New Richland Farm and City Days July 18 to 20

The New Richland community will celebrate Farm and City Days from July 18 to 20. Highlights include a parade at 5 p.m. on July 19, followed by a street dance featuring Azby from 8 to 12 p.m. Also featured will be a medallion hunt, craft and vendor show, Kid Zone in the city park, and more. See website for information: farmandcitydays.com

Ice Cream Social at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Otisco Sunday, July 20

There will be an Ice Cream Social at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Otisco beginning at 4 p.m. Sunday, July 20. Sandwiches, calico beans, potato salad, pie, coffee, ice cream and lemonade. Suggested donation \$12.

Mal Murphy performing at Indian Island Winery Sunday, July 20

Musician Mal Murphy will be performing at the Indian Island Winery from 1-3:30 p.m. Sunday, July 20. Performing folk, alternative and country covers and originals.

Retirement Party for Cheri Brummond July 25, 2025

A retirement party for Cheri Brummond, administrative assistant at the Waseca Soil and Water Conservation District, will be from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on July 25 in the East Annex Conference Room across from the county licensing office at 300 North State Street in Waseca. Refreshments provided.

Waseca Lakefest



From left: Franky, Jenny, Elisa, Izzy, Aiden, Kaitlen and Arianna were all helping to sell lemonade for the first time at Waseca's Lakefest



Los Tequileros

Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann



Emily and Lydia Rux



Tameron and Braxton



Finnley, Amber and Rob



Jemma and Elsie



Kacie and Jeff Kuchenbecker of Kuchenbecker Mini Donuts



Dilly Rodney was manning the food stand, "Authentic Jerk Chicken"

Kite Festival



KITES GALORE - Despite little wind, families were able to enjoy the Kite Festival at Farmamerica on Sunday, July 6, with kites of their own, food and drinks and the large kites and American flag. Pioneer photos by Amelia Roessler