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People’s Choice award goes to...

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher

For the fourth year in a row, the Waseca Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Business and Industry Celebration at the Mill in Waseca, on Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023. Five awards were given out to Waseca Businesses. They were:

People’s Choice, voted on by chamber members.

This year’s people’s choice went to Team Academy which celebrated its 20th anniversary this fall.

The Young Entrepreneur title recognizes a business professional under 40. This year’s award went to Sam Steffel from Dennis Steffel Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service.

The “Social Media Rising Star” Award is given to a business which “knocks it out of the park,” a business known for being up and coming. This year’s rising star award went to a brand new business in town, Small Town

Chamber continued on 5



By the Way gas station robbed

Two Chicago men, Kiwand Keuonte Brown, 25, and Jaylan Whitley, 22, were charged Monday in Waseca County Court with entering the By the Way gas station the evening of Nov. 11, threatening one female and two male employees with firearms and ordering them to the ground. The two reportedly took slightly less than \$350 from the store till, went through the pockets of the employees, and stole the woman’s purse, which held between \$100 and \$200 in cash. A wallet and a phone were also taken.

Witnesses reported seeing two men flee the station, enter a white sedan and drive east-bound on old Highway 14; based on that information, the car was located and stopped in Steele County. Although the two men wore masks during the robbery, the complaint states they could be identified by their clothing, which was visible on surveillance video.

The police report regarding the incident says a BB gun was located in the vehicle, as were the stolen wallet and cell phone; the woman’s purse was found along the roadway between Waseca and Owatonna.



Blast raises \$55,000

Evening auction caps off successful day

Bidding wars provide excitement

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

A one-hour sightseeing flight over the Waseca area. A diamond and sapphire bracelet, a “Bluejay Sports Fan” reserved parking spot, Superintendent Eric Hudspith as a teacher’s substitute for a day. The items for sale at the November 18 Bluejay Blast social event were a source of entertainment for their variety, but became doubly interesting as various members of the crowd entered into bidding wars over specific items. The evening “adults only” gathering at the Starfire Event Center was the culmination to a day of activities which raised more than \$55,000 to be shared among Waseca Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) based at each school site.

About 200 people were in the crowd which bid on 70 or so items offered on the evening’s live auction. An elite ticket package which included food and drinks at a Minnesota Wild game, donated by TraLo, sold for \$1,700. A “favorite things” brunch to be served next spring by a group of Waseca ladies sold for \$1,350. A Ruger Wrangler .22 caliber pistol with custom engraving donated by Prepared Sportsman Jason Lynch sold for \$925.

The day began with a capacity crowd at the Waseca Intermediate School, where “Chris Cakes” and other breakfast items were served in the cafeteria on an all-you-care-to-eat basis.

In the gym, a silent auction offered a variety of items alongside “cupcakes for cash,” carnival games, bingo, face painting, hair styling, and cotton candy. Children were able to buy punch cards which allowed them to choose among their favorites. About 30 volunteers joined the 25 or so Bluejay Blast committee members who operated



Saturday’s many activities. Roughly 400 people attended the morning events.

According to fourth-grade teacher Laura DeWees who, along with Melanie Teders and Julie Brass, served as the planning committee for the annual Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) fundraiser, the day’s events raised more than \$55,000—with a few donations still coming in. The live auction in the evening brought in more than \$24,000; income from the silent auction came close to \$8,000.

The Waseca PTO organization has four committees: Hartley, Intermediate School, Junior/Senior High School and District. Each will receive a share of the money and will begin making independent decisions in January about how their funds will be used. According to DeWees, items purchased in

the past include specialized “flexible” seating for specific classrooms, providing funding to bring special events or speakers into the schools, school-wide learning incentives for students, and support for organizations or activities.

DeWees comments, “The committee would like to thank all of our sponsors, volunteers, donors, and anyone who attended the events. This fundraiser not only brings in money to use in the schools, but also brings the community together. It was so great to see all of the families, staff, and community members come together with one common goal. This fundraiser would not be possible without all of them. If anyone has suggestions for future years or would like to be on the committee, you can email wasecabluejayblast@gmail.com.”

WASECA SCHOOL BOARD

Facility questions still need answers

By MELISSA DUNN
Staff Writer

During the November 16 meeting of the Waseca School Board, Superintendent Eric Hudspith told board members that, as there is no consensus right now regarding the facilities updates, the board’s next step is to discuss the direction they wish district administration to proceed. “We have a handful of options; we have the K-6 option (adding on to the intermediate school), we have the smaller bond option of repairing some things and getting us several years down the road with our current buildings. And then we have something we haven’t thought of yet.”

Hudspith said at the next work session he will be asking board members to think about what they want the administration to discuss. “We don’t really have the option to do nothing unless we take some other actions financially and planning-wise.” Hudspith said the building and grounds director will deliver a list of priority repairs needed at the Hartley and WIS buildings for board members to discuss during the December meeting.

As the November 16 Waseca school board meeting began, board clerk Dave Dunn reviewed claims for October and recommended action of payment for Accounts Payable: \$1,472,204.99, October dental: \$15,395.01 and Payroll: \$822,747.77. The October 26 meeting minutes and employment and contract agenda were approved.

Community Education Director Paul DeMorett provided a synopsis of the program and its components. The Family Education Center (FEC) includes preschool and early childhood family education, the School Age Care (SAC) program, numerous enrichment and recreation classes, adult basic education, and Opening Opportunities, a program serving adults with disabilities. The Community Ed office also oversees reserving and renting out the district’s facilities when they are not being used by students or staff. DeMorett said the preschool program currently includes seven sections of five- and six-year-olds. The FEC also performs early childhood

*A word from
The Word*

Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.

Proverbs 4:25-27



Salvation Army bell ringers

Safety departments enter fundraising challenge

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

The Waseca County chapter of the Salvation Army has challenged the Waseca Police Department, the Waseca Fire Department and the Waseca County Sheriff’s Department to raise funds by ringing the bell outside the Waseca Walmart during daytime hours on Saturday, Dec. 2.

This is the second year of the challenge: last year’s champions were the members of the police department, whose efforts raised just under \$2,000. Their victory is declared on a traveling plaque which the other two safety agencies will try to win from them on December 2.

During last year’s challenge, fire department members dressed in their field wear, complete with reflective yellow stripes. In addition to attracting attention, says fire chief Jason Forshee, the uniforms helped keep the firefighters warm, since the day turned out to be spectacularly cold.

Bell continued on 11



Compostings

by Al Batt
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What did one duck say to the other?

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

I answered the phone. The caller sneezed and hung up. Do you know who it was? It was a cold call.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. The guy didn't talk to me at all on the flight from Seattle to Juneau until we landed, when he asked if he could catch a ride to his hotel. I told him I was riding Shank's pony (walking). I'm not sure he knew what that meant, but he said not another word and I journeyed from Juneau to Haines via a ferry. Things were happening in Haines, Alaska.

THE WILLOWS WERE GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE

A yearling bull moose named Duck Moses escaped from the Kroschel Wildlife Center near Mosquito Lake north of Haines days before the moose hunting season began. Bad timing. The 60-acre Center is home to wolves, wolverines, bears, snowy owls, otters, porcupines, lynx and caribou. The fate of the docile moose remains unknown.

THE BREAKFAST RUSH

I was at the Mountain Market looking over the food offerings in a cleverly arranged display case when a young woman came up from behind and grabbed me lovingly and said those sweet words every man longs to hear, "Babe, I worry about cross-contamination with those two foods together like that."

I've been married a long time, so I responded with an oft-used reply, "Whatever you think, dear."

Hearing my voice, which wasn't that of her fiancée, caused her to drop me like a hot potato.

Dragging Main in Haines

I rode around with a fellow named Steve, a reverse snowbird who moved from southern Florida to Alaska. He came to Alaska as did Joel Fleischman in the TV show "Northern Exposure." Steve is a chiropractor. After riding around with him, I felt great, but I need to see him for adjustments every week for a few months.

BEARS TYPICALLY WEAR CROCS

An angler told me he'd been recreating at Chilkoot Lake State Recreation Site. He'd taken his boots off and put on waders. He looked up from his fishing to see a brown bear carrying the boots away. He pursued the bear into the forest before realizing no boots were worth that much.

I'VE LEARNED

Those who are happy with what they packed for a trip that involved

flying are a fortunate few.

None of the 10 Commandments say anything about what our neighbors should be doing.

Take a gourd and divide its circumference by its diameter. That's my recipe for pumpkin pi.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

What did one duck say to another when they flew under the bridge? Duck!

How many electricians does it take to screw in a light bulb? Just one. They're good at those sorts of things.

SCUBA is an acronym that stands for "Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus." TUBA is an acronym for "Terrible Underwater Breathing Apparatus."

Jokes about sausage are the worst.

If you put memory foam insoles into your shoes, you'll always remember why you've walked into a room.

BE GRATEFUL FOR THOSE YOU'VE KNOWN

In December 2020 Haines residents Jenae Larson and David Simmons lost their lives in a devastating landslide. I didn't know Jenae (a kindergarten teacher) and knew David only slightly, but I felt the loss of both. David was 30 years old. I stood on an unmarked observation deck erected in his memory and looked out at what he might have seen from his window.

NATURE NOTES

Predicting the movements of snowy owls is difficult due to limited information on prey availability and nest success at their remote breeding sites in the Arctic. Some snowy owls migrate south every winter. Every three to five years, a spike in the population of lemmings, their chief food source, results in a larger number of surviving owl chicks. Adult owls chase young owls from their territory. The owls aren't coming south because they're hungry. Peaks in lemming numbers cause a boom in snowy owls. Large numbers of owls force the lemming population down. With fewer lemmings around the next year, snowy owl numbers fall. Fewer owls mean lemming numbers rise and the cycle repeats.

Squirrels are good at locating buried foods. They use a combination of landmarks, cues, memory and a sense of smell to narrow their search.

The term jayhawk combines two birds: the blue jay, noisy and quarrelsome, and the sparrowhawk, a stealthy hunter, according to the University of Kansas.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive."—Marcus Aurelius. Be kind. Happy Thanksgiving.

No way to count all the blessings

It's Thanksgiving week, and so I ask myself what I have to say about the topic of being thankful.

I think back to a high school writing class I taught for a decade or more. It was titled "Extreme Nonfiction." The idea behind the class was a response to student claims that "We could write a good paper if you'd just give us a good topic."

In the class, we would spend two to three weeks reading nonfiction works about an "extreme" topic, then students were assigned a paper.

In honor of Labor Day, the first topic was "labor."

Early in the course, I would spend two days providing a summary of how human "civilization" evolved. Based on authoritative sources, I told students that we humans survived as hunters and gatherers for many centuries before we developed the practice of farming, at which point we could begin to build stable communities and begin trading with one another to meet our needs.

I brought in a (small) piece of raw wool and discussed what it took to acquire wool like that and make it into clothing. There was raising, feeding and protecting the sheep.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

There was shearing the sheep using a metal tool which had to be fabricated by a specialist. There was washing the wool, combing the wool, spinning it into yarn and then weaving it on a loom, then finally shaping it into something that could be worn. With all of that labor taken into account, we reached the conclusion that a single, simple tunic cost in time and labor what might equate to thousands of dollars in modern society.

Thinking about the humans who lived before us, we members of modern technological society have no business being anything but euphoric about the ease and comfort with which we live, About the reliability of our food delivery systems. About the safety and good health we are privileged to enjoy.

As I think of gratitude, though, I also think of the magnificent people I have gotten to know thanks to my job as a reporter. I think of Helen Foster, whom I interviewed a couple of days before she turned 102. I think of Sandy Daniel who celebrated the fortieth anniversary of receiving a kidney transplant and expressed her gratitude for the renewed life and opportunities it gave her. I think of the Honor Guard, Waseca area veterans who "fall out" to the funerals of their military brothers no matter what the weather. I think of the SMART bus drivers who love their jobs because they are able to help others. I think of Chasity Marquette who has taken her kindness and goodwill to what might be called a professional level by learning to care for injured and orphaned animals. I think of the board

and employees of the Waseca Area food shelf, who were so excited about building a better facility that they went ahead and built it knowing they would need to be creative and determined to find a way to pay for the construction. I think of the planners and volunteers for the Blue-jay Blast who used their energy and creativity to find ways to raise money while also helping children build community. I think of the folks at the Waseca History Center who find ways to remind us that our present is built on the work and accomplishments of people in our past. I think of the Friends of the Library, who want to see the benefits of reading, communication, and community continue to benefit Wasecans for decades to come. I think of Patty Wetterling, who has found some level of peace after decades of anxiety. And the list could go on...

This Thanksgiving, I am grateful for you: the people whose efforts, goodwill, honesty, and sincerity make it a privilege to tell your stories. I will toast you all as I enjoy Thanksgiving dinner with my family.

Finally made it to the first scheduled break

Well, it's finally Thanksgiving break.

Two days of bliss is all we get off from school. For the lucky among us, some teachers canceled classes on Wednesday, allowing students to travel home. What I think is interesting is that this is the first break the University scheduled since we started school in the first week of September. Other schools get fall break, but we don't because school starts later, after Labor Day and after the state fair is done. It's okay though, most of us survive the treacherous stretch from September to the end of November, through midterms and projects and finals prep.

Lately, school hasn't been that difficult for me. My classes are fairly reasonable, with few or no homework assignments, and only final projects to work on. Working at the Minnesota Daily has been keeping



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

me busy lately though, with important stories and interviews to do and such. One of my stories had seven sources: We usually have about three sources for each story. But now we get a little break to relax for a couple of days, so that's exciting, I guess.

Thanksgiving, I believe, does not get the attention it deserves. Some people seem to transition straight from Halloween into Christmas, skipping right over Thanksgiving. But this is where all the good food is. Turkey, stuffing, my favorite Captain

Morgan sweet potatoes, green bean casserole. So much delicious food.

My family likes to run the turkey trot, a 5K, every Thanksgiving we can, which is unfortunate as I do not appreciate running as much as other people do. I just was not built for it and I don't have the mental patience to train myself to like it and go through the run. I once read, though, that some writers have picked up running as a distraction from writing. Like, writing is demanding, but running is demanding in another way.

By "torturing" themselves on the trail, they can go back and enjoy writing more. I thought it was funny.

Hopefully the 5K ends quickly and I can go home and relax knowing I did my exercise for the day. Then I can eat Captain Morgan sweet potatoes scooped up by delicious King Hawaiian buns. Mmmm. I wonder how different the traditions are among the many different households celebrating the holiday. Does it also differ in the midwest since we have a very family centered focus and also have casseroles? I don't know, but I'm quite satisfied with what I have, thank you very much.

My Determination: "I don't know half of you half as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve." — J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring

Three different celebrations

I successfully turned 26 years old on Friday.

To celebrate I had lunch with my mother and spent the evening with my friends.

One of my new friends learned it was my birthday Friday evening and insisted on baking me a cake. So on Sunday when I came to visit, she surprised me with a delightful, homemade chocolate cake. Her secret ingredient was adding a touch of espresso.

Sunday afternoon, however, was spent celebrating Thanksgiving. My great uncle Chuck Rosacker encouraged me to write about the conversations which were shared.

My brother Nathan has a new girlfriend, so we swapped horror stories from Nathan's previous relationships, along with his bad driving endeavors.

Nathan's new girlfriend has the same name as a previous one, so we had some fun giving them a hard time.

For the first time, my Uncle Chuck learned he was in the newspaper 50



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

years ago. My sister Jessica puts together the Looking Back/Archive sections for the paper and Chuck reads those every week. When he was sent overseas during his time in the service, there was a news blurb sharing the details. He never saw it because he was, well, overseas. The first thing he did on Sunday when he saw me was thank me for putting that in the paper. I gave credit to my sister, feeling grateful he reads the paper.

In my haste, I've glossed over Saturday night.

How could I forget the Bluejay Blast dinner?

The first three people I saw when I arrived assumed I was there working. I tell Deb, our editor, that not

every social gathering or event in Waseca which either of us attends needs to be work.

I was not working. I was there to enjoy good food, good company, and a lively auction.

For the second year in a row I joined Matt Petsinger at his table with Becky and company.

The food was divine. My only complaint was the music was loud. It was difficult to have conversations. Nonetheless, good conversation was also had.

Monday was spent writing. Tuesday was spent constructing the newspaper. And Wednesday, more of the same.

Dad and I planned to go to Perkins for our Thanksgiving on Thursday.

Oh, I should reflect on turning 26.

After working nearly every day for a year and a half, I was forced to slow down beginning in April of this year. Physical health problems required me to work less, and that was difficult. I learned something important because of it, though. I learned it's possible to delegate work or to say no to some requests; the lesson became clear when I simply could not do any more. The biggest thing I've learned this year is that my health is more important than a perfect newspaper (not that a perfect paper exists.) If I am not healthy, I can't put the paper together. I've started taking more time for myself, and now, more weeks than not, I do take an entire day off.

What I'm trying to say is you can always spend time working. But you can never get that time or your health back when it's gone.

Here's wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving!

"Time is what we want most, but what we use worst." - William Penn



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PHONE: 507-837-6767

email: news@wasecacountypioneer.com
Address: Office at 111 Elm Avenue West
Mail: PO Box 578, Waseca MN 56093

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ELI LUTGENS Publisher
JON LUCCA Ad Design
DEB BENTLY News Editor
JIM LUTGENS Sports Editor/Dad
AMELIA ROESSLER Editorial Assistant
TERESA ROSACKER Advertising Sales
JESSICA LUTGENS Staff Writer
MELISSA DUNN Staff Writer

Contributing writers/photographers: Dave Zika, Santiago Ramirez, Al Batt

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OBITUARIES

Ruth Thompson

Ruth Elaine (Schroeder) Thompson, age 72, of Elk Grove, CA, formerly of Waseca, passed away on Wednesday, November 15 at Kaiser Hospice in Sacramento, CA.

Born on June 7, 1951 in Waseca, she was the third daughter of Carl Arnold and LaVonne Joyce (Peterson) Schroeder. Shew grew up in Waseca, graduating with the class of 1970. While working in Austin, MN, she met and married Carlos Thompson. They moved to California and settled in the Sacramento area.

Ruth is survived by her sisters, Karen (Bill) Lechner of Waseca, Deanna (Mike) Ostlund of Lubbock, TX, and Joyce (Randy) Wendel of Bloomington, MN; by niece and nephews Brad Lechner, Jennifer Lechner Burt, and Carl Wendel. She was preceded in death by her husband, Carlos, and her parents. There will be a graveside service at a later date.



Ruth Thompson



LEGACY - Above, Vince Peterson and scenes from the display which was set up on his property near New Richland until 2015. Below: a scene from the Holiday Lights display at the Waseca County Fairgrounds.

Holiday lights shine on fairgrounds

The Waseca County Free Fair is again sponsoring its "Holiday Lights" celebration on Friday and Saturday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. The event will take place the next three weekends: Nov. 24 and 25, Dec. 1 and 2, and Dec. 8 and 9.

Anyone attending is invited to bring donations of food items to be distributed to area food shelves, or to give a free-will cash donation which will either be kept by the fair board for support of future holiday lights events, or passed on to food shelf organizations in Janesville, New Richland and Waseca as the individual specifies.

Entry into the event is at the far east end of the grounds, near what is the parking lot at fair time. Those who wish can park their cars at the end of the drive-through to walk to booths and gatherings.

Fair board members will be on the grounds serving hot cocoa all six evenings. The Waseca fire department will have a "cookies with Santa" event this Saturday, and possibly other evenings as well.

Various area businesses and organizations will also have booths.

Among the decorations and displays being set up on the fairgrounds are some made by area boy scouts and other volunteers. The fair board has been expanding its number of holiday decorations from the Vince Peterson collection,

and expects to have seven of his homemade pieces on display. Vince and Virginia Peterson were New Richland area farmers whose rural property became a Christmas-time drive-by destination as Vince crafted elaborate light-up pieces and set them out for display.

The pieces acquired by the fair board and being displayed for the first time on the fairgrounds this year are one which appears to have a deer jumping through a ring, a set of bells which appear to swing, and a giant group of Christmas trees.

"It's a really neat thing to do as a family," says fair board member Jennie Johnson of the drive- or walk-through event. "It's completely heartwarming to see the kids leaning out car windows, all excited about the things on display."

Johnson reveals that past Holiday Lights events have collected as many as eight banquet tables full of food donations and as much as \$1,000 in cash. "People are truly generous," she observes. "They often bring whole bags full of food for the sake of supporting the food shelves."

"This is a really good thing on many levels. Families get to enjoy the lights, the food shelves get donations, and everyone is reminded how much fun they can have at the fair."

"It's a great way to give back to the community."

Cherry Orchard

New director introduces new techniques



TAKING A BOW - The cast of the WHS fall production takes a bow after finishing the opening night performance. Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

Chekhov classic updated by Weber

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

An adaptation of Anton Chekhov's classic play "The Cherry Orchard" appeared on the Waseca High School Performing Arts Center stage the evenings of Thursday through Saturday, Nov. 16-18, and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19.

Junior Nathanael Andrs has been in every school-wide drama production since his freshman year. He observes that this production was distinctly different from all the others in a number of ways.

First, there were auditions, which took place the first week in September. "We stood in a circle and repeated lines at each other," Andrs recalls.

Then, instead of immediately beginning to practice scenes, the cast spent a couple of weeks in what can best be described as "acting class."

"We looked at ways we can express our characters," describes Andrs. "I liked it. We don't really have a drama class here at school. The class gave me a chance to better myself as an actor."

Another difference from what might be considered "typical" high school plays is the tone of Anton Chekhov's works. For one thing, Chekhov is known for distributing the action and the lines more evenly across his characters, showing the personalities of the servants almost as clearly as those of the wealthy landowners, leaving it to audience members to analyze who is wise or foolish, weak or strong.

"There are so many opposites in this play," observes Andrs. "A capitalist and an academic, servants and wealthy people."

Eden Eads, who had the lead role as the owner of the cherry orchard, says her character displayed many of those opposites. "On the surface, Linda is happy and bubbly," Eads describes. "But she's crumbling from the inside out, trying to hold herself together while her property is going up for sale."

The many sides of the character, Eads said, "made her fun and interesting to play. I really hope I showed those undertones—the things that were important but were not explicitly said."

Keira Landrum, who played Linda's adopted daughter, Evie, said she found many parallels between her own personality and her character's. It added a touch of fun, she commented, that her character persistently gave Andrs' "the stink eye."

"Nathanael and I are good friends," said Landrum. "It was fun to play out some of the ways we



UPDATED - Though the story line remained the same, Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard" was moved forward in time from the 1900s to 2003.

kid each other in real life here on the stage."

Landrum shared a sentiment also expressed by Eads and Andrs regarding opening night: "All things considered, tonight was amazing!"

She explained the production's practice schedule experienced numerous disruptions, including that many cast members took part in the indoor marching band concert for three evenings the week prior to opening night, the football team's trip to the state tournament, and illness among cast members.

"I'm proud of how far we've come," commented Landrum.

Eads expressed a similar sentiment: "We faced some difficulties," she said, "but we pulled it together very well."

Director Luke Weber felt the same. "There were a few hiccups here and there," he commented. "That doesn't change the fact that the kids were tremendous. They handled themselves very well."

Weber, who holds a degree in acting from Viterbo University in LaCrosse, moved to the Waseca area with his family in October of 2022. He had approached the community education department about possibly teaching an acting class when he learned the high school was looking for someone to direct its fall play.

Arrangements were made for him to take on the task already last spring. Weber says he spent the summer going through the classic Chekhov play, originally set in Russia in the early 1900s, finding ways to adapt it to more modern times.

As presented at Waseca High School, the action of the play was set in Minnesota in 2003. Weber had added references to coveted lakeshore property and a discussion about the repercussions artificial intelligence is likely to have for society. Many character names were changed to more fa-



Eden Eads and Jason Wadd.

miliar, English forms.

He concedes that his methods for auditions and assigning actors to roles may have been unfamiliar to students, but says he believes the surprises were pleasant and productive. His goal for this fall's production, he said, were similar to Chekhov's. "I hope people were moved in some fashion," he commented. "Perhaps they saw something of themselves in one of the characters. Maybe they enjoyed a laugh at some of the humorous elements."

In addition to their other observations, cast members expressed gratitude to the stage managers and technical crew. "We've barely ever been able to do a full run-through of the play," recalls Eads. "But still they got all their cues right on the first try."

Cast members for "The Cherry Orchard" were Nathanael Andrs, Brandon Basse, Eden Eads, Elliott Galle, Amber Hagen, Aiden Harrison, Eryn Harrison, Alexander Kotz, Kiera Landrum, Katelyn Robeck, Kylie Snow and Mason Wadd.

History Center holding Bootlegger's Ball Dec. 2

The Waseca County Historical Society invites area residents to step into the world of flappers and bootleggers at the Holiday Bootlegger's Ball at the Waseca County History Center at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, December 2. The event will feature live jazz from the high school jazz band; a dance troupe, Terrascyn dance, teaching moves from the roaring 20s; and a costume contest. Mocktails and Hors d'oeuvre will be provided.

The password to know at the speakeasy door (the Museum) is "Buttercup."

Anyone wishing to attend must register by November 29. Tickets are \$20 for non-members, free for members. Membership is \$30 and includes many future immersive events. Members still need to reserve a spot at the Ball to attend. Purchase tickets or membership at <https://www.historical.waseca.mn.us/>, at the

museum at 315 Second Ave. NE, Waseca, MN, or call (507) 835-7700.

Available to view from December 2 to January 26 is a museum display entitled, "The 20s - They Were the Cat's Meow," which will simulate a speakeasy right in our museum. Mannequins dressed in period clothing will be displayed dancing the night away. The 20s clothing is on loan from Vagabond Village in Mankato and from the Little Theatre of Owatonna's Coletta Collection. During the bootlegger's ball and throughout the exhibit, an immersive photo background will allow visitors to take vintage postcard style photos with their cell phones or cameras, to upload to their social media. Pose like a flapper, mobster, or bootlegger with props and lavish period furniture.



ROARING 20s - Joan Manthey and Amy Danielson of the Waseca County History Center with some items from the 1920s. Pioneer photo by Deb Bently



Jaydyn Gaul and Julie Nelson

Jaydyn Gaul recognized as ‘Outstanding New Marcher’

Jaydyn Gaul, daughter of Steve Gaul and Julie Nelson of Waseca received the recognition of "Outstanding New Marcher" with the University of Eau Claire Blue/Gold Marching Band (BMB). She was selected November 2 out of the group of 162 new marching band members by her fellow marching band students.

Jaydyn was formerly a member of our own Waseca Marching Jays, having graduated in 2023: She played both clarinet and trumpet for Waseca. She is currently playing clarinet with the UW Eau Claire Blue/Gold.

This award speaks highly of the Waseca band educational program as well Jaydyn’s efforts juggling college coursework, practises and performances; to be elected by her peers is an extreme honor.

The modern BMB was born in fall 2000 with a modest, 60-

member ensemble. It has since developed into a vibrant, 475-member collegiate marching band that tours extensively and performs on the world stage.

The year 2021 marked another restart for the BMB. After the enormous challenges presented by COVID-19 in 2020, BMB regrouped and took the field in 2021 with more than 400 members.

The Blue/Golds completed a full 2023 performance schedule that included home football games, exhibitions at Chippewa Falls, Youth in Music (Minneapolis) and Bands of America in St. Louis, Mo.

As programs continue to rebuild, BMB is excited at the prospects of an even bigger and better 2024. Every two years the band travels internationally; 2024 marks that upcoming trip. Jaydyn is excited to travel with the band.

School from Page 1

screenings required for kindergarten entrance, compiles census numbers for zero- to four-year olds, and holds four sections of parent child classes. FEC and SAC are both housed in the Central building.

DeMorett explained all programs in Community Ed are by registration only, so performance is measured by the number of offerings that have strong enrollments, as well as participant feedback. “We actually had a pretty good year last year,” he said. “Our youth rec programs were up slightly from the previous year, and we’re slowly increasing the number of opportunities.” DeMorett also told the board that, as part of the district’s focus area of parent engagement, his department is working to establish a baseline for that while also working to identify any subset of parents who are perhaps being missed.

In the strategic plan topic, Hudspeth highlighted the four areas of strategic priorities (learning for all,

community engagement, efficient and effective use of resources, and safe and welcoming environment) and some of the work that has been completed by committees in each of those areas. “At the end of the day, our job is teaching and learning, right? Everything else except for safety is second to teaching and learning. That’s our job,” Hudspeth said. “But you can see there’s a lot of work going on.”

Business Manager Matt Moline’s report included a chart showing significant reductions to the district’s expenditure budget this year, reporting that spending is on track with where the district has been in years past. Enrollment is also holding steady and trending a little higher than expected. The audit is nearly finished and will be forthcoming by the December meeting.

The board approved acceptance of received gifts and donations, the set rate for out-of-district non public transportation, the 2023-25 master agreement with clerical employees, and approved reviewed and revised policies. The board then moved to closed session to discuss negotiations and an employee hearing request.

National Honor Society

Three inducted during annual ceremony



NRHEG chapter of the National Honor Society members. Along with the three inductees, members of the New Richland chapter of the National Honor Society are Kia Buendorf, Payton Bunn, Julia Churchill, Keira Lenort, Addison Loken, McKenzie Mueller, Madison Murray, Evelyn Nydegger, Erin Peterson, Annabelle Petsinger, George Roessler, Tayler Schmidt, Hallie Schultz, Brenna Sommer and Isabel Stadheim.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

Dobberstein, Misgen, Sandry joined NHS Wednesday

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

The NRHEG chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) inducted juniors Alden Dobberstein, Sierra Misgen and Tayla Sandry during a ceremony held Wednesday, Nov. 15 in the high school gym. All three inductees expressed that they felt honored to be inducted.

Speaker for the event was Duey Ferber, sixth-grade teacher for the district.

The NHS lists four cornerstone personality traits for potential members: scholarship, leadership, service and character. Ferber focused on the word “leadership.”

He told those in attendance, “Being a leader is not about being the best, it is about making everyone else better.” He went on to say that the NHS members assembled on the stage were not “perfect.”

“I taught them all how to drive,” joked Ferber. “I assure you, they made mistakes.”

Ferber then went on to share a story of regret from his own childhood. He told of a classmate who was “an easy target” for bullies. He con-



New National Honor Society inductees, from left, Tayla Sandry, Alden Dobberstein, and Sierra Misgen.

Pioneer photo by Deb Bently

fessed, “I didn’t join in, but I did nothing to stop it.”

“I was 12 years old, and I was a coward.”

He went on to suggest that anyone in the room could be a leader. “Be the kind of person who stands up for the Penny Fishers of the world,” he suggested. “Be the kind of person who looks for solutions rather than complications.”

“Show leadership by shoveling an elderly neighbor’s driveway,” he offered, then went on to give his own address. “Be the kind of leader who understands pressure is a privilege; it means some-

thing is expected of you.

“And always,” Ferber finished, “choose kindness.”

Along with the three inductees, members of the New Richland chapter of the National Honor Society are Kia Buendorf, Payton Bunn, Julia Churchill, Keira Lenort, Addison Loken, McKenzie Mueller, Madison Murray, Evelyn Nydegger, Erin Peterson, Annabelle Petsinger, George Roessler, Tayler Schmidt, Hallie Schultz, Brenna Sommer and Isabel Stadheim.

Jenzen pins winning essay

Veteran organizations sponsor contest

By Ashton Jenzen
Waseca High School Junior

What are the greatest attributes of our democracy?

The United States of America has long been heralded as a bastion of democracy, and at the heart of its democratic system lie the cherished values of freedom and liberty. The freedoms are, without a doubt, the greatest attributes of American democracy. Our freedoms—freedom of speech, religion, the press, assembly, and petition—are not only fundamental, but also paramount in shaping the essence and enduring strength of our democracy.

Freedom of speech is arguably the cornerstone of our democracy. It allows citizens to express their thoughts, opinions, and criticisms without fear of government retribution. This freedom fosters a marketplace of ideas where diverse perspectives can be heard and debated. It enables citizens to hold their leaders accountable, discuss controversial topics, and advocate for change. Freedom of speech is a great attribute of our democracy because it empowers open debate, accountability, informed citizens, and the expression of diverse perspectives, which strengthens democratic values and governance. Without freedom of speech, the very ethos of democracy would be stifled and the voice of the people silenced.

Freedom of religion is another crucial aspect of American democracy. It ensures that individuals can practice their faith without government interference. This freedom not only protects religious minorities, but also promotes tolerance and diversity. It emphasizes that the state has no authority to dictate religious beliefs, thereby upholding the principle of separation between church and state—a key pillar of democratic governance. Freedom of religion is a great attribute of our democracy as it upholds individual autonomy, fosters cultural diversity, promotes forbearance, and ensures a plu-



Ashton Jenzen learns her essay was selected as the first place winner in the “Voice of Democracy” contest.

Pioneer photo by Eli Lutgens

ralistic and inclusive society.

A vibrant and free press is essential for a functioning democracy. Freedom of the press allows journalists to investigate and report on government actions and societal issues. It serves as a check on power, providing transparency and accountability. A free press permits the public to access information, make informed decisions, and participate in the democratic process. Without this freedom, democracy would be susceptible to manipulation and authoritarianism. The free press acts like a watchdog, exposes corruption, informs the public, promotes transparency, and holds those in power responsible, strengthening democratic principles and informed decision making.

The right to peacefully assemble is another vital attribute of American democracy. It authorizes citizens to gather, protest, and engage in collective action to advocate for change. Freedom of assembly empowers individuals to voice their concerns and grievances collectively, creating a channel for social and political movements that have shaped the nation’s history. It underscores the power of citizens to influence government policies and decisions.

The right to petition the government for redress of grievances ensures that citizens can directly communicate their concerns to authorities. It pro-

vides an avenue for individuals and groups to seek remedies for perceived injustices. This freedom reinforces the idea that the government exists to serve the people. Citizens have the right to seek accountability and justice when they believe their rights have been violated.

The freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—freedom of speech, religion, the press, assembly, and petition—are undeniably the greatest attributes of American democracy. These freedoms not only distinguish the United States as a democratic society, but also form the bedrock upon which the nation’s democratic principles rest. They empower citizens to express themselves, participate in civic life, and hold their government accountable. These freedoms have allowed America to evolve and adapt to the changing needs and values of its diverse population, making American democracy not only enduring, but also a beacon of hope for democratic movements worldwide. Because of these privileges, we are and forever will be the most free people in any nation of the world. As we celebrate these freedoms, we must also remain vigilant in safeguarding and upholding them, for they are the very essence of our democracy and the guarantors of our continued liberty and progress.



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From Team Academy, from left: Missy Pfeifer, Chris Hering and Jill Courtney.



Waseca Fair Board members with their Legacy Award, from left: Jennie Johnson, Noah Battenfeld, Robin Dulas, Mike Har-guth and Tyler Huber.



SMALL TOWN MEDIA - From left, Cory Stenzel, Nick Wobig and Kristina Wobig.



Kwik Trip Assistant Store Leads Dan Groskreutz and Nicki LeBlanc.

■ Chamber

from Page 1

Media.

The final award given out is the Legacy award, which goes to a business which has served the area for more than 50 years. This year's Legacy choice was Kwik Trip.

While the chamber selects five honorees each year, only the People's Choice and Legacy awards are always given. Other categories are selected based on the year's activities.

After all the awards were distributed, Chamber President Ann Fitch thanked the night's sponsors, including the Boat House for catering and the Mill for providing a fantastic venue. The night's Title sponsors was Minnwest Bank. Other event supporters were: Keen Bank, United Prairie Bank, iCan,



Sam Steffel

Mediacom, Suburban Furniture, Rotary International, iWealth, The Mill, Thrivent, FM Bank, Dennis Steffel Omtvedt Funeral and Cre-mation Services, and Quality Print.

One Watershed One Plan

Funding system changes focus

Lengthy document includes wealth of information

By DEB BENTLY
News Editor

"The Minnesota of today is not the same as Minnesota of 200 years ago," says Eric Miller, coordinator of the LeSueur River comprehensive watershed management plan.

Miller, who was hired to fill this new position in May, has been rapidly learning a great deal about the topography and hydrology of the 711,000 acres which drain into southern Minnesota's LeSueur River. The river itself eventually delivers its water to the Blue Earth River in the vicinity of Mankato.

"Water is always working to make things flat," says Miller in an effort to explain why a watershed needs to be "managed."

"We would rather see things maintain as they are, or even, improve by reducing high volume runoff events or major erosion losses."

Much of what Miller is referring to is the amount of soil and sediment being removed from the land, carried into waterways, and borne downstream in the master watershed which leads to the Mississippi and then the ocean.

Keeping Minnesota soil where it is has long been a central goal for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) associated with each Minnesota county.

The change is that now, rather than using the artificial boundaries created by government units, the state legislature has authorized using the literally "natural" divisions created by topography. Watershed management funding is available based on the size and circumstances of the state's 62 One Watershed One Plan planning areas, rather than it's 87 counties. Under this new arrangement, the LeSueur River watershed is receiving more than \$1.3 million to be allocated over two years to projects which improve water quality, including projects that will help restore "impaired" lakes, reduce the amount of sediment which is carried into waterways, and by finding and sealing abandoned wells which might act as direct conduits to deliver contaminants to groundwater.

In order to receive this watershed-based funding, government agencies, lake associations and property owners within each watershed were expected to work together to create a "comprehensive management plan" that identifies risks to water quality and establishes priorities for corrective measures. In the case of the LeSueur River, this meant all such organizations and towns within Blue Earth, Waseca, Freeborn and Faribault counties. According to Miller, although a portion of the watershed extends into Steele County, the county chose not to take part in the planning process.

With only the northeast portion of Waseca County being within the Cannon River watershed, the vast majority of Waseca's 430 square miles are drained by the LeSueur. Within the watershed there are 72 lakes. Along with the 111-mile length of the LeSueur River itself,



LESUEUR RIVER WATERSHED - The LeSueur River carries water from more than 700,000 acres located across five counties.

"The Minnesota of today is not the same as Minnesota of 200 years ago."

— Eric Miller

there are about 1,100 miles of tributary streams. Within the waterways, about 500 miles are consistently carrying water while 700 are "intermittent," meaning they are often dry between water events.

The amount of information and number of details collected for the sake of the watershed management plan is impressive, as is the 366-page document which summarizes it. Interested parties can refer to the plan on the Waseca County website at https://www.wasecacounty.gov/Document-Center/View/8759/2023_leSueurRiverWatershed_comprehensiveManagementPlan_ISG. Much information is also available at LeSueur-River.org.

Though the size and scope of the document might seem intimidating, Miller suggests readers will find much to keep them interested.

The watershed management plan received final state approval in August. Now that it's in place, funding to help protect water resources and reduce erosion is distributed to the watershed rather than to counties. Miller explains that the change has two advantages. For one thing, it no longer matters if a project extends across county or city boundaries. "One Watershed, One Plan" means the project can be coordinated and funded using its allocated budget. Another major advantage, he says, is that the watershed has ownership and control of its funding. Once a project is verified as meeting the priorities identified in the plan, funds can be allocated and work can begin without the delay of applying for money from other agencies, a process which sometimes took years in the past.

This quicker response is important, Miller



Eric Miller

suggests, because it allows for adjustment to changing and developing circumstances.

Miller observes that rural property owners will find the "One Watershed" priorities familiar, since many are the same as the soil and water conservation districts have been encouraging for decades—restoring natural wetlands, using cover crops and alternate tillage methods, and generally slowing the rate at which rainfall and snow melt move across the landscape. Anyone who wishes to seek funding for lake restoration, soil conservation or for locating and sealing abandoned wells should begin where they would have in the past, by contacting their county SWCD. According to Miller, funds from the One Watershed One Plan will become available for distribution early in 2024.

NRHEG Blood Drive 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. November 30

NRHEG Student organizations are sponsoring a blood drive at the NRHEG gymnasium from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursday, November 30. Anyone wishing to donate can call the Red Cross at 800-733-2767 to arrange an appointment, or can register online at RedCrossBlood.org and enter the code NREG.

Teen Journals Workshop 1 p.m. December 1

A Waseca Library workshop will focus on helping teens create interactive journals. This 1 p.m. December 1 event is free and open to all interested teens. More information is available from library staff, 507-835-2910.

Lego Story Time at Waseca Library 10 a.m. Dec 2

Children ages 4-6 are invited to bring an adult to a monthly event which asks them to create a Lego scene meant to illustrate a story. Get more information by visiting the library or calling 835-2910.

Got news?
507-837-6767

The Waseca Chorale

under the direction of
Deb Wantoch-Yess and John Hoehn
presents

Fantasy of Christmas Carols

Sunday, November 26, 2023 at 4:00 pm
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
111 4th Street NW, Waseca

Tickets available at the door
Adults \$10
Youth ages 12 and under \$7

This performance of the Waseca Chorale is made possible in part by a grant from the E.F. Johnson Foundation



NORTH WASECA LUTHERAN - Known as “the church on the hill” North Waseca is more than 165 years old. At right, Cheryl Forrest, Dolores Srp and Sonja Thomson sort through bags of lefse to be delivered to customers.
Pioneer photos by Deb Bently

Local church celebrates Scandinavian roots

By **DEB BENTLY**
News Editor

The tables in the basement of North Waseca Lutheran Church are mounded with Scandinavian treats. The largest space is occupied by pre-counted, labeled bags of lefse; church members Roy Srp and Greg Thomson have been receiving orders for the last two weeks. Today customers are pulling up outside, being greeted by Srp or Thomson, and having their orders delivered to their cars.

The system, like the lefse sale, was devised during the pandemic. It was the best substitute organizers could find for their annual Scandinavian (i.e. lutefisk and Swedish meatballs) dinner which had to be put on hold for four years.

To their pleasure and relief, the Scandinavian dinner returned this year, feeding 220 people in three one-hour shifts on Sunday, Nov. 12. Long-time organizer Greg Thomson passed the reins on to Ryan Miller, who had been helping with the meal since 2012. Miller says there is a fair amount of work in being sure everything is ready for the event—the first planning session took place about two months in advance. But because so many volunteers and participants were anxious to see the tradition return, things fell into place rather smoothly. The only real challenge, he says, arose when the number of interested diners was so high that the originally planned two shifts were expanded to be three.

“We were all excited to see this tradition return,” Miller comments. “It was an honor to take over.”

About 50 volunteers put in many hours planning, preparing for and then serving the much-anticipated meal, which had been a tradition at the church for 35 years. In the center of the action were lutefisk cooks Duane Johnson, 86; Jim Hansen, 75; and their recent protege Nathan Schultz, 36.

Schultz admits he had never before even tasted lutefisk, but was willing to fill in wherever he was needed. The experienced cooks, he says, “have it down to a science,”

and so he contented himself with doing what was asked of him and observing the masters at work.

Cheryl and Dan Forrest and Sonja Thomson explain that lutefisk would probably be a universal favorite if everyone who prepared it could do so correctly. Cheryl describes it as flaky, buttery baked cod that can be indescribably good, while Dan warns that, if overcooked, the effect is ruined. Thus, all volunteers present express their admiration for the three cooks, two of whom have been giving their time and talents for decades, and one of whom has shown a genuine aptitude for the task despite being something of a newcomer.

In the meantime, the lefse sale had become its own successful tradition, and so here are the volunteers, busily locating and delivering the labeled bags.

Although there are at least two capable lefse cooks present, the product here was purchased from a bakery in Rushford. The 550 rounds which were ordered, they explain, would have been too much to ask of a home based kitchen.

Both the Scandinavian dinner and the lefse sale are charitable fundraisers operated by the church in support of food shelves in Waseca, Waterville and Elysian, the communities from which the majority of church members come. Roughly \$2,000 were raised by the dinner; today’s activities will bring in about another \$500.

As the lutefisk dinner and the lefse sale illustrate, North Waseca Lutheran is looooong on tradition. The church began in the 1840s, before Minnesota was even recognized as a state. After meeting in private homes for 15 or so years, the congregation built its church on land donated by one of its members.

According to church members, services were held in Norwegian into the 1920s: Back in that time, men sat on one side of the church while women and children took the other side.

The church remained the center of its rural community for many dec-

ades. Lifetime member Dolores Srp remembers a time when the only bathroom was an outhouse and the only on-site source of water was a small hand pump located in the kitchen. “We would bring water from home when there was a larger event,” recalls Cheryl Forrest.

All that was modernized in the 1960s when an addition brought in modern plumbing and increased the church’s size by nearly half, while also leading to the replacement of the high, steep concrete stairs which were once the entryway.

A centerpiece of the church is the tall, traditional altar with a painting of Christ on the cross. The painting was commissioned from a Norwegian artist back near the congregation’s beginning.

Longstanding members know the history and past uses of nearly every nook and cranny of the building.

Dolores Srp remembers back to her youth when the school bus simply delivered youth choir members to the church on Wednesday afternoons, since that’s when weekly practices were held. Cheryl Forrest recalls the school bus would drop her off there when neighborhood women—including her mother—were attending “ladies’ aid” meetings. “Well,” she remembers, “Dad would be in the field and Mom would be here—so it was where I needed to be, too.”

Church volunteers want everyone to know the congregation holds its services at 8:45 a.m. each Sunday. Scandinavian ancestry is not an expectation, they reassure.

Lutefisk apprentice Nathan Schultz agrees. He and his family moved to the Waseca area in 2019. When choosing a church, he said, they attended a few in town. When they attended North Waseca, he said, “Everybody was so friendly—they made us feel as if we had always been members there.”

“People come here now because we’re welcoming and we have a real sense of community,” suggests Greg Thomson. “We’re glad to have new people, and we’re glad for their energy and their fresh perspective.”



The Pastor’s Column

Called to be thankful

By **PASTOR KEN ANDRS**
I really enjoy a good slice of pie. My mother-in-law makes an amazing pumpkin pie, every year she has to take into account how many pies will be eaten. We all have our favorites, but there is always more than enough pumpkin pie.

The first family Thanksgiving we had after Naomi and I were married, saw my brother-in-law and myself standing in the cold garage eating pumpkin pie. Dinner was supposed to be at 1pm, but not everything was ready. Out to the garage we went, every excuse we could find, we would eat a slice of pie, and then head back in.

After dinner, we were asked to go get the pie, we went out, ate a slice ourselves, brought in the remaining pies and shared with the family. It was the start of a tradition that remains today, the sharing of pie in the garage. This Thanksgiving we will do the same, a tradition of giving thanks while eating pie.

As followers of Christ we have been called to be thankful. As a people group we have been called to give thanks for what God has done for the world in Isaiah 12:

4 In that day you will say:

"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;

make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.

5 Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world.

6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

As we engage in relationship with our family, friends and community let us remain focused on what God has done for us. He has chosen to be in relationship with us and calls us to be in relationship with one another. In sharing a meal with family we are able to tell the stories of what God has done and how He has moved in our lives apart from one another.

No matter what has gone on in your family or with your friends over this past year, take time to do as Paul tells the church in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, “16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Happy Thanksgiving

Attend the Church of your Choice!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2200 4th St NE, Waseca 507-835-2235 Service times 9:30 a.m. * * * 4TH STREET EVANGELICAL CHURCH 605 4th St NE, Waseca 507-201-7293 (Pastor Andrew Isker) Worship Sundays 10 a.m. * * * FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 801 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-3167 Worship Sundays 9:30 a.m. * * * CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH 309 6th St NE, Waseca 507-835-9176 Worship Sundays traditional 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Sunday School/Fellowship; 10:45 a.m. contemporary service * * * ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH 401 3rd Ave NE, Waseca 507-833-1703 Sundays 9:00 a.m. * * * ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH 314 4th Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-2647 Worship Sunday 9:00 a.m. * * * FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 503 2nd Ave NE, Waseca 507-835-4548 (office email: 1ewaseca@hickorytech.net) Worship Sunday 10 a.m. * * * GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 300 E Elm Ave, Waseca 507-835-1709 Worship Sunday 9 a.m. * * * SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH 111 4th St NW, Waseca 507-835-1222 Worship Saturday 5:15 p.m., Sundays 8:00 and 10:00 a.m., weekdays 8:30 a.m. Tues., Wed. and Fri., 7:00 a.m. Thurs. * * * 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 * * * FIRST CONGREGATIONAL New Richland, Minnesota Pastor Pamela Jensen Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship * * * 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 Brian Mulligan Saturday - 5 p.m. Mass * * * FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Rev. Michael Mathews, pastor Sundays: Worship 8 a.m.; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and adult bible class * * * IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH Freedom Township Sunday - 9 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 - 10:30 a.m. Worship * * * THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS Brad Donner, Branch President Waseca, Minnesota www.lds.org Sunday - 10 a.m. Sacrament Mtg.; 11:20 a.m. Sunday School Wednesday - 7 p.m. Youth Activities, ages 12-18 * * *	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 412 N. Main Street, Janesville Interim Pastor Wednesday, Saturday - 6:30 p.m. Worship Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship, 9 Bible Class, 10:15 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.
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Daniel J. Johnson

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Argus Archives

1923

We may well pay a merited tribute to the young men and women who so ably reflected the dramatic art and the spirit in the play presented at the Town Hall on Thursday and Friday evenings. Two considerations as applied to the personnel of the cast may be invoked in order to fully do justice to the time and effort. First, there was the sacrifice of time in preparing the play, always and inevitably a contribution to the public good. Those who spend their time night after night in practice and rehearsals presumably are actuated by a higher motive than mere personal preferment and exploitation. They are looking into the future as it may affect the wealth and woe of the community, as it may work out for human welfare.

We wish that the address delivered on Tuesday evening by Mr. C. K. Mayer, at the Heinrich Hotel, Mankato, might be read by every citizen of Janesville. The occasion was a meeting of the Civic and Commerce Association of that city. Mr. Mayer is the president of the association.

A deal that had been pending for some time was consummated on Thursday when the garage building owned by C. E. Woodhall and J. P. Breuer was sold to Manthey & Son. This is the garage directly across from the library building and is one of the largest and best equipped garages in the county. The new firm consists of Mr. John Mannthey and Mr. Herbert Manthey, father and son. They will sell Ford cars exclusively and in addition do repairing for any and all cars.

The poultry exhibition which is scheduled for three days this week, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday; is well in hand through the activities of its officials, Edward Goltz, president, and its secretary and manager, Ray Truman. The rooms and fixtures are ready for the opening.

1948

The Golden Bears traveled to Waterville on Armistice Day and edged the Buccaneers in a tough football battle by a score of 13-0. The initial quarter was scoreless with neither team making a serious threat to score. Waterville's punter bobbled the ball and before he could recover it and get the ball away the whole Janesville line was upon him causing him to fumble. In the deal, John Schmidt picked up the fumbled ball and scampered across for the Bears' first touchdown. Art Cahill's placement was good, making the score 7-0.

Mr. and Mrs. Cash. Roeker of Janesville observed their Golden Wedding anniversary on Wednesday, November 10 at a special church service at Trinity Lutheran Church in Janesville at 11:15 o'clock in the forenoon, conducted by Rev. A. T. Koehler. After the ceremony, the large group present gathered in the church parlors. Mr. and Mrs. Roeker were married on November 10, 1898, by Rev. Christian Myers at Sanborn, Minnesota.

Two farm accidents have been reported so far this week. One, Mrs. William Blank of Janesville and the other Ernest Bagne of Iosco. The Smiths Mill Club reported that Mrs. Blank received a severe cut on her hand that required four stitches when she was attempting to uncrow the lid off a fruit jar. Mr. Blank was holding the fruit jar. And Mrs. Blank was turning and suddenly the jar broke. Her hand slipped and was badly cut. She won't be able to use her hand for some time. Ernest Bagne's accident was reported by the Palmer Sunbeam Club. Ernest was hauling logs when one of the logs slipped and fell on his foot, breaking a bone. The injury was very painful and he won't be able to use his foot for some time.

1973

The District 830 School Board moved to reduce daytime schoolroom temperatures from 72 to 70 degrees Monday night in an effort to conserve fuel and prevent a total shutdown of the school system. By dropping the daytime room temperatures by two degrees, the board compelled with a State Department of Education request that recently went out to all school districts regarding a plan for conserving fuel. In addition to the daytime drop in temperatures, the board agreed to set thermostats at 60 degrees during nighttime hours. If the fuel oil shortage becomes critical, the school will close on a day-to-day basis.

Janesville's 9:30 p.m. weekday curfew will be strictly enforced says Deputy Jerry Splett. The 9:30 p.m. curfew applies to minors 16 years of age, or younger, and is in effect from Sunday through Thursday night. Splett said the curfew hour is extended until midnight on Friday and Saturday night. The local deputy told the Argus that parents of minors caught out after the curfew hour will be called to pick up their children on the first offense. If it happens the second time, Splett said, the violators will be prosecuted.

Fifty-nine area residents rolled up their sleeves and agreed to give blood at the Red Cross Bloodmobile last Tuesday at Trinity Lutheran. Three of the 59 were deferred and 56 each gave a pint of blood.

1998

What could have been a disaster turned into a safe landing for a Le Sueur pilot. On Wednesday, Nov. 11, a cut corn field located at 50th Street, Janesville Township, was the site of an emergency landing for Daniel Kenneth Bergeson, pilot of a light single engine Cherokee aircraft. Bergeson and another occupant were returning from Chicago, Ill., to Mankato where the aircraft had been rented from Northstar Aviation.

Each day brings something new to write home about for Rotary Exchange student Sigita Bagdzeviciute of Kaunas, Lithuania. "Everything is new and interesting," Sigita said. Sigita's stay began in August and will continue to July. Through the Rotary Exchange program she will stay with three host families in the Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton School District. She is currently staying in Pemberton with Charles and Virginia Flitter and their children Stephanie and Jonathan.

A new chief of police may soon be joining the Janesville Police Department. During its Monday, Nov. 23 meeting, the Janesville City Council authorized the city to offer its chief of police position to Michael Lee Schumacher of Truman. "He is certainly by far the best candidate," said Mayor Tom Trahms. Schumacher is currently the chief of police with the city of Truman, which has a comparable population to Janesville.

Holiday Cookie Dazzle 9 a.m. until noon Dec. 2

Achieving Dreams for Disabilities will host a "holiday cookie dazzle" at the Waseca Senior Citizen Center on Saturday, December 2 from 9 a.m. to noon. Plates of 12 cookies will be available for \$7 with breads and other treats priced individually. To donate baked goods, contact Kari Haslip in advance at 835-2058. All proceeds go towards programs for those with disabilities.

St. Paul Lutheran Christmas Bazaar 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 2

St. Paul Lutheran of Waseca will be offering Christmas items for sale and also serving meals during its bazaar from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2. On the menu are sloppy Joes, hot beef sandwiches, and homemade pie.

History Center Bootlegger's Ball 5:30 p.m. Dec. 2

The Waseca County History Center is sponsoring a "Bootlegger's Ball" at its Second Street NE address. Live jazz music, 1920s dances and a costume contest will be among the highlights.

Tickets are \$20; admission is free to members. RSVP required.

Back in the day (Waseca)

100 Years Back - 1923

A jump of more than 14 per cent in his taxes is what faced the Waseca property owner for the next year. County Auditor Panzram has completed the rate for 1924 for the city and county and finds it makes 77.3 mills on the dollar for the residents of Waseca. This year's rate was 67.6 mills so that the advance amounts to more than 14 per cent.

F.L. Steward has sold his grocery and meat market to Ed. Schultz of this city and S.L. Halverson of Belle Plaine, Iowa, who have taken possession. Landkamer Brothers Company had a public opening of their newly remodeled furniture store last Saturday which was largely attended by the people of Waseca and vicinity.

The sixty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Vista Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Society of Otisco was observed last Sunday with appropriate services. Only two of the charter members of the society are living at the present time, namely, Johnny Larson and Alfred J. Larson.

Mrs. Harriet Amos returned to her home in Winnebago Friday morning after spending the last two weeks at the home of her niece, Mrs. Earl Maxham in this city.

W.K. Mickelson went down to New Richland Monday to arrange for the Red Cross roll call down there. Donald Brown and Miss Dorothy Huesby are taking charge of the roll call in that village.

Colonel Wagner came to Waseca Monday on legal business. He was as full of the spirits as usual and states that he will open a legal office here one of these days. Colonel states that a fellow who can make others money can make money for himself.

75 Years - 1948

Robert J. and Richard E., 19-year-old twin sons of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Wright of Waseca, were sworn into the U.S. Army ground forces for 21 months.

Excavation for an office building for Dr. R. Leland West is now underway on South State street south of the Joecks and Magner garage.

Mrs. Ethel Pavey of Good Thunder and granddaughter, Barbara Dee, spent several days this week visiting with Mrs. Pavey's daughter, Mrs. R.F. Case, in Waseca.

Grove Brown, a student at the University of Minnesota, came Wednesday and visited Armistice Day with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Donald C. Brown.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Krause and Mr. and Mrs. Emil Preuss of Waterville were Wednesday visitors at the August Messall home.

Mrs. Edith Laudert attended the golden wedding anniversary of her sister, Mrs. W.M. Miller, at Janesville, Sunday, Nov. 14. She was bridesmaid at her sister's wedding fifty years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Schaetzke and Mrs. Clarence Krueger and son, Carle, of Packwaukee, Wis., were week end guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Schaetzke.

50 Years - 1973



Duane Brase, member of the Waseca Fire Department, presented Hartley and Southside third graders with awards for their Fire Prevention Poster Contest. First prize was awarded to Cindy Mokoff, who received a fire truck; second prize to Jeff Bahr, \$5; third to Jean Hermann, \$4; and fourth to James Barbknecht, \$3. Honorable mentions were given to Marty Friegaard, Keith Kuhn, Dawn Mulcahey and Nicci Abraham.

Over 60 Waseca businesses are cooperating this year in what will probably be the biggest give-away extravaganza ever to hit Waseca. They will be giving away a 1974 model automobile and \$1,000 in cash. The promotion has no obligation to purchase anything from the businesses in Waseca that are supporting the give-away, it is merely their way of saying "thank you" for your past and future support.

Reverend Paul Knutson, chairman of the Waseca Housing Authority and the other members of the authority accepted the keys of the new 60-unit Maple Terrace apartment building in Waseca Monday. Serving with Knutson are Phil Hasselquist, Keith Fenner, George Kastle, and Marie Eustice on the authority.

25 Years - 1998



Sacred Heart Elementary School Principal Sandra Alliare accepts a check for \$16,916.27 from Gregg Johnson of the Waseca Knights of Columbus for Sacred Heart's annual Marathon for non-public education. Students pictured collected the highest number of pledges and the highest dollar amounts for the event. Front row, from left: Brandon Kingston and Corey Harguth. Middle: Joe Hoehn and Andree Hoehn. Back: Chris Meschke, Sammie Hoehn and Abby Neigebauer. Not pictured are Meghan Monahan and Mikiah Johnson

Grief Group from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Thursdays through December 7

Real Life Church, 620 Elm Ave W, will be the site of a weekly grief support group, Grief Share, from

6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays through December 7. Contact Janeice Bull at bull.jm@gmail.com or 507-384-2181 for additional information, and register at griefshare.org/findagroup.

Looking Back (New Richland)

100 Years Back - 1923

Members of the Morristown Volunteer Fire Department will receive one dollar each at every fire which they attend, providing it is necessary to turn water onto the fire.

Mesdames B.C. Rotegard, Ella Haugan and C.I. Virnig were hostesses at a party given at the home of the latter in honor of several lady friends Thursday evening.

Several friends gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Johnstone on Friday evening, surprising them on their Silver Wedding anniversary.

The following were entertained at the Fred Proehl home last Sunday: Mr. and Mrs. John Lewer and family, Mr. and Mrs. Hans Kroeger, Miss Katie Kroeger, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Heckes and Mr. and Mrs. John Kroeger and family.

Before officers of the 88th Division at Albert Lea Friday, Raymond Kreuzer successfully passed the examination for the U.S. Army Officer's Reserve Corps.

The M. & St. L. excursion to the Iowa-Minnesota football game in Minneapolis last week proved especially popular. Sixty-one round-trip tickets were sold at the local station, besides many people made the trip to the cities by car. The Gophers came out on the long end of a 20 to 7 score.

77 Years Back - 1946

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Klessig entertained at dinner at the Hotel Waseca Thursday evening, November 14, for Mr. and Mrs. O.S. Martinson. The event commemorated the 25th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Martinson and the 34th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Klessig.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Laudert and son, Pvt. Harvey Laudert, spent Sunday at Austin with their daughters and sister, Mrs. Theodore Haack and Miss Shirley Laudert.

The harvest of soybeans was renewed to some extent the fore part of the week. The price, which had reached higher levels than \$2.40 a bushel, has in the meantime dropped down to \$2.97, a drop of 15 cents a bushel occurring Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Rhiger and son and Mr. and Mrs. Holbeck Rhiger of Albert Lea spent Sunday afternoon at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Loken.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Michaelis entertained the following for dinner Sunday: Mr. and Mrs. Lester Otto and family, Mr. and Mrs. Arvid Langlie and family of Ellendale, and Mr. and Mrs. Chester Herbst and family.

Miss Evodia Larson of Minneapolis came Saturday morning and spent until Sunday night with her parents, Rev. and Mrs. A.A. Larson. She is employed as a technician in the laboratory in the Swedish hospital.

50 Years Back - 1973

The cast of "Pillow Talk" to be presented by the New Richland-Hartland high school senior class, Friday, Nov. 29, is pictured here. From the left, front: Laurie Roesler, Kris Thompson, Dawn Janowitz, Ron Soper, Randy Knutson; middle: Cindy Goette, Pam Schumacher, Janet Westeng, Jean Herbst, Ruth Brandvold, Julie Jeddeloh, Susie Wilson; back: Jim Lillesve, Gary Hagen, Ray Byron, Lynn Budach, Patti Lee, Connie Miller, Randy Kalis, Mary Root. Vicki Kraupa is not pictured. Directing the play is Gary Nordlie.

25 Years Back - 1998



A NRHEG High School Internet Investing team was ranked ninth out of 496 of the 1100 Internet Investing teams in the region last week with a total equity of \$153,311.78. Members of the team are seniors, Josh Jacobson, Nate Waldhauser, Evan Berg and Brian Johnson.

Authorization was given to New Richland Police Chief Brad Flor by the New Richland City Council to purchase a squad car video camera. Cost of the camera is estimated to be \$5,194.

Holiday Train to visit Waseca, Janesville, December 6

The Canadian Pacific "Holiday Train" will be stopping in Waseca at 5:30 p.m. near the city safety building parking lot and in Janesville near Veterans' Memorial Park at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, December 6. More information available at https://www.cpkcr.com/en/community/HolidayTrain

Waldorf Community Christmas Dinner at Noon, December 7

A community Christmas dinner will be at noon on Thursday, Dec. 7 at the Waldorf Community Center. Cost for the meal, which includes "turkey and all the trimmings," is \$10. Take-out meals can be arranged for by calling 507-461-0115, and will be available for pickup beginning at 11:30 a.m.

All You Can Eat Breakfast 8 a.m. to noon, Dec. 10

All you can eat breakfast to benefit Waseca Boy Scouts Troop 85 at the Waseca V.F.W. Cost is \$12 for adults, \$7 for youth, preschool free. Menu includes pan-

cakes, French toast, biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, beverages.

Concert to Benefit New Richland Foundation Dec. 9, 10

A concert featuring local musicians Adam Moen and Gavin Berg will be at 7 p.m. Dec. 9 and 2 p.m. Dec. 10 at Trinity Lutheran Church in New Richland. All proceeds benefit the New Richland Area Foundation. Free will offering.

Live Nativity at St. John Lutheran Church Dec. 15 and 16

A live outdoor nativity scene will be on display at St. John Lutheran Church (401 Third Avenue NE, Waseca) the evenings of Dec. 15 and 16. Viewers may drive or walk past. There is no cost to attend.

Starfire Event Center Holiday Craft Show 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 16

The Starfire Event Center is presenting a craft show with more than 50 vendors from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3 at its location at 206 Second Ave SW.



A Day in the Country

HAPPENINGS IN THE LOCAL AG COMMUNITY



Bountiful harvest

Solid soybean yields, fantastic corn yields as 2023 growing season surpasses expectations

By MARK BERNARD
Staff Writer

Harvest 2023 is history for most, and like last year, brought yields which were far better than anticipated, especially on the corn side. Uncertainty was the name of the growing season until harvest began. Soybean yields were respectable in most cases, but not generally on a par with 2022. Corn yields were a surprise which led to amazement once numbers began to trickle in. Where did the yields come from given the rainfall that just never seemed to come in July and August?

We made the most of what we had for moisture. We went into the winter last fall very dry. Winter started early and we received about the usual amount of snowfall. However, the frost depth remained shallow or nonexistent where the ground was snow-covered throughout much of the winter. The snowfall also contained a higher-than-normal moisture content. When the opportunity was there for the snow to melt and seep into the soil, that's exactly what it did. The snow cover was gone in mid-March and even though precipitation for March and April was below normal, there was enough residual moisture to get the crop out of the blocks in good shape. Warm temps in mid-April had everyone giddy. A few planted corn prior to that and were rewarded, this time. The temps turned cold and rainfall after that delayed planting into the first week in May.

Most made great headway and were done planting corn when the rain started the afternoon of May 5. Depending on location, much of the area received between 6" and 14" of rain over a ten-day period. Large areas of corn were underwater where the rainfall ponded. Some of the soybeans that were planted suffered a similar fate. By the end of

May, anywhere from 20% - 25% of the corn had to be replanted. What appeared to be a nice start similar to last year had suddenly deteriorated into a potential crop insurance claim. Or had it?

Rainfall for the months of June, July and August was substantially below normal, more than 3" below normal for June and July and about 1.5" below normal for the month of August at the University's Southern Research and Outreach Center (SROC) in Waseca. We did receive some spotty rains from August 7 to 14, although it appeared the small pods that were setting up top on the soybean plants were aborting as the month wore on. Corn was showing some tip back, which wasn't surprising given the lack of rainfall. Fortunately, as happened last year, while we ran into some stretches of hot days, their duration wasn't as lengthy as it could've been. Also like last year, we generally didn't have extreme wind with the heat. Were we still in the game or had we missed too many rains at critical times?

While our growing season precipitation had been very hit and miss, there were also some strengths. Where and when rain did fall, there were once again long intervals between the significant rainfall events. This means less favorable conditions for foliar disease development in both corn and soybeans. There was some spotty appearance of sudden death syndrome in soybeans, but many had treated their seed for it after being stung in 2022. Same as last year. However, most were wringing their hands over tar spot in corn after being bombarded all winter with horror stories from primarily the "I States." And, same as last year, considerably more tar spot affected local coffee shops and social media than area corn fields.

Our growing degree unit (GDU) accumulation for the season was

again well above normal. At Waseca, the growing season (May – September) GDU accumulation was 2932.5 or 17% above normal, making it the fourth-warmest growing season on record. The first frost was October 10. This was crucial, particularly for those who had replanted, especially when they stuck with some of the closer to full season corn hybrids. Some of the early planted, early maturity corn reached physiological maturity and was harvested as early as September 9. Stalks were questionable on those fields, so it made sense to pick it. Corn kept maturing about on schedule. We had a slight harvest delay due to some substantial rains September 22 to 28. The silver lining was that, unlike last year, we suddenly had some soil moisture to work with for both fall tillage and for the 2024 crop. October added moisture to the soil profile for us to play with next season.

So how did this growing season turn out for most after the devastating May rainfall? On the early soybeans, yields were reported as high as the low to mid 70 bu./acre range with most falling in the 60 – 65 bu./acre area as the harvest season progressed. Not on a par with the previous two growing seasons perhaps, but still far better than many imagined after missing out on some desirable August rains to finish.

Did the soybean size and weight compensate for the lack of rainfall at a perceived critical time? Hard to say, but it appeared once again that estimating soybean yields is best done with the combine.

Corn basically followed a "high ground/dry ground – low ground/wet ground" formula. Where water had ponded, it apparently was early enough that not much denitrification or leaching had occurred. Why not? Soil temps remained cool much of April and May, slowing conversion of ammo-



ANOTHER BANNER YEAR — Like last year, final harvest yields proved far better than expected for area farmers in 2023.

num nitrogen to nitrate. There was also more moisture left in the low ground from that excess rainfall during the critical parts of the crop's development. Yields for corn planted on last year's soybean ground ran well above expectations, especially after the blast furnace presented by August 22 to 24 during this year's Pro Farmer Crop Tour and again on September 3 to 6. The crop appeared to have given up. Or had it? Appearances can be deceiving.

Corn yields were coming in well over 200 bu./acre field average, which seemed incredible considering the warm growing season and lack of rainfall. Low areas of fields and peat ground had yield monitors showing some 300 bu./acre areas. What was even more incredible was some of the replant corn actually yielded as well and in some cases better than the initial planting. That wasn't surprising in some instances where there wasn't anything left after the initial planting. Even in areas where the crop was sufficient to leave, some reported better yields in adjacent areas where they'd replanted. That might not have been the case if there had been a freeze



about mid-September. Harvest moisture, too, was surprisingly dry considering the planting date. Well above normal temperatures in September and October dried the corn down rapidly, particularly with the unheard-of 90+ degree highs October 1 and 2.

To sum up, solid soybean yields, and fantastic corn yields for the conditions were the name of the game for the 2023 harvest. Corn and soybean prices are down, but so are fertilizer prices. Cash grain farmers can definitely exhale after

being on edge for much of the growing season. Soil moisture conditions are much improved over a year ago at this time. The long, warm fall allowed operators to finish fall work in a timely fashion and finish many projects they'd only dreamed of with 6" of snow on the ground last year. 2023 proved we can still raise a pretty decent crop without timely rains if we have enough stored soil moisture to carry us and temperatures that moderate. There's more than one way to skin a cat.

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A Day in the Country

HAPPENINGS IN THE LOCAL AG COMMUNITY



Conagra re-use system returns nutrients to fields

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

As many millions of pounds of corn are processed at the Conagra plant near Waseca, millions of gallons of fluid are collected and distributed across fields.

The fluids, known as “silage leachate” comes from the silage (cobs and husk byproducts) which are harvested along with the sweet corn being processed and sold to consumers, according to Samantha Ruger, Environmental, Health and Safety Supervisor with the company.

Ruger says Conagra is unique in that it runs the cobs and husks through a chopper-and-screw-press squeeze system, which removes a significant percentage of the fluids from the silage. This increases the nutrient value of silage produced for sale to area dairy and beef farmers while removing fluids which contain many nutrients helpful to the soil, most significantly nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

From August to October, most of the duration of the sweet corn harvest, the leachate is collected and promptly distributed across about 1,000 acres of fields which will be producing either peas or sweet corn for the company the following year.

Ruger mentions that Birds Eye has been distributing leachate this way for roughly 10-15 years; she has been with the company since 2017.

The only major change to the practice has to do with capacity. While over 7 million gallons of leachate per season was typical in the past, some new steps in the processing system have increased the number to about 12 million.

Preparing for and monitoring the distribution, Ruger says, is essentially a year-round task.

For one thing, farmers are asked in February or so whether they are willing to have the leachate worked into the soil on their land. Once farmers give permission, an application for the process must be filed with appropriate state offices. Longer forms are needed for first-time locations, with slightly less paperwork when the field has been used before. The townships where the process will occur must also be notified. Creating and filing the paperwork can be complex and is time sensitive, says Ruger.

Before the leachate is distributed, the soil in each field is tested to determine the optimal per-acre rate. Nutrient needs vary, Ruger explains, based on the soil, the type of crop grown on the field, and other factors. The leachate is also consistently monitored to determine its levels of nutrients.

Conagra contracts with Minnesota Valley Pumping of New Prague to take care of the physical distribution. The company has numerous tank trucks to pick up and deliver the leachate, a tractor with specialized tilling equipment, and large-scale hoses long enough to be zig-zagged across many acres of land as the fluid is pumped to the tractor and worked into the soil.

Depending on the size of a field, distribution may take days at any one location. Typical rates are between 10,000 and 15,000 gallons of leachate per acre; tank trucks have capacities between 6,000 and 8,000 gallons.

Also among Ruger’s duties is communicating with farmers to let them know when the process is likely to take place; once it’s completed, she notifies land owners about the specifics of the work—most



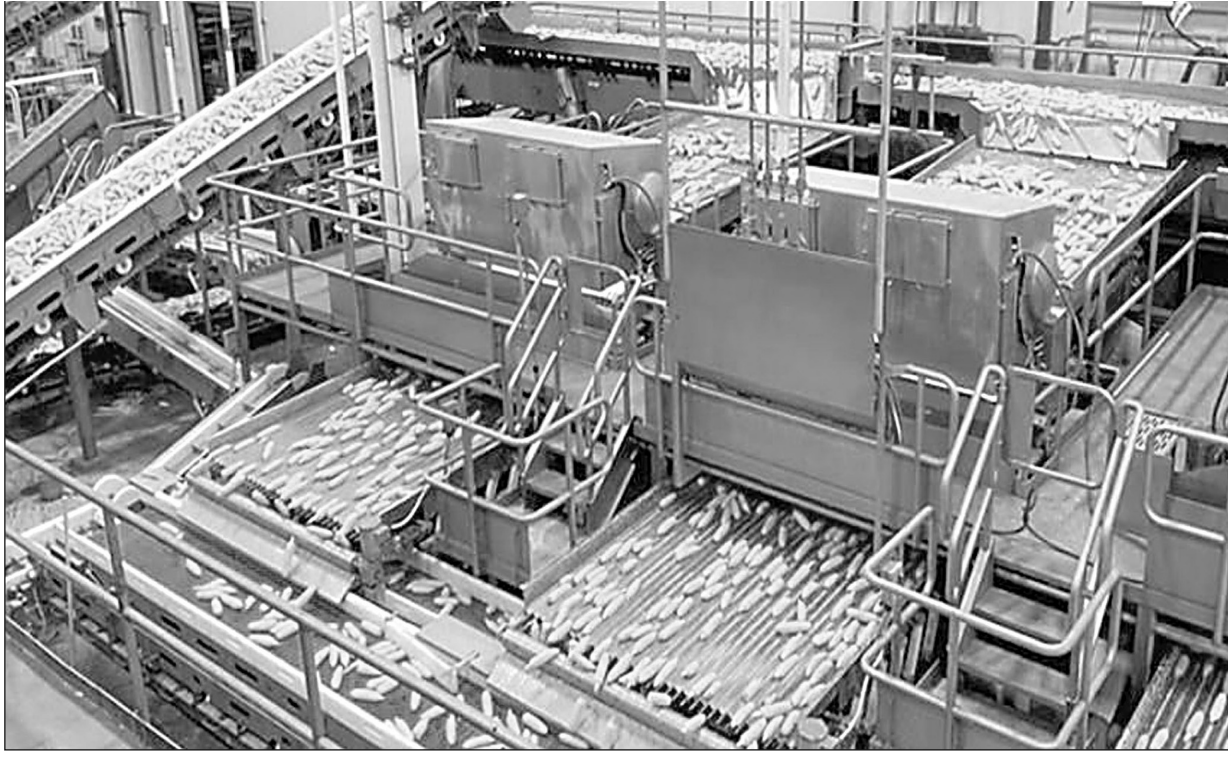
Above: Gary Paulson, left, and Jeff Kraimer of Conagra in front of the company’s sign. Below, sweet corn is processed in Conagra’s plant near Waseca.

importantly reporting how much nitrogen has been added to their soil. While the amount is significant—typically about 130 pounds of nitrogen per acre—it is enough to reduce, not eliminate, the need for additional fertilizers prior to next spring’s plantings.

In addition to returning important nutrients to the soil, the distribution process streamlines operations at the plant, vastly reducing the amount of storage needed for the leachate.

Ruger says she finds her job very satisfying, knowing she is following through with government requirements for the process, helping facilitate operations for the plant, and providing an important service to those landowners who are open to it.

“I speak with some great people on a regular basis,” says Ruger. “It’s fulfilling when all the systems are working and I am able to let the farmer know they are getting what they asked for.”





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Bluejays claim district honors

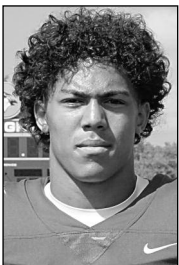
Ellis player of the year; Engel-Mueller selected for Minnesota Showcase

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

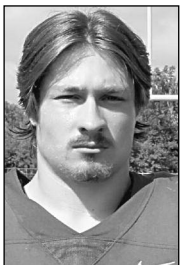
The Waseca High School football team had plenty of representation on the Big South White All-District team for 2023. The Bluejays won the district title with a record of 4-0. Other schools in the district are Jordan, Albert Lea, Tri-City United and Belle Plaine.

The following players were selected all-district:

- Carter Ellis, linebacker
- Shane Engel-Mueller, defensive line
- Kaeden Johnson, running back
- Andrew Robran, offensive line
- Damarius Russell, wide receiver



Ellis



S.Engel-Mueller

- Deron Russell, defensive back
- Receiving all-district honorable mention were offensive lineman Brandyn Jascha and linebacker Noah Thompson.
- Other district awards:
- Co-District Offensive Back of



ALL-DISTRICT — Waseca High School football players receiving recognition included Shane Engel-Mueller (75), Kaeden Johnson (1) and Andrew Robran (63). Pioneer file photo by Jim Lutgens

the Year - Johnson

- District Receiver of the Year - Damarius Russell
- District Offensive Lineman of the Year - Andrew Robran
- Co District Defensive Lineman of the Year - Engel Mueller

- Defensive Back of the Year - Deron Russell
- Player of the Year - Ellis
- Coach of the Year - Brad Wendland
- Robran was named to the Class AAA All-Academic Team. He has a



TOP FINISHER — WHS High School graduate Ella Dufault won the recent NCCAA Division II cross country title. File photo

WHS hockey girls blank Worthington, fall 4-3 in OT to Windom

The Waseca High School girls' hockey team defeated Worthington Saturday with a final score of 4-0.

Goalie Ilamay Draheim secured the shutout for the Bluejays.

Maizee scored the first and final goals for Waseca, with Maddy Benson and Emma Keith adding one goal apiece. Keith had two assists, with one apiece by Emily Gordon, Makayla Forthun, Izzy Slechta, Kaylee Lawson and Benson.

The Jays fell 4-3 to Windom in overtime Tuesday, Nov. 21.

Keith, Storey and Benson scored, with assists by Forthun, Gordon and Keith.

Draheim was in goal.



EARLY-SEASON ACTION — At left, the Bluejays' Izabela Slechta (8) battles a Worthington opponent for the puck during Waseca's 4-0 shutout victory at home last Saturday. At right, Emma Keith (21) falls to the ice in a scoring attempt. Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens



Dufault wins NCCAA Division II CC crown

Ring also runs as Crown team takes 3rd

Waseca High School graduate Ella Dufault did not just win the 2023 National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA) Division II women's cross country championship.

She ran away with it.

Dufault, a freshman at Crown College, covered the 5-kilometer course at Warsaw, Ind. in 19:20.04, defeating the runner-up by nearly a full minute. Crown College, based in Saint Bonifacius, Minn., finished third in the meet with 91 points. Fifty-four runners competed.

Dufault was not the only former Bluejay to run in the meet.

Camille Ring, a freshman, was a member of the third-place Crown team, finishing 47th (36th in team scoring) with a time of 25:15.0. Bob Jones College of Greenville, S.C. finished first with 25 points, followed by Grace Christian of Grand Rapids, Mich. with 83.

Kuhns, Taylor, Hoehn named all-conference for volleyball

Bluejays' Slattery receives honorable mention

The Waseca High School volleyball team had a strong season in the Big South Conference this fall, and the Bluejays were rewarded when it came time to announce the all-conference squad.

The Bluejays, who finished 7-3 in the East Division of the Big South, had three players named all-conferenced and one other receive honorable mention.

Selected all-conference were senior Siri Kuhns, junior Aliyah Taylor and junior Ellie Hoehn. The honorable mention pick was junior Takara Slattery.

The rest of the East Division all-conference team: Abby Maloney 12 St. Peter; Emmy Remmert 11 St. Peter; Riley Rubischko 12 St. Peter; Iris Elias 11 St. Peter; Afton Hulke 12 New Ulm; Alexa Barstad 12 New Ulm; Taylor Klabunde 12 BEA; Grace Pendergast 12 Fairmont; Journey Swanson 10 St. James. Honorable mention: Olivia Seys 11 St. Peter; Gracie Linbo 12 New Ulm; Hailey Becker 12 BEA; Brylee Miller 10 Fairmont; Madi Whitney 12 St. James.

St. Peter finished 10-0 in conference play.

West Division all-conference: Brielle Riess 12 Marshall; Morgan Bjella 12 Marshall; Kennedy Drake 12 Marshall; Reese Drake 10 Marshall; Kendall



Kuhns



Taylor



Hoehn

Huhnerkoch 11 Redwood Valley; Kylee Larsen 12 Redwood Valley; Hailyn Ourada 11 Redwood Valley; Tristyn Maras 12 Windom; Hannah Dauer 11 Windom; Emma Haren 12 JCC; Madison Beckmann 12 Worthington; Morgan Ahrendt 12 Luverne. Honorable mention: Brooke Gillingham 10 Marshall; Cali Johnson 11 Redwood Valley; Charlee Huska 11 Windom; Elese Paplow 12 JCC; Addison Gerber 12 Worthington; Amira Cowell 11 Luverne; Taryn Tuinstra 10 Pipestone.

Marshall was 6-0 in the conference, Redwood Valley 5-1.

A fine start to the season



The 10U Waseca girls' hockey team came away with a first-place finish in a tournament last weekend in Marshall. The girls are coached by Brad Lawson and Jesse Roemhildt. The first-place girls pictured include: Amelia Madsen, Brayleigh Kuball, Charlotte Meister, Chloe Cherro, Halle Casterton, Joslyn Wilblin, Kelsey Lawson, Lauren Tegmeier, Reese Roemhildt, and Violet Farley. Submitted photo

Four Bluejays selected all-conference in girls' soccer

Despite not having great overall numbers, the Waseca Bluejays captured the 2023 Big South Conference girls' soccer championship, and they were honored appropriately with four all-conference selections and two honorable mentions.

Named all-conference were senior midfielder Addison Weiseler, senior forward Evelyn Nydegger, junior midfielder Gabby Lopez and sophomore goalie Ella Bulfer. Receiving honorable mention were senior midfielder/defender Ella Krautkremer and junior defender Lucia Mansfield.

The rest of the all-conference

team: Sam Madden (C), 11, St. Peter, Defender; Baylee Nygard (C), 12, St. Peter, Goalie; Rachel Salfer, 12, St. Peter, Defender; Paige Winkelmann, 11, St. Peter, Midfielder; Hannah Gordon, 12, Marshall, Midfielder; Alexi Schneider, 12, Marshall, Defender; Kaelyn Eikanger (C), 11, New Ulm, Forward; Anna Kramer (C), 12, New Ulm, Midfielder. Honorable mention: Keira Friedrich, 10, St. Peter, Midfielder; Addie Letts, 10, St. Peter, Forward; Anna Kuecker, 12, Marshall, Midfielder; Averi Schneider, 12, Marshall, Forward; Rylee Jacobson, 12, Marshall, Forward; Addison Haynes, 11, New

Ulm, Defender; Yanelle Fernandez, 11, New Ulm, Midfielder; Isabella Larson, 12, Fairmont, Defender; Sara Esquivel (C), 12, Worthington, Midfielder; Mayra Aguilar (C), 12, St. James/Windom/Madelia Midfielder.

The Bluejays finished 10-1-1 in conference play. St. Peter was 9-0-3, Marshall 6-3-3, New Ulm 6-4-2, Fairmont 4-7-1, Worthington 2-10, St. James/Windom/Madelia 0-12.

One Waseca boy received honorable mention all-conference, senior defender Logan Hoyer.

All-conference selections: Jonathan Banegas, 12, Worthington, Forward; Maqui Sandoval, 11,

Worthington, Defender; Hugo Garcia, 12, Worthington, Defender; Carlos Castillo, 11, Worthington, Forward; Moo Gay, 11, Marshall, Forward; Roberto Garcia Lopez, 11, Marshall, Goalie; Mason Graven, 11, Marshall, Midfielder; Dominick Kamrath, 12, New Ulm, Midfielder; Ethan Goff, 12, New Ulm, Goalie; Theodor Myhre, 11, Fairmont, Forward; Aaron Grapla, 12, Fairmont, Defender. Honorable mention: Charles Saydee, 12, Worthington, Midfielder; Mathias Noble, 12, Worthington, Defender; Jared Hernandez, 11, Marshall, Midfielder; Jasiel Flores, 11, Marshall, Defender; Maverick



Weiseler



Nydegger



Lopez



Bulfer

Johnson, 12, New Ulm, Midfielder; Brennan Shaver, 12, New Ulm, Forward; Cole Frederick, 10, New Ulm, Defender; Jack Sadusky, 12, Fairmont, Midfielder; Gerson Revolorio 11 Fairmont Forward; Luke Gilbertson, 12, St. Peter,

Midfielder; Andrei Rivera, 10, St. James/Windom/Madelia, Defender.

Conference standings: Worthington 11-1-0, Marshall 11-1-0, New Ulm 7-4-1, Fairmont 4-7-1, St. Peter 4-8-0, Waseca 3-8-1; St. James/Windom/Madelia 0-11-1.

■ Bell

from Page 1

There was also some confusion: since the fire department used a couple of fire trucks to call attention to their presence, and although it had been publicized in advance on Facebook, some people had the impression there was some sort of emergency at the store.

The police and sheriff departments also brought their vehicles to call attention to the bell ringing.

Police chief Penny Vought, Waseca County sheriff Jay Dulas and fire chief Forshee say they are entering the competition in a spirit of fun and because of their desire to benefit the community. They recall that safety staff enjoyed interacting with community members and “talking smack” among the three departments. But given the very cold day, there were very few long chats outside the store.

“It was more a case of put some

money in the kettle and keep on moving,” remembers Dulas.

In addition to the safety worker challenge, the Waseca County Salvation Army invites anyone who would like to ring the bell outside the Waseca Walmart during the Christmas shopping season—beginning with Black Friday.

Waseca County bell ringers brought in around \$6,000 in 2022: local Salvation Army chapter chair John Petersburg says pretty much all that money was distributed within the county. Area residents received help with emergency needs ranging from shoes for their children to help with utilities and household costs.

Petersburg explains the organization is looking for people or groups to fill two-hour shifts. He offers the idea of having one organization or club issue a challenge to another group. Individuals, couples or families can also sign up: the website registertoring.com offers all needed

information. Once folks are on the schedule, Petersburg or another Salvation Army representative will meet volunteers at Walmart both to deliver and pick up the kettle and the bell(s).

People wishing to donate to Salvation Army can watch for bell ringers outside Walmart, or can find indoor kettles at SPIRE financial and at locations in New Richland and Janesville.

Another good time to drop a few dollars in the kettle, of course, would be December 2, in dual support of the Salvation Army and a chosen safety agency. The sheriff’s department will be at the store from 10 a.m. to noon, the fire department from noon to 2 p.m., and the police department from 2 to 4 p.m. Any flashing lights at the store during those hours will probably not be an emergency, but an attempt to draw in donors. According to fire chief Forshee, his department has a distinct advantage when it comes to lights.

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The lease is for the 2024 crop year. Sealed bids will be accepted until 10 a.m. Friday, December 1, 2023.

Bids should be submitted on a per acre basis to Byron Law Office, PLLC, 122 North State Street, Waseca, MN. Bids can be dropped off, mailed or e-mailed to byronlawofficewaseca@gmail.com. A sample lease is available for review. For more information call 507-835-3355.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
NATIONAL VETERANS & MILITARY FAMILY			1 6pm BAR Bingo	2 7pm BINGO	3 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	4
5	6	7 Burger nite 5-7pm	8 6pm BAR Bingo	9 7pm BINGO	10 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	11 VETERANS DAY
12 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am - Noon Your Host	13 7 PM POST & AUX MEETING	14 Burger nite 5-7pm	15 6pm BAR Bingo	16 7pm BINGO	17 CATFISH MEAL 5:30-7pm Meet Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30	18 Turkey Bingo 7pm
19	20	21 Burger nite 5-7pm	22 6pm BAR Bingo	23 THANKSGIVING DAY	24 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	25
26	27	28 Burger nite 5-7pm	29 6pm BAR Bingo	30 7pm BINGO		

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Lorelei DeRaad



Fresh lineup



Smiling faces



Teachers from Waseca Schools



Katie and Andrew Gonzalez



A great time



Big Winner



Far right, Cecelia and Evelyn Wolfe, both 3 years old



x
x



Connolly Turek



Harper Stencel



Mary Gilson and her children: Elliott, 4; Gracelynn 5; Abigail, 11; Addison, 3; Jaxton, 7; and Izzy, 9.



Clara DeRaad, 5



Pyper Price, 5



Eric Teders, Connolly Turek



Aubrey DeRaad, 9



Charlotte Anderson, 6



Tommy Kramer

Pioneer photos by Deb Bently and Eli Lutgens

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