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Committee members behind the Ellendale mural project took a few moments to enjoy the new artwork, which went up last week next to the Ellendale Café. Pictured with Mayor Matthew Bartsch, center, they are: Gwen Reiss, Barbara Mrotz, councilor Jackie Froman, Cynthia Nelson, Jo Lerberg, and Ed Reiss.

Ellendale mural complete

By JONI HUBRED
Steele County Times

It's (mostly) all over but the paperwork.

Volunteers who have worked more than three years to erect a mural in downtown Ellendale finally saw the original artwork up last week. All that remains is to install a closed cover across the top and LED lighting.

"It looks amazing," Mayor Matthew Bartsch said during a July 16 Community Gathering Place committee meeting.

Albert Lea artist Chandler Anderson painted the historic scene, which features Ellendale's 1900

railroad depot, a train, and a street scene with pioneering citizens Thomas Brown, Ellen Dale Ives and Dr. E.Q. Ertel. The mural was created in sections, which are attached to six large poles.

The effort to replace a faded mural on the side of the Ellendale Café building began with business owner Gwen Reiss, who started fundraising three years ago.

City officials felt the art would be better placed on poles in the city garden, which sits next door to the restaurant. Bartsch said at the time that, "buildings change hands. A new owner might not want it."

While that raised the cost, the

committee was awarded a \$10,000 Southern Minnesota Initiative Fund grant—which came with a deadline. The project had to be finished within a year, which is up in August.

A few details will remain after the cap and lighting are added. The Ellendale Area Heritage Society is funding an interpretive sign that will explain what the mural represents.

Also, committee member Jo Lerberg said, the group needs to think about "how we're going to present this to the community. We can talk about that in the fall."



Members of the Ellendale Ambulance service include, from left: Merisa Thompson, Bethany Boswell, Alexis Bartness, Curt Boswell, Greg Bartsch (Director), Garry Gordinier (treasurer), Chris Stangl, Cody Boverhuis, and Ned Bell. Not pictured: Trudy Nelson, Katie Lamb and Janel Attig-Heideman.

Ellendale Ambulance Service earns 'Excellence Award'

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

The Ellendale Ambulance Service was the recipient of a Certificate of Excellence award for the calendar year 2023 for its service rate of 80% or higher of five or more of the Clinical Advisory Performance Measures by the Minnesota Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board.

"This award is a credit to your organization, leadership, the involvement of your Medical Director, and most of all the exemplary care and documentation performed by your dedicated crew members," a letter from the board reads. "You should be proud of the care that your organization provides to the communities and citizens you serve."

The ambulance service has been around for more than 60 years and the letter and award were celebrated Monday evening, July 22, during the board's regular meeting.

Members of the Ellendale Ambulance service include: Merisa Thompson, Bethany Boswell, Alexis Bartness, Curt Boswell, Greg Bartsch (Director), Garry Gordinier (treasurer), Chris Stangl, Cody Boverhuis, Ned Bell, Trudy Nelson, Katie Lamb and Janel Attig-heide-man.

Below is a copy of the entire letter enclosed with the award:

Dear Ambulance Service Manager,

As you may be aware, in 2022 the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board, in consultation with the Medical Director Standing Advisory Committee, implemented nine different Clinical Advisory Performance Measures. The implementation of these measures was a step towards improving and showcasing the already phenomenal care that is provided across the State of Minnesota every single day.

The EMSRB closely monitors performance related to these measures, and I am pleased to report that your ambulance service has performed at a level worthy of special recognition.

Due to your ambulance service performing at a rate of 80% or higher on five or more of the Clinical Advisory Performance Measures for calendar year 2023, it is my pleasure on behalf of the Board to award you the enclosed Certificate of Excellence.

This award is a credit to your organization, leadership, the involvement of your Medical Director, and most of all the exemplary care and documentation performed by your dedicated crew members. You should be proud of the care that your organization provides to the communities and citizens you serve.

Sincerely,
Dylan J Ferguson
Executive Director, Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board.

Ellendale Heritage Society to meet on August 3

The next meeting of the Ellendale Heritage society will be August 3 in the community building at 9 a.m.

Finly's Wings at Work concert at NR Liquor Aug. 3 at 8 p.m.

Neon Live will be performing from 8 p.m. to midnight on Aug. 3 at New Richland Liquor. All are welcome to attend this concert donated by Finly's Wings at Work. All proceeds will go to the NRHEG teachers with FWA, matching funds up to \$5,000.

Relay for Life event set for Aug. 9-10, Waseca County Relay for life disbanded

The Relay For Life events in Mower County and Waseca County have disbanded, but the spirit of community and support continues as members from these areas join the Freeborn County Relay For Life event—now officially named, Relay For Life of Freeborn-Mower County.

The event is scheduled for August 9-10, 2024 at the Freeborn County Fairgrounds, and welcomes participation from all locations. Groups and individuals from Freeborn, Mower, and

Groskreutz reunion draws more than 100

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

"We're all strangers," admits Jeff Groskreutz. "But we're still family."

Jeff, 69, and his wife Linda lived in Pemberton for 36 years before moving to a home on Lake Washington this summer. "Anyone who knows me," he comments, "knows I love a good story." It seems there's no better place to find them than by studying genealogy.

Jeff has put together a self-published book well over 600 pages long which lists about 11 generations of the Groskreutz family. The back 90 pages are an index of 4,100 names which appear in the book. "What makes my book different from most genealogy books," he observes, "is that I put in a lot of detail.

If I know you raised a 300-pound pumpkin that won a prize at a local contest, I'll put it in."

Thanks to Jeff's research, the Groskreutz family is aware of connections all across the country. Using that collected information, they shared the news that 2024 marks year 150 since Groskreutz ancestors took up residence in Minnesota.

Two brothers, Karl and Gottlieb, arrived shortly after the end of the Civil War, taking up residence on farmland in the area of Waseca County's Matawan in 1869 and 1874. Even today, family members point out, there is a two-mile stretch

Reunion continued on 4



This past weekend, well over 100 members of the Groskreutz family gathered at JR's Barn near Waldorf, owned by Joel and Renee Groskreutz, to celebrate the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of patriarchs Gottlieb and Karl, who who came to Minnesota in 1869 and 1874, respectively.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

Eaton celebrates century mark

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

According to his golfing friends, Kenny Eaton's two years as a drill sergeant carried through to his hobby as a golfer.

"He would call us up and tell us to 'report to the golf course' at a certain time," comments long-time golfing companion Neal Scott, 86, pretending to be offended. "And when it was your turn, you didn't waste time or you'd hear about it."

Rolland Swenson adds that he

would "drive Kenny around," acting as chauffeur in the golf cart co-owned by the three of them.

But any further claims that Kenny, who turned 100 on Friday, July 26, ran a tight ship on the golf course seem difficult to substantiate.

Asked who among them was the better golfer, Rolland admitted, "We usually didn't keep score."

To hear Neal talk, the only score kept was the number of digs each one got in on the others during the 1.5 to 2 hours it would take them to

complete the nine-hole course at New Richland's Riverview Golf Course.

"We would line up, take careful aim...then we'd take another shot," Neal describes. "We used to tell each other, 'Swing harder, maybe you'll hit it this time.'"

"And we'd congratulate each other when the ball would go in the water."

Eaton continued on 3



Longtime golfing threesome of (from left) Neal Scott, 86; Kenny Eaton, 100; and Rolland Swenson, 97, marked Kenny's one-hundredth birthday last week.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

Briefs continued on 12

A word from
The Word

For God gave us a
spirit not of fear but
of power and love
and self-control..

2 Timothy 1:7



FenceLines

by Mark Bernard

Transition to the El Nina pattern

The scurs and the Weather Eye teamed up for another warm, dry week. More of the same or will we get a taste of early September highs in the new month? Starting on Thursday, mostly cloudy with a good chance of showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 70's with lows in the mid-60's. Sunny on Friday with highs in the mid-80's and lows in the mid-60's. Sunny on Saturday with highs in the mid-80's and lows in the mid-60's. Sunday, sunny with a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the low 80's with lows in the low 60's. Mostly sunny on Monday with a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 70's with lows in the mid-60's. Tuesday, partly sunny with a fair chance of developing showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the mid-80's with lows in the mid-60's. Cloudy on Wednesday with a good chance of showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 70's with lows in the low 60's. On August 3rd, we will have lost one hour of daylight since the summer solstice. August 6th, the sun will set at 8:30 p.m. The normal high for August 6th is 80 and the normal low is 60. Come Monday, the scurs will be sleeping off another Freeborn Co. Fair.

Another week of scant precipitation coverage and amounts. After not being able to turn the spigot off in May, June and early July, precipitation has been much harder to come by. Even with all the rain we had, we still need some periodically to help feed the shallow root systems found under many of these plants. Some would say well, we had some heavy rain last year in May too and the crop rooted down well. That's the whole point. It rained early and the root systems had a chance to really anchor the plants well. There was very little sign of root lodging on corn anywhere in this area. More corn has reached blister stage and has pollinated well. Ear size looks OK, although there are places in many fields where there are no ears due to the drown out spots. Most have finished planting into the holes to provide cover and competition for weeds. Soybeans look decent from the road, although we have the month of August that really makes or breaks the crop.

Our weather appears to be following the script as we transition into a La Niña pattern. We likely will see some better rainfall coverage over the next 8 – 14 days, then odds are in favor that it will continue to be dry but warm heading through the months of September and October. That would be a positive for those whose corn and soybeans are uneven, particularly for those with replanted crop. LP prices are relatively reasonable, however, so booking some is still not a bad idea. Something the dry, warm weather probably won't help with is the relatively hard soil. If you've attempted to dig holes or work any ground, it is often like a brick. Dry soil could mean wearing points on primary tillage implements more rapidly. Some rain prior to harvest would help alleviate that situation as well, although it will need to be more general than it's been. I figured the other night if I watered the small garden I could make it rain. It did, but not very much. Probably should've watered the big garden instead.

Doing chores is generally a pretty mundane experience. Hauling pails, feed pans, slices of hay and occasionally bedding isn't exactly the most exciting experience, but it's a necessary one unless you want to wind up on the 10 o'clock news for animal abuse. Every once in a while there's something in a water bucket that needs attention. Most

of the time it came out of the rear end of a sheep, but other times it is or was alive. The latter would include expired rodents such as mice and rats or the occasional house sparrow. There are those creatures that thrive in water and that would include frogs and toads. Monday morning brought a newcomer to the list, however. When I looked in the water bucket and saw something black in it, it wasn't instantly recognizable. Closer inspection revealed it to be a salamander swimming laps. I've seen them in the well pit and of course crossing the roads towards fall, but this was a personal first. As they say, there's a first time for everything.

Three blushing tomatoes made it in the house before something decided to wreck them. When our tomatoes were planted, they were essentially no tilled into some fairly wet soil, even though it was one of the driest areas we had. They've done well and best of all, there's no blossom end rot on any of those specimens, something that seems to happen on those earlier tomatoes. There are also many more setting, so given some cooler nights, we should be just getting started. Even the peppers I wrote off weeks ago look as though they may amount to something if our season runs long enough. I planted some fall garden on Sunday, hoping to catch a rain. I didn't, but the snap peas and winter radishes can lie there a few days before a rain or an assist from the garden hose. If there's time, I'll probably put some fall greens and some of the typical spring type radishes in. They do equally as well in the fall and seem to take advantage of the cooler nights by adding some additional sweetness to their firepower.

The bird population is showing signs of transitioning at the ranch. The orioles are still coming to the jelly feeder, but more sporadically. Fewer full colored male Baltimore types, but did see a male orchard oriole in full plumage Tuesday morning. Goldfinches too are less numerous. They pick away at the thistle feeders from time to time. When I was picking some cattails for Mrs. Cheviot, I noticed a lot of them hanging out in the CREP acreage. There has been a Cooper's hawk perusing the yard recently and it's an unwelcome visitor. The blue jays sound the alarm and within seconds there are barn swallows and kingbirds chasing the intruder off. The hummingbirds are seen occasionally, but not like some years. I suspect as we move into August that will change as they start migrating through from points north. Swallows are gathering on powerlines in places, especially east of St. Olaf Lake. It won't be long and they'll be gone.

While Poppy has spent some extended time in the kennel, she's also had longer stretches out of it as well. Gardening continues to be one of her favorite pastimes. She even likes to eat the string beans when they start to appear on the plants. We've had a fair amount of visitor traffic including 4-H kids and parents as well as some overnight guests. This gives her a chance to experience more and different people, hopefully to learn how to behave in a more appropriate fashion. Corgis aren't Border Collies as we continue to discover. There needs to be more repetition in order to get commands to sink in. Getting Poppy to stay down and not jump on people has been taking some time. When something is that cute, it's hard not to allow it. If everyone's on the same page though, eventually the light bulb will come on. As they say what goes up must come down.

See you next week...real good then.

This is a shortened column

Maybe it's my age. Okay, it's probably my age.

I can watch or listen to a baseball game and be enjoying myself when there it is: "His velo is down this game." And then I sigh.

Just say velocity. Why is that so difficult? It's two more syllables. Are we in that much of a hurry that we have to spare a half second? I know the pitch clock gives announcers less time to talk between pitches, but come on.

So I sent myself down a rabbit hole, looking up other terms that are shortened, grumbling as I did so. But then I discovered just how much I do this regularly.

I don't often, or ever, ask someone if they saw that cool advertisement on TV. Neither do you. You are watching an ad, the same as those annoying ones that pop up on your phone or tablet when you're trying to play a game.

Speaking of those devices, how many applications do you have downloaded? If you're squinting in confusion, I'm referring to the apps, which seems like the much more likely way you talk about them. You probably got them from a site that was recommended. Okay, sometimes we still say website.

However, when thinking about downloading things, I'm reminded of a word that was abbreviated for a time, but seems to have rebounded to the full word. We use the internet every day. For a time, it was referred to as the net, but that seems to have



Whatever Flips Your Waffle

by Mark Domeier
Contributing Writer

reverted in recent years.

Some I don't feel like using are ones I hear often from my students. I do not have a convo with Mr. Ferber and Mr. Larson between classes. Nope, we have conversations, and are they ever stimulating! We still solve the world's problems four minutes at a time!

Too often, I hear people referred to as bro or brah. First, this seems in opposition to the gender equity sought by so many as far as how we refer to ourselves and others. Second, there are only three people who can call me bro on this planet, and even my sisters don't do that.

If the food I eat is very good, I will say it's delicious. No delish for this guy. I also don't look at something really great and say it's fab. I probably don't use fabulous much either, but that would be my preferred choice.

I do take my meds. They seem pretty legit. The info I got said it was best to take them. However, I don't even need an ID to procure the drugs. Hmm, there are plenty of words I shorten when I speak or write such as medications, legitimate, information, and identification.

I work at a school. Quite often, I refer to the principals and superintendent as our admin. That's generally used just when I'm talking about plural people in charge. I try not to miss much time at my job, but when I do, there is a list of subs to take my place. They have to be legit to work in my classroom, but I have to prep for their arrival. My administration approves the substitutes who are legitimate so I can best prepare to be gone.

I miss umping games, but my foot just won't allow me to squat so much. However, I can still ref football and basketball, which gives me much joy. It still happens, but it's not as often that you'll hear someone talk about the umpire or referee. It's much easier to shorten things when you're upset with the job they're doing!

If I did ump again, I'd probably have to do some rehab after to keep my plantar fasciitis from flaring up too much. There would be a lot of reps of stretches and other exercises to do that. The repetitions of the rehabilitation might take longer than saying the whole words.

Reps is a funny one. It can actually

Late night conversations with Tink

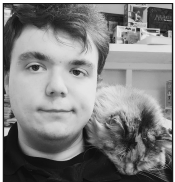
Lately, Tink Larson and I have been exchanging emails between 1 and 2 a.m.

He sends in results from Braves baseball around then, which is when I am often just finishing my work. That makes it easy for me to send a spontaneous reply.

That I am receiving sports results came about because my dad has a hard time with technology and so, sometimes, he can't find the emails from Tink. So Tink asked me if I could respond to his emails; that way he has confirmation of which emails he's sent or maybe an indication he may have forgotten about one.

I'm very grateful Tink stays on top of these things. Some folks in the younger generations (and older) don't understand how important it is to take care of the extra little things. In this case, for sports.

Publicity helps promote the program, which in turn, hopefully helps it grow. Doing team gatherings, practicing together—all of it builds camaraderie for a team. I cannot stress enough that going the extra mile with extra tasks is what keeps local sports groups, programs and small communities as a whole not only surviving, but thriving. When folks start letting things like that slip away, they stop happening; after that, the program, or worst case, the community,



Just a Thought...

by Eli Lutgens

dies a little.

For example, NRHEG baseball saw a slip when Jeff Reese retired. The program is still recovering today. Now, former students he once coached are heavily involved in the program and he himself has returned. NRHEG hasn't had a Legion program for a number of years; now it's finally looking like the upcoming groups will bring it back in the coming season.

I think of the Carlie Wagner years of basketball. Carlie inspired powerful excitement in the youth program which she continues to give back to. That enthusiasm strengthened the basketball program for years to come. Benefits are still felt today.

Anyway, back to Tink. It appears we are both night owls; the conversations we have are quite nice. I was not able to attend Braves games this year due to other obligations, an unfortunate circumstance I warned Tink about before the season. I'm

grateful for these back and forth communications and again glad he puts in the effort to communicate. I really enjoy speaking with him.

This week we talked about the latest game with Waterville, which ended with the Waterville coach making a second trip to the mound. It seems the Waterville team was unaware of the rule in baseball which states that, if a coach makes a second trip to the mound to speak to a pitcher, the team must make a pitching change.

The other team wanted the Braves to let it slide, but that's not how rules work. Tink presented the point that, if the Braves had sent up an illegal batter, he would have been called out.

I've known the rule about two trips to the mound since I was 12 years old. Tink and I both agreed, kids today don't watch baseball. It seems as if, in general, people watch less baseball today. To try and adapt,

be short for three very different words: repetitions, represent, and representative. I was recently elected to the governing board of Education Minnesota, so I will be a rep repping my fellow teachers.

Back to sports. A couple of terms irked me a bit at the end of the college basketball season. We followed the MSU men's and women's teams since Anton was playing with the pep band, and we knew local connections on each team with the Willingham boys from Waseca and Joey Batt from New Ulm with her grandparents hailing from the Bath area. I heard players talking about their uni, which I thought could be short for uniform, but was actually referencing their university.

When both teams won the national title, they called it the natty. I also heard that at the Division I level. They each got the dub in the final game. Sometimes, they say W, which is actually three syllables and not really about shortening when talking about a win.

Maybe I shouldn't get my undies in a bunch and just accept this vocab as part of life. Maybe I'll eventually synch with the current trends. Maybe.

Word of the Week: This week's word is grunted, which means happy or content (and is both shortened and the opposite of disgruntled!), as in, "The student was grunted when their teacher started to speak more like them." Impress your friends and confuse your enemies!

major league baseball has implemented new rules, including a pitch clock, to speed up games. It really has helped speed up the pace. I, for one, enjoy high school and college sports more than professionals. The amateurs seem more genuine, less calculating. To quote my favorite move, it's, "for the love of the game," not a job.

Tink and I were having another email exchange the other night. Though I had planned to, I was unable to attend Wednesday's home playoff game because of the funeral of my Grandpa Ray Rosacker.

During that exchange, I mentioned to Tink that it truly is a small world, since Uriah Possin, a fellow player, also served as a pallbearer at the funeral. I had run into Uriah the week prior when I stopped to visit Grandpa on a Saturday.

Here is the response I got from Tink: "It's a small world many times. That's why I say to never cheat on your spouse unless you are willing to be caught and willing to suffer the consequences. If you do, at some point you will run into someone you wish you wouldn't have seen at that time and you will have a hard time convincing them that the lady you are with is a long lost cousin."

Thank you, Tink, for the life lessons.

Dear Editor,

It is with thankful hearts and great appreciation to the people in our local communities for the overwhelming support of the inclusive playground we are building in Ellendale at the elementary school playground! The donations from the parades in both Ellendale and New Richland will go towards the fund to pull the goal of this playground closer to the second stage. We have already ordered some equipment for the first stage of the project that we hope to begin building in the spring of 2025! If you or your organization would like to donate for this project,



you can do so by sending your donation to:

Ellendale Community Action Group; P.O. Box 218, Ellendale, MN, 56026
or
Inclusive Playground Fund; c/o Karla Christopherson; NRHEG Public Schools; 306 Ash Ave. South; New Richland, MN, 56072

NRHEG
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and the communities of Waseca, Otisco, Hope, Clarks Grove, Matawan, Freeborn and Waldorf

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Address: 128 North Broadway, PO Box 248, New Richland, MN 56072

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Compostings

by Al Batt

What President had the shortest term?

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING
I added a skylight to my condo. I’ll bet you’re enjoying it.
I am, but I don’t think the people living in the condo above me are.

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE
I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Deep thoughts occur as I drive past his drive. I was trying to carpe a diem, so I picked the lint out of my belly button. Keith Richards had outlived Richard Simmons, so I knew anything was possible. I was grunted, thanks to seeing lightning bugs. I love fireflies. They make me high-five happy. It’s nice to see someone is using their blinkers. Technology has extended the lifespan of light-bulbs, but the Centennial Light bulb in a fire station in the San Francisco Bay Area has been shining since 1901 and outlasts modern bulbs. The light shines for 24 hours a day, and was first installed in a cart house when fire hoses traveled by carts, not by trucks. The bulb’s survival is likely because of good craftsmanship. Unlike the standard thin tungsten filaments, the hand-blown thick glass of this bulb contains a durable carbon filament. It’s filled with nitrogen gas, which is gentler than the argon and krypton gas used in later incandescents. Leaving it on 24/7 contributes to its longevity, since turning a light on and off can damage the filament. Its amazing story falls short of that of the firefly, which produces a chemical reaction inside its body that allows it to light up. This type of light production is called bioluminescence. Fireflies create light in their abdomens by combining oxygen, calcium, adenosine triphosphate, and luciferin in the presence of luciferase. A firefly is a crackjack chemist. Unlike that light bulb, which produces heat in addition to light, the firefly’s glow is a cold light with little energy lost as heat. If a firefly’s light-producing organ got as hot as a light bulb, the firefly wouldn’t survive the experience.

ASK AL
“What is the rule of thumb?” Don’t hit it with a hammer.
“What can I do about my fear of lettuce?” Romaine calm.
“Why do so many people dislike mimes?” It’s because mimes do unspeakable things.
“What tea is the hardest to swallow?” Reality.
“What president had the shortest term?” Grover Cleveland, he was the twenty-second president.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT
Sit in the corner if you’re cold. Most corners are 90 degrees.
Who is Tinkerbell’s smarter sister? Thinkerbell.
If Hobbits can’t live here, is it inHobbitable?
What do you call 2000 mockingbirds? Two kilo mockingbird.
When I look at a map, I look up to Canada.
What are two pairs of pliers called? Multipliers.
Why does Smokey the Bear have flat feet? To stamp out forest fires. Why do ducks have flat feet? To stamp out forest fires. Why do elephants have flat feet? To stamp out flaming ducks.

NATURE NOTES
I watched a ruby-throated hummingbird feeding. Pound for pound, a hummingbird isn’t. The miniature marvel weighs less than a #2 wooden pencil, a marshmallow or an AA battery.
After swallows finish nesting, they gather in pre-migratory focus groups on utility wires in late July. They chatter excitedly about the gift of another day before starting a meeting without a single doughnut. It’s a session with the purpose of planning for migration, including air travel tips, handling hawk emergencies, and whether to eat dragonflies with wings on or off. The young stay with their parents during a diurnal migration undertaken by a flock. They leave here July-September so they can feed on flying insects, with some swallows flying as far as Argentina.

LEFT-HANDED PENCILS
There are days when everything is like driving down a washboard gravel road in an ancient vehicle, which, with careful driving, I’m able to hit every bump and feel every ensuing rattle and shutter. That can put a kink in a day. That’s when I need something different. Something like pickled radishes. The secret is in the eating. Or a left-handed pencil. You may be surprised to learn that pencils have hands. Well, they don’t. On an ordinary pencil, the text runs from

the tip to the head, making it the right way up when held in the right hand. That’s upside down for southpaws and portsideers. If you’re right-handed, you’ve likely never noticed that most pencils are designed for you. A left-handed pencil appears the right way up when held in the left hand. The percentage of the US population that is lefthanded is 10.9%, and the worldwide average is 10.6%.

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Why does Smokey the Bear have flat feet? To stamp out forest fires. Why do ducks have flat feet? To stamp out forest fires. Why do elephants have flat feet? To stamp out flaming ducks.

NATURE NOTES
I watched a ruby-throated hummingbird feeding. Pound for pound, a hummingbird isn’t. The miniature marvel weighs less than a #2 wooden pencil, a marshmallow or an AA battery.
After swallows finish nesting, they gather in pre-migratory focus groups on utility wires in late July. They chatter excitedly about the gift of another day before starting a meeting without a single doughnut. It’s a session with the purpose of planning for migration, including air travel tips, handling hawk emergencies, and whether to eat dragonflies with wings on or off. The young stay with their parents during a diurnal migration undertaken by a flock. They leave here July-September so they can feed on flying insects, with some swallows flying as far as Argentina.

LEFT-HANDED PENCILS
There are days when everything is like driving down a washboard gravel road in an ancient vehicle, which, with careful driving, I’m able to hit every bump and feel every ensuing rattle and shutter. That can put a kink in a day. That’s when I need something different. Something like pickled radishes. The secret is in the eating. Or a left-handed pencil. You may be surprised to learn that pencils have hands. Well, they don’t. On an ordinary pencil, the text runs from

Hagens talk potential plans for church

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff Writer

During their July 22 meeting, New Richland city council members heard from area residents Ethan and Angel Hagen regarding the former First Congregational Church of New Richland, which was recently vacated by its congregation. The Hagens are considering acquiring the building and renovating it to become an event center. They asked council members for guidance and assistance in finding funding, including grants and other concessions. Said Hagen, “Our main focus is to keep the life of this church going. Using the church as an event center will help keep business in town.” Among possible events, Hagen listed live bands, funerals, weddings, and dances. The first step, Hagen said, is to bring the building up to code, including the kitchen, which is currently ineligible to prepare food for the general public; until the facility is renovated, all food would have to be brought in

from elsewhere.
The assessed value of the First Congregational Church is \$563,000; property taxes are about \$10,000 per year. Council members told the Hagens they support the idea of repurposing the building, and suggested they might acquire useful information by meeting with the planning and zoning committee, which might be able to offer suggestions regarding grants and other forms of assistance.
New Richland Care Center administrator Bob Johannsen reported the center currently has 40 residents, with the expectation of three more arriving in the near future. The facility continues to advertise in an effort to recruit new staff, but new applications have been limited. Johannson said he is in the process of drafting a recruitment and retention plan. The center has a family picnic planned for Friday, Aug 2. Music will begin at 3 p.m.; a 5 p.m. meal will be provided by the Red Leaf Café.

NEW RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL

The waste treatment plan reported some of the complications caused by June’s heavy rains. Because of inflow to the wastewater treatment system. Over the month, more than 17 million gallons of water came through the processing plant; roughly half that amount was processed while about the same amount was “released” into the storm water system when the plant’s capacity was exceeded. The releases conform to allowed practices; samples were taken to determine levels of bacteria in the storm sewer system after releases. Council members approved a \$1,500 request from wastewater plant manager Shell Johnson to purchase a new washer and dryer for use at the plant.

Street maintenance supervisor Eric Hendrickson submitted a written re-

port listing recently completed tasks. These included regular maintenance of Legion field, City Park, City Hall, City Shop, Library, Water Plant, and St. Olaf Lake park. Preparations were performed for Farm and City days. Volunteers Chloe Stork, Faith Phillips, Wyatt Hendrickson, and Eli Hendrickson assisted with painting bleachers at Legion Field.
Council members were informed the pavilion at Legion Field Pavilion needs maintenance and a new roof. Council members requested estimates for various roofing options before proceeding. An area organization has offered to pay half the cost of improvements up to \$10,000.
Council members were advised the county has scheduled a meeting of area township boards and city councils to discuss issues developing around the regulation of cannabis businesses. The meeting will be the evening of Monday, Aug. 19.

■ Eaton from Page 1

“We had our own way of playing golf,” he admits.
The three would play on Tuesdays and Fridays, usually quite early in the day, starting around 7:30 a.m.
Kenny’s oldest son Steve suggests they had to play at that time so their shenanigans didn’t annoy golfers who took their game more seriously.
Until retiring from the game about two years ago, the threesome had been playing together for more than 20 years. But the whole business started 30 years before that with more of a “ninesome.” The trio names a whole group of players who were fellow members at Vista Covenant Church and who came and went over time: Floyd Calhoun, Sid Bishop, Pastor Steve Johnson, Pastor Dick Williams, Ole Roesler and Roland Peterson.
The “ninesome” was apparently only a bit more serious about the game than the three came to be. Neal remembers one player as “the hummer.”

“You’d line up to shoot,” he says, again with mock offense, “and he’d start to hum, just to get you off your game.”
Despite the horsing around, the digs, and the apparent indifference to the polite rules of play, Kenny says their time on the golf course had rich significance. He says he fell in love with the game “from the first time I hit that ball.”
“It just seemed to go forever. It was almost magical.”
Kenny and his wife Harriet, who have been married 78 years, now reside in a senior living community in Faribault. He still owns the 300-acre farm about a mile east of Otisco where he and Harriet established their home in the 1950s, and where they raised their five children. He was still part of its operation at 90; three grandnephews now farm there.
The couple’s offspring, currently ranging in age from 76 to 61, remember many changes over time.
“I helped with the [dairy] cattle until I was 12 or 13,” remembers firstborn Steve, who recalls there were 30 head. “Dad knew all of their names,” he comments. “And some of them weren’t very flattering.”
The cattle were sold in the mid-1960s. Kenny said it was a strategic move: the money from the sale helped with the purchase of additional farmland. He recalls he had carefully calculated whether having



The threesome of Neal Scott, Kenny Eaton and Rolland Swenson golfed together for more than 20 years.

more acreage would bring him the income he needed “without having to keep the cattle.” He had also determined farming the extra land might not leave him time to run the dairy operation.
Whether with or without livestock, though, Kenny might claim farming is in his blood. He was raised as one of five children on an area farm.
“It’s all I ever wanted to do,” he says simply.
He comments it is both physically and mentally demanding to operate a farm. “You’ve got to love it with your whole heart,” he comments. When his sons point out he never pressured them to follow in his footsteps, he repeats the statement.
Kenny was 17 when Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941. As he finished out his teen years, he was deferred from the draft because he was performing the essential job of raising food on the home front. Still, by 1944, he says “I felt I should serve the nation.”
He reported to basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama.
Son-in-law Ted Johnson remembers Kenny sharing the story with him on a recent walk. “You were all running up a hill carrying a 40-pound pack on your backs,” Johnson repeats. “And one fellow couldn’t make it up the hill.”
“So you picked his pack up and carried it, too.”
“That’s when they decided to make you a drill sergeant.”
“I was really lucky,” observes Kenny. “I stayed right there for the rest of the war. A lot of the fellows who went overseas came back in a box.”
Another element of luck occurred shortly after the war ended and

Kenny was back on home turf. He took his pickup to the free outdoor movies which were shown in Otisco at that time. So he didn’t have to sit on the ground, he set the seat cushion from his truck on the grass. “This girl came by and asked me to let her sit on it,” he recalls. “And I ended up on the ground after all.”
But, “By the end of the night, I had asked her for a date.”
The two of them married in 1946. They purchased their first farmland in 1950. Among her children’s strongest recollections of Harriet’s role on the farm was “making sure the farmers were fed.”
“And not only farmers,” says Steve. “If you were on the property at meal time, you got a meal.”
Although he had not been much of a church-goer in his youth, Kenny became a member at Vista Covenant, where Harriet’s name continued to be posted on the “cradle roll” past the time her own children were in cradles. When the couple received an invitation to attend a Billy Graham revival held in Austin in the 1950s, they not only attended but ended up in a group which went on a boat ride with Graham.
The weekend’s message “changed my life,” states Kenny. He never again performed fieldwork on Sundays and has placed strong emphasis on his faith ever since.
Of being a drill sergeant, Kenny refuses to acknowledge the infamous harsh behavior associated with the role. “You had to get up before everyone else,” he observes. “You had to make sure everything was ready. Then you had to let people know what was expected.”
His family members say the habit of “letting others know what was ex-

pected” has been a central element. Not that Kenny bossed others around, but he has always placed a high value on physical fitness. Family lore has it that, although he was in his eighties at the time, he regularly taught children how to perform cartwheels while serving as a volunteer counselor at Lake Beauty Bible Camp in the northern part of the state. Perhaps not surprisingly, the campers in his group also tended to win the “cleanest cabin” award.
His children also mention that shared family vacations—which came to include as many as 57 people—pretty much always included elements of fitness. Son-in-law Ted describes up to 50 people being “roped into” sit-up contests which led to the other, exhausted participants watching and talking among themselves as Kenny continued long after they had stopped. He recalls a record of 211 consecutive sit-ups.
“He had tremendous perseverance,” remembers son Brian. “He just would not stop.”
Of those contests, and perhaps of other elements of his life, Kenny says, “Sure, I could’ve taken things easier. I’ve just always been a hard worker; it’s what made sense to me.”
Even now in the retirement residence, Kenny has marked off a distance one mile in length and walks it two or three times a day.
“He’s been a great role model and a great dad,” commented Brian. “He showed us a good path.”
Son Steve recalls an exchange that would take place almost daily at the breakfast table. “Dad would say to Mom, ‘Guess what? We have another day.’
“He has always been positive, always grateful for what he has.”





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OBITUARIES

Lois Bushlack

In loving memory of Lois Louise Bushlack, a devoted homemaker and beloved mother, whose earthly journey came to a peaceful close on July 24, 2024, surrounded by her cherished family in Waseca, MN. Born in Wells, MN on August 28, 1938, Lois leaves behind a beautiful legacy of love and laughter that will forever live on.

Lois was known for her quick wit and playful sense of humor, always ready with a joke to bring a smile to those around her. As a protective mother, she dedicated her life to the well-being and happiness of her children, Doug, Mike, Lori and their families. Her joy knew no bounds when spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, sharing stories and creating lasting memories with each generation.

Throughout her life, Lois found solace and contentment in the simple pleasures - from winters spent in Mesa, AZ, making cherished memories, to fishing adventures in Northern Minnesota, where she found peace in the tranquility of the water. These moments were a reflection of her inner spirit, always seeking joy in the present and creating a sense of warmth and comfort for those she loved.

A public visitation to honor Lois's life was held at All Saints Catholic Church on July 31, 2024, starting at 9 a.m. Following the visitation, a funeral service was held at the same location at 11 a.m. The community was welcomed to join in celebrating Lois's life and offering condolences to her family during this time of remembrance.

As a final farewell, Lois was laid to rest at Calvary Cemetery in New Richland, MN, on July 31, 2024 at 12:15 pm, where she will find eternal peace and serenity in the embrace of nature she so dearly loved.

In the hearts of those who knew her, Lois's spirit will forever remain a beacon of love, laughter, and unwavering protection. May



Lois Bushlack

her legacy inspire kindness and joy in the lives of all she touched. Rest in peace, dear Lois Louise Bushlack.

She leaves to cherish her memory her loving children, Doug (Mary) Bushlack and Lori (Rodney) Born; daughter in law, Laurie Bushlack; grandchildren, Jessica (Adam) Hollerich, Eli Bushlack (Shana Andersen), Brevin Bushlack, Brie Bushlack, and Christy Jo Born; great-grandchildren, Isabel Hollerich, Freya, Rayna and Rue Bushlack; and a host of family and friends.

Lois was preceded in death by her parents Albert and Marie Schulz; her loving husband of 56 years, James E. Bushlack; son, Mike Bushlack; grandson, Jake Bushlack; sister, Karen Bleess; brothers, Norman Schulz and Bruce Schulz; and her bonus son, Tim Voight.

The family received guests on Wednesday, July 31, 2024 at All Saints Catholic Church, 307 1st St. SW, New Richland, MN 56072 for visitation at 9 a.m. Funeral Mass began at 11 a.m. with burial to follow at Calvary Cemetery. A fellowship luncheon will follow immediately after at the church.

In lieu of flowers the family ask that you make a donation in Lois' memory to Mayo Hospice.

Nadine Scheffert

NADINE CAROL SCHEFFERT, age 95, of rural Waseca, died on Sunday, July 28, 2024 at Whispering Creek in Janesville with her family by her side.

Born on April 11, 1929 in Iosco Township, Waseca County, she was the daughter of W.A. and Charlotte (Stoering) Mittelsteadt. Nadine was baptized as an infant on May 5, 1929, and later confirmed in her Lutheran faith as a youth on April 6, 1941 at St. John Lutheran Church in Iosco Township. She received her education at Janesville Public Schools, graduating with the class of 1947, and continued her education in Le Center where she went through

teachers training. Nadine taught in country schools for four years in rural Waseca County. On October 3, 1951, Nadine was united in marriage to Ivan Scheffert at Trinity Lutheran Church in Janesville. Together they made their home on the farm in Wilton Township where they raised their family and farmed together for 50 years. Nadine continued to make the farm her home after Ivan passed away in 2002.

Nadine was a homemaker and enjoyed reading, gardening, cooking, baking, crocheting and spending time with her family and friends. She was a faithful member of First Lutheran Church in Waldorf where she taught Sunday School and was active

with Ladies Aid.

Nadine is survived by her daughters: Maxine and her husband Glenn "Denny" Hoehn and Marlene and her husband, Loren Schoenrock, both of New Richland; four grandchildren: Leah (Ryan) Owens, Chad (Jena) Schoenrock, Brady (Chrissy) Hoehn and Ryan (Taylor) Hoehn; eleven great grandchildren: Lily, Elsie and Analiese Owens, James, Ivan and Connor Schoenrock, Kinsley and Hadley Hoehn and Calvin, Archer and Violet Hoehn; sister-in-law, LaDonna Herbst; brother-in-law, Eugene (Mary) Scheffert; several nieces, and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her husband of 50 years; parents;

brothers and their spouses: Gordon (Edna) Mittelsteadt and Harvey (Naomi) Mittelsteadt; sister-in-law, Jeanette Scheffert; brother-in-law, Ralph Herbst.

Funeral Service will be 11 a.m. on Friday, August 2, 2024 at First Lutheran Church in Waldorf with Rev. Larry Sipe, officiating. Interment will be in the church cemetery. Visitation will begin at 9:30 a.m. and continue until the time of the service at the church on Friday.

Nadine's family would like to extend a special thank you to the caregivers of Whispering Creek and St. Croix Hospice for the care that Nadine received

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■ Reunion

from Page 1

of road where all the homesteads belong to a Groskreutz.

"The story, right or wrong," relates Jeff, "Is that they came for two main reasons. One is that, since they weren't the oldest sons, they were not in line to inherit any land from their father back in Germany. Young men were also at risk of being drafted as soldiers in the regional wars taking place in Europe at the time.

"Also, once Gottlieb was here, he wrote letters to his younger brother Karl. He told him there was land available, and the grass was so thick and tall it was up to the cow's knees.

"Gottlieb even paid the cost to bring Karl and his family across the ocean and to Minnesota."

The stories grow from there.

Jeff explains that about a year ago, a committee was formed to plan this year's gathering, which took place on Saturday, July 27, and Sunday, July 28. Though not all who came attended for both days, a total of about 125 people signed up to take part at Waldorf area event center JR's Barn. The facility is owned by Joel and Renee Groskreutz.

Those who came the farthest, according to Jeff, traveled from Illinois and Massachusetts.

Someone whose journey was "long" in the figurative sense was Apple Valley bodybuilder and weightlifter Matt Thompson, 44.

Thompson's mother estranged herself from her Groskreutz family before he was born, and went on to live a tragic life which included mental illness and addiction. "She had no idea how to be a mother," Thompson said of her. She died in 2019; only as Thompson was sorting through her papers did he learn of his connection to the Groskreutz name.

When he was contacted to attend the reunion, he said he found the idea exciting. "I had no idea how wide and deep the roots are," he commented.

Activities on Saturday included a tour of the Waldorf area farm currently owned by Russell Groskreutz. The property is still in the family from the time when Karl and Gottlieb first arrived.

Group members also visited the St. Paul cemetery, where many members of the family line are buried. Planning committee members had even gone to the trouble of marking the graves with small, numbered flags. The number indicated what page of the genealogy book the individual is featured on.

For quick reference, those in attendance could refer to a "family tree" chart which showed the lines of descent; the chart was about 8 feet square, and was made by Linda, with technical assistance from Jeff.

"I really have to thank my wife," Jeff said of Linda numerous times. "She puts up with me and all my shenanigans." He credits her with devoting more than eight hours to making the giant chart, helping plan the activities, moving furniture to set up arrangements in JR's Barn, and being a better angler than he is.

After the tours, family members gathered back at JR's Barn for a potluck supper. The evening ended with



Members of the Groskreutz family enjoyed musical entertainment while they ate a potluck meal provided the evening of Saturday, July 27, 2024.

Star Eagle photos by Deb Bently

a barn dance; musicians were members of the Groskreutz family.

Sunday's events included a morning divine service, a catered meal, and time set aside for independent area tours.

Among the stories shared was how one Groskreutz farm was located within Matawan "party line" phone service. The neighboring Groskreutz received service from Wells. To save money, the families jury-rigged wiring between their phones.

Another story was of the five farms in a row, "If a letter came addressed to 'R. Groskreutz' at Rt. 2," remembers Russell, "the mailman would put the letter in the first box in line. If it was the wrong R. Groskreutz, they would put it back in the mailbox. The next day, the mailman would take it to the next mailbox, until they found the right person."

In JR's Barn, owner Joel Groskreutz pointed to the large number "1912" painted on one of the beams. He told how, when the barn was first erected, the preacher of the family church came and blessed it; after the ceremony, the year was painted on the beam.

One of Jeff's favorite stories is of Jeff and Bonnie Groskreutz couple who took their "three on the tree" vehicle to Texarkana, Texas, on their honeymoon back before the days of interstate highways. When the starter went out, they had too little money to get it fixed. Instead, they made a point of parking their car at the top of a steep hill each evening, making it possible to put it in gear, set it rolling, and get it started each morning.

Jeff remembers that, during his childhood, some of the older family members still used German as their home language.

"The children started learning English when they went to school," he said. He still remembers his father and grandfather sometimes acting as a translator for his great-grandfather, Carl.

A "tour" of sorts was available right on the lawn of JR's Barn. Family members brought a row of tractors—many of them refurbished—once purchased new by ancestors.

Two of the oldest were McCormick-Deerings made in 1929. One had been sold to a tractor collector decades ago. The collector had gone



Area resident Russ Groskreutz next to the 1929 McCormick-Deering tractor purchased new by his father. The cab and a number of mechanical features were added over time.

on to repair the broken transmission, bring the engine back to operational condition, and restore its paint to the original appearance. When the Groskreutz family contacted the collector to see whether the tractor could be borrowed for the reunion, they received the surprise news the collector was downsizing and would be willing to sell it. Matt Groskreutz and his father Dale bought it.

Also on display was a much tougher-looking tractor which had remained in the family the entire time. It had been stored indoors, but had otherwise not been given any special attention—except for the many modifications made by Joel's grandfather when it was in use. He had built a wooden cab and added nu-

merous features using automotive parts.

"He should have been an engineer," said Joel of his grandfather's ingenuity.

Anyone curious about the stories collected surrounding Groskreutz family history, or about some of the many stories which have been recorded, can visit Jeff Groskreutz's YouTube Channel "Groskreutz family videos" or access the family Facebook page—permission from Jeff may be needed, since the genealogy pages are private.

Jeff also mentions there may be another reunion in 2026, when the Russell Groskreutz farm will be eligible for classification as a 150-year family farm.

Ryan Johnson

Ryan Larry Johnson, affectionately known as "Juner," age 65, of Ellendale, passed away on Saturday, July 20, 2024 at his home.

Juner was a man of many talents. He could master anything he set his mind to achieve. As a skilled and meticulous woodworker, he generously donated his creations to local benefits and organizations, especially those that contributed to children during the Christmas season. Juner had a fun sense of humor and his "stand-up" act included him telling the stories of The Three Little Pigs, The Alphabet and Cinderella in his own unique way. He enjoyed golf, pool, hunting, fishing, brain challenging puzzles, the Vikings, the Twins and being with family and friends.

He began his working career on the Railroad and then became a rural mail carrier in the Albert Lea area.

Ryan is survived by his brothers, Rick (Beckie), Rollie (Cheryl), and Ross "Poke" Johnson; sister, LuAnn (Brad) Prescher; a sister-in-law, Jolee Lee; uncle, Don (Gail) Johnson; and a host of nephews, nieces, cousins, family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Gerald Johnson; brothers, Ron and Roger



Ryan Johnson

Johnson; and nephew, Avery.

Juner was well known and well-loved in the community he loved of Ellendale that embraced him and appreciated all he had to offer.

The Family of Ryan "Juner" Johnson would like to thank you for the kind expressions and comforting words through this difficult time.

A memorial service will be held, Friday August 2 at 2 p.m. at Vibrant Life Assembly of God Church Ellendale, 702 3rd St. S. The family will receive friends at a visitation to begin at 1 p.m. and at a luncheon following the service.

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Staff members from numerous agencies support the Drug Court program. Acknowledged during a July 16 celebration of the program’s tenth anniversary were (Front, from left) Kaiya Martin, Kate Hendrickson, Rachel Cornelius, Scott Wolfe; (Back, from left) Mary Ulrich, MacKenzie Weis, Daniel Frenk, Scott Hanson, Scott Cody, Robert Jarret, Nicole Grams, Rusty Hardeman, Perry Berg, Judge Carol Hanks, Judge Joseph Buettel. Team members not pictured include David Wright, Kris Markesen, Joshua Sorensen, and Laura Cain. Photo by Deb Bently

Area ‘Drug Court’ marks ten years of bringing change

By DEB BENTLY
Staff writer

“I sure didn’t expect I would ever be advocating for the Drug Court program,” stated area graduate Ken Holmseth. He remembers “I was convinced the justice system was out to get me.”

Holmseth was one of three Waseca graduates who spoke Tuesday, July 16 during a celebration ceremony marking the tenth anniversary of the Steele/Waseca County Drug Court.

As has been explained in past Waseca County Pioneer articles, Drug Court is a locally operated program which offers an alternative to eligible individuals convicted of a crime related to chemical abuse. Those selected are typically offenders who have previously served sentences for at least one chemical-related crime. Drug Court staff members approach them with a choice: either serve the sentence behind bars or consent to take part in a closely supervised program meant to help them begin the process of recovery while also reconnecting with their community—including family, neighbors, and employers.

Drug Court graduates have repeatedly told the Pioneer that following the Drug Court regimen is difficult and demanding: though they do avoid time behind bars, they are required to meet all financial obligations, including pay-

ing fines, restitution to victims, and—when applicable—child support. They are also expected to catch up on major life achievements their addiction may have kept them from completing, for example earning a GED or acquiring a driver’s license. They must also attend counseling, get and keep a job, and consent to random testing to confirm they are not using chemicals.

The Waseca site’s first graduate, Ashly Sylvester, spoke at last week’s event. Sylvester expressed gratitude for the “entirely changed” life course she has been able to follow since her 2016 graduation.

Anyone who “drops out” of Drug Court must serve the incarceration time they were sentenced to; it typically takes about two years to meet all the requirements of the program.

Waseca County Attorney Rachel Cornelius points out it costs about \$76,000 a year to incarcerate an individual in the state of Minnesota. Supervising someone in drug court is about \$4,800 a year. But most significantly, comments Cornelius, “Drug Court rebuilds people’s lives and their connections to the people they have often alienated. It gives them a path out of the cycle of addiction and incarceration.”

Cornelius praises Drug Court coordinator Nicole Grams: “Without her, our program would not have gotten started 10 years ago. She has worked hard to keep our

drug court thriving.”

Grams, in turn, says that, although she has been in the field of probation for 24 years, the most recent 10 working with Drug Court have brought her the strongest sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction. “We get to make a difference by helping our drug court participants restore their lives.” Also rewarding, she says, is “the ripple effect it has on their families, employers, and community. Court has also forged stronger working relationships among the criminal justice professionals in our community.”

In its ten years of existence, the Steele/Waseca Drug Court program has “graduated” more than 100 area individuals. Three of those graduates, including Holmseth, spoke during last week’s ceremony.

“Nobody thought I was going to make it,” he stated during his talk. “I had an attitude about the justice system and everybody in it.”

Holmseth said his cynicism continued until one day he saw tears in Cornelius’s eyes during a graduation ceremony for another participant.

“That compassion showed me a side of the justice system I was never willing to consider existed,” he stated. “That’s when I had to realize the system is maybe not out to get me, and maybe that chip on my shoulder needed to be broken.”

Also a speaker during the celebration was graduate Emily Nelson. Nelson told of having been raised by substance-addicted parents. “From the beginning,” she observed, “my entire life was centered around addiction.” After being introduced to methamphetamine at 19, she said she entered a “very long, vicious cycle of abuse, crime, and incarceration.”

“It was rare when I wasn’t on a local jail roster,” she mentioned, saying she saw no future for herself except to “die with a needle in my arm.”

Faced with the choice whether to enter Drug Court or serve yet another sentence and “miss another two years of my son’s life,” Nelson took part in the program beginning in 2017.

She told everyone gathered at the session she is now working toward the goal of becoming a professionally licensed counselor.

As the celebration closed, plaques were presented to members of the law enforcement and justice systems who regularly contribute to the Drug Court’s on-going programs. Honorees included Steele and Waseca County district court judges, members of the county attorney office, Drug Court coordinator Nicole Grams, probation supervisors, law enforcement officers, and more.

Early phases of internet installation underway in southwest part of county

By DEB BENTLY
Staff writer

The process of installing about 200 miles of fiber internet cable has begun in the southwest portion of the county. Under the terms of a \$4,385,000 grant from the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development, fiber internet cable is due to be installed in Vivian, Byron, Freedom and Wilton townships; installation will continue next year, with internet service in those townships probably being fully connected and operational late next summer.

The grant was applied for by Waseca County in partnership with Blue Earth based television, phone, and internet provider, Bevcomm. Under the terms of the grant, all residences within the designated areas are eligible to be connected to the system at no cost to themselves, provided they request that connection during the installation process. New connections will be possible after the system is in place, but at a significant fee. Those who wish to use the fiber network to acquire services will have to contract for them through Bevcomm.

Anyone with questions about arranging connections for homes or businesses within the designated area can contact the Bevcomm office, located at 123 W. Seventh Street in Blue Earth. The phone number there is (507) 526-2822.

Those moving through the four townships at this time will see small white and orange flags, and if their timing is right, a crew of three or four workers with about the same number of vehicles working along roadsides.

The crew and vehicles are owned by Midwest Utility Services, a Mankato company engaged by Bevcomm to bury the needed casings and cables.

According to Midwest team supervisor Cody Elias, the white flags indicate the path the buried cable should follow. Orange flags indicate locations where the team should be cautious of underground lines.

Elias explains there are about five steps to getting the internet cable distributed throughout the planned network. The first, determining the route, was done by engineers at Bevcomm; their objective was to devise a network which could meet system demands while making efficient use of resources. Bevcomm staff placed the flags and advised Midwest of the route.

The second step is now in progress. A crew of three has been working about a month so far using a specialized piece of big equipment known as a “directional bore.” Mounted on tracks and at least 15 feet long, the bore drives a shaft underground and creates a channel about five inches in diameter.

Operators say the machine is capable of digging hundreds of feet down and of creating a continuous opening about a mile in length. When necessary, it can drill through solid rock, but those extremes are not called for on this project.

Elias says the pipe being placed to serve as a casing for the fiber is between 3 and 3.5 feet below the ground in ditches, at least five feet beneath roadways, 10 feet below culverts and a minimum of 15 feet below water channels. He says the

path of the channel and the mechanics used to create it follow rules set by a number of state agencies, including the Department of Natural Resources.

Once the directional bore has created the needed underground opening, the machine pulls an orange pipe about 1.25 inches in diameter through to line the channel. For those who come across the crew and their vehicles, the giant reel of what looks like oversized orange hose is the “pipe” in question.

Depending on the number of specialized digs—waterways, culverts, and passages under roads—Elias says the vertical borer team completes about two miles of underground channel a day. He also clarifies that the equipment will no longer be able to operate once the ground freezes, and so the work will need to be continued next summer. The laying of the orange pipe is the second of five phases Elias named.

Elias invites farmers to contact Midwest with information about any underground tiles which extend into ditches. The company’s number is (952) 884-3661.

The next step will be to actually insert the cable into the pipe and set what Elias called “pedestals” at each location where a connection is arranged for. Crews from Midwest will also be doing the work for that phase, and are likely to begin later this summer.

The cable’s diameter is about the same as a dime or a nickel, Elias says, but it encloses 100 glass fibers. Each connection on the network—home or business—will have its service delivered by one of those fibers, which are capable of sending or delivering a gigabyte’s worth of information in a second.

The fourth installation phase, also scheduled to be performed by Midwest crews, is to run the needed connecting cable from the “pedestal” to the outside of the customers’ home or office.

A fifth crew will install the service inside the structures.

The current timeline has the system up and running sometime near the end of summer 2025.

A couple of elements are still in the “to be determined” phase.

For one, Waseca County and Bev-



Above: Experienced operators of the directional borer say it can dig a channel up to a mile long. Below: Operator Scott Kroenke at the controls of the borer. Photos by Deb Bently



comm applied for an additional grant which would add St. Mary’s township to the planned network. The list of successful applications has not yet been released by the Office of Broadband development, but if the grant is received, some elements of the plan may be expanded.

One other detail, according to

Elias, is that there must be a small building located somewhere fairly central within the system. The building will act as a hub for the wiring and connections, allowing the services customers request to be delivered. The location for that structure is still being finalized.

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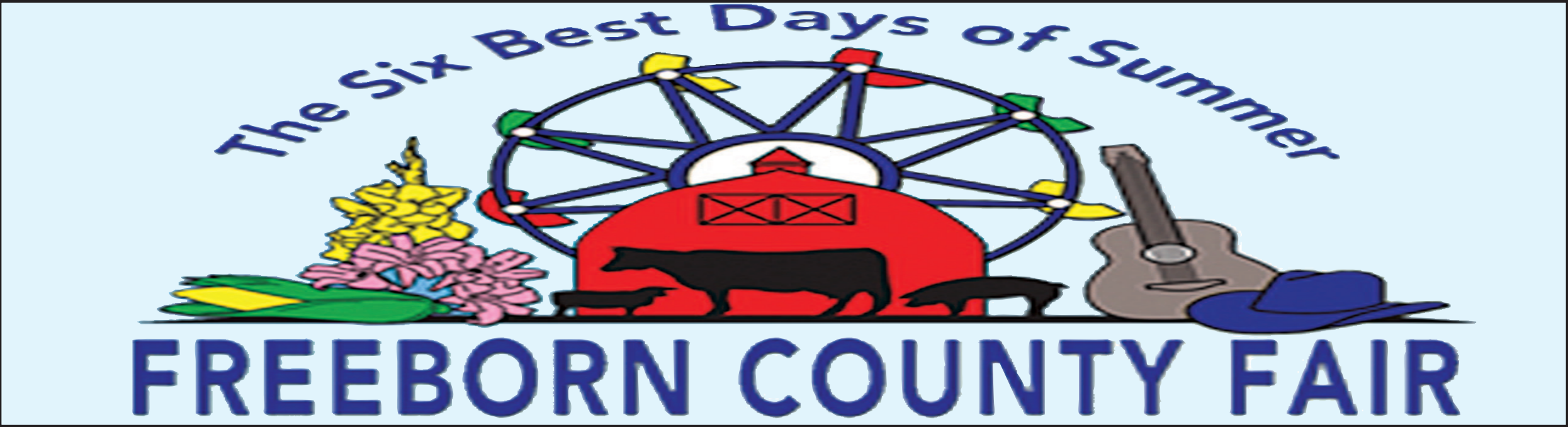
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TUESDAY-SUNDAY • July 30 - August 4, 2024

140th ANNUAL FAIR

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Albert Lea, Minnesota

www.freeborncountyfair.com

Thursday, August 1

Hours:

- Fair Office 8am-8:30pm
- Beer Garden Noon-Midnight
- Carnival 3pm-Midnight
- Conservation Building Noon-8:30pm
- Exhibit Buildings 10am-8:30pm
- Kiddie Farm Zone 11am-9pm
- Vendor Buildings Noon-8:30pm
- Big Woods Sculpture Machinery Hill
- Bucket of Junk-Silent Auction Commercial Building
- Great Lakes Timber Show 1 & 5pm
- Thorni Ridge Exotics Petting Zoo Machinery Hill
- Entertainment Plaza 3pm-Dunnell Lenort 4pm-Todd Utpadel 6pm-Roe Family Singers 7pm-Roe Family Singers

GRANDSTAND SHOW – 8:30pm CROWDER

All Tickets Can Be Purchased On-Line thru www.midwestix.com

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OFFICE HOURS: July 8th-25th, 9:00am-4:00pm Monday's through Thursday's, July 26th-29th, 9:00am-5:00pm FAIR WEEK: Tues. July 30-Sat. August 3rd, 8:00am-8:30pm, Sun. August 4th, 8:00am-6:00pm ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

ADMISSION PRICES

All concessionaires, Exhibitors, Service Personnel, FFA, and 4-H must have Season Tickets and Season Auto Tickets.

General Admission	\$13.00
Children 0-9	FREE
Senior Citizens, (65 & Over) Wednesday Only	\$7.00
Season Ticket (Pre-Season) until May 31st	\$49.00
Season Ticket (June 1st-August 4th)	\$55.00
Season Auto Ticket	\$20.00
Auto Ticket Per Day	\$7.00
Livestock Exhibitor Includes Parking	\$40.00

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- \$200 FOR THE WEEK (SW LOT)

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Each person must have a season ticket purchased in advance.

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TUESDAY-SUNDAY • July 30 - August 4, 2024

Friday, August 2
Daycare Day

Saturday, August 3
Kid's Day

Sunday, August 4

Fair Office 8am-8:30pm
Beer Garden Noon-Midnight
Carnival Noon-Midnight
Conservation Building
Noon-8:30pm
Exhibit Buildings 9am-8:30pm
Kiddie Farm Zone 9am-9pm
Vendor Buildings Noon-8:30pm
Big Woods Sculpture
Machinery Hill
Bucket of Junk-Silent Auction
Commercial Building
Great Lakes Timber Show
1 & 5pm
Thorni Ridge Exotics
Petting Zoo
Machinery Hill
Entertainment Plaza
3pm-Casey McIntyre
4pm-Ron & Steve Unplugged
6pm-Curtis and Loretta
7pm-Curtis and Loretta

GRANDSTAND SHOW – 8:30pm
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Carnival Noon-Midnight
Conservation Building
Noon-8:30pm
Exhibit Buildings 10am-8:30pm
Kiddie Farm Zone 11am-9pm
Freeborn County Historical
Village 11:30 am-6:30 pm
Vendor Buildings Noon-8:30pm
Big Woods Sculpture
Machinery Hill
Bucket of Junk
Silent Auction Ends 8pm
Commercial Building
Great Lakes Timber Show
1 & 5pm
Thorni Ridge Exotics
Petting Zoo
Machinery Hill
Rad Zoo 1:30-3:30pm
North Pavilion
Entertainment Plaza
2pm-Rockin' Hep Cats
3pm-Rockin' Hep Cats
4pm-Holly Day Music
6pm-Flashback
7pm-Flashback

GRANDSTAND SHOW – 8:30pm
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Fair Office 8am-6pm
Beer Garden Noon-8pm
Carnival Noon-7pm
Conservation Building
Noon-8:30pm
Exhibit Buildings 11am-4pm
Kiddie Farm Zone 11am-4pm
Vendor Buildings 11am-4pm
Church Service-Grandstand
10am
Great Lakes Timber Show
11:30am, 2pm & 3:30pm
Thorni Ridge Exotics
Petting Zoo
Machinery Hill
Entertainment Square
1pm-Talent Show
Pedal Pull
1pm-Kiddie Farm Zone

GRANDSTAND SHOW – 4:00pm
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This week I am writing my column from the confines of our cabin. I know that it has happened before, but I cannot say that I can ever remember visiting the cabin when the weather has been this consistently hot. Luckily, I did most of the mowing on Friday; after I had finished unpacking, I tried out my new riding lawnmower. I can't believe that I waited until now to purchase one.

Saturday was a wasted day as I awoke at 6:30 a.m. To 81 degree temperatures. The air was "thick," so I decided to hunker down in front of the fan for most of the day. I have some breathing issues, so hot and humid do not agree with me all that much. I ventured outside to check the game cameras and was greeted with pictures of a doe and two fawns and what looked like a fully grown black bear. Finding the picture of a wild animal on the game camera is always exciting to me. I guess I'd rather see a picture of a bear than be up close and personal with one in the woods. Getting a picture on a game camera is the next best thing to being there. I believe that a guy once said that in a TV commercial.



Woods and Water

by Dick Herfindahl
Outdoors Writer

So far the only birds visiting our feeders have been the hummingbirds. I can usually depend on them to show up. Once, a hummingbird kept buzzing my head while I was hanging up the feeder. This happened a couple of years ago. Meanwhile back at the ranch ("home" to those not old enough to know what that phrase means), I was in the act of filling a suet feeder in our front yard when a Downy woodpecker landed on my shoulder for a second or two as if to tell me to hurry up. Nature is amazing, and there are many things to be experienced if we just take the time to pause, watch and explore.

The other day while I was walking down the driveway, I heard a crackling sound before a huge birch tree came crashing down about 10 feet away from me. It was parallel to me, so I wasn't in harm's way, but it sure opened my eyes. In the 22 years

since we bought this land and built our cabin, I can recall a few times that a tree has come crashing down while I was sitting by a campfire or just sitting outside. There doesn't have to be any wind or explainable circumstance for it to happen.

Once the grandsons have grown up and gone their own ways, they don't frequent the cabin like they once did. My wife doesn't have any desire to come up to the cabin anymore, so it is usually just me and my sons, and one or two grandsons who visit once or twice a year. I figure I'll take that because they have their own lives to live. I will enjoy the solitude in the woods whenever I can and do a little fishing and exploring while I'm at it.

I enjoy being at the cabin whenever I can, whether I am by myself or with family. Spending time outdoors doing different tasks keep me feeling a little younger,

which puts a little extra spring in my step. We have a good view of the lake from the cabin, so I don't always have to be outside to enjoy it.

Hunters can apply for youth deer hunt permits through Friday August 16th. The number of permits for each hunt is limited. Individual hunts will be held in state parks on various dates in the fall. These firearms hunts are for ages 12-15 at the time of the hunt and must be accompanied by an adult. Special youth deer hunts are different from the statewide youth deer season, which takes place Oct. 17-20 and does not require an application. More information is available on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website.

Until next time: Take a little time to explore the outdoors. It is always a good time to take a walk. Walking is one of the best ways to get exercise and enjoy nature up close.

Please show your support for our troops who are now deployed. These service men and women are making that sacrifice, so that we may have the many freedoms that we enjoy today.

LOOKING BACK

100 Years Back

-A contribution of \$32 was taken up in Ellendale last week for the erection of a diving board at Beaver Lake.

-Found-An automobile side curtain has been left at the Star office for the owner; also a license tag.

-On July Fourth the New Richland and Austin teams played three innings of a scheduled game at the celebration at Wells. When this game was called by rain in the third inning New Richland had a 6 to 0 lead over Austin. Last Thursday the game was played off at Wells for a \$400 purse. New Richland won the game 6 to 5 when Tyrholm poled out a three bagger with Nock, Dielke and Gomsrud on bases.

-Two Ellendale residents were arrested in Albert Lea Thursday night by the local police department when liquor was found in their automobile.

-Cash Specials-Salmon, 1 lb. cans, 29c; beans, per can 11c; syrup, 5 lb. pails, 23c; toilet paper, per roll 6c; red cherries, per can 33c; Golden Bantam corn, per can 19c; Chocolate, pure baking chocolate, per cake 19c; tooth picks, 3c; salt, per bag 7c; pineapple, per can 29c; fig cookies, per lb. 17c; olive skin soap, per bar 8c; Tanglefoot, to get rid of flies, 3 double sheets 5c; picnic plates, 12 in. package, 8c; wash rags, each 4c-Sunde-Romine Co., phone 35, New Richland.

-Waseca is fast becoming a city. The first evidence is the fact that three divorce actions were started in one week.

77 Years Back

-Fire did a lot of damage Monday night at the Faust Theatre. The evening show was well under way when at 8:40 a defective wiring in the rewind table threw a spark which ignited the film. This touched off other films and soon the interior of the fire-proof booth was enveloped in flames. About 20,000 feet of film was destroyed, and both projectors which cost about \$2,000 each probably were ruined.

-Sharrell Albright was hostess at a party for 13 of her friends last Friday evening at her home. It was her 12th birthday.

-William Sullivan was the successful bidder for the residential estate of Miss Agnes Sunde and will do some remodeling before occupying the home. The purchase price was around \$3,800.

-Every once in a while someone reminds me of news I've missed. The latest to kid me about it is Attalla Abraham who gleefully remarked that he was gone from the store a whole week and it failed to "make" The Star. That was back in June when he was called down into Oklahoma by the death of a cousin. Some time we're going to make trouble for those Abraham clerks who hold up news from us.--C. W. Brown

-Elmer Lee accompanied Reuben Johnson of Clarks Grove, Oscar Hendrickson of New Richland and D. P. Moon of Norwalk, Calif., to the northern part of the state at Lake Winnibigoshish Wednesday morning where they enjoyed fishing, returning home Sunday.

-Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Storlie of Waseca and Mr. and Mrs. Orville Johnston of Albert Lea were Saturday evening guests of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Kaufman.

50 Years Back

-Pee-Wee tractor pull will be held at the annual Farm-City Day in New Richland this year. Pictured are Gary Hagen and Brad Nelson holding the prize trophies, and Orlene Moden on the Pee-Wee tractor.

-Mr. and Mrs. John G. Johnson of Albert Lea, Mrs. Palma Hanson and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Knutson were Sunday evening visitors at the Selmer Gulbrandson home.

-Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Reistad attended a birthday party Sunday at the Earl Thompson home in honor of his mother, Mrs. Gladys Thompson's birthday.

-Unofficial UFO Landing?--Delano Barnness, a farmer near Hartland, was spraying his cornfield when he discovered a most peculiar disturbance in the midst of the rows. It was in the shape of a circle and esti-



mated to be about 12 to 15 feet across. In the circle there were vice holes in the ground, all about a foot and a half deep. Other smaller but deeper holes also appeared in the circle. The dirt near the holes had what appeared to be white ashes on it. The corn leaves on the outside of the circle were silted, but still green, as though they had been exposed to extreme heat. It's been nearly two weeks since the incident was noticed and most everything in the area is back to normal.

25 Years Back

-The congregation of Vista Lutheran Church, rural New Richland, will celebrate the 140th anniversary of the organization of the church, Sunday morning, Aug. 9 at 10 a.m. worship service.

-New Richland-Hartland Elementary School in New Richland welcomes Paul Sparby to the position of the principal. Paul accepted the position this spring, following the resignation of Ken Meyers. Ken had served in that capacity for 19 years.

-Minnesota Lake's Festag royalty was crowned following the parade Wednesday, July 15. They are from left: Miss Congeniality Melissa Bruegger, First Runner-Up April Becker, Miss Festag 1998 Katie Maras, and Second Runner-Up Taryn Treanor. Parents of the girls are Richard and Cindy Bruegger, Richard and Anne Becker, Denise and Brian Esser and Arlyn and Sandy Treanor. Katie is the granddaughter of Dennis and Barb Byrne of New Richland.

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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 Wednesday - 5:15 p.m. Supper; 6 p.m. Bible Study ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH Otisco, Minnesota Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor 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 Wednesday) 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 CROSS OF GLORY LUTHERAN Hartland, Minnesota Rev. Marcia Pedersen	Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship Tuesday - Council meeting (First Tuesday) WEST FREEBORN LUTHERAN Hartland, Minnesota Rev. Marcia Pedersen Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship Tuesday - Council meeting (First tuesday of the month) Quilting meets 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, see newsletter for dates. HARTLAND EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN Hartland, Minnesota Pastor Phillip K. Lepak Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship MANCHESTER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN Manchester, Minnesota Pastor Phillip K. Lepak Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Father Glenn Frerichs Friday - 10 a.m. on 1st, 3rd and 4th Fridays p.m. Mass Sunday - Mass at 8 a.m. COMMUNITY LUTHERAN Geneva, Minnesota Pastor Leandra Anderson Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship (times very for holidays) Monday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting SIMPLY CHURCH 105 Second Street North East Geneva, Minnesota Todd Lundgren, Pastor Sunday - 9:30 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Worship VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH Ellendale, Minnesota Pastor David Modder Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship; 10 a.m. Kids church Check the website for additional updates	www.vibrantlifeag.com FIRST LUTHERAN, AFLC Ellendale, Minnesota Pastor Kyle Smith Saturday - 8 a.m. Men's Bible Study Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship Monday - 7 p.m. Call to prayer Wednesday - 9:30 a.m. Bible Study; 6 p.m. Confirmation; 7-9 p.m. Youth Group (No confirmation during summer) ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST Ellendale, Minnesota Randy Cirksema, Pastor Sunday - Summer Service time is 9:30 a.m. Worship; 9:15 a.m. Sunday school. (No summer sunday school) Worship is at 10:30 a.m. beginning after Sept. 3. Food shelf is open every Thursday from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. CENTRAL FREEBORN LUTHERAN CHURCH Pastor Matt Griggs Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship FM Transmitter is used for those wanting to listen through their car radios at FM 90.7 EAST FREEBORN LUTHERAN Pastor Matt Griggs Sunday—8:30 a.m. Worship FM Transmitter is used for those wanting to listen through their car radios at FM 89.3 ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS Hollandale, Minnesota Pastor Jesse Krusemark Sunday—9 a.m. Worship HOLLANDALE REFORMED Rev. Neal Ooms 101 East Park Avenue Hollandale, Minnesota Sunday—9:30 a.m. Worship; 10:45 a.m. Sunday School	ZION LUTHERAN, ELCA Rural Ellendale Deacon Billie Jo Wicks Sunday—8:30 a.m. Worship ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN, ELCA Meriden, Minnesota Deacon Billie Jo Wicks Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN Lemond Township Pastor Dave Klawiter Sunday—10:15 a.m. Worship FIRST LUTHERAN, LCMC Hope, Minnesota Pastor Sandy Miller Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 10:15 a.m. Youth/Adult Study FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Clarks Grove, Minnesota Pastor James Cameron Sunday—9:15 a.m. Sunday School; 10:30 a.m. Worship HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH of LITOMYSL Father Peter Schuster Sunday—8 a.m. Sacrament of Reconciliation; 8:30 a.m. Mass with Children's Church; Preschool Sunday School during Mass Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. - Faith Formation classes for grades K-Confirmation www.litomysl.webs.com www.stisidoreschool.webs.com FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Rev. Michael Mathews, pastor Sunday—8 a.m. Worship; 9:10 a.m. Sunday School and Bible Study ST. JOHN LUTHERAN Minnesota Lake, Minnesota Rev. Michael Matthews,	Sunday — 10:30 a.m. Worship ST. PAUL UNITED Minnesota Lake, Minnesota Interim Pastor Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Sunday School; 10:30 a.m. Worship PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Minnesota Lake, Minnesota Interim Pastor Sunday — 9 a.m. Worship 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 a.m. Worship (summer) and 10:30 a.m. (winter) 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 NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE STAR EAGLE.
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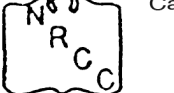
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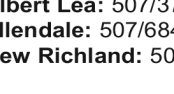
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In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

Just me, the hammock and the sky

On a whim last spring, I purchased a square hammock which is 10 feet on a side. It's meant to be suspended from four points. The obvious choice, of course, is four trees.

The phrase "live and learn" comes to mind. After all, trees are easy to come by, but four trees located within reach of straps in each of four directions from a central point are a bit more of a challenge.

My family has put the hammock up a few times. It's impressive to look at. This past weekend, we hung it so that it was just above ground level on one side, but it reached out over a hill and was about 10 feet above a downward slope on the far side.

In the quiet of the afternoon, two kayakers came by on the lake. I could hear them talking between themselves about how the appearance of my family's cabin has been changing since we took ownership. Most noticeable to these two was the more open view of our building site; we trimmed back quite a few dead branches, so we would have a better view of the lake. Turns out, a "view" goes in more than one direction.

I was flattered they noticed the improvements and intrigued by how well their voices were carrying.

As they floated on past, they saw the hammock. Quite understandably though, they did not know what it was. "Is that some kind of roof?" one of them asked. "Why is it hanging there?" That was yet another understandable question. The natural ground cover below the hammock clearly did not require a "roof."

"It's some kind of tarp," speculated the other kayaker.

Both ideas seemed fairly feasible, since, when no one is on it, the hammock hangs very level, well, at least flat.

At that point though, I could stay quiet no longer. I stepped out where they could see me and called out, "It's a hammock."

In response to their confused "A hammock?" I replied, "Yes, it's for laying on. It's made to hold four or more people."

Their uncertainty dealt with, one of them called back, "Well, it looks like fun! Enjoy it!"

Deciding I should do just that, I approached the nearest edge. The published capacity of the hammock is more than 600 pounds, so I had the academic understanding that it would be perfectly safe for me to climb aboard.

But it was out over that hill.

Anyone who went through it, or fell off the edge, would probably roll 20 or 30 feet across brambles and scrub trees only to land on the rocks at the shallow edge of the water. Not a pleasant possibility.

Still, I had received clear instructions to "enjoy" the hammock. I gradually convinced myself to crawl on at the ground level side. And of course, being a hammock, it curved downward under my weight. There near the "top," I was actually still touching the ground. Noting I was still unharmed, I rolled gingerly outward until I was fully suspended.

Above me, a circle of trees extended skyward. Since they were a combination of deciduous and evergreens, they provided a richly varied frame around a small patch of sky.

I took a deep breath, looked upward, and took a moment to appreciate I was not rolling rapidly toward the lake. Then it sank in I was beautifully comfortable. The temperature was just right. Something was keeping the mosquitoes away. It was quiet and, although there are always tasks to be performed, none of them were an emergency.

I continued to lie there and appreciate the sky and its framework of trees. Various sounds filtered my way, but all of them from a distance—and none of them of any concern to me.

So there we were, just me and the sky. It had been a long time since I had had the time and the mindset to appreciate being in the moment.

I can't tell you how long I stayed there. It might have been five minutes, it might have been most of an hour; time seemed irrelevant.

Eventually I took on the challenge of getting back off the hammock. Because the surface area I was on had sagged under weight, it was now an uphill climb back to "ground level." I have to speculate that, if the kayakers had come by as I planted my hands and knees and rocked sideways, they would have really wondered what was going on. Let's just say I'm glad there was no one there watching to see how oafishly clumsy I must have looked. Those feelings mustn't have mattered much though, because two hours later I invited someone from a neighboring cabin to come share time on the hammock with me.

The text read, "If you come over, I will show you something completely new."

Happy Here!

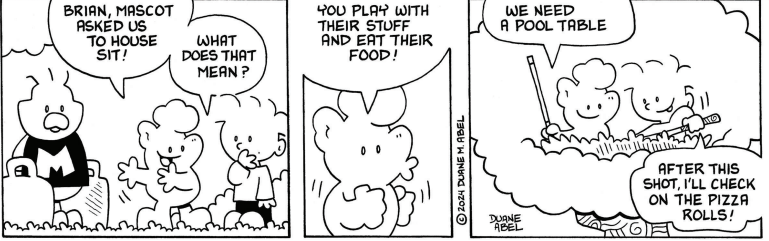
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12U Softball Panthers



The 2024 NRHEG 12U fastpitch softball Panthers. Back row from left: Coach Amber Lewer, Hadley Roeker, Mikayla Lewer, Grace Riskedahl, Lily Hughes, Camellia Lynne, Marnie Mullenbach, Jade Wyrum, Coach Jenny Wyrum. Front row - Cali Nelson, Annie Buffington, Monroe Wayne, Maci Johnson, Lauren Johnson, Vivienne Schlaak, Alayna DeShanne, JayLee Larson, Kali Peterson, Aubrey Hendrickson.

NRHEG Softball Boosters would like to give a special thank you to their sponsors this year: Keen Bank, Lerberg's Grocery Store, Car Wash & Laundry, Lerberg's Fitness Center, Geneva Lumber Company, Schlaak Trucking, Red Leaf Cafe, Panther Powerhouse, L & D Ag Service, State Bank of New Richland, Johnson Heating & Air Conditioning, Finly's Wings at Work, New Richland Liquor Company, New Richland Care Center, The Pour House Bar & Grill, and Casey's Gas Station.

10U Softball Panthers



One of the 2024 NRHEG 10U fastpitch softball Panther teams. Back row from left: Coach Rachael Eustice, Makenna Misgen, Evelyn Duffner, Lydia Louks, Kylie Johnson, Lucy Peterson and Coach Kenley Gehrke. Front row: Coach Angela Gehrke, Paige Ward, Kaisley Gehrke, Addison Berg and Kyla Eustice.

10U Softball Panthers



One of the 2024 NRHEG 10U fastpitch softball Panther teams. Back row from left: Charlotte Simmons, Kendall Whiteside, Grace Wear, Gladys Cazares, Brynna Christensen, Mya Smith, Rylea Walk and Hazel Bell. Front row: Coach Kaleb Christensen, Evelyn Schlaak, Kelsey Warke, Madison Erickson, Alexis Olson, Sophia Groeneweg, Kendyl Kaplan, McKenna Moody, Libbie Mullenbach, Heather Christensen.

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Event Details:
Location: Farmamerica, 5 miles west of Waseca

Date: August 8, 2024
Time: Start times at 6 p.m. and 6:45 p.m.

This event puts a new twist on the popular Meat-a-palooza event Farmamerica has held in the past. "Meat-a-palooza has allowed us to build relationships with many local food producers and vendors. We wanted to invite these vendors back, but in a new, special way that better highlights who they are and what their part is in bringing food from the farm to our tables," said Kari Wadd, Farmamerica's Program Coordinator. Vendors set to be featured include Bushel Boy Farms, Morgan's Meat Market, Compart Family Farms, Ferndale Market, Revol Greens, Barefoot Lane, and Apples-Rus, among others. "We're working with our vendors to ensure that there is a great variety of delicious food and drinks along the route," said Kari.

There are only 100 tickets available for this exclusive event. General public admission is \$100, and Farmamerica Members and Passholders are \$75. Secure your tickets at farmamerica.org/events.

SUMMIT TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF
OF PRIMARY
ELECTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024

Polls Open:
7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Voting Location:
Summit Town Hall
15973 South West 35 Ave.
Ellendale, MN

Andy Jewison Summit
Township Clerk

NOTICE

FILING NOTICE HARTLAND TOWNSHIP

Notice is hereby given that a General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, for the purpose of electing candidates to fill the offices listed below:

Supervisor (1) - four (4) year term

Supervisor (2) - four (4) year term

Treasurer - four (4) year term

The filing period opens at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, and closes at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 13, 2024. Affidavits of Candidacy must be filed during the above filing period at the office of the Hartland Township Clerk located at 71622 325 St., Hartland, MN.

The filing fee for candidacy is \$2.00.

Al Batt
Hartland Township Clerk

NOTICE

Summit Township Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 6
7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall

Andy Jewison
Summit Township Clerk

Notice of Filing City of Hartland
2024 General Election

Notice is hereby give that a filing period will be held for candidates seeking election to the Hartland City Council and Mayor at the General election to be conducted November 5, 2024. The filing period will be open Tuesday July 30 and will close August 13 at 5 p.m. Affidavits of candidacy can be obtained from the city clerk. Filing fee is \$2.

Filings for the Office of Mayor for 2 Years
And For the Offices of (2) Councilors for 4 Years

More information contact city clerk at
cityofhartland@deskmedia.com or by calling
507-845-2469

Brook Olson
Hartland City Clerk

BERLIN TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF
OF PRIMARY
ELECTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024

Polls Open:
7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Voting Location:
Ellendale Community
Building
507 2nd St. South, Ellendale

Helen Schmidt Berlin
Township Clerk

CITY OF HARTLAND

NOTICE OF
PRIMARY
ELECTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024
Primary Election Polls Open:
7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Voting Location:
Cross of Glory Church
401 Church St.
Hartland Minnesota

Brook Olson
Hartland City Clerk

Notice of Filing City of New
Richland 2024 General Election

Notice is hereby give that a filing period will be held for candidates seeking election to the New Richland City Council and Mayor at the General election to be conducted November 5, 2024. The filing period will be open Tuesday July 30 and will close August 13 at 5 p.m. Affidavits of candidacy can be obtained at city hall. Filing fee is \$2.

Filings for the Office of Mayor for 2 Years
And For the Offices of (2) Trustees for 4 Years
And for the Special Election for Office of (1)
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term expiring December 31st, 2026)

Affidavits of Candidacy for the November City
Election Will Be Accepted at the Office of the City
Administrator, 203 N Broadway, New Richland, MN,
Until 5:00 p.m. On Tuesday, August 13th, 2024

Anthony Martens
New Richland
City Administrator

City of Clarks Grove

NOTICE OF
PRIMARY
ELECTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024

Polls Open:
7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Voting Location:
Clarks Grove Fire Hall
101 North Independence Ave.
Clarks Grove, MN

Kathy Jensen
Clarks Grove City
Clerk/Treasurer

City of Ellendale

NOTICE OF
PRIMARY
ELECTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024

Polls Open:
7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Voting Location:
Ellendale Community Center
507 2nd St. South
Ellendale, MN

Kim Zimprich
Ellendale
City Clerk

Notice of Filing
City of Clarks Grove
2024 General
Election

Notice is hereby give that a filing period will be held for candidates seeking election to the Clarks Grove City Council and Mayor at the General election to be conducted November 5, 2024. The filing period will be open Tuesday July 30 and will close August 13 at 5 p.m. Affidavits of candidacy can be obtained at city hall.

2 open seats for councilors
Both 4 year terms
Filing period July 30 -
August 13 at 5 p.m.

Filing fee of \$2 at city office
More information can be obtained by
emailing: clarksgrovecity@gofast.am

Kathy Jensen
Clarks Grove City
Clerk/Treasurer

BYRON TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF
OF PRIMARY
ELECTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024

Polls Open:
7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Voting Location:
New Richland Township Hall
117 E. Division Street
New Richland, MN

Loren Schoenrock
Byron Township Clerk

NEW RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF
OF PRIMARY
ELECTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024

Polls Open:
7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Voting Location:
New Richland Township Hall
117 E. Division Street
New Richland, MN

Rob Hutchens
New Richland
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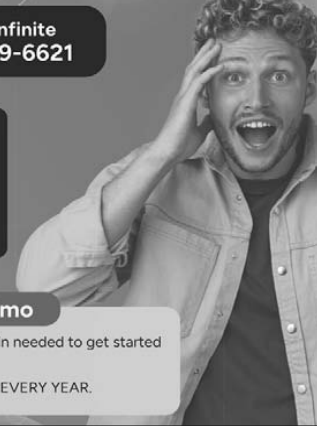
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**Notice of Filing City of Waldorf
2024 General Election**
Notice is hereby give that a filing period will be held for candidates seeking election to the Waldorf City Council and Mayor at the General election to be conducted November 5, 2024. The filing period will be open Tuesday July 30 and will close August 13 at 5 p.m. Affidavits of candidacy can be obtained at the city office. Filing fee is \$2.

**Filings for the Office of Mayor for 2 Years
And For the Offices of (2) Councilors for 4 Years**

More information contact city clerk at
info@cityofwaldorf.com

Sherri Sandry
Waldorf City Clerk/
Treasurer

NOTICE
Berlin Township Board Meeting
Monday, August 12, 2024
7:00 p.m. in the Ellendale Comm. Bldg.
(in the Board Room)
Helen Schmidt, Berlin Township Clerk

**Waldorf Public
Meeting NOTICE**
The City of Waldorf will be holding a public hearing for a petition to vacate a portion of School street, on August 12, 2024 at 7 p.m. at the Waldorf Community Center. Persons wishing to appear and present comment may do so at that time.
Published in the Star Eagle on August 1, 2024.

**City of Waldorf
NOTICE OF
PRIMARY
ELECTION**
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024
Polls Open:
7:00 am – 8:00 pm
Voting Location:
Waldorf Community Center

Sherri Sandry
Waldorf City
Clerk/treasurer

**Vivian Township
NOTICE OF
PRIMARY
ELECTION**
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024
Polls Open:
7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Voting Location:
Waldorf Community
109 Main St N, Waldorf

Mindy McDonough
Vivian Township
Clerk



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Bright future for Panther baseball

By MARK DOMEIER
Staff Writer

The Quad Cities Baseball Association (QCBA) sent two teams to the MBT State Tournament the weekend of July 19-21. The 13U team competed at the AA level in the Championship Tier while the 14/15U team played at the A level Championship Tier. Both teams had qualified for state earlier in the summer season through various state-qualifier tournaments.

The 13U team started pool play on July 19 in Lakeville against Wayzata Gold and won 9-2. Mack Gilliland led the way offensively and on the mound, going 3-3 at the plate and striking out ten batters over four innings, giving up two hits and no runs. After QCBA scored first on a Gilliland single, the third inning saw them plate four more on RBI hits from Gilliland, Tyler Piepho, Brock Holland, and Eli Hendrickson. QCBA had 11 hits and six steals.

Next up was Somerset, a team handled by QCBA 11-3. Holland went 3-3 in this game and also started on the mound, scattering nine hits while giving up two runs in five innings. Holland struck out four and walked one. The team jumped on top in the first again and broke things open in the third with five runs plated. Hendrickson drove in three runs as part of the team's 12 hits, but the team ran wild with 12 stolen bases.

The last game in pool play was held on July 20 and saw QCBA fall to Rosemount 12-2. After Rosemount scored in the top of the first, QCBA answered when Hendrickson stole home after singling earlier. But Rosemount jumped ahead for good in the third with four runs. Rosemount stroked 17 hits and stole 16 bases in the runaway victory.

The local boys advanced to bracket play with their 2-1 record and met Rochester in the win-or-go-home part of the tournament. QCBA won 8-6, but it was nip and tuck after Rochester took a 2-1 lead in the first. QCBA went back in front in the fourth inning with Holland, Wyatt Hendrickson, and Memphis Schlaak each scoring. QCBA was able to hold on after that, even though they led 8-2 at one point. Gilliland and

Owen Schlaak each had three hits along with two each from Alec Wyrum, Piepho, and Jacob Klaras.

The next game would be the last for the 13U team, though, as they lost to eventual champion Minnetonka 7-3. Gilliland pitched a strong game to start, striking out 11 batters in 4.1 innings, giving up four hits and two runs, but Minnetonka took the lead in the fourth and extended it from there. The three teams the QCBA team lost to this year included three of the top four teams ranked in the state.

The 15U team played the same weekend in Farmington and Lakeville. Their first pool play opponent was Minnetonka, a game QCBA won 7-4. QCBA struck early and often, scoring Dom Olson in the first and then five more runs in the second, highlighted by a Cameron Christopher steal of home. Brooks Gilliland started for QCBA and threw six innings, giving up two runs while striking out two and walking one. Dakota Schlaak had three hits on the night, part of 14 total for the team.

The next game was a wake-up call as Wayzata shut out the boys 5-0. Ryan Schlaak started and gave up one unearned run over five innings, striking out four and walking three. However, Wayzata pulled away late as QCBA struggled to get anything going.

The team rebounded well in the final pool game against St. Michael-Albertville, winning 13-3 behind seven runs in the first inning. They added three more in the second and the route was on. Levi Whiteside started for QCBA, relieved by Zander Hanna, both throwing effectively. Sean Lassahn was 3-3 at the dish as part of 17 hits by the team.

On to bracket play, and QCBA really stepped up. They played Prior Lake in the first round and showed them the door quickly, winning 21-8. After Prior Lake went on top 4-1 in the first, QCBA scored nine runs in the second inning before piling on with nine runs in the seventh inning. Whiteside and Gilliland again threw for QCBA on the road to the win. Gilliland had 4 RBI while Schlaak, Lassahn, and AJ Deen each blasted three hits.



Pictured above is the 13U Quad Cities Baseball team players, coaches and fans who competed and attended the MBT State Tournament the weekend of July 19-21.

The next round saw QCBA defeat Lakeville North 7-4 after spotting the big school a four-run lead. QCBA scored seven unanswered, though, to take the W. Olson earned the win in relief. Deen and Schlaak each had two hits in the win.

The semifinals saw QCBA take apart Farmington 13-2. Whiteside and Olson each pitched in the game and Schlaak and Lassahn both drove in three runs as part of a 17-hit onslaught.

The fun finally came to an end in the championship, however, as QCBA fell 5-2 to Minneapolis. Gilliland gave the hometown boys their only lead in the third on a 2-run single, going up 2-1. But Minneapolis took the lead for good in the third inning, then added a 2-run home run to cap things off in the fourth. The boys had nothing to hang their heads about, though, bringing home second place in a highly-competitive bracket.

Both teams were from the smallest community at their tournaments, outside of Medford in the 14-15U bracket. It just goes to show that small-town boys, who have played together their whole lives, can sometimes slay giants, though with a bat instead of a slingshot. The teams also had a huge contingent of fans who came to their games; one estimate had the number at 150 people from the NRHEG area, no surprise to sports fans around here, who have always traveled well to support young athletes.



A group photo of the 14/15U Quad Cities Baseball team which competed in MBT State Tournament the weekend of July 19-21, 2024.



A group photo of the 13U Quad Cities Baseball team which competed in MBT State Tournament the weekend of July 19-21, 2024.

Briefs

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Waseca Counties are invited and encouraged to be represented.

Lutheran night at the Twins Aug. 12 at 6:40

p.m.

It's Lutheran Night at the Twins Monday, August 12, 2024 at 6:40 p.m. The cost is \$60 per person paid in advance - no refunds. The price includes a coach bus leaving from behind Hy-Vee in Albert Lea at 4 p.m. Home plate view tickets with eight bus people who want to go out to center field to help lead in singing the national anthem. Deal or no deal prizes on the way to the game, plus

coupons for all.

Your name on the score board if your birthday is August 12th. The bus is parked nearby.

Cash back of \$10.00 per bus person after 57 tickets are sold (a full bus).

For reservations call: Bob and Genie Hanson at 507-373-8655 or Wayne and Bev Indrelie at 507-286-3267.

NR Summer Burst Concert Series returns Aug. 11

The concerts in the park series will continue for a third season of music for New Richland area communities. Concerts are held at the New Richland City Park (114 1st St. SE) on Sunday afternoons with free admission. (Free will offerings are accepted.) An additional concert is held prior to each park performance at the

New Richland Care Center for its residents.

August 11th: Gold Star - Come and listen to this local band from Mankato who plays a variety of music, including classic country, 50's/60's music, and classic rock!

A food truck will also be available at each concert for your eating pleasure! Please bring a chair &/or blankets to sit. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota

through a grant from the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, thanks to a Legislation appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

Thank you to the State Bank of New Richland, KEEN Bank, and Arcadia Bank for their generous donations to the Summer Burst Concert Series, and a special thanks to the City of New Richland for the utilization of their park and services for our events!



KEEP DANCING



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PLEASE JOIN US FOR

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AUGUST

3

8PM-12AM

ALL are welcome to attend the live performance by the band Neon Live! All proceeds will go to the NRHEG teachers with FWAU matching the funds up to \$5,000!

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