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Sports

Radio Link closes abruptly, for good

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

Monday afternoon, Ellendale area internet provider Radio Link announced it is ceasing operations effective immediately. A reported 400 customers, including both home users and businesses, have abruptly lost internet access. The Waldorf bar Papa Ollie's, for example, has posted on Facebook that it will be doing business "cash only" until it can find a replacement provider.

An email was sent to some customers, stating the following:

"We are writing to inform you that Radio Link Internet has permanently closed all business operations, and all internet services have been shut down.

"Please be advised that this shutdown includes all of our communication channels. Our website, customer phone lines, and company email addresses are no longer active or monitored.

"We want to express our deepest gratitude to this community. Serving as your internet service provider has been an incredible privilege, and we are profoundly grateful for the trust, loyalty, and support you have shown us over the years.

"Thank you for being a part of our journey."

Customers reportedly could not reach anyone at the company. Traffic cones placed on Radio Link property deterred customers from approaching the door.

Customers went to Facebook for an answer, where numerous people expressed frustrations. Some reported having paid for a year of service and were looking for their money back.

Other than its email message, Radio Link has not provided any comment regarding the closing. As reported in the Star Eagle over the past months, the company has been unsuccessful in negotiating contracts with the communities of New Richland, Hartland, Ellendale and Geneva that would allow Radio Link to keep transmission equipment located on the cities' water towers.

During conversations at council meetings, Radio Link owner Daniel Petsinger claimed the cities were proposing unfair terms. Both the cost and other requested contract elements, he told the Star Eagle previously, were unfair and would drive him out of businesses.

Radio Link's most recent unsuccessful negotiations were with the city of New Richland.

During the meeting which led to the loss, spokespersons for the city and the city lawyer stated the language of their proposed contract was fair, and was even "standard boilerplate."

Radio Link Internet had been operating without a contract with the city since 2018. The council was urged to reject Radio Link's offer of roughly \$2,000 paid annually to remain operating on the tower. The city lawyer named nearby towns including Le Center, which is paid a combined \$3,500 monthly by T-Mobile and Verizon, and Elysian, which receives \$2,500 a month from Verizon for use of its tower.

A word from

The Word

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 4:7

Class of 2026



GRADUATION - Above left, Olivia Johnson hugs her dad, Jeff, during parent appreciation. Above right, Christian Huntington Cully walks as Molly Johnson, behind, waves. Below, Camryn and Quinn VanMaldeghem sit behind the podium during commencement.



Class of '26 graduates 55

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

They stood together for the final time. One by one, they walked out into the world.

The 55 members of the NRHEG class of 2026 graduated Sunday afternoon in a packed high school gymnasium in New Richland.

Principal Grant Berg got the show rolling quickly as he said the day was not about anyone but the students standing on the stage.

Berg kept the introduction short and sweet. "Today is their (the graduates') day. Thank you."

Berg introduced the NRHEG choir which performed "Forever Young."

Class speakers Chloe Stork, Winter Pederson, and Kaitlyn Dobberstein, elected by their peers, addressed the group's shared experiences in elementary grades, secondary school, and looking toward the future.

"I don't want to graduate," Stork began. "I know that's probably not what you want an 18-year-old who's supposed to be ready for the next chapter to say, but it's never really been about being ready. I'm just incredibly grateful to be able to say I had the best high school experience possible, and it's because of the people who surrounded me along the way."

Stork talked about what it was like growing up in such a small town, in a class under 60 students; class trips and experiences that shaped who they are today.

"It's a unique gift to grow up in a community like ours," Stork continued. "Many of us have known each other since the days of mismatched socks and boogers.



PARENT APPRECIATION - Madison Bogue embraces her mom, Sara. Star Eagle photos by Eli Lutgens

"Somewhere in the middle of all of that, we learned things that mattered... We learned the importance of kindness, integrity, and working hard even when nobody was watching. I carry the values I do today because of my experiences throughout high school, and I hope that many classmates can say the same."

Graduation continued on 12



Valedictorian Chloe Stork smiles during graduation May 31, 2026.

Stork earns top honors at NRHEG

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editor

Chloe Stork, 18, is NRHEG's valedictorian for 2026. She is the daughter of Dan and Stacy Stork of New Richland. Her family also includes Anna Jensen, Jake Stork and Sophie Stork. Her future plans are to attend the University of Notre Dame for Business Administration.

During her time in school, Stork was involved in volleyball, basketball, softball, flag football, student council, FCLA, DECA, student ambassadors, FCA, yearbook and National Honor Society. In the community, she was a faith formation teacher, altar server, played classical piano, and volunteered at various other events. Stork also worked field preparation for youth baseball and softball.

Of her accomplishment of becoming valedictorian, Stork says, "It is a huge honor to be named valedictorian. I have always prided myself on working hard and it is rewarding to see that pay off." She says that she never specifically thought about the achievement, but just wanted to do the best she could and work hard.

Stork says her family is proud to see the work she has done lead to this accomplishment. She adds that they have always supported her in all of her endeavors.

For younger classmates, Stork suggests to stay true to yourself and keep your priorities straight.

"I will miss being involved in all of my activities with my closest friends," Stork says. "I have had so many fun memories."

Stork states her favorite or funniest memory during high school was competing at the state level in basketball, at-

Honors continued on 5

Retired school staff gather at The Willows; most behaved well

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Retired, and even long-retired, individuals from the staffs of the Ellendale, Geneva, Hartland and New Richland school systems gathered for one of their twice-a-year reunions at The Willows in New Richland on Friday, May 29. This was over the luncheon hour and former staff started trickling in at 11, giving everyone time to catch up and reminisce before they placed their or-

Retired continued on 2



RETIRED GATHERING - There was an NRHEG staff reunion at the Willows on Friday, May 29, 2026. Pictured from back row left: David Eliason, Sharon Eckart, Lanae Thorstad, Pam Coyer, Darlyne Dahle, Bonnie Jacobson, Georgia Dinneen, Mark Rud, Diane Matthies. Middle Row: Becky Jensen, Judy Thompson, Kathy Anderson, Karen Jacobson, Mary Sack, Ann Howe, Judy Economy, Pat Theuer, Kris Pfeffer. Front Row: Shelly Mangskau, Mary Ignaszewski, Ona Meyer, Tom Meyer, Marilyn Dobberstein, Tom Steilder, Paul Cyr, Cathy Stringfield. Star Eagle photo by Ben Revermann



FenceLines

by Mark Bernard

I want to be where the sun warms the sky

The scurs kept the Weather Eye dialed into summer. Are we in for a June Swoon or will temps continue to stay warm? Starting Thursday, mostly cloudy with a good chance of rain. Highs in the upper 70's and lows in the low 60's. Partly sunny Friday with a good chance of rain. Highs in the mid-80's with lows in the mid-60's. Partly sunny on Saturday with a modest chance of rain. Highs in the low 80's with lows in the mid-60's. Sunday, mostly sunny with a modest chance of rain. Highs in the mid-80's with lows in the mid-60's. Mostly sunny Monday with a good chance of rain. Highs in the mid-80's with lows in the mid-60's. Tuesday, mostly cloudy with continued chances for rain. Highs in the mid-80's with lows in the low 60's. Sunny on Wednesday with highs in the mid-80's with lows in the low 60's. On June 7th, our daily gain in daylight slows to less than one minute per day. We'll only gain about 6 minutes more by the summer solstice on June 21st. The normal high for June 7th is 76 and the normal low is 57. A nap in the hammock in the shade sounds appealing to the scurs.

This corn crop certainly isn't napping With GDUs accumulating at a late June to early July pace, it shows. Corn has some of the best color we've seen in years for this time of the growing season. The nodal root system formation was evident last week when digging up V4 plants. Nodal roots already 4" - 6" long were noted and that meant the plants were tapping into nitrogen as well as beginning development of the root system that will carry the plant to maturity. Soybeans have been going through the ugly duckling stage, although worries about stands have been alleviated somewhat by recent rains and warm temperatures. Fields with heavy residue are behind those that were worked, which is no surprise. Not all the soybeans got the benefit of the same warm temps the earlier planted corn did. The sun needs to keep warming the sky for that to change.

Something that has also been refreshing after the past couple years has been the relatively low level of mosquito activity. Now, I have encountered a few in the backyard at the ranch, but they've been sparse, unlike the past several seasons. Aside from a few annoying blackflies, about the only insects that have been a real pain literally are the stable flies They started in a few weeks ago and are only too happy to come along for the ride, whether it's a side-by-side scouting fields or a boat while you're trying to catch some supper. I can honestly say I have never regretted killing a stable fly. They deserve everything they've got coming to them. I derive great pleasure watching barn swallows and tree swallows picking them. I'm pretty sure the numerous toads here won't pass on them either.

The garden continues to take shape. All the large vine crops

were planted Saturday after a morning bomb session with the tiller. Once that was done, over 40 hills were planted between squash, pumpkins, and gourds. Three rows of string beans were put in Sunday morning with the intention to plant cucumbers and muskmelons upon our return from the first outing of the year in the Studebaker. It decided to rain, so that pushed the process back a couple days. Not to worry. Last year we were looking at melon and cucumber seed that was rotting in the ground at this point. There is plenty of time to plant those yet, along with sweet corn and sunflowers. The ground is prepared, and, unlike last year, it's dry. Once the seeds germinate, the sprouts should fly out of the ground.

At long last we were able to get the Studebaker out for a drive. Setbacks were numerous, but our crack Studebaker mechanic rose to the challenge and eventually found what was wrong. As it turns out, there's a good reason to keep your old parts, which we did. Sure enough, the NOS rotor supplied with the tune up kit failed and caused all sorts of questions before answers were found. A rebuilt carburetor was definitely a good idea as the original had a vacuum leak, making the gas mixture a little tricky. The rebuilt carb in combination with a new electric fuel pump, plugs and points made it run like it hadn't run before, at least as long as I've had it. It was much more responsive and didn't lug down even at lower rpm's in overdrive. It made the trip to Faribault for lunch enjoyable, but not as enjoyable as making it home again without incident.

Birds start their day at the ranch at 4:30 a.m. I swear there's a robin with a bullhorn pointed at the bedroom windows, since it's been nice enough to open them up overnight. I wonder if it's the same robin that's suddenly decided the rain gauge makes a good toilet? The last several rains have been rather disgusting to measure and have me questioning the accuracy of the reading. Not only is there a quantity of bird poop in the cylinder, there's also some plugging the hole in the funnel. It also tends to absorb some of the moisture. Eventually the robin will move on, but in the meantime, it takes some of the fun out of reading the gauge.

Poppy finally got her toenails trimmed and not a minute too soon. The young lady who trimmed them did a great job and Poppy was none the worse for wear. She was definitely stealthier once back home on the laminate floor. No clicking of toenails to give away her position. Of course when you do zoomies the roughly 70" length of the house, it's still pretty easy to know where she's at. After she's done tearing around, it's especially easy. Poppy will be sound asleep on her pillow, dreaming of the squirrels that got away, again.

See you next week...real good then.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

We should all be as happy as kings

Though I did not capture them with a camera, a number of "pictures" from the last 7 to 10 days keep staying with me.

The first two descriptions I want to offer are alike, but different.

At a T-intersection of two gravel roads, I came to a stop and then made a right turn. My stop must have startled a kestrel from somewhere he was roosting, causing him to take flight. For a few heartlifting seconds, the bird was flying alongside my car just a couple feet away from the passenger side window.

I saw the bird there and it was as if time slowed down. It seemed I could see its muscles moving in its chest, keeping the wings in motion. I can still picture its sleek outline, the field and skyline behind it. Though a kestrel is not a particularly large bird, it is a predator—a sharp-eyed hunter that needs strong muscles and quick reflexes.

In those seconds the bird was in my line of sight, it seemed all that information was available to me in its pro-

file and its intent expression.

The next magnificent surprise I want to describe was a swallowtail butterfly. This time, I was leaving the Waseca Junior Senior High School by its west doors. Brick and glass behind me, concrete below me, asphalt up ahead—not a setting where one expects an encounter with nature.

Yet there it was, flying fast.

The moment did not have the noise and power of a Thunderbird flyover, but it had a grace and majesty that stays with me, again like a short film in my head. My peripheral vision took note of movement. I turned my head to see what it was.

And there, suddenly brilliant and beautiful only a foot or two in front of my face was a swallowtail butterfly: The elegant shape and distinctive yellow and black colors stopped me in my tracks, and caused me to whisper aloud, "What are you doing here, you magnificent creature?"

The butterfly was already past me when I finished. "Go grace someone's



MAGNIFICENT CREATURE - The elegant shape and distinctive yellow and black colors mean this butterfly is a swallowtail.

flower garden."

That "snapshot" moment may have been only one or two seconds long, but again, it is locked in my memory and makes me smile when I recall it.

The third moment of grandeur I wish to describe came at the end of one of our recent oppressive 90-something-degree days. Of course no Minnesotan needs to be told that, when the heat and humidity work together, we get storm clouds.

The official name for those is "cumulonimbus," a combination of Latin words meaning "heaped" or "piled," and "raincloud."

As it came toward evening on one of those hot days, white, glowing towers rose powerfully above us, seeming to reach to space. Though I know what those towers can become, it was impossible not to look at them with awe and appreciation—so shining

white, so immense, and such a contrast to the sky around them.

As the sun moved toward the horizon, they became shades of pink, purple and orange. I couldn't help thinking about the rising heat and energy which fed them and kept them looking fluffy and marshmallow-like...but with marshmallows hundreds of feet across.

Like the kestrel and swallowtail, all I have to do is think about this moment and the picture appears in my imagination. Even only the memories cause me to draw my breath in delight.

I hope my descriptions bring you pleasure, but even more, I hope you take the opportunity to appreciate moments like these when they present themselves to you. After all, as we were told in A Child's Garden of Verse, "The world is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings."

Thoughts and more on graduation day



Just a Thought...

by Eli Lutgens

I was able to enjoy Graduation and baseball this weekend without feeling completely and utterly exhausted. This was the first year since I played high school baseball where I didn't have more work than I felt there were hours in the day.

That said, it was still a lot of work. Order of importance dictates that I start with NRHEG Graduation. Deb offered to cover the event for me, but I insisted I planned to photograph and write about the event. (She, of course, was invited to come along.)

Graduation is one of my favorite events of the year. It is sentimental, pulls at my heart strings. I enjoy the student speeches, the parent appreciation, and the video montage. Graduation Sunday goes quickly, faster for the graduates, (at least for me when I graduated), but still, for me. I arrived at about 1:15 p.m. Sunday afternoon for the 2 p.m. start.

I found a spot to reserve for myself in the front row. (Really two spots.) This year the Stork family had part of the front row taken and Dan arranged for me to sit next to him. I have known Dan since kindergarten/preschool. He was my gym teacher and athletic director at NRHEG my entire life. He brings me joy whenever I see him. During my academic years, I every so often during study hall would stop and visit him in his office. Despite his being very busy, he never, ever asked me to leave his office. Instead he would entertain my many questions about his life and job. (I think most of my teachers have experienced the many questions I would ask.) And from time to time he put me to work helping with various tasks: stocking concessions for basketball games, folding programs, etc. I am grateful for the excellent relations I had with teachers at NRHEG. I imagine at a larger school, it would not be tolerated for a student to stop and visit the Athletic Director for no good reason during a study hall. Dan also had a small basketball hoop in his office that I

would shoot at until one day it broke and was repaired in a way (tape) that it was "just for looks."

Thank you Dan, for the kind memories.

So there I was, two seats reserved. One in the front row and another on the end. (To photograph the kids as they walked to the stage.)

From there I headed to another former teacher's room, Mrs. Hatton, to find the graduates and take their photos. I went with the soon-to-be graduates to the commons area where I photographed the class, honor students, military bound and valedictorian and salutatorian. Oh, and boy scout. I asked if there were any other photos that should be taken and Wyatt Larson asked if I could take that one. "Of course," was my answer.

This year's valedictorian and salutatorian were Chloe Stork and Wyatt Larson. Stork is Dan and Stacy's youngest daughter. Wyatt is the son of Shawn and Jody. Shawn was my 6th grade teacher and in some parts, my baseball coach from about 7th grade through my senior year. He is one of my favorite teachers and coaches of all time. Partly because his class taught us cribbage, poker, and fantasy football. I have many fond memories from that year. The "trash can battle" Larson had with Aaron Seath; the glitter stain I caused on his floor during Christmas festivities; beating Larson in chess (My record against him was 4-3-2. I believe I was the first student who had defeated him.); and how could I forget Larson scolding me for reading fiction books during his math class. One final thanks for Larson, for he encouraged reading and gave me many books to

read that year. I am an avid reader to this day. It was really cool to see Chloe and Wyatt earn these prestigious awards, and to see the happy proud faces of their parents.

Before stepping back into the gym, after photos were taken, I chatted briefly with Principal Berg and Superintendent Michael Meihak. I asked Berg if he had a speech I could get the text of to quote in my article.

"Eli, you should know by now," Berg said. "It's about the kids, I don't have a speech.

"All I have to say today is it's about the kids."

After I sat down in my seat, I chatted with Dan as he gave me updates on all his kids. I enjoyed hearing the updates. As I sat there, I hoped I wasn't detracting his attention from the day, the moment, his last daughter's graduation. Oh, and I got to meet his grandson, Anna and Matt Jensen's first child. I played baseball with Matt for a few years. Watching him play baseball, I thought home runs were more com-

mon in high school sports in our area than they really are. He was an excellent player and even better teammate.

These thoughts and many others went through my mind as graduation started.

I snapped many photos during the ceremony and worried about the kids I didn't have as many photos of as others. The speeches were good. We print them in the paper because I, as a former graduate, would love to go back and read the speeches from my graduation 10 years ago. Looking back, that day went by so quickly. The same can be said of Sunday, as before I knew it, the graduates were walking outside as they closed this chapter of their lives.

I truly intended to write about the best baseball game of my life, which I witnessed Saturday when the Panthers held on to win 5-4 over Adams. But I may have to save it for next week.

Thank you to everyone who helped in the lives of the graduates from the class of 2026. Sometimes it might be hard to remember how much impact you may have on the life of a young person. I hope my many memories serve as a reminder of how powerful those small acts of kindness have on a person.

"Behind my graduation cap lies an invaluable team of supporters. To my team, thank you for making this possible." - unknown.

■ Retired

from Page 1

ders.

The gatherings are organized by Kris Pfeiffer, who retired after teaching for 41 years in Ellendale. She explained, "We try to do it on the first and last day of school every year. We usually have around 30 or so people join us. It's a good time. It seems like everyone enjoys it. I really think meetings like this are important, us remembering—it certainly helps me to remember."

The energetic group kept waitresses bustling around filling water glasses and giving friendly greetings.

Ona Meyer, 96, was there, a former "school secretary," she described, "here in New Richland, I started in 1978 and I was done working for them

in 1998; I've been retired for a while. When the schools split in 1992, I stayed in New Richland. I've been coming to these reunions for a number of years now."

Dan Economy was also there; he taught English, American government and journalism for the Ellendale school district from 1979 to 1985.

Tom Meyer, another Ellendale man, taught from 1970 to 2002. "I taught biology, chemistry and physics." After Meyer said this, Economy, who taught journalism said, "I would like to read this article before you publish it." He then wrote down his email before turning back to his table to make small talk.

Marilyn Dobberstein, who amazingly taught from 1974-2017, gave lessons in home economics, family and consumer sciences (FACS), early childhood family education (ECFE) and preschool. She was also a community education director.

David Harvego-Eliason, who taught K-12 from

1973 to 1999, described, "I was a social studies and English teacher." He then added, "And I ran two marathons last winter." He highly encouraged others to try it.

Before they ordered lunch, Pfeiffer wanted everyone to pose for a few group photos, causing the wait staff to pull tables out of the way. She created a number of different groups, including those who worked at Hartland, Ellendale and Geneva, and then at New Richland prior to when the districts realigned. Some in attendance were quite a handful; when they weren't following instructions, they were admonished, "If you don't quiet down, you guys are going to get a time out." Eventually the chatter died down, and they all faced the front with smiles.

After that, the tables were moved back, people took their seats and turned to look at their menus. The chatter picked up again, lunch continued and another reunion was added to the books.

NRHEG
Star Eagle

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Compostings

by Al Batt

Try an aebleskiver

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

You know what they say about getting older? No, what? I don't remember either.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I needed a good password. I always need one. I was trying to recall my maternal grandfather's third cousin's barber's nephew's stepdaughter's hyphenated name from her second marriage. I couldn't remember it. Pity. It would have made a dandy password.

I met him in Colorado at a 60th wedding anniversary for people whom I didn't know. It's a long story. I could tell that the guy liked parties as long as he could maintain a position near the potato chips. His fingers tapped an impatient message on the table as he waited for the chip bowl to be refilled. He wore a "Pretty good. Not bad. I can't complain." T-shirt. I smiled and told him I liked his shirt and that I was a big fan of that song and the singer, John Prine. He said he didn't know who that was and that he got the shirt at a thrift shop. Then the potato chip reinforcements arrived.

AEBLESKIVER

Aebleskiver are spherical Danish pancake balls. The name means "apple slices" in Danish, although slices of apples aren't ingredients in present-day versions. They are delicious. Please try them if you've never had the pleasure of having your pancake roll off the table.

HOW THE LAKE GOT ITS NAME

I grew up along Mule Lake. The area had been settled by the Boardman brothers in 1857 and was called Le Sueur Lake. The lake was large then, and abundant in northern pike, wild rice and migrant ducks. The story goes that the Boardmans tried crossing the ice-covered lake with mules, but the ice was too thin, and a "fine span of mules" fell through and were drowned. Local folks called it Mule Lake after the incident. The lake was drained in 1914.

I'VE LEARNED

Science fiction has become nonfiction.

If it tastes just like chicken, it's probably chicken.

The tallest buildings in Minnesota are all in Minneapolis. The Wells Fargo Center stands 775 feet high. The Capella Tower is a foot taller at 776 feet. The IDS Center is the tallest, adding equipment and antennas to its top to retain the title.

I miss video stores. There

was drama in the aisles as families negotiated (argued).

I know members of a family that had 22 children—all single births. I don't know if the parents had difficulty remembering all the names, but I know that I'd have had trouble counting them all.

I remember when excessive screen time was a giant wall of TVs in a retail store, meant to showcase the picture quality of various televisions.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

Did you ever knock on someone's door and then run away before they could answer? If so, UPS is hiring.

An alligator can live 50 years. There is a good chance that one will see you later.

Why is it spelled "camouflage" and not " ?

What has 5 toes and is not your foot? My foot.

NATURE NOTES

A gray catbird with a stubby tail fed on grape jelly, then did a jazz riff, and meowed like a cat before eating more. Why did it have a stubby tail? The bird didn't want to talk about it, but I'm guessing it was a stress molt, during which it shed tail feathers to escape a predator. Feathers re-grow rapidly when they've been pulled out. Tails are important but not critical. Tail-less birds can fly, avoid danger and feed themselves, but might have trouble getting a table in an upscale restaurant. It's better than losing a tail in the winter. Catbirds aren't here then, but nobody wants a cold rear end.

In many turtles, warm temperatures during incubation create females and cold temperatures produce males. A friend, Gina Kemper, told me, "It's hot chicks and cool dudes."

Common mallard nest predators include skunks, raccoons, coyotes, foxes, weasels, mink, snakes and large bird species. A nest success rate of 15% is a rule of thumb for maintaining a mallard population. Delta Waterfowl found that 90% of egg destruction is due to predation; the rest is because of weather events. Approximately 7.5% of eggs leave the nesting site as live ducks. The survival rate of those drakes is around 70% and about 60% for hens after one year.

Habitat loss is the most significant cause of declining songbird populations. A U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service report found that cats are the top human-related cause of bird deaths, with collisions with buildings/glass a distant second.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Zig Ziglar said, "Don't judge me by my past. I don't live there anymore." Be kind.

Geneva resident

uses crochet as both

art and medicine

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Kaycee Peterson is a Geneva resident who is perfecting her skills while putting a new twist on the time-tested hobby of crochet. This 29-year-old has 148 different designs, and she was willing to talk about them on Friday, May 22.

"I was asked once to make a dog that was similar to the one a man had just lost. His wife asked me," she recalled. Although she doesn't crochet a lot of dogs, she knows how. She's been married to Soren Petersen for the past two and a half years, and they've lived in Geneva for two. "He loves my creations," she said. "He encourages me to do them and pursue this, even if it's mostly a hobby right now." Kaycee says people can get in touch with her through her Facebook account. She invites people to have a look at some of her work there, and let her know of any requests at <https://www.facebook.com/kaycee.pooole>. People will also be able to find her in person at an October craft

show that will be taking place in Blooming Prairie. She says she looks forward to practicing her sales skills while also letting people see some of her work.

Kaycee says she is currently a stay-at-home spouse, "I've been diagnosed with non-epileptic seizures. They're stress induced. But my crochet keeps me busy and everyone likes it. If I can keep my mind on that, focus, it's a way to relax once you get good at it." She spoke cheerfully about her craft and how she is always improving. "I am working on a Pokémon right now, from the original Pikachu. I've been watching a lot of anime. That's where my husband likes to point out ideas on what I should do next. When I was little my grandmother didn't let me watch that show because she thought it was evil. Now when my grandmother sees my projects, she loves all of them, even the Pokémon." Kaycee says her grandma's favorite is a triceratops.

She has two sisters, "And one of them is about to give birth come Sep-



CROCHET DREAMS - Kaycee Peterson of Geneva is slowly expanding her crochet business. Also pictured is Toby on Friday, May 22, 2026.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

tember." Her husband works at Elendale Casey's, "Right off 35. He does prep in the kitchen. I love their pizza, pepperoni and breakfast sausage. I like that better than the Italian sausage because it's more peppery. Most of the time I make my own pizza, from scratch." She has two dogs, Toby and Maya, and five house cats. "I am an animal lover. That's why a lot of my projects are of farm

animals, cows, sheep, but I can also do raccoons, black bears, bunnies, and dinosaurs. I don't do a lot of birds, but I have done a pretty owl." On her Facebook page is an interesting photo of mushroom people reminiscent of characters in Mario Brothers. There's also a picture of Toby. "He's the dog that's black and white colored." And sitting next to him with a smile, is Kaycee.



STAYING ACTIVE - The Workout Girls of New Richland gave it their all in the Trinity Lutheran Church basement on Friday, May 29, 2026. Pictured from back row left: Dot Gonitzke, Mary Berg, Pat Bethke, Karen Jacobson, Cathy Stringfield, Jean Berg, Pam Goehring, Ann Hagen, Kathy Anderson, Suzy Routh, Mary Routh, Sally Routh. Front row from left: Robin Brekke, Kris Schlaak, Marcia Berg, Karen Krause.

Star Eagle photo by Ben Revermann

Workout Girls of New Richland get their steps in

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

A Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) group meets three mornings a week in the basement of Trinity Lutheran Church in New Richland. Sessions last about an hour and include a range of exercises with a little music on the side.

Group member Karen Jacobson said, "I give all the credit for this class to Pam Goehring; she works really hard and she's the one that makes this happen." Goehring is the leader, and has been keeping a senior workout group going in New Richland since January of 2012. Said Goehring, "We started out at the Royal Villa apartments, then we

moved over to the food shelf before Trinity Lutheran let us do it here."

Goehring was surrounded by women in stretch pants and loose-fitting workout gear. Membership, which is free, has been as many as 26, and as few as 1, but rain or shine, Goehring pushes forward alone or with everyone. Some of the ladies made use of weights ranging between 1 and 5 pounds; others had strap-on weights that can be attached to an arm or a leg. Any woman who needed to slow down during the session was welcomed to. Those who could keep up, stayed the course. The weights looked brand new; the group extends thanks to the State Bank of New Richland for donating them.

The exercise routine required leg lifts. At a certain point Goehring began repeating herself until one of the ladies said, "You did that one already; we need to move to the left leg now." Laughter around the group was followed by one woman's whisper, "Sometimes we need to keep up on Pam; she's got so much going on, it's hard to keep track." During the class held the morning of May 29, two arrivals who were just a few minutes late, Karen Krause and Sally Routh, were welcomed with open arms by everyone as they joined.

Complete with warm-up, aerobics, balance, strength training and stretching, the SAIL workout is designed for those 55 and over. The ladies say regular attendance improves strength, balance and flexibility. For those 65 and over it focuses and aids in fall prevention. It has been found to improve the quality of life and give those getting older the ability to stay independent.

After the workout session, these lovely ladies were kind enough to pose for a photo. At this time, their three meetings are Mondays at 8:30 a.m. and Wednesday and Friday at 9 a.m. The class lasts around an hour but has been known to go over or under by a few minutes. There is no cost to attend, and group members say sessions are easy to keep track of, and the benefits of staying active as one grows older are invaluable.





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OBITUARIES

Lori Ann Nelson

Lori Ann Nelson, 65, of Ellendale, passed away on Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at New Richland Care Center with her family and beloved dog Ginger by her side.

She was born August 8, 1960 in Waseca, Minnesota, the daughter of Clinton and Margaret (Kuntze) Gruzebeck. Lori graduated from Owatonna High School in 1979 and then went to Albert Lea for travel planning courses. On May 21, 1988, Lori and Wesley were united in marriage at the Assembly of God Church in Ellendale. They were blessed with their son, Tyler. Lori owned and ran the Straight River Inn in Hope for 10 years. Once she sold the business, she then worked for "Teachers On Call," working in many area schools as a paraprofessional.

Outside of work Lori loved to make wire wrap jewelry, and she would sell them at different farmers markets, craft fairs and flea markets. She even won many ribbons at the fairs with her quality work on her jewelry. Lori and Wes loved to go fishing and hunting in northern Minnesota together. At home Lori loved to tend to her flower gardens and spend quality time with her family and her dogs that she had over the years.

She is survived by her husband of 38 years Wes Nelson of Ellen-



Lori Ann Nelson

dale, their son Tyler Nelson of Ellendale, her sister Carrie (and Jeff) Knippel of Owatonna, sister-in-law Beathe Arneson of Norway, brothers-in-law Ed Nelson of Ellendale, William Nelson of Pine City, nieces and nephews, and her golden retriever, Ginger.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brother, Steve Gruzebeck of Norway, parents-in-law, Ed and Alcie Nelson, and her three dogs.

Visitation will be at Ellendale United Methodist Church on Friday, June 5, 2026 from 11 a.m. To 12 p.m., with the funeral service starting at 12 p.m. Interment will be in the Berlin Cemetery in Rural Ellendale.

Barbara Berg

Barbara Ann (Chicos) Berg passed away peacefully on April 23, 2026 at the New Richland Care Center.

She was born July 12, 1947 in Albert Lea, MN to Raymond and Veronica (Callahan) Chicos. Barb grew up on the family farm by New Richland.

Barb went to New Richland schools, graduating in 1965. After graduation Barbara worked at Herter's in Waseca, MN. She moved to Mesa, AZ and worked for the Boeing company before returning to Minnesota.

She is survived by Shannon

(Eddie) Peterson, Shane (Brooke) Berg and Justin (Jacqueline) Berg. Siblings Richard (Ellen) Chicos, Michael Chicos and Nancy (David) Fisher and many nieces and nephews.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents Raymond and Veronica Chicos, her sister and brother-in-law Agnes (Harold) Schroeder, sister-in-law Marilyn Chicos, sister and brother-in-law Catherine (Roger) Solberg and a niece Joell (Solberg) Quiram.

A memorial service will take place at a later date with the immediate family. Burial will be at Calvary Cemetery.

FFA Parent Member Banquet



BEAUTIFUL BANQUET - The 96th Annual Parent-Member Banquet for the NRHEG FFA was held on Saturday, May 23, 2026. Those attending did so at the New Richland city hall; there were guest speakers, dinner served and awards presented.

Star Eagle photos by Ben Revermann

IN BRIEF

Blood Drive at Waldorf Community Center June 9

There will be a blood drive at the Waldorf Community Center from 1-6 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9. The event will take place at 109 S Main Street.

Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Meeting June 11

The SWCD will be holding its monthly board meeting at 6:30

p.m. on Thursday, June 11. The meetings will be held in the SWCD offices located at 300 North State Street - Door 4.

Ride for Heroes at Pour House in Clarks Grove June 20

The Ride for Heroes will depart from the Pour House in Clarks Grove on Saturday, June 20. Breakfast and registration at 8:30 a.m., kickstands up at 10:30 a.m. Following the run, food, live auction and live music. Proceeds go to local veterans.

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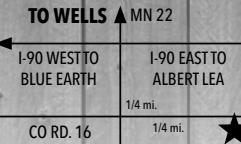
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New assistive devices acquired for elections

By **DEB BENTLY**
Staff Writer

Anyone voting in Waseca County this fall will have the option of using an “ExpressVote” machine, recently acquired by the Waseca county office of property and election services.

Department head Tammy Spooner and election coordinator MacKenna Conway explain the “assistive voting devices” provide an alternative to the process of coloring in the small circles which voters have become accustomed to.

The two suggest the machines will be especially useful for those who have trouble reading the small print on paper ballots, or who either find it difficult to color in the circles or are impatient with the process of doing so.

Expressing pride in the county’s 91-percent voting rate during the 2024 national vote, the two say their research revealed the machines are quick, accessible, and popular among voters of many age groups.

A demonstration reveals that the machine shows each ballot item in turn on a screen. The voter reads the options and touches the circle next to the preferred choice. The next question is displayed, and so on. Voters are offered the opportunity to enter a write-in choice using an on-screen touch keyboard. They are also informed if they are allowed to select more than one response to an item. Voters who wish may also choose to decline voting on specific questions.

Once all the items on the ballot have been displayed, the screen shows a summary of the individual’s responses and offers a chance either to go back and make changes or to submit the votes. Once “submit” is selected, the machine prints a paper ballot displaying the responses, ready to be fed into the same counting machine as a hand-completed ballot would be.

The machines, say Conway and Spooner, meet the criteria for Americans with Disabilities laws and will be available at all future primary and general elections within the county.

The two also wish to address perceptions among members of

the public that voting machines are unreliable, or that voting using a machine makes it possible for votes to be changed or manipulated in some way.

Spooner, who has been with the office for more than 20 years, wants people to know votes are handled with “the utmost integrity.” They explain that, prior to the election, each piece of equipment is tested by election staff and then again by election judges at a “public accuracy testing” to prove that what is marked on the paper ballot is exactly what the machine counted.

Along with that, all steps having to do with tallying and counting votes are handled by a team of people who contribute to the process, including checking each others’ work. Anyone who distrusts the use of machines should know that, in all Minnesota counties a “post election review” is required by state law. Shortly after the voting day, a team of election judges hand counts key offices on all the ballots submitted from two randomly selected voting sites. Also part of the hand-count team is at least one representative from each of the major political parties.

Spooner relates that in her 21 years, no Waseca County team has found a discrepancy at the post election review.

For any who regard elections as something that happens only every other year, Conway and Spooner say they are preparing for and considering elements of elections daily.

For example, those planning to be on this November’s ballot are currently in the window when they must “file” for election. This includes the statewide governor’s race; locally many county officers are up for reelection, including county board members De Malterer, Brad Milbrath, and Brad Krause, county attorney Rachel Cornelius, county sheriff Jay Dulas, and soil and water supervisors Larry Muff, Gregg Rosenthal and Matt Sommers. Because he is a resident of Waseca County, state representative Tom Sexton may also file with the Waseca office; he could also file with the Secretary of State.

■ Honors

from Page 1

tending the DECA career development conference in Florida and Atlanta, traveling to Costa Rica with the Spanish class, and “all of the little everyday moments with friends.”

Her favorite subject in school is math, with no class being the least favorite. “I loved being able to explore different subjects,” she adds.

In terms of favorite teachers, Stork says she is fortunate to have built a relationship with so many of her teachers that it

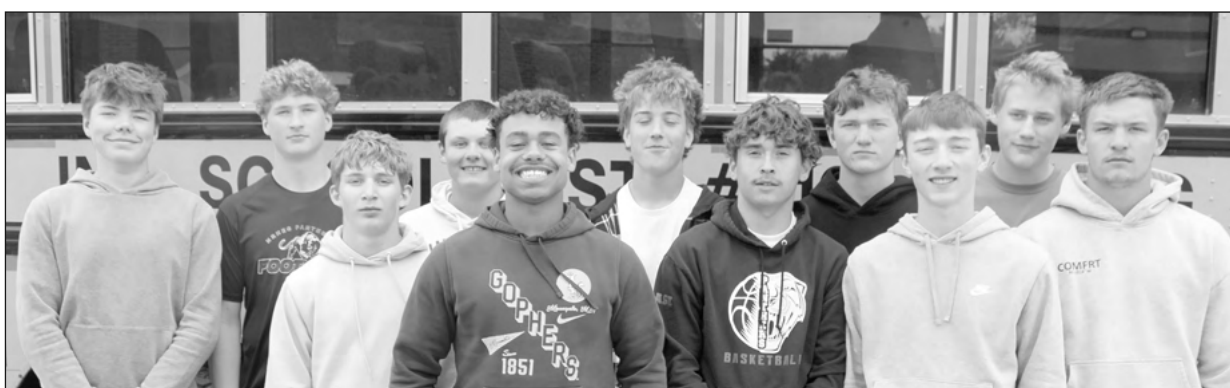
would be hard to pick. She points out that they have all helped her grow not just as a student but as a person.

“I’m excited for all that the world has to offer,” Stork says about her future. “There is so much out there to explore and so much to learn.”

In ten years, Stork says she just hopes that she is happy and in a position where she’s making the world and those around her better.

While she claims it sounds cliché, Stork says she would tell her freshman self that the high school years truly do go by quickly, so, “Enjoy all of the little moments and don’t be afraid to dream big!”

Community Day



Groups of students large and small overseen by NRHEG staff members took on tasks all around the New Richland Area during the district’s Family, Career and Community Leaders (FCCLA) community service day on May 22. Among the projects students took part in were cleaning at the district bus garage, a highway cleanup, planting flowers both to decorate the school grounds and as volunteers for the New Richland Town and Country Garden Club, decorating downtown sidewalks and at the community library, and performing yard work for area residents.

Star Eagle photos by Deb Bently

Traveling to Arkansas, enjoying life’s pleasures

After taking some time off for a while, I’m back into the writing of the article.

Genie and I were in Harrison, Arkansas for two long weekends in April and May of this year. Genie attended a weekend retreat for just ladies in the mountains above Harrison. The natives refer to the area as the “Grand Canyon of Arkansas.”

The area caters to motorcycle bikers, they get reduced motel rates, towels to wipe off their motorcycles, plus parking under an overhang in a well lit area in plain sight.

I was amazed at the number of bikers who brought their bikes in a trailer to Harrison and rode their bikes after arriving. (It amazed me to see the number of ladies riding their own bike.)

An interesting change of language of the older north American versus the southern older American was what something was called for example a “rummage” sale was called an



“If you repeat what you have read here, it may be used against you.”

FACT OR FICTION

...you decide

by Bob Hanson, Emeritus

“old age sale.” As long as a parent was alive, a son or daughter was referred to as the first.

We travel by car getting onto highway 65 in Des Moines, Iowa, following it to Harrison, Arkansas after staying the first night in Marshall, Missouri. An interesting thing starting at Des Moines and all the way to Harrison, Arkansas was virtually no field work completed. (It was the same on the way home- very dry, no wild work completed.) The older Natives were comparing it to a drought of a dust bowl in the fifties.

We didn’t experience any bad tornado storms in the time we were there until we got back to Albert Lea and spent the evening of Friday the 15 of May in the basement of our house. (Go figure-The area we were in has lots of tornadoes!!)

I suppose you have heard of the black bear seen just north of Owatonna and a black bear seen between Clarks Grove and Albert Lea. Isn’t it strange the birds are migrating north and the bears are migrating south.

Genie and I decorated graves of some of her relatives in Northern

Iowa on Saturday, May 23, 2026 in honor of Memorial Day. (Being from Clear Lake, Iowa, most of her relatives’ graves are within 50 miles of Clear Lake.

Genie and I celebrated the full moon Saturday night August 16 by dancing on our driveway about midnight. Thank you, Genie!!

Many of you read the Star Eagle newspaper from New Richland, MN. Hopefully you read the “Just a thought” as written by Eli Lutgens, auditor in regards to his health situation. I’m asking you to keep Eli in your prayers- You can do it! I know you can!!

Bob is a retired AAL (Aid Association for Lutherans) agent, currently working on his master’s degree in Volunteering. His wife, Genie, is a retired RN, currently working on her doctor’s degree in Volunteering. They have two children, Deb in North Carolina, and Dan in New York. Bob says if you enjoy his column, let him know. If you don’t enjoy it, keep on reading, it can get worse. Words of wisdom: There is always room for God.

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ON TO THE FINALS — The NRHEG High School baseball team held on to defeat Southland 5-4 in the Section 1AA semifinals Saturday at Austin. At left, the Panthers' Calvin Nissen slides safely into home. At right, the Panthers celebrate the win. The victory advanced the Panthers to the section finals Tuesday, June 2, where they would need to defeat JWP twice in order to advance to state. Photos by Eli Lutgens

Magic carpet ride continues

Panthers reach section finals

By ELI LUTGENS
Publisher/Editor

For Hall of Fame coach Jeff Reese, retired except for assisting with the NRHEG baseball team, it was a top-five game all time.

"Let the magic carpet ride continue," Reese said after the Panthers completed their run to the Section 1A finals with a thrilling 5-4 victory over Southland on Saturday at Austin's Riverland College.

"In 40 years, you see a lot," Reese said. "This one is in the top five."

The Panthers continued their playoff success, blanking Lewiston-Altura 6-0, setting up a memorable rematch with Southland, who defeated the Panthers 6-5 in the winner's bracket earlier in the week.

A pitcher's duel for most of the game set up the nail-biter.

The Panthers went up 2-0 in the second inning after they loaded the bases and scored via a single and sacrifice fly.

Pitcher Owen Wayne allowed only one hit and no runs in five innings of work, which did not come consecutively.

The Panthers plated three in their half of the fifth, before pulling Wayne, who had 74 pitches and would be eligible to pitch in Tuesday's game due to the required rest days. Once a pitcher throws more than 75 pitches, they are required to rest for three 24-hour

periods.

Brooks Gilliland threw two-plus innings in relief, allowing four runs.

After the first four batters reached in the seventh and two runs were scored via a double to the left field fence, NRHEG coach Marcus Fischer made the decision to re-enter the senior, Wayne, to try and save the Panthers season.

He did just that.

The first batter he saw hit a ground ball to third base, which was smothered; there was no play at first.

With the bases full and no outs, the next batter grounded to first baseman Brooks Gilliland, who made the play, throwing home for the force out.

The next batter lined out to the drawn-in-infield, to second baseman Calvin Nissen.

Fittingly, the final batter of the game grounded out to Wayne who tossed to fellow senior catcher Wyatt Larson for the final out.

Panther hits went to Wayne, Dakota Schlaak, A.J. Deen and Nissen. Brooke Gilliland drove in two runs, Dakota Schlaak one.

The final pitching line for Wayne was five innings, no runs, eight strikeouts and three walks.

"We needed to win this game," Fischer said after the game. "I had it in the back of my mind the entire time that we might need to bring Owen back in to finish it. I knew he



SCENES FROM SECTION — Above left, NRHEG head coach Marcus Fischer exchanges fist bumps with his players and assistant coaches after the Panthers' victory over Southland. At right, former NRHEG head coach and current assistant Jeff Reese cheers on the Panthers. Below left, Owen Wayne, who started on the mound and was summoned in later innings to pitch, picking up the win and the save. Below right, Tyler Piepho races home with a run.



was the guy to put in."

During the mound visit in the seventh, Brooks Gilliland told Coach Fischer to put Wayne back in the game.

"We gotta win," Brooks told us on the mound," Wayne said after the

sively with two hits, including a double. Sean Lassahn hit a home run in his return from a hamstring injury that sidelined him the previous game. Wayna, Wakota Schlaak, Brooks Gilliland and Brock Holland also hit safely.

The top-seeded Panthers would need to beat No. 2 seed JWP twice Tuesday in order to advance to state.

The state tournament is June 11, 12 and 15 at various locations, with championship games to be played at Target Field in Minneapolis.



SECTION ACTION — Competing at last week's Section 2A SouthTrack and Field Meet are Noah Weller, left, and Gabby Schlaak. The Panthers had no state qualifiers. Photos by Larry Nydegger

Season ends for NRHEG tracksters

The NRHEG High School track and field teams competed in the Section 2A meet at Janesville last Saturday.

Unfortunately for the Panthers, none of their entries advanced to state.

Kasey Jewison captured the top place for the NRHEG boys, finishing seventh in the 3200-meter run

with a personal-best time of 10:59.55.

Senior Quen Meyering placed ninth in the 200 and 11th in the 100.

Noah Weller threw a personal-best 127 feet, 7 inches to finish ninth in the discus.

Gavin Lewison was 10th in the triple jump at 36-8.5.

Wyatt Tuttle, Brendan Schlaak,

Lewison and Meyering teamed for 10th in the 4x200 relay.

Senior Gabby Schlaak led the NRHEG girls, finishing fifth in the 100 hurdles in 17.35 seconds and fifth in the high jump at 4-11.

Julieann Wobbrock placed in both distance events, taking ninth in the 1600 in 5:54.05 and ninth in the 3200 in 13:40.65.

Ellie Clark clocked a personal best of 50.94 for 10th in the 300 hurdles.

It marked the end of the season for the Panthers.

"I am proud of the kids and their efforts this season," said NRHEG co-head coach Larry Nydegger.



NRHEG golfers advancing to the second round of section play are, from left, Alexis Olson, Reid Sandry and Hailey Staska.

Sandry, Olson, Staska advance in section golf

NRHEG High School's Reid Sandry had a stellar round last Tuesday in the section golf tournament.

Sandry, who shot an 86 for 18 holes, was one of three Panthers to break 100. David Deen shot 93, Braxton Arnold 95. Rounding out the scoring for the Panthers were

Blake Olson, 101; Chuck Tufte, 105; and Shan Hansen, 111.

Sandry's showing advanced him to the second round of section play this week.

Advancing for the NRHEG girls were Alexis Olson and Hailey Staska.

Pederson Graduation Speech



Winter Pederson

Hello everyone, and thank you for coming this afternoon. My name is Winter Pederson, and I'm very honored to have been chosen by my classmates to come up and make a speech today. I'm going to start by saying a sentence that will be used many times today, but only because it's true: this is the last time you will ever see the entire class of 2026 together. Today is the day that we all close a very important chapter of our lives together. This is a day that all of us have been looking forward to, and maybe even slightly dreaded at times.

Some of us have spent so much time in this building, and others not as much time, but today we all experience this moment together. This is the moment we have worked towards for, let's be honest, too long. We should all be proud of how far we've come to get to today. And even though we all sit up here together as a group, let's not forget about us as individuals. Each one of us up here has worked towards this day, all changing a little bit every day since we first stepped foot in this building. This moment is evidence of all of our collective achievements we've made throughout our entire school careers.

As each of us walk across this stage today, we aren't just celebrating making it through high school and getting a diploma. We also celebrate our growth, our determination, and our resilience. Staying up doing homework, getting up early or staying late for practices, studying for tests, or hanging out with our friends after

school just talking, got us all here today. We all pushed through the tests or quizzes that we probably didn't want to do, games, meets or competitions that didn't always go our way, or even days when it was hard to keep our eyes open in class. Every high and low helped us and encouraged us to grow as people. Through all of these things and more, we showed up.

Knowing this is most likely the last time I'll see my entire class together, it really makes me appreciate just how many fun moments and memories we've made together and alongside one another. But more than anything, it makes me appreciate this moment even more and makes me look forward to the great things this class will do in our futures. But, throughout this senior year, I think all of us have come to the same conclusion: our time at NRHEG is over, and some things just won't ever be the same as they once were.

We've been counting down to this moment for years, to our graduation, most of us not realizing how fast that "someday" that we always talked about would actually be here. But even this moment will soon just be a memory that we were all a part of. That's why I want everyone to embrace how powerful the present moment can be, instead of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future, because the present is the foundation for everything yet to come. I want to give one more congratulations to the class of 2026, and a huge thank you to everyone that believed in us and helped us get here today.



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GENEVA - Geneva Bar & Grill
HARTLAND - BP Gas Station
HOPE - Krause Feeds &

And At The Star Eagle Office

Chloe Stork Graduation Speech

Good afternoon. My name is Chloe Stork, and I am honored to speak on behalf of my class today.

It feels a little surreal to be standing up here speaking to you today. If you have been around me at all this school year, you have probably heard me say the words, "I don't want to graduate!" a million times. I know that's probably not what you want an 18-year-old who's supposed to be ready for the next chapter to say, but it's never really been about being ready. I'm just incredibly grateful to be able to say I had the best high school experience possible, and it's because of the people who surrounded me along the way.

While living in a small town is all many of us in this room have ever known, it's a unique gift to grow up in a community like ours. Many of us have known each other since the days of mismatched socks and boogers—well, who am I kidding, some days that's still me—but over the years, we've also welcomed so many new classmates and friends into our lives.

Being a class of under 60 has allowed us to become unbelievably close, grow up together, and make so many memories along the way. Some of us are even related. Being a Schlaak, Gabby had to be really careful not to date someone she was related to, so she found someone out of town—and somehow his last name is still Berg. Fingers crossed they aren't related.

All jokes aside, we've shared some pretty unforgettable moments together. I don't think any of us—both basketball players and fans—will ever get the sound of Ms. P yelling "rebound!" out of our heads. The boys wearing neon shorts and knee-high socks in middle school, the girls walking around with scrunchies, and all of us somehow becoming

entrepreneurs with our slime businesses are things I don't think we'll ever forget.

We had opportunities to travel to new places such as Costa Rica, New Orleans, California, and even Australia. We will always remember that Devon Nelton was always a fan favorite on the quote wall in band, usually because he was roasting else. And at Eagle Bluff in fifth grade, we played Nukem every night like it was our full-time job. However my favorite memory has to be Mr. Domeier beating Gavin in a rap battle in junior high.

But honestly, I don't think the most important part of these years was just the big trips or the funniest stories. It was the little things that slowly shaped who we became. Having breakfast with friends before school. Laughing in class when we definitely shouldn't have been. Mr. Guildner putting up with senioritis in College Calculus. Summers that somehow always ended up being spent together anyway.

Somewhere in the middle of all of that, we learned things that mattered a lot more than what was on a test. We learned the importance of kindness, integrity, and working hard even when nobody was watching. I carry the values I do today because of my experiences throughout high school, and I hope that many classmates can say the same. We learned that success means a lot more when you use it to help the people around you too. Every single person sitting behind me took a different path through these years, but those experiences shaped all of us into who we are now.

And I think that's what makes this all so hard to put into words. Because when you're living it, it just feels normal. It feels like, "this is just how life is." But looking back now, it



Chloe Stork

wasn't just normal. It was formative, incredibly fun, and honestly really special.

I don't think any of us fully realized that at the time. School wasn't perfect for everyone in this room, and I think we all know that. There were hard days, long days, and days we probably wanted to be anywhere else. But even in the middle of all of that, we still got to grow up together.

We grew up with the same people seeing our awkward phases, our worst moments, our failures, our worst haircuts, and everything in between. And through all of it, we slowly became the people we are now.

And now, somehow, we're sitting

here at the end of it all.

And I think that's where it finally starts to sink in.

Im going to miss seeing the same faces every day without thinking twice about it. The noise, the chaos, the inside jokes that only make sense to us will forever be cherished.

So as we all go our separate ways, I just want to say thank you. Thank you to the teachers who put up with us, the classmates who became lifelong friends, and the people sitting behind me who made these years what they were.

Because looking back now, we really were lucky.

Kaitlyn Dobberstein Graduation Speech

Good Afternoon! You have heard about the past and present, but now let's talk about the thing that most of us have stressed constantly about, the future. I'm Kaitlyn Dobberstein, and when we were younger, the future felt so far away. It was something we heard of but never fully understood. We talked about who we wanted to be and what we wanted to do when we grew up, without realizing that one day we would really be here, sitting in our caps and gowns, moving into the future.

As seniors, we have spent countless hours worrying about tests, practices, homework, friendships, and figuring out who we are. Some of us have known exactly what we want to do after high school, while others are still trying to figure it out. I think the thing that makes the future both exciting and scary is that we truly don't know what's coming next.

We are entering a world full of change. New places, new people, new responsibilities, and new opportunities are just waiting for us. Some of us will go to college, some will start careers, some will serve others, and some might still

be looking for their paths. No matter where we go, we will all leave here with something valuable: The lessons we learned together. The future is not just about jobs, success, or achievements. It's about learning to be kind when the world feels harsh, brave when life feels uncertain, and hopeful even when things don't go as planned.

There will be moments in our future where we fail. Moments where we feel lost or overwhelmed. But if High school has taught us anything, it is that we are capable of more than we think. We have already overcome challenges we once thought were impossible. The truth is, the future doesn't need us to have everything figured out right now. It just asks us to keep moving forward.

As we leave this chapter behind, I hope we remember the little moments that brought us here—the teachers who believed in us, the friends who stood beside us, the game, concerts, late nights studying, and even the difficult days that taught us resilience. These are the memories that will stick with us no matter where life



Kaitlyn Dobberstein

takes us. As we look ahead to the future, let's not fear it but instead be confident. Because sitting here today is a group of students who are stronger, smarter, and more capable than we sometimes realize.

Our future will not look the

same for all of us, and that's okay. Success is not defined by one single path because each of us will create our own stories. Congratulations to the Class of 2026! The future is waiting for us.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Wyatt Tuttle**,
Son of Thaddeus and
Jessica Tuttle,
will be held at **his home**,
76833 340th St. Ellendale
on Saturday, June 13, 2026
from 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Alexis Loken**,
Daughter of Dallas and Nicole
Loken,
will be held at **Loken Excavation**,
3695 Hoffman Dr. NW Owatonna
on Saturday, June 13, 2026
from 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Kaitlyn Dobberstein**,
Daughter of Josh and
Linda Dobberstein,
will be held at **Dobberstein Park**,
14798 SW 82nd Ave. New Richland
on Saturday, June 13, 2026
from 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Winter Jade Pederson**,
Daughter of Michael Pederson &
Nikki Cromwell, will be held at
the **Geneva Community Center**,
406 1st Ave. SE, Geneva
on Friday June 5, 2026
from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Abbie Viktora**,
Daughter of Dan &
Elizabeth Viktora,
will be held at **her home**,
80492, 275th St., Hollandale
on Saturday, June 6, 2026
from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Chloe Stork**,
Daughter of Dan and
Stacy Stork
will be held at **her home**,
224 3rd st NE., New Richland
on Saturday, June 6, 2026
from 4 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Camryn and Quinn**
VanMaldeghem
will be held at
Riverview Golf Course
15590 240th Ave. New Richland
on June 6, 2026
from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Jordan Del Brouwers**,
Son of Jessica (Brouwers) Hanna
will be held at the
Ellendale Community Center
507 2nd St. S. Ellendale
on June 7, 2026
from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.



A Graduation Open House
in honor of **Owen Wayne**,
Son of Brandon & Jodi Wayne
will be held at **his home**
4501 SW 108th St. Ellendale, Mn,
56026
on Friday June 5, 2026
from 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.



Woods and Water

by Dick Herfindahl
Outdoors Writer

You're never too old to learn something new

I was pleasantly surprised last Sunday morning when my grandson Trevor called and asked me if I wanted to go fishing. We went and I observed Trevor catching numerous fish and losing one huge northern pike. The fish came out of the water right at the boat and actually straightened out the snap holding the lure before swimming away with Trevor's lure still in its mouth. I felt satisfaction in just being able to witness a fish that size, in one of our area's lakes.

There have been plenty of fish being taken from Fountain and Albert Lea Lake. I asked Trevor if he had tried fishing out by the Jugland dam yet. He said that he tried it a week ago, but the water was so murky that he knew fishing wouldn't be any good.

I always enjoy fishing with Trevor. Now that the tables have turned instead of me taking him fishing, it is him taking Grandpa fishing. I was even lucky enough to get him to retrieve my lure a couple of times when one cast landed in a tree and another on someone's dock. I told him that it was payback for the times I took him fishing as a kid. I can never tell him enough how much I appreciate him taking me fishing.

This spring, the fishing has been good on many area lakes. St. Olaf,

Beaver, Fountain and State Line lakes have all been producing different species of fish. I have heard that Lura Lake is already pretty weedy for this time of year. I would guess that it might be attributed to the lack of rain in our area.

Each year in early June, Take a Kid Fishing Weekend is an opportunity for adults to share the fun of fishing with kids.

"This is a great time of year to take kids fishing. The weather is usually pleasant, and the fish are often found close to shores and piers," said Benji Kohn, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources volunteer mentor program coordinator. "Try heading out to a nearby lake and cast out with a hook, bait and bobber. Kids will be all smiles when they catch fish."

Take a Kid Fishing Weekend is from Friday, June 5, to Sunday, June 7, and this year, the weekend coincides with a pause in fishing license sales as the DNR transitions data to Minnesota's new electronic license system. During the pause in license sales, anglers may fish without a license from 12 a.m. Tuesday, June 2, through 11:59 p.m. Monday, June 8. All other fishing season regulations and bag limits will remain in effect. At 12 a.m. June 9, the new electronic license system will open for anglers and hunters.



Shown here are a couple of pictures that Dick's son, Brad, took when they were up north. One of the pictures is also of Brad fishing.

Youth 15 and younger do not require fishing licenses at any time of the year, though they must observe all fishing seasons and regulations.

Please take the time to remember

our troops that are serving now and those that have served before them. They are the reason that we have all of the Freedoms that we enjoy today.

LOOKING BACK

25 years ago

- Selected New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva 2001 Teacher of the year Elizabeth Knudson is happy to represent the district. She has served as an elementary instructor in the local district for 16 years. Beth will be competing with other teachers of the state for the honor of Minnesota Teacher of the Year, which will be announced in the fall.

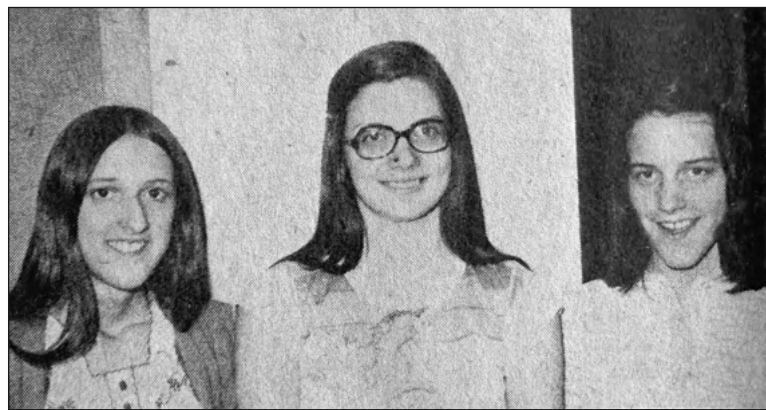
- Mollie Holmes of Waldorf was selected by Thomas Madden American Legion Post #587 Post Auxiliary as their 2001 Girls State candidate. Mollie is attending Minnesota State University-Mankato full-time under the Post Secondary enrollment options and planning a career in the medical field.

- Minnesota State University Mankato student Julie Fleming has been named as the recipient of two scholarships from the College of Education, Fleming of New Richland, was awarded the \$500 Jane Neubert scholarship, in addition to the \$250 Kiwanis-Munsun scholarship for the 2001-2002 school year.

- The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton girls softball defeated Medford 19-3 and Alden-Conger 10-0 in Wednesday and Thursday games last week.



50 years ago



- These three members of the Waldorf-Pemberton High school band have been selected as participants in the Minnesota All-State Band, according to Jim Kopetzki, Waldorf-Pemberton band instructor. They are from the left: Linda Mensing, Kary Eichhorst and Noreen Pfeffer.

- Mr. and Mrs. Walter Kent of rural New Richland announces the engagement of their daughter, Edna Jean to Kevin Burns of rural Janesville. An August 21st wedding is being planned.

- Coastguardman Daryle B. Rudolph was recently promoted to Chief Petty Officer at the Coast Guard Station, San Francisco, California. Chief Rudolph is a former resident of New Richland and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. H.J. Rudolph of Albert Lea.

75 years ago

- Miss Loraine Wenzel became the bride of Winston Evenson, Wednesday, June 27, at a ceremony performed at St. Peters Lutheran church at 2:30 in the afternoon. Rev., Wm. F. Lehmann read the double ring service. Mixed garden flowers decorated the altar.

- Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Miller (Mildred Proehl) of Hartland, are the proud parents of their third son, born in Waseca Memorial hospital Monday, June 25, weighing eight and a half pounds. The older Miller boys are Stuart and Eugene.

- You just can't expect to come off on top when your opponent has the ability or good fortune to get 11 runs on four hits, especially when you are able to get only four hits yourself and make them good for only one run. And that is exactly what happened last Friday evening at Manchester when the New Richland American Legion team met up with the Manchester team.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

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
Interim Pastor
Trish Reedstrom
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 - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Tuesday - Council meeting (First Tuesday)

WEST FREEBORN LUTHERAN
Hartland, Minnesota
Rev. Marcia Pedersen
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship
Monday - Council meeting (First Monday of the month)
Friday - Quilting meets 9:00 a.m. twice a month, 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 - 10 a.m. Worship (times vary 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 LCMC
Ellendale, Minnesota
Lay Pastor Ross Sletten
Saturday - 8am Men's Bible Study
Sunday - 9am Worship
Monday - 7pm Call to prayer
Wednesday - 9:30am Bible Study; 6pm Confirmation

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. Sunday School from Oct through May from 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.
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

FAMILY OF FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH
101 East Park Avenue
Hollandale, Minnesota
An EagleBrook viewing church.

Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Coffee Fellowship; 9:20 a.m. Worship/Kids Church
Familyoffaithhollandalemn.org
ffchollandale@gmail.com

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 Gena Parker
Sunday - 10:15 a.m. Worship

FIRST LUTHERAN, LCMC
Hope, Minnesota
Pastor Sandy Miller
Sunday - 8:30 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; Pre-school Sunday School during Mass
Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. - Faith Formation classes for grades K-Confirmation
www.litomysl.webs.com
www.stsidorechurch.webs.com

FIRST LUTHERAN
Missouri Synod
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Rev. Larry Sipe, pastor
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
Region Nine Development Commission will hold its FY27 Budget Hearing on Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at South Central Service Cooperative, 2075 Lookout Drive, North Mankato, MN to present and receive comment on the proposed budget is \$1,812,672.

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The Board of Education will be taking action on submitted quotes at the regular School Board meeting scheduled for Monday, July 20, 2026.

Please submit your quote to: Mike Meihak, Superintendent, 306 Ash Avenue South, New Richland, MN 56072 by 11am on Thursday, July 2, 2026.

Sarah Wacholz
Administrative Assistant
To the Superintendent
NRHEG Public Schools

Publish in the NRHEG Star Eagle
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Larson earns salutatorian honors

By AMELIA ROESSLER
Editor

Wyatt Larson, 18, is NRHEG’s salutatorian for 2026. He is the son of Shawn and Jody Larson, and his family includes JayLee Larson. His future plans are to attend the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, College of Biological Sciences for his undergraduate. After getting his degree, he plans to attend Medical School. Larson would then like to pursue an anesthesiology residency.

During his time in school, Larson was involved in baseball, football, wrestling, trap shooting, National Honor Society, Student Council and choir. In the community, he was a part of Scouting America, where he became an Eagle Scout, was a member of the Student Council and also did volunteer work. Larson also worked as CNA at the New Richland Care Center.

“It is a huge accomplishment to be awarded this. I have worked really hard to get to where I am today,” Larson says. “I feel that I deserve and have earned this award, but also that so many people have helped me on my journey.”

While he says he expected to win this achievement, Larson adds that it didn’t make him feel as if he was entitled to it. He says he continued to work hard and take challenging classes to help him in his future.

Larson says his family has told him so many times how proud they are of him, even when he struggled. He adds that they believe in him achieving his future goals.

“I will miss my sports teams. There is nothing like high school sports, and the bond I have with my teammates is something amazing,” says Larson.

Larson states his favorite or funniest memories during high school are



Salutatorian Wyatt Larson embraces his father, teacher Shawn Larson during graduation May 31.

the times he spent with his close friends in class or outside of school.

His favorite subject in school is math and science, with English as his least favorite subject.

In terms of favorite teachers, Larson says his favorites were Mr. Ferber, Mr. Larson and Mrs. Reeder. “Mr. Ferber was my favorite class ever,” he states. “My Dad has helped me when I asked for it with my schoolwork. Mrs. Reeder was a teacher in High School as a mentor and a person who would give me advice.”

For younger classmates, Larson suggests working as hard as possible, being active, and always asking questions and for help.

Larson says he is looking forward to being able to continue to help other people throughout his life. In 10 years, he sees himself midway through his residency at a hospital.

Advice Larson says he would give himself as a freshman is, “Everything will fall into place; you just have to trust yourself and trust the path that is given to you, and you will succeed.”

Barnyard Treasures holds spring show

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Barnyard Treasures of New Richland held a spring “pop-up sale” on Saturday, May 30. The forecast said 83, but the wind off the field kept it an even 75 degrees for the 11 vendors who were present.

Emily Schultz of St. Olaf Bakery, who ordinarily sells from her farm stand near her house, was there. She had chocolate chip sourdough cookies. She keeps sourdough for bread, but said, “When you have extra sourdough for bread, but don’t need it, you can use it in your cookies.” The Candle Beesness, which has hand poured bees wax products, is owned by Nastassia Misen. She also sells room cleansing sprays, crystal infused sprays, wax melts and candles.

Twin Arrow Spices was in two places at once; the founder, Andra Brandt, had her husband Eli manning the stand for the day. She was in Mankato at the farmers market. Eli said, “She started this back in 2018. We’re from St. Clair.”

Leanne Possin, the proprietor of “Pig Pen” said, “I do embroidery and print. I have my own printer and can make my own shirts and sweatshirts.” She also had keychains, hats, jewelry, dish towels and a magnetic white board with mini magnets shaped like various items most people have in their cupboard or refrigerator, including Heinz Ketchup, Frank’s Red-hot sauce, barbeque sauces, mustard, milk jugs, and more.

Deb Lustig of “Deb’s Delights” said,

“I’ve been doing crafts for almost 10 years. I’m out of Rochester, but not too long ago I lived in Owatonna.” She was selling a unique item; “You take two old cd’s, wrap them in quilt batting, tie them together with string and buttons and you have a card holder. I’ve heard that children and the elderly have a difficult time holding cards for long periods, so this card holder takes the pressure off.” She was also kind enough to pose for a photo with one of her holders.

Dawn Selly of St. Peter’s “Silver 3D Prints” had a display like that which might be seen in a toy store, with pirates, dinosaurs, dolls, knight sets, games, and puzzles. Said Selly, “I’m a stay-at-home mom who needed a hobby, which turned into more.” She attends many shows and says she will be at the next St. Peter Farmers Market.

Stacy Webster was selling many antique items. She has been downsizing and said, “I am a collector, a big collector of antiques, but as I get older, I need to cut back a bit and this is in the spirit of that.” Brenda Johnson was also there. She’s the owner of “Ginny Warm, Hearth and Lefse,” and she said, “I usually stick to the farmers market out at Farmamerica. I have been making lefse for over 40 years.”

Dawn Raatz, owner of the property the Barnyard Treasures vendor show gathers on, said, “I bet we’ve had maybe 50 cars come through here by 11:30 a.m. I can’t wait to see how well the afternoon goes!”



Leanne Possin, proprietor of "Pig Pen," attended the Barnyard Treasures Pop-up Spring sale in New Richland on Saturday, May 30, 2026.



Deb Lustig of "Deb's Delights" attended the Barnyard Treasures Pop-up sale in New Richland on Saturday, May 30, 2026. Pictured is Deb holding her homemade card holder, for those unable to hold cards at the table for long periods of time.

Star Eagle photos by Ben Revermann

■ Graduation

from Page 1

Looking back now, we really were lucky,” Stork concluded.

Pederson spoke next and reminded those in attendance that today is the final time the class of ‘26 will see each other together.

“Today is the day that we all close a very important chapter of our lives together,” Pederson said. “As each of us walk across this stage today, we aren’t just celebrating making it through high school and getting a diploma. We also celebrate our growth, our determination, and our resilience.

“I want everyone to embrace how powerful the present moment can be, instead of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future, because the present is the foundation for everything yet to come,” Pederson concluded. “Thank you to everyone that believed in us and helped us get here today.”

Kaitlyn Dobberstein spoke about the future.

“Some of us have known exactly what we want to do after high school, while others are still trying to figure it out,” Dobberstein said. “I think the thing that makes the future both exciting and scary is that we truly don’t know what’s coming next. We are entering a world full of change.

“The future is not just about jobs, success, or achievements,” Dobberstein continued. “It’s about learning to be kind when the world feels harsh, brave when life feels uncertain, and hopeful even when things don’t go as planned.

“Our future will not look the same for all of us, and that’s okay,” she concluded. “Success is not defined by one single path because each of us will create our own stories. Congratulations to the class of 2026. The future is waiting for us.”

Berg introduced the NRHEG band, which played the traditional “last song together,” a composition played sometime during the seniors’ career, and one they selected as a favorite.

This year’s choice was “(Risk) Everything for a Dream,” arranged by Richard L. Saucedo.

Gabrielle Schlaak led the parent appreciation statement, after which graduates came down off the stage and delivered flowers to the parent figures in their lives.

Following the parent appreciation, a compilation of videos and photos from the class of ‘26 was shared.

Berg introduced salutatorian Wyatt Larson and valedictorian Chloe Stork.

Short biographies of both these

honored students appear in this week’s Star Eagle.

School board members Amy Ihrke and Kelly Delacruz, alongside superintendent Michael Meihak and Principal Berg, presented diplomas to the graduates.

When finished, Berg told graduates, “It’s time,” and asked the graduates to stand and move the tassels on their caps.

“You are now officially graduated,” said Berg. “I want to congratulate all of the graduates and thank everyone for their attendance. I wish you all the best.”

History always arrives with more questions than answers.

The Waseca County Historical Society is sharing the story of a remarkable 48-star United States garrison flag recently brought to local attention. Measuring approximately 32 feet by 19 feet, this enormous cotton bunting flag is not the kind of flag that would have hung on a front porch or been carried in a small parade. It is the largest standard military flag size, traditionally used for forts, bases, major ceremonies, national holidays, and large public displays.

And yet, for now, its story remains a mystery. The flag dates from the era when the United States had 48 states, a design used from 1912 to 1959 after the admission of New Mexico and Arizona and before Alaska joined the Union. During that long period, the 48-star flag flew over the country through some of the most defining moments of the 20th

century, including World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.

“This is the kind of object that stops you in your tracks,” said the Waseca County Historical Society Executive Director, Amy Danielson. “Its size alone tells us it was meant to be seen. But the real question is: where was it seen, and by whom?”

The flag is especially notable for its craftsmanship and condition. It features hand-sewn stars and machine-sewn stripes, reflecting a period when traditional handwork and modern manufacturing existed side by side. Despite its large size and likely use in public or institutional settings, it remains remarkably well preserved, with only minor staining and no major structural damage.

What is not yet known is where the flag came from. Was this giant flown above a local school? A courthouse? A

civic building? A military training site? Was it part of a ceremony remembered by local families? Did generations of Waseca County residents pass beneath it without knowing that, decades later, its story would be waiting to be rediscovered?

Anyone who recognizes the flag, remembers a large historic flag being displayed locally, or has photographs, family stories, or records that may help

identify its origin is encouraged to contact the Waseca County Historical Society.

While formal appraisal would be needed to determine monetary value, the flag’s size, condition, construction, and era all make it historically compelling. Community members with information are invited to contact the Waseca County Historical Society at 507-835-7700.

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