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Dictionaries

Worry, uncertainty follow abrupt evacuations for local families

Lives on hold as family seeks answers

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

“We don’t go in there,” Shelby Priebe says of her family’s home at 123 Aspen Avenue in New Richland. “There’s mold everywhere and I don’t think the air is safe to breathe.”

Shelby, her husband Tyler, their daughter Lizzy, 11, and son Hunter, 9, have been living with family since their property was inundated with water the morning of Sept. 19. When they last left the home around 8:30 that day, Tyler placed each of his family members in turn on his shoulders and carried them through the still-rising, thigh-deep water.

It was the last step of an evacuation that had begun about midnight the night before.

The lowest-lying building on

the property is a spacious garage workshop where Tyler’s penchant for mechanical work had allowed him to gather a wide-ranging collection of vehicles, including snowmobiles, a vintage truck, their own lawnmower and one or two being repaired for friends, and the family’s cars.

Shelby describes that Tyler did not go to bed at all on Friday: given the heavy rain, his preparations began with protecting the basement from water that was rising up through the floor drain. With the inflow blocked, two built-in pumps were keeping the basement dry. As the rain continued, they were taken by surprise when water began rising in the utility sink. That, too, was

Home continued on 7



REBUILDING HOME - Next-door neighbors on Aspen Avenue, the Priebe and Wigham households both experienced flooding which reached into the main floors of their homes. Pictured here, from left, are Lizzy, Shelby and Hunter Priebe and Susan and Steve Wigham.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

Cleanup efforts revealing new problems

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

“I guess we’ll see where it all goes from here,” comments Susan Wigham, 70. “But winter is coming, and we’ve got to keep making progress.”

Susan and Steve Wigham have been living with Susan’s sister since leaving their home on New Richland’s South Aspen Avenue on short notice, arriving at her home unannounced the morning of Sept. 19.

Susan is quick to say how supported she feels thanks to the volunteers who have helped flood victims, and to the people who stop by to check on her and Steve. “New Richland is a family,” she says of her neighbors. Susan and Steve are staying elsewhere, but spend many hours at the house most days; they are gradually determining what work, and what further steps are

necessary to make their home of 32 years habitable again—or whether it can even be done. They are also waiting to learn more about federal emergency funds which may help them move forward.

Susan says that, as of now, they plan to move back into the home: She points out they do not have the finances to purchase a replacement residence, especially given that their current one is in no condition to sell. “And who would buy it?” asks Susan rhetorically. Steve foresees he may have to use the money he has saved for retirement simply to make their house habitable again.

A remarkably energetic team from an organization called Christian Ministries appeared on Sept. 21. The group carried soaked and ruined items out, helped clean, and

Wigham continued on 4

Spotify Bookmarks at New Richland Public Library Thursday, Oct. 15

The New Richland Library will hold a Spotify Bookmark event at 4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15. Perfect for gifting or for personal collection, for ages 13-18.

Glow in the Dark Party at New Richland Public Library Wednesday, Oct. 19

The New Richland Library will hold a Glow in the Dark Party at 6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 19. This pumpkin party is geared towards children 7-12.

Romp and Rhyme Storytime Hour at New Richland Public Library, Thursday, Oct. 20

Romp and Rhyme Storytime Hour at New Richland Library 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 20. Puppets, bubble machines, music, these are not your average storytimes. For ages 3-6.

New Richland Legion Auxiliary meeting at New Richland Library Thursday, Oct. 22

The New Richland Legion Auxiliary will hold their October meeting at the New Richland Library at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22.

Todd Utpadel at Geneva Grill and Bar Friday, Oct. 23

Musician Todd Utpadel will play at the Geneva Grill and Bar from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 23. This is part of a Musicians Against Cancer, MAC performance.

A word from The Word

My son, hear the instruction of thy father; and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Proverbs 1:8-9



SHOWING THEIR STYLE - At left, models Kris Johnson, Pennie Ladlie and Gretchen Supalla stand ready to step out for the audience during the Oct. 6 fashion show held by Two Doves Boutique in Ellendale. At Center, Owner Gwen Reiss provided colorful commentary. At right, models Pennie Ladlie, Rhonda Hareid, Gretchen Supalla and Karen Krause cluster around the decorative fountain in the Two Doves outdoor plaza.

Star Eagle photos by Deb Bently

Fall Into Winter style show has good ‘feels’

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

Two Doves Boutique owner Gwen Reiss joked that the models during her “Fall Into Winter” style show were keeping count of how many “feels” they had to stop for as they walked among the 30 or so guests who enjoyed not only an up-close

style show in the boutique’s outdoor plaza, but an elegant buffet of wine and hors d’oeuvres the evening of Oct. 6.

The sensory temptations included leather-like slacks, some with sparkling accents, a thick fur-like jacket, silky lingerie, and richly embroidered jackets and accessories.

Reiss offered input and sugges-

tions as models Pennie Ladlie, Rhonda Hareid, Gretchen Supalla, Karen Krause and Kris Johnson strode past wearing outfits they had selected from among the boutique’s offerings.

As an embroidered garnet-colored jacket appeared, Reiss offered that “dark jewel colors are in this season.” She commented that people going to weddings are

tending to choose “stylish but comfortable” clothing, often including a dressy jacket over a somewhat more casual outfit. She also joked that guests would find their seats more comfortable if they treated themselves to a bit more wine.

Two Doves Boutique holds its fashion shows twice a year.

Ellendale Fire Hall has its public debut

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

A steady stream of visitors appeared at an open house at the Ellendale fire hall the afternoon of Sunday, Oct. 11. Firefighters were on hand to offer tours, answer questions, and serve free hot dogs. On the street nearby, children were offered the chance—with adult support—to hold a fire hose and experience the pressures it exerts while in use.

Fire chief Logan Busho explained that the event, which



FIRE PREVENTION SWAG - Handing out fire prevention awareness materials that included shopping bags, children’s hats and coloring books were volunteers (at left) Chloe Muhlenberg holding Lucy McGowan, Allison Muhlenberg (at right, in black) and (beginning at second from left) Courtney, Katelyn, Briella and Keelin McGowan.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

took place just after the final day of Fire Prevention Week 2026, was designed to create an invit-

ing atmosphere that included free food, children’s activities, department-related gifts, and a

Fire Hall continued on 4

ELLENDALE CITY COUNCIL

Council allows \$56K to investigate water treatment

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff Writer

Ellendale Council members approved spending up to \$56,000 under a “facility plan development agreement” with the Mankato engineering firm Bolton and Menk after hearing a proposal from company representative Brian Sarff during their Oct. 7 meeting.

Sarff summarized that the city water treatment facility is capable of treating 100,000 gallons per day, but is operating at or above the maximum permitted rate. Under the agreement, the firm will provide a full picture of existing wastewater treatment flows and loadings, anticipate future needs and provide planning alternatives for the associated needs and costs. Bolton and Menk will also submit applications for federal and state funding by March 2027, thus meeting deadlines for fiscal year 2028. Council members plan to go door to door in the Crown Ridge subdivision, where residents have complained of damage caused by storm water. There will be a special council meeting at 7 p.m. Oct. 22 to discuss the problems residents experienced. Council members state that, although the public is welcome to attend, the meeting will not include public discussion.

The council accepted two donations: \$250 from the Central Farm System to the Ellendale Fire Department; \$1,000 from the Lions Club.

LMC Trust issued Ellendale a \$6,200 dividend check.

Fire Chief Logan Busho said the Ellendale Fire Department currently has two openings. He reported two helmet visors have cracks,

Council continued on 4



Fence Lines

by Mark Bernard

Those fallen leaves lie undisturbed now

The scurs kept the Weather Eye dialed in for more sunshine and warm temps. Are we heading back into fall or do we get another free pass? Starting Thursday, mostly cloudy with a good chance of rain. Highs in the low 60's with lows in the low 40's. Mostly sunny Friday with highs in the mid-50's and lows in the low 30's. A frost! Sunny on Saturday with highs in the upper 50's and lows in the low 40's. Sunday, mostly highs in the mid-60's and lows in the low 40's. Mostly cloudy on Monday with highs in the upper 60's with lows in the upper 40's. Tuesday, partly sunny with highs in the upper 60's and lows in the low 50's. Mostly cloudy Wednesday with a good chance of rain.

Highs in the upper 60's with lows in the low 50's. On the 15th, the sun will set at 6:30 p.m. CDT. On the 16th we slide below 11 hours of daylight. On the 17th the sun will rise after 7:30 a.m. CDT. The normal high for the 17th is 58, and the normal low is 36. After this cooldown, the scurs will be ready for a hot cup of soup.

Soybean harvest is largely in the books for most growers, and it appears to be a record crop locally. Many farm averages in the 70+ bu./acre range with some over 80. Even though the soybeans got too dry, the waiting lines slowed harvest for some. Earlier maturing soybeans did very well and combined very easily while some of the group 2 varieties combined harder and didn't produce yields any better than some of the 1.6 maturity varieties. The harvestability might've been enhanced if we'd had a frost to dry those stems down on the later beans. One of these years our frost will return to a more normal date. It may have the desired effect of spreading the harvest and allow operators to harvest more beans at 12% - 13%.

Corn is coming off. While yields have reputedly been good, many fields harvested have been earlier maturing hybrids. Reported moistures have been in the low 20% range. Odds are as we move into later maturing corn we'll know what this corn crop is really made of. So far it has withstood the wind. There were signs of stalk rot here and there earlier this fall prior to maturity. Stalk rot doesn't go away and frequently gets worse. The effect of stalk rot is compounded by strong wind events, something that wasn't a potential issue until recently. Couple that with a slow,

soaking rain and things can come unraveled in a hurry. On paper, corn should come out quickly. Reality may temper those expectations however, especially if this crop is what many think it is when/if storage becomes an issue.

The garden at the ranch is close to coming to a close. I'm still hoarding the last of the cucumbers and thinking there may be a tomato or two left with my name on it. All the pumpkins, gourds and squash are piled in front of the house, awaiting their distribution around the yard. The trouble has been that so many of the summer flowers in the pots and planters continue to bloom and look like they have since July. The heat and wind from this last week necessitated a decision to yank them out or water them and keep them another week. We chose the latter. There have been lots of pollinators still feeding on the nectar and pollen, so why not? There will be lots of months without flowers outside soon enough.

As it turns out, it's probably a good thing we left the flowers out for another week. I'd also left some sugar water in the feeders in case a straggler hummingbird might be passing through. Sure enough on Sunday the 11th, Mrs. Cheviot spied a hummingbird working over the blue and purple salvia on the north side of the house. I didn't see it but was pretty sure she wasn't kidding. After my Studebaker mechanic and I had unloaded hay, we were gabbing while getting ready to hook up the hay rack to his pickup. I glanced at the cannas and sure enough, a hummingbird was feeding on them! It spotted us and quickly retreated to one of the apple trees. Not the first time at the ranch.

Back in the early 90's we had one show up on October 8th or 9th. It happens.

The fall color has been somewhat unique also. Some trees in the yard at the ranch have had some color earlier than usual and are dropping their leaves while others are still as green as grass, with little sign they're even thinking about turning. I was amazed how many leaves I ground up during the latest mowing. With the recent windy days, that probably shouldn't be so surprising. The nice thing about that is between all the leaves and pine needles that were recently cast, it really cleans the mower deck up nicely underneath.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

Surreal moments encountered on the road

There I was, on the road between New Richland and Ellendale, on a moonless night. Knowing some locals who refer to the road as "Venison Alley," I was being particularly watchful. After all, as farmers harvest their crops, deer have to readjust their habits to the decreasing amount of cover where they can conceal themselves. As the corn disappears, it must seem to them the area goes from being about 80 percent to roughly 5 percent "forest."

Anyway, there I was, watching the road closely, when a legless, brown creature maybe two feet tall began to dance in my headlight beam. It twisted and spun, then performed an effortless flip and disappeared into the darkness.

I was still staring ahead in confusion when I realized what I had just seen. On that particularly windy night, a dried corn leaf had been caught by the moving air and carried into the road. Puppet-like, it followed

some invisible instructions before escaping to the roadside.

I saw another lengthy brown leaf behave in about the same way a couple days later. It caused me to speculate why these particular blowing leaves seemed so noticeable; I quickly realized the largest single thing is that the leaves were alone—that is, rather than being part of a flurry of leaves, they were the only ones moving at the time. That is why they seemed to be moving of their own volition—because we "see" the wind based on its effects. With only one unusually long leaf caught up in the movement, I saw the leaf without immediately recognizing the power behind it.

It was a glorious fraction of a second, though, thinking I had discovered some bizarre new creature...

Another experience that brought a smile to my face occurred in broad daylight. I topped a hill and quickly realized I would have to pull off the



CORN CONVOY - Deb recently pulled over for two combines traveling in her direction. Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

road.

Ahead of me, extending past the edge of the road on both sides, were two combines traveling in my direction. Though there were only two of them, and though there was considerable space between them, they sent an impression of being a convoy. I have great respect for farmers and for the pressure they are under during harvest, so I felt no resentment as I turned off on a convenient side road and waited for the two behemoths to pass.

For the three or four minutes I

watched them, I recognized that pulling over was the right choice—the drop-off at each side of the road was a bit too steep or rough for us to have attempted sharing the road. Given the relative size of my vehicle to theirs, it was obvious who would have been the loser.

The driver of the first combine waved energetically as he passed—I took that as a signal of appreciation that I had chosen not to complicate their drive.



Just a Thought...

by Eli Lutgens

Life is too much fun to be boring

Bob and Genie Hanson are the types of folks a person would need a lifetime's worth of coffee to chat with.

I was blessed with their company last Wednesday afternoon in my home for coffee and rolls.

After learning of Bob's Alzheimer's diagnosis from his column this week, I called the Hanson home almost immediately. For a long time I have wanted to hear the Hanson story firsthand.

Bob's great grandparents came to this country with just a suitcase, one they still have in their home.

A Korean War veteran who spent most of his service time in Japan as a war spy, Bob returned home and attended college on the GI bill going to school for sales and accounting.

Although vowing never to sell insurance, Bob became a Thrivent dealer, serving more than 2,200 across southern Minnesota.

He met his wife Genie in Twin Lakes Minnesota. Two weeks later he asked her to go out for a hamburger. The pair have been married 63 years as of Sept. 28, 2026.

Six years separate the almost 90 year old man and his wife Genie. They raised two beautiful children, both now in their 60s.

Acceptance and self care were two important lessons the couple talked of.

Their faith: Genie says, "We are children of God."

Time goes so fast, they say, how can anyone be bored?

Whoosh, the couple says, and 1988, the year of their retirement, became 2026.

Where should you vacation? The man who has seen the continental United States says Big Horn Mountains in Wyoming. Arrowhead Lodge in Sheridan, Bob answered.

I asked Bob about his health. If not for Bob and Genie's openness, I would have had no idea Bob was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. The diagnosis came after a routine blood check this past summer.

I am grateful for the Hansons for sitting down with me. A lesson to myself from this experience is not to put things off. I blinked and a decade went by. Reading Bob's column this past week, I didn't let a day go by before I called their home to set up a time to chat.

One of my first assignments at the newspaper was typing in Bob's handwritten columns. That was almost 15 years ago. When I got something wrong, he would call and in the kindest, most upbeat voice, explain what I had gotten wrong and that "Things should be written the way he intended." What he explained was his writing voice, my first introduction to such a topic.



CELEBRATING LIFE - Bob Hanson served in the Korean War and spent most of his service time in Japan as a war spy.

Bob reminded me of a story I had forgotten. My dad almost sold the Star Eagle to someone else a few years prior to my taking over as publisher. Bob told my dad he needed to

think of my mother and me. He would be putting us out of a job if he sold the paper.

Thank you Bob, for helping save the paper.

Every day of life changed with Alzheimers

With me being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, my everyday of life has really changed. For example:

1. This was the first time I wasn't actively involved in the annual serving of the Soup and Dessert supper at Central Freeborn Lutheran Church. We served 437 people!

Genie and I got to eat with Jennifer and Steve Larson, former teachers in Decorah, Iowa. Jennifer is the new chaplain at St. Johns Lutheran Com-



FACT OR FICTION

...you decide

by Bob Hanson, Emeritus

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

munity in Albert Lea. Steve is Jennifer's private chaplain in their home.

2. I have received cards and thank yous plus phone calls from

many well wishers. Thank you so much.

3. I now have "my own private chauffeur." (I am not allowed to drive.) Thank you, Genie - your

driving is great!!

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.

Got news? • 463-8112 • steagle@hickorytech.net

NRHEG Star Eagle

SERVING THE NEW RICHLAND-HARTLAND-ELLENDALE-GENEVA AREA and the communities of Waseca, Otisco, Hope, Clarks Grove, Matawan, Freeborn and Waldorf

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Compostings

by Al Batt

Flattery will get you everything

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

Don't you ever clean your beard? I can tell what you had for breakfast this morning. Oh, yeah? What did I have? Eggs.

You're wrong. That's what I had for breakfast yesterday.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. It was a Goldilocks day: not too hot, not too cold, just right. I taught a writing class. One pupil was named Iris. I teach because I dream of one day being able to open accounts in the Cayman Islands, have safety deposit boxes in Zürich, or become a hard-charging shopper at Walmart.

One student, not Iris, had dropped the Jell-O he had for lunch onto his new, white basketball shoes. It was an assault with a congealed weapon.

Iris had a new eraser. It was half-blue and half-pink. In grade school, I believed the blue half was meant for erasing ink. In reality, the pink half is designed for soft graphite pencil marks on standard paper, while the blue is meant for thick, durable paper. I tried the blue on ink scribbles. It tore the paper. I thought it erased ink because I believed in magic. I believed the school custodian lived in a closet because he was always coming out of or going into one.

I CUT HEADS OFF IN FILMS

I took a photo of a photo at a county fair to remind myself to tell the photographer how much I liked his work. I remember using film and waiting two weeks to see what developed. A bottle of ketchup provided no anticipation in comparison. I waited forever to get photographs back with a tall man's head cut off in one picture.

I'VE LEARNED

Cabins are never built of cottage cheese.

In the first grade, I learned exits were on the way out.

I gave my turtleneck sweater to the Salvation Army. I had had it up... well, you know where with it.

If you eat ice cream before the meal and again after the meal, it's an ice cream sandwich.

The clock on the wall hadn't worked for years. We kept it there because we could depend on it.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

Authorities arrested a guy for stealing hay. He couldn't make bale.

Accordion to a recent survey, replacing words with the names of musical instruments in a sentence often goes undetected.

If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, there's some-

thing wrong with your goldfish.

NATURE NOTES

It was a lovely day, one offering perfect weather in October. The everlasting summer didn't last. Fall begins. Summer ends. Winter looms. The landscape turns the color of overdone meatloaf. I stopped at a pumpkin patch to have a pumpkin repaired.

I walked, moseyed, strolled, ambled, meandered, sauntered, wandered, ambulated, hoofed, traipsed, stepped, peregrinated, tramped, tiptoed, strutted, lumbered, waddled and toddled along, seeing many people on the trail who were taking their phones for a walk. The best things in leaf are trees. I played the "catch the falling leaf" game, a folk tradition that claims catching a tumbling leaf brings good luck, helps avoid colds, or grants 12 months of happiness. It's a form of mindfulness that fosters focusing on the present moment and the beauty of autumn. I snatched a red maple leaf out of the air. It was a vision of loveliness. Yay, me!

Meadowhawks are small dragonflies, 1 to 1.5 inches long. The males are red, and the females are a yellow-orange color. They are tough, sometimes surviving into November.

Flattery will get you everything. Fluttery gets a monarch butterfly to Mexico. Their future is up in the air.

Migrating birds carry built-in calendars. Unlike other warblers, yellow-rumped warblers (butter-butts) don't go far to overwinter, traveling to the southern United States, Mexico and the Caribbean. Some winter farther north on the east and west coasts. They survive harsh winters due to their ability to eat berries when insects aren't readily available. They're able to digest bayberry, juniper, wax myrtle and poison ivy berries.

A Jack-in-the-pulpit has red berries that glow on the forest floor, and the red sashes of ambitious Virginia creeper climb trees. Milkweed pods burst, having turned from green to a gray or brown color, and the seeds are mature when brown.

Bur oak (a white oak) acorns have fuzzy caps reminiscent of ushankas. Wood ducks, wild turkeys, squirrels and deer prize the acorns. White oaks have rounded leaf lobes, and red oaks have pointed leaves. A study found that squirrels eat 85% of white oak acorns shortly after discovery and store 60% of red oak acorns, which have larger amounts of bitter-tasting tannins than white oak acorns.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"Be the reason someone smiles. Be the reason someone feels loved and believes in the goodness in people."—Roy T. Bennett.

New Richland Lions Club to pass along \$15,000 to flood victims

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

New Richland residents affected by the flood will be offered a free shopping trip at Wagner's Foods, thanks to a recent \$15,000 donation from the regional Lions Disaster Fund. Each of about 50 households will be allotted \$291 to purchase groceries and certain types of cleaning products, with the proviso that shoppers should select off-name products.

Lions Club members explain the shopping trip is a way of delivering immediate assistance, as opposed to many programs which have turnaround times of days, weeks, or even longer.

The disaster fund donation was delivered by Lions Club district governor Chuck Tolzman during a local club meeting held at the Willows restaurant on Wednesday, Oct. 7. While he was there,



SPECIAL CAUSES - The New Richland Lions Club was presented with a check for \$15,000 to help those affected by the New Richland flood. Pictured from left: Lions Secretary Brian Vairma, District Governor Chuck Tolzman, David Matthies, President Dan Schmidt, Neil Schlaak, Dale BayerKohler, Kent Nelson, and Alverrecheo Bell. Star Eagle photo by Ben Revermann

Tolzman presented an acknowledgment of local club leader Dale Bayerkohler's 50-year membership as a Lion.

Sheila and Justin Arndt, proprietors of the Hartland University Bar, requested that the New Richland Lions pancake breakfast fundraiser this year be held on behalf of John Eustice, who has been suffering from a kidney immune disease for 29 years. The Arndts said Eustice has numerous medical needs and a mounting list of medical costs. He receives blood work twice a week, and has been approved for a kidney transplant. Even after he re-

ceives one, though, his compromised blood system will be something he will have to deal with for the rest of his life.

Eustice has been helping out at Hartland U for years, said Sheila, describing that he helps set up for events, solicits donations for special causes, and provides assistance with tasks and projects. She went on to say Eustice "prefers to earn" what he gets, and so would not ask to be the beneficiary of a fundraiser. Justin added, "He doesn't complain about anything." Eustice is married and his wife has three children.

County receives strong audit, completes long agenda

By DEB BENTLY
Staff writer

Members of the Waseca County board of commissioners plowed their way through a hefty agenda during their Oct. 6 meeting. Numerous actions and decisions from the day are summarized in separate articles which appear in this week's edition.

Among actions not addressed elsewhere, board members approved a report from Amanda Mboga of auditing company Baker Tilly, who informed them the company had issued an "unmodified" report regarding the county's 2025 finances.

Despite its neutral-sounding name, Mboga said classifying a set of books as unmodified is the strongest statement of accuracy an auditor provides. It indicates no errors or discrepancies were found in the records. Mboga also commented that the county has very healthy finances, having made only limited use of credit and keeping a significant level of funding in its general fund.

When it comes to public agencies, a general fund is an amount of money that has not yet been designated for

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

spending, and which could, if necessary, allow the county to continue operating for a time, even if all outside sources of funding were not delivered. Mboga told commissioners the state recommends that counties keep a value equal to about 38 percent of their annual budgets in the general fund, which would allow roughly five months of independent operation. Waseca County, she said, averaged 48 percent, well above the state recommendation.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, board members heard from New Richland area resident Rick Schultz, who presented a detailed suggestion for routing water around New Richland to the north, rather than to the south as has been described by county leadership.

Schultz showed a map of the New Richland area and summarized information about the elevations of various features. Routing water to the north, he suggested, might be a better way to prevent future flooding in New Rich-

land because it makes more efficient use of existing topographical conditions.

Commissioners approved a proclamation naming Oct. 4 to 10 as "4-H Week" in the county. The proclamation also recognized that 2026 begins the one-hundredth year 4-H has been active in the county, and praised the organization for its role of "empowering youth with the skills they need to lead for a lifetime."

Amy Nelson, the University of Minnesota Extension Educator for 4-H Youth Development in the county, shared that numerous events and celebrations are planned in the coming months to mark the anniversary, including a return of the "Share the Fun" event this spring.

Commissioners received a memorandum from the Courthouse Safety Committee which expressed concern that Waseca's is the only courthouse in the Third Judicial District where people enter the building without any sort of security screening. The memo pointed out the county received a grant, and has already acquired a metal detector for that purpose. It requested that

commissioners move forward with steps to ensure the equipment can be set up and used. This would include providing funding, so the sheriff's department could assign a staff member to operate the security station.

Consultant Renae Kuehl informed commissioners that she is part of a team helping to update the county's roadway safety plan, which was last updated in 2012. Kuehl provided a summary of severe "crashes" which have occurred in the county in the past five years, explaining that the Minnesota Department of Transportation focuses on updating roadway conditions with the intent of reducing incidents where victims are either killed or experience life-changing injuries.

The efforts are part of the "Toward Zero Deaths" initiative which began in 2003.

In a county-wide meeting held the afternoon of Oct. 6, Kuehl led a discussion regarding safety issues encountered by public employees and private citizens who chose to be present. Information regarding that meeting will be summarized in a future edition.

Ellendale Heritage Society holds Bingo fundraiser

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

About 40 people enjoyed snacks and beverages while listening intently to proclamations from bingo caller Scott Groth: a cash prize and a pound of Hope butter were on the line for 21 rounds of bingo the evening of Saturday, Oct. 10.

Ellendale Heritage Society president Dan Nelson shared that the 4-times-a-year bingo event is the group's largest fundraiser, joined

Bingo continued on 5



GIVING THEIR TIME - Heritage Society members (from left) Dan Nelson, Becky Lassahn, Barb Mrotz, Jo Lerberg, Johnny White, Nathan Vanek, Andy Lerberg and Brenda Dokken volunteered their time at the organization's Oct. 10 fundraiser held at the Ellendale Community Center. Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently



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OBITUARIES

Rolland Swenson

Rolland Wallace Swenson, age 99, passed away at his Colony Court home in Waseca in the early morning of Monday, October 12, 2026.

Rolland was born in Waseca County on March 15, 1927 to parents Carl and Hilda (Larson) Swenson. A first-generation Swedish immigrant, his family spoke Swedish in their home which caused Rolland difficulty as he began in an English-speaking country school. He graduated from New Richland High School. He later went on to serve his country in the United States Army from 1950 until 1952. During his time in the service, he was married to Carol Joanne Peterson at Vista Evangelical Covenant Church. Rolland owned and operated his own building construction business for over fifty years. His family recalls him driving throughout the area recounting stories and memories of the over eighty different residential properties and two churches that he built. He purchased his Otisco farm, and it was said that he “built houses so he could farm.” He loved the Lord and his family and was a long-time member of Vista Evangelical Covenant Church.

Rolland is survived by his devoted wife of seventy-five years, Carol, of Waseca; four children, Douglas (Evie) Swenson of Woodbury, Jeanne (Evan) Shaddock of Prior Lake, Keith (Amy) Swenson of Savage, and Karl (Debbie) Swenson of Waseca; and nu-



Rolland Swenson

merous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by both of his parents; three sisters in infancy; two sisters as adults, Esther Dietrich and Frances Swenson; and six brothers, Arthur, Raymond, Russell, Kenneth, Emmeth, and Marvin Swenson.

A visitation for Rolland will be held from 4-6 p.m. on Thursday, October 15, 2026 at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca, and will continue for one hour before the service at the church on Friday. In lieu of floral gifts, memorials in honor of Rolland may be directed to the Vista Evangelical Covenant Church or to Gideons International.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, October 16, 2026 at the Vista Evangelical Covenant Church in rural New Richland. Following interment, a luncheon will be hosted at the church.

dsofuneral.com

Joan Johnson

Joan Marie Johnson of Owatonna, MN died October 10, 2026 at her home with her family by her side. Mass of Christian Burial is set of Saturday, October 17, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 512 – South Elm Ave, Owatonna. Friends may greet the family on Friday, October 16, 2026 from 4-7 p.m. at Brick-Meger Funeral Home, 1603, Austin Road, Owatonna, with a Parish Rosary starting at 3:45 p.m. The visitation continues one hour prior to the funeral Mass on Saturday at St. Joseph Church.

Joan was born August 24, 1941 in Faribault, MN to Orville and Lorraine (O’ Connor) Quiggle. She was raised in Morristown, MN and she graduated from Morristown High School in 1960. She attended cosmetology school in Mankato, MN.

On July 8, 1961, Joan was united in marriage to Rodney Frank Johnson at Immaculate Conception Church in Faribault, MN. After living briefly in Lemond, the couple settled on a farm near Owatonna,

where they raised five children. Joan operated an in-home beauty salon before devoting herself to life as a homemaker and farm wife.

Joan had a gentle spirit and a quiet, sweet nature that endeared her to everyone who knew her. But those fortunate enough to know her well also knew the wonderfully spirited woman beneath that quiet exterior. She had a delightful sense of humor, a mischievous streak, and a gift for bringing laughter and fun to any gathering.

A wonderful cook and gracious hostess, Joan loved bringing her family together for meals, celebrations, and laughter. She and Rodney enjoyed farming, going to their cabin and camping with their family. A devoted Catholic, Joan loved Jesus with all her heart and treasured her family above all else.

Joan is survived by her husband, Rodney; five children: Tim (Margaret) Johnson, Char (Daryl) Kubicek, Troy (Lisa) Johnson, Cindy (Steve) Rohwer, Carmen (Mark) Van Osedale; 16 grandchildren: Michael Johnson, Jami (Josh) Johnson, Travis

(Krystle) Johnson, Cory (Alicia) Johnson, Trevor (Emma) Johnson, Jason (Vannesa) Kubicek, Kristi Johnson, Justin Kubicek, Tyler (Michelle) Johnson, Jake (Marin) Johnson, Sara Johnson, Brittnei (Ryan) Ferch, Nicole (Brandon) Rohwer, Ashley (Ben) Resler, Lacey (Alex) Spinler, Logan (Emily) Hanson, Andrew (Karissa) Van Osedale, Sean (Amy) Van Osedale, Sam (Jake) Rahier-Van Osedale; 25 great-grandchildren: Issac, Jeremiah, Noah, Xavier, Alli (Blake), Elle, Jax, Carson, Bay, Gunner, Odie, Remy, Amelia, Norah, Kennedy, Talon, Greyson, Cooper, Emma, Sydney, Landon, Clayton, Lincoln, McLain, Bowen, Andi Joan, Lucas, June, Lila, Piper, and Tucker; sisters-in-law: Pat Johnson and Shirley Quiggle, and nieces and nephews: Marlon Quiggle, Jr., Gary (Kathy) Johnson, and Craig Johnson.

She was preceded in death by her parents Orville and Lorraine Quiggle; brother Marlon Quiggle; daughter-in-law Karen Johnson; great-grandchild Georgina Johnson; siblings-in-law Jesse Johnson, and



Joan Johnson

Richard (Barbara) Johnson and their children Julie, Loren, and Corrine.

Joan's legacy of faith, love, and laughter will live on through the generations of family she so lovingly brought together.

For more information or to leave an online message of condolence, go to www.megercares.com.

Council

from Page 1

and will be replaced at a cost of \$220. Southern Lock and Glass will be replacing one doorknob on the fire hall for \$1,224, but a total of three need to be replaced eventually. The department will purchase three 5-gallon buckets of Class A Foam for \$420. The

fire department gave \$8,000 to be deposited into the fire department checking account to go toward the Ford Ranger Raptor and the grass fire equipment tank.

At Brown Park, a new water hydrant was installed, and the city Lions Club also planted a new tree.

The resident with the grass and weed problem on 5th Ave West, if not taken care of by Monday, Oct. 12, will receive a letter of violation. A resident on North

School Street also has a grass and weed problem and will receive a notice. The council is waiting to hear from City Attorney Rahrack for guidance on how to proceed regarding the property on 8th Ave East and the vehicles parked in their yard. Regarding the property on 4th Ave West, a complaint was served to the owner who lives in Roseville, who has 20 days to respond. The property on 6th Ave East has made progress on their house repairs and the

council decided to give them some time to finish.

General elections will take place Tuesday, Nov. 3. The city’s “truth in taxation” public hearing is set for 6:30 p.m. Dec. 10. There are currently 450 registered Ellendale voters

Council members approved closing Third Street South for Vibrant Life Church from 5 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31 for the church’s Halloween celebration.

Wigham

from Page 1

“scooped mud out of the basement.” Susan has had the inside of the house cleaned, and is now working on a stream of decisions about where to go from here.

Much of the flooring in the house is warped. With the discovery of some mold, she and Steve worry they will have to take the main floor apart all the way down to the sub-flooring. The drywall was ruined and has been removed up to a height of about four feet on many interior walls.

All of their salvageable possessions are now stored in a portable unit set in their driveway.

“It’s packed to the top,” describes Susan. She has counted a total of 58 totes, and since others helped in the task of packing them, she admits, “If I want to find some certain thing, I really have no idea where to start.”

She says it’s hard to believe how quickly and completely nearly every facet of her life has changed in less than a month’s time.

Sleeping in on the morning of Saturday, Sept. 19, she and Steve were awakened around 8 a.m.

by an explosion. “The whole house shook,” remembers Susan. “We had no idea what it was.”

When they investigated, it was to learn their house was entirely surrounded by a flood. A basement egress window had shattered inward under the pressure; water was streaming into the lower floor as quickly as if they were in a sinking ship.

Water was already more than halfway up the basement stairs; in the driveway, their vehicles were submerged to the tops of the tires.

They quickly realized that, not only did they need to leave, they needed to take whatever supplies they could for an extended absence. In the half hour or less she had to gather things, Sue describes the surreal experience of watching water begin to creep onto the main floor, not only up from the basement, but soon in through the front door.

“We couldn’t believe how fast it was rising,” she remembers of those nightmarish minutes.

As she and Steve left the house, their vehicles were submerged up past the seats. With the help of neighbors, they managed to take two garbage bags holding their possessions.

“The water was up to here,” says Susan, indicating her waist. “It was cold.

“And it had quite a current to it. I couldn’t stay

standing without help.”

Police gave them a ride to Susan’s sister’s apartment. “We didn’t call or anything,” Susan admits. “We just walked in with our garbage bags wearing wet clothes and told them what happened.”

On Monday, Sept. 21, they were able to access their property, where they found ruin on every hand.

In the garage, the lawnmower, a generator, and Steve’s tools and equipment were ruined. In the basement, totes full of holiday decorations, winter clothes, and other possessions were beyond recovery; several items of furniture their son had stored in the basement were also a total loss.

On the main floor, water had saturated the carpeting and soaked into the drywall. Much of their furniture had to be discarded; the bathroom vanity had to be removed.

The insurance company “totaled” their cars.

Everything stank of contaminated water.

Susan shrugs as she finishes her description. “We’ve had a lot of help and we’ve gotten a lot done.” Her tone sends the message there is a great deal more to do, and she wonders how long it will take until chaos and uncertainty are no longer the abiding features of their lives.



GIVING IT A TRY - An Ellendale firefighter guides a young visitor as she controls water from a fire hose.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

Fire Hall

from Page 1

chance to become acquainted with the new facility.

Milo Dahlin, owner of Schem’s Kettle Corn, offered bags of kettle corn in exchange

for a free will donation, with all proceeds going to benefit the fire department.

“I think it went really well,” observed Busho regarding the event. “We got a lot of good feedback and answered a lot of questions. I feel like we had a good crowd for a warm October day.”



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NRHEG COLOR RUN F"RUN"DRAISER

Join NRHEG for our 1 mile Color Run, Walk or Stroll event in Ellendale on Saturday, October 24th 2026 at 3:00 PM. This fun, family-friendly event is a fundraiser for our community inclusive playground. You can walk, run, stroll, skip or somersault through a course and get blasted by color dust along the route!

Event check in will start at 2:00PM and the race will begin at 3:00PM

There will be music, face painting, food trucks and more to help collect donations for our inclusive playground. Parking is available in the north school lot, football field, and street.

Registration fee: \$30 per person. The fee includes a t-shirt and race entry.

(4 and below are free but no t-shirt included)

Registration:

Please register online by scanning the QR code or by returning the bottom half of this sheet with your payment attached to the Ellendale or New Richland school office.



Register online

Register by Oct. 9th
to ensure a
t-shirt

DONATIONS
WELCOME

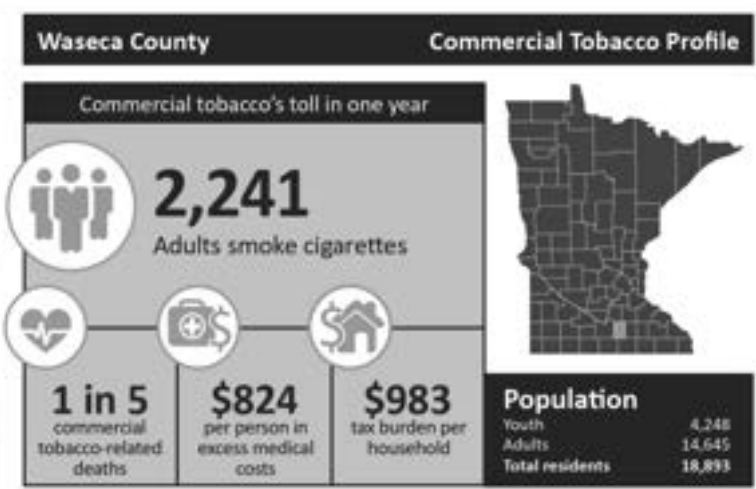
Payment:

Option 1: Cash or check to New Richland/Ellendale school Office (made out to NRHEG Schools)

Option 2- Online payment. Scan the QR code.



Pay online



Public health recommends stricter laws on tobacco sales

By DEB BENTLY
Staff writer

Waseca County Public Health worker Josh Ramaker encouraged county commissioners to update the county's codes and practices surrounding tobacco sales, mentioning to them that the current statute was enacted in 1999.

In a presentation given during the Oct. 6 county board meeting, Ramaker commented that much has changed in the tobacco industry since 1999, and went on to share a set of recommendations which include raising the licensing fee for retail outlets which sell tobacco products from the current cost of \$150 to \$450, an amount he said would more realistically address the county's expenses in administering, implementing, and enforcing its code. Ramaker shared that the county currently licenses seven tobacco retailers located in Janesville, New Richland, and unincorporated locations. The City of Waseca handles retailers within its borders.

Ramaker stated that, in 2025, about 2,250 county adults reported they are smokers. The adverse affects of smoking and the health care smokers often need due to failing health, he said, create a tax burden of "nearly \$1,000 per household."

He went on to state the adults "probably wouldn't be smokers if they had not been targeted as youth."

Ramaker commented on the

remarkably powerful marketing techniques tobacco companies use to lure young people into trying cigarettes and other nicotine inhalants.

His presentation slide show included a photo of a school principal's drawer full of confiscated nicotine products; most of them were pocket-sized "vape" units. "Every principal has a drawer like this," stated Ramaker. "They confiscate new units on a daily basis."

Among the recommendations which will be included in the proposed new codes, Ramaker told commissioners, are raising the age a clerk must be to sell tobacco products; raising the number of compliance checks at retailers from one to two; prohibiting delivery sales, including drive-through purchases; and not licensing any facility located within 1,000 feet of a location known to be frequented by youth.

Noting that fruit, menthol or mint, and the tastes of candy, desserts, and other sweets are the flavors most often used by youth, he suggested it would be an important step toward protecting area youth—and the adults they will someday become—if the county forbids the sale of flavored nicotine products anywhere within its borders. Ramaker requested that the county might hold a public hearing regarding the proposed new standards during a meeting in December.

■ Bingo from Page 3

by a root beer stand during Ellendale Days and the sale of personalized paving bricks for use at the community gathering space that is the organization's current project.

Nelson shares that only a limited number of bricks remain available, and that interested parties should contact him or another Society member as soon as possible.

The Society is seeking to raise another \$6,000 or so toward completing plans for the gathering space; they hope to install

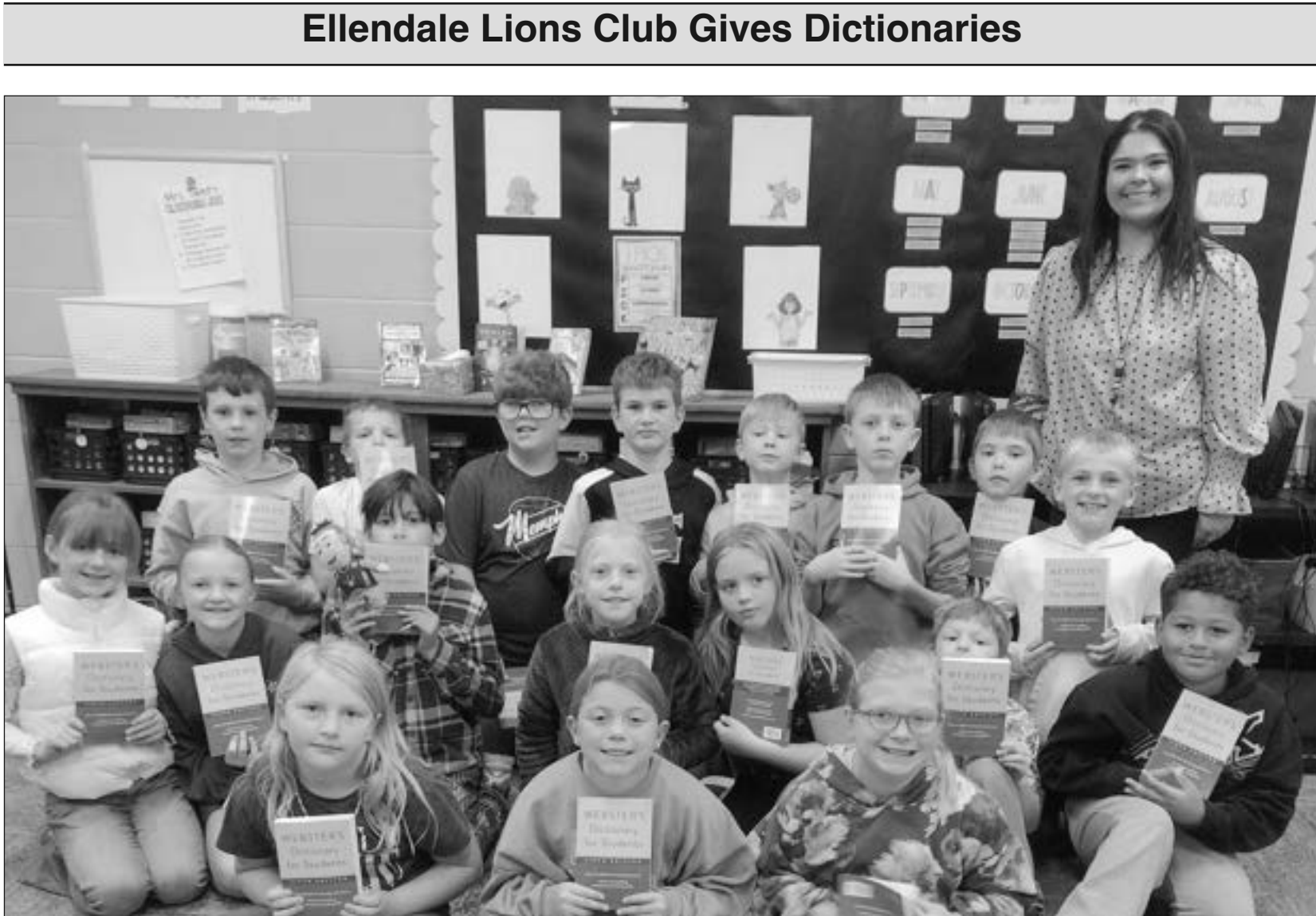
a seating wall and complete landscaping, probably in spring.

A completed project the group takes pride in, Nelson described, was placing signs at the sites of the 15 one-room school districts which consolidated to form the Ellendale School District and the five rural schools which became the Geneva District. The Society has printed pamphlets with images from the many locations and a map showing where each one was located.

Nelson expressed gratitude to Heritage Society members who volunteered at the evening's event, and to the Hope creamery for its donation of butter. Door prizes included butter and a sprawling yellow mum plant.

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The Ellendale Lions club once again handed out dictionaries to the NRHEG Third graders. Each year the students are excited to receive them. In this day and age of electronics, the dictionary is still a useful tool. We wish these students the very best.

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Volleyball Panthers improve at Alden

NRHEG plays well after lopsided home loss to Kenyon-Wanamingo

After a disappointing loss to a strong Kenyon-Wanamingo squad last Tuesday, NRHEG High School volleyball coach Bethany Tennis was looking for a bounce-back performance in Thursday's non-conference match at Alden-Conger.

She got it. The Panthers improved their play all around while dropping a 3-1 decision. The final in favor of the Knights was 25-20, 25-18, 22-25 and 25-15.

"The girls came out with strong energy and communication, creating some scrappy volleyball with plenty of hustle and defensive touches throughout the match," commented NRHEG head coach Bethany Tennis.

Panther senior Izley Boerner recorded 10 digs, while libero Aubrey Hendrickson led the back row with 18 digs. Offensively, outside hitter Anika Ladlie led the Panthers with nine kills.

The Panthers, according to Tennis, continued to battle throughout the third set, staying competitive and finding a way to come out on top. The Panthers will look to carry that energy and teamwork into two games next week as they continue to build consistency and momentum.

Full statistics from Alden-

"The girls came out with strong energy and communication."

— NRHEG coach Bethany Tennis

Conger: Ezra Boerner six kills, three digs, two blocks, two ace serves; Izley Boerner 10 digs, one set assist, one ace; Sierra Fish four digs; Hendrickson 18 digs; Jovey Knudson three kills, three digs, three blocks; Ladlie nine kills, eight digs, three blocks; Brooklyn Sommer one kill, six digs, 21 set assists one block; Emmy Stadheim four kills, eight digs, one block, three aces; Ciara Stenzel three digs.

Two nights earlier was a rough outing for the Panthers, who lost 3-0 with set scores of 25-13, 25-1 and 25-12.

Coach Tennis had no comment on it.

Individually: Ezra Boerner two blocks; Hendrickson eight digs; Knudson one kill, three blocks; Ladlie three kills, four digs, two blocks, one ace; Sommer two digs; Stenzel two digs.



ALL OUT — Above, the Panthers' Joey Rossing lays out for a dig against Kenyon-Wanamingo last Thursday. Below left, Anika Ladlie sends it over the net. Below right, Emmy Stadheim smacks a spike. Photos by Jim Lutgens



Panthers start slow at Fillmore Central

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

According to New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva first-year head football coach Devin Lockerby, there was one distinct difference between the way his squad and Fillmore Central started last Friday's game.

"They came out with their hair on fire, and we didn't," said Lockerby. "They are a really well-coached team and we caught them after a bye week. You can't start with a three-and-out on the first drive and so forth. We're excited for Senior Night on Wednesday."

The Panthers fell behind early, surrendering a pair of first-quarter touchdowns as the Falcons set the tone.

There was a ray of light in the second quarter when the Panthers cut it to 14-6 on a 12-yard touchdown pass from Brooks

Gilliland to A.J. Deen.

Unfortunately for Panther fans, it was the last time they found the end zone, and the Falcons went on to score 21 unanswered points. They led 28-6 at the halftime break.

Sean Lassahn was held under 100 yards rushing for one of the few times this season, finishing with 74 yards on 17 carries.

Gilliland was 6-for-19 passing for 82 yards, with 58 of those yards going to Deen.

The Panthers were outgained 305-150 in total yards, totalling eight first downs to Fillmore Central's 20.

Ryan Schlaak led the NRHEG defense by getting on 12 tackles. Lassahn, Fynn Baumann and Dakota Schlaak had a part in six stops apiece.

The loss dropped the Panthers' season record to 3-4.

After hosting Medford Wednesday, Oct. 14, the Panthers finish the regular season

NRHEG football team's record falls to 3-4 as playoffs loom

"They came out with their hair on fire, and we didn't. You can't start out with a three-and-out on the first drive, and so forth."

— NRHEG coach Devin Lockerby

Oct. 21 at United South Central.

Fillmore Central 35, NRHEG 6

NRHEG	0	6	0	0	— 6
FC	14	14	0	7	— 35

First Quarter

FC — 30 pass from Bahl (Bahl kick)
FC — 1 run (Bahl kick)

Second Quarter

NRHEG — Deen 12 pass from Gilliland (two-point conversion failed)
FC — Run (kick failed)

Third Quarter

No scoring

Fourth Quarter

FC — Bahl 5 run (Bahl kick)

	NRHEG	FC
Plays	45	48
First downs	8	20
Rushing	68	153
Passing Yards	82	152
Total Yds.	150	305
Third down	3-10	5-9
Fourth down	3-5	2-3
Turnovers	1	0
Fumbles lost	0	2
Penalties	4-30	2-10

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — NRHEG: Lassahn 17-74; B.Gilliland 4 — 6; FC: Bahl 11-43; Rest of team 30-110

PASSING — NRHEG: B.Gilliland 6-19, 82; FC: Bahl 12-14, 149

RECEIVING — NRHEG: Deen 5-58; Lassahn 1-13; Nissen 1-11; LA: Team 13-152

NRHEG Defense — R.Schlaak 12T; Lassahn 6T; Baumann 6T; D.Schlaak 6T; Schroht 5T; O.Schlaak 2T; Holland 1T; Rest of team 16T

NRHEG CC teams compete at Waseca

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School cross country teams competed last Thursday in the Waseca Invitational at Lakeside Golf Club.

The Panthers' Julieann Wobbrock continued to lead the girls, placing second overall with a time of 19:54 for 5,000 meters. Violette Botten was 28th in 25:54, Rylie Cromwell 31st in 28:57.

Kasey Jewison was the boys' runner-up, taking second in 17:19. Colton Lermom place 26th in 20:30, Devlin McWilliams 39th in 21:52.

Neither the girls nor boys fielded a full squad.

"It was nice weather for a run," said NRHEG head coach Larry Nydegger. "Kasey got into a real test of wills with a runner from Faribault, ultimately taking second place with a personal-best time. That was a fun race to watch. Kasey and Julieann continue to put up strong performances as we near the end of the season, both consistently near the front of the pack."

After the No Frills meet hosted by USC/Alden-Conger Oct. 13, the Panthers travel to Medford for the Gopher Conference meet Oct. 20 and to Norwood-Young America for the section meet Oct. 29.



GREAT DAY TO RACE — NRHEG's Violette Botten, left, and Devlin McWilliams, right, race at Waseca's Lakeside Golf Club last Thursday. The Panthers' Juliann Wobbrock and Kasey Jewison both placed second overall. Photos by Larry Nydegger

HERITAGE BITS



In 1933 Floyd Frost started a small business in a tavern he built just outside of town. In 1935 the building was moved into town and later additions were added. Over the years there were many different operators of this tavern. They were: Floyd Frost, Mork, Harold Buck, Schuman, Arnold Drache, Burnell Scripture, Milt Thompson, Dick Cory, Bob Means, Keith Miller, Bette Tlamka and Milt Jensen. This business was closed in 1994 and the building was sold to Mark and Tim Sorenson. Later this building was torn down and Vern's Trucking now occupies this property. (10/15/26)

ZED by Duane M. Abel



■ Home

from Page 1

blocked, and at 11:30 there was no water in the basement, an unfinished space used for storage.

With that accomplished and the rain continuing, Tyler checked outside. There, he saw that water was within one or two feet of the garage. At first, vulnerable items were being moved from the lower to the higher areas inside the building.

“We watched it,” remembers Shelby. “And we figured the water was rising at about a foot an hour.”

Friends, family, and trailers were called in. The machines were moved a few blocks to high ground onto land owned by a friend.

By about 5:30 Saturday morning, the endangered vehicles, equipment, tools and supplies had been removed. “I would say we saved about 90 percent of the things in the garage,” Shelby says of that long night’s work.

Shelby shakes her head as she remembers, “Hunter’s football team had a 9 a.m. game in Jordan. At 5:30, I still thought we would be going to that game.”

At 6:30, the house was completely surrounded by water. A basement window broke open under the pressure and the downstairs began to flood. Around the house, water continued to rise rapidly.

Shelby says she gave up on the football game and began to gather a few supplies.

Her mother, who was among the family members who had been helping through the night, observed how deep the water was and suggested she should pack for an extended absence.

At this point, the children were awake and frightened. Shelby says she was very grateful for her parents who distracted the kids while she tried to think what she would need.

“I asked myself, ‘What do we touch on a daily basis?’ and I started packing.”

As they left, the last suitcases and bags were lifted up over people’s heads as they worked to keep their footing against the cold water and the current.

By Monday, it was dry enough to approach the house. Shelby remembers being repulsed. “The whole place smelled like poop,” she describes.

A group of about 10 volunteers from Christian Ministries came to help with the cleanout. Tyler supervised in the basement. The youthful volunteers carried everything up the basement stairs and set it outside. It was Shelby’s job to say whether items were to be kept or discarded.

Some of the storage tubs in the basement remained sealed, so that their contents were salvageable. Others had apparently been pushed around by the current and were actually broken apart. A freezer full of meat was a loss. Items of winter clothing and two high-end snowmobile helmets were discarded. “We would never be able to get the smell out of them,” Shelby observes.

Between the number of items which went past her and the speed with which the volunteers

worked, Shelby says it may be a very long time before she knows what she still owns and what is gone forever. “I have so many totes full of stuff, and so many different people helped pack them,” she says. “I don’t know where to look for things.”

In a particularly ironic twist, Shelby and Tyler had invested in a \$100,000 remodeling project just this year, having lived at their address since 2013. They have seen flooding in that time, and had developed systems to be prepared for it. Water had never before risen anywhere near the levels reached during the Sept. 19 flooding.

“Never did I ever think water would reach our main floor,” Shelby says. “I couldn’t have imagined a time when water would push the basement windows in.”

As traumatic as it was to have to evacuate her home through floodwater, and as difficult as it was to see many of her family’s possessions discarded, she finds the difficulties which have followed just as bad.

“We don’t know what to do,” she says. “We want to know whether we will get some disaster funding. We want to know whether our house will be condemned. We want to know if we can make it safe to live in again.”

“But we haven’t found the people yet, who can give us some answers.”

Shelby expresses gratitude to all the volunteers, family and friends who have given so much help. She says she is grateful that her family can stay with parents, and says doing so will probably be the “new normal” for some time.



REUNION - Front Row: Michael Rossing, Chuck Lund, David Friestad, Lester Casterton, David Neckanicky. Middle Row: Robert Cook, Kaye (Grunwald) Allen, Pauline (Kasper) Fetterley, Renee (Swearingen) Holmes, Carla (Aronson) Scripture. Back Row: Tom Broskoff, Mark Foster, Garlyn Bergdale, Daryl Paulsen, Gerald Ellis.

Ellendale High School Class of 1966 celebrates reunion

By KATHY PAULSEN
The Ellendale High School Class of 1966, which graduated 60 years ago, June 2, gathered at the Blooming Prairie Cue Company and Pizza Cellar on Wednesday, September 16, 2026.

The 1966 Graduating Class from Ellendale High School numbered 48 students, and Kaye Grundwald Allen and Gerald Ellis once again organized the class reunion this year, and they were pleased to have 15 members of the class in attendance.

Class members in attendance, along with their guests, included Carla (Aronson) & Burt Scripture of Motley; MN; Garlyn Bergdale, of Tempe, AZ; Tom (Sybil) Broskoff, of Albert Lea, MN; Bob (Carol) Cook of Harris, MN; Gerald Ellis, Inver Grove Heights, MN; Mark (Carol) Foster, Ellendale; MN; Dave (Marta) Friestad, Mesa, AZ; Kaye (Grunwald) Allen, Otsego; MN; Pauline (Kasper) & Richard Fetterly, of Fari-bault; MN; Chuck (Linda) Lund, of Ironton; MN; David & (Jody) Nechanicky, of Albert Lea; MN; Duane Nelson of Sarasota, FL; Daryl (Kathy) Paulsen, of Geneva; MN; Mike (Renita) Rossing, of Minnetonka; MN; and Renee (Swearingen) & Tony Holmes, of Ellendale, MN.

This year a dinner of roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, tossed salad, green beans and dinner roll was served, along with a dish of sherbert and an ice cream cookie for dessert.

Following dinner, Gerald Ellis asked his classmates to share information with him if any of their addresses or telephone numbers had changed this past year.

The class members in attendance for the reunion also remembered and shared memories about class members no longer with them, including Ellen Berg Hanson, Bob Burshem, Earl Cleven, Bob Crabtree, Tom Goodonature, Brent Ingvaldson, Alice Johnson, Roger Knutson, Brian Langlie, Tom Misgen, Charles Montayne, Alvin Olson, and Pat Phillips,

Classmates not in attendance for the reunion this year were also remembered, and included: Phyllis (Bryant) Loe of Minneapolis; MN; Carol (Burshem) Putrah of Good Thunder, MN; Helen (Crabtree) & Lyle Swearingen of Blaine, MN; Beverly (David) & Henry Bar-on, of Minneapolis, MN; Floyd (Judy) Davidson of Tower, MN; Steve Gothman of Longville, MN; Jenelle Haberman of Hastings, MN; Sally (Halverson) & Greg Trytten of Albert Lea; MN; John Hanson,

of Maple Grove; MN; Lynn (Hanson) & John Suess of Loveland, CO; Larry (Elaine) Howell of New Prague, MN; Kathy (Jensen) & Steve Roth of Lake Crystal, MN; Lynda (Jensen) & John Oldenburg, of La Mesa, CA; Jeff (Sharon) Lageson of Geneva; MN; Roger (Joyce) Larson of Ellendale; MN; Eileen (Lindsay) Langford, Waseca; MN; Teresa (Nechanicky) & Peter Von-Ruden, of Algona, IA; Duane (Diane) Nelson, Sarasota, FL; Merlyn (Butch) Ottesen and Gail (Sorenson) Ottesen; of Delavan, MN; Merlyn Paulson, Fort Collins, CO; Barry Ribbe of McKinney, TX; Tom Roberts of Austin; MN; Dennis Vogel-sang, Albert Lea; MN; Diane (Weseman) & David Leeds, Reading, PA; Peggy (Whalen) Whales, Motley, MN; and Sharon (Wittmer) Hemenway, Albert Lea, MN.

Before the afternoon reunion came to a close, the EHS Class of 1966 decided to gather again next year, which will be the 61st Anniversary of when they graduated. They plan to meet on Wednesday, September 15th at the Blooming Prairie Cue Company and hope that the class members will put it on their calendars and hope that they, along with other members of their graduating class, make plans to attend next year.

Ways to contact the Star Eagle:

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2. E-mail steagle@hickorytech.net
3. FAX 507-463-0504
4. Use the drop box at Lerberg’s Foods
5. Mail: P.O. Box 248, New Richland, Minn., 56072

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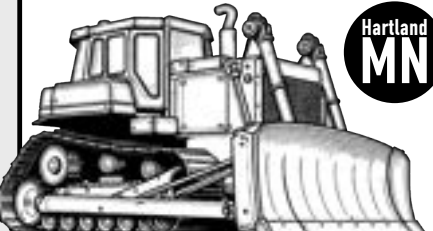


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Woods and Water

by Dick Herfindahl
Outdoors Writer

Navigating my way through life

This past week I was able to spend four days at the cabin with my son Brad. Although the fishing gods were not kind to us, we did catch some fish and enjoyed some beautiful weather. It was great to spend time at the cabin with Brad. A few weeks ago, I was able to be at the cabin with my son Brian. Both of those times were special to me. My sons do so much for their grandma and me that thanks are not enough.

The colors up north were past peak, but there was still plenty of color on the trees. I enjoy the peaceful serenity of the fall in the north. On Sunday the temperatures were in the high 80's and very warm. I don't do well with warm anymore, and this summer I didn't leave the house a lot.

I wish that we could go back to the days of politicians that were promising a chicken in every pot

and a Buick in every garage. Instead, we have to watch ad after ad of politicians telling us what bad people their opponents are. What happened to running on your own merit?

Enough politics, I will cast my vote at the polls in November.

Wildlife viewing

Do you want to see something really cool?

Check out Minnesota's native wildlife! Our wild animals create magnificent "spectacles" during their yearly rituals of migration, courtship, feeding and rearing young. Watching wildlife can be exciting and provide a sense of discovery that is fun to share with your family and friends.

Join in on the wildlife tourism trend.

Wildlife tourism is growing as a popular hobby in Minnesota. You



Shown here the colors on the shores of a couple of lakes that Dick fished.

can be part of it no matter what your budget, time constraints, or travel options are. Some wildlife tourism adventures are as close as your own backyard! You can also expand your viewing adventures to a wildlife management area, park, wildlife refuge, or other public recreation spot.

Until next time; I will be looking forward to spending some time before winter comes enjoying the outdoors around the area. There is

plenty of time to go for a walk, a bike ride, take a drive in the country or visit a state park. These are all inexpensive ways to enjoy what we have left of fall.

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

- New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Panther Marching Band placed first for the third year in a row in Class A at the Tri-State Band Festival at Luverne on Saturday, September 29. Performing Jay Dawson's "Canson," the 90+ member Panther band, led by director Dave Haugh, and drum majors Gavin Berg and Britt Panuska, outclassed eight other class A schools from Minnesota, South Dakota, and Iowa in the parade marching competition.
- Second Lieutenant Karl Felsheim, son of Glenn and Kathy Felsheim, New Richland, was commissioned into the Minnesota Army National Guard on Friday, September 14, 2001. Felsheim received a Bachelor of science degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and is working as a physician assistant in Huntingdon Tennessee.
- Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) District Representative Susan Bengtson, FIC, Albert Lea, has been honored for outstanding mutual fund sales and service to AAL members during June. Bengtson finished the month fifth among more than 1,700 AAL representatives across the nation.

50 years ago

- Gloria Griffin, DFL candidate for Congress from the second district, has received endorsement and financial support from IMPACE, Independent Minnesota Political Action Committee for Education.
- Angela Sue Giles, born August 31, 1976 at Holy Trinity Hospital, Graceville, Minnesota, was baptized October 3 at Elim Lutheran Church, Clinton, Minnesota. Angela's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Randy (Val Beckmann) Giles, Graceville, Minnesota. Pastor Robert Bleeke officiated.

75 years ago

- Arnold Schemer of Albert Lea, a member of the Inactive Naval Reserve, has been called back into service, leaving Albert Lea November 6 to report at Seattle, Washington November 8.
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Westland announce the birth of their first child, a daughter, born at the Naeve Hospital, Albert Lea, Tuesday, November 6 and weighing 8 pounds.

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VISTA EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH New Richland, Minnesota Brian Schanil Pastor * * *	SIMPLY CHURCH 105 Second Street North East Geneva, Minnesota Todd Lundgren, Pastor * * *	ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS Hollandale, Minnesota Pastor Jesse Krusemark * * *	FIRST LUTHERAN Missouri Synod Waldorf, Minnesota Rev. Larry Sipe, pastor * * *	THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS Brad Donner, Branch President Waseca, Minnesota www.lds.org * * *
CROSS OF GLORY LUTHERAN Hartland, Minnesota Rev. Marcia Pedersen * * *	VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH Ellendale, Minnesota * * *	FAMILY OF FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH 101 East Park Avenue Hollandale, Minnesota * * *	ST. JOHN LUTHERAN Minnesota Lake, Minnesota Rev. Larry Sipe, pastor * * *	NOTE: CHANGES IN CHURCH CALENDARS MUST BE MADE BY NOTIFICATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE STAR EAGLE.
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Political campaign and advertisement signs not permitted on public highway rights of way

ROCHESTER, Minn. — With upcoming elections, the Minnesota Department of Transportation reminds campaigners that state law prohibits placement of political signs or any advertising on highway right-of-way.

These areas include driving lanes, inside and outside shoulders, ditches, sight corners at intersections, and boulevards in urban areas. It also includes displaying flags or other signs on bridges over traffic. You can also visit the MnDOT website for additional information about signs on state right-of-way.

State law requires MnDOT workers to take down political or advertising signs located on the state highway right-of-way. County, city and township employees administer the laws on their roads. You can retrieve signs by contacting your local MnDOT office.

In addition, state law says that signs may not be placed on private land without the consent of the landowner. Violation of this law is a misdemeanor. Civil penalties may also apply if the placement of such material contributes to a motor vehicle crash, creates injury to a person, or causes damage to a motor vehicle that runs off the road.

State law also prohibits

placing advertising materials on public utility poles, trees and shrubs, and painting or drawing on rocks or natural features.

Stay connected, informed

Check out MnDOT southeast Minnesota construction projects and sign up for construction updates.

Join the MnDOT Southeast Minnesota Facebook group and follow us at MnDOT Southeast on X.

Sign up to receive text message and/or email alerts during significant road closures or winter weather events that affect state highways in southeast Minnesota.

Find road updates in Minnesota on 511mn.org or get a free app at Google Play or the App Store.

Search job openings at the Minnesota Management and Budget website and sign up to receive southeast Minnesota job alerts.

Sign up to receive emails about traffic safety.

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Work Item 1673751900021
Original File Number 1673751900021

STATE OF MINNESOTA OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FILED
10/04/2026 11:59 PM

Steve Simon Secretary of State

Published in the NRHEG Star Eagle on October 15 and 22, 2026

NRHEG Public Schools
Ind. School District No. 2168

Snow Removal Quotes

This is to notify you that the NRHEG Public School #2168 will be accepting quotes for Snow Removal for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years for the New Richland location only.

The Board of Education will be taking action on submitted quotes at the regular School Board meeting scheduled for Monday, October 19, 2026.

Please submit your quote to: Michael Meihak, Superintendent, 306 Ash Avenue South, New Richland, MN 56072 by 12pm on Monday, October 19, 2026.

Sarah Wacholz
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
NRHEG Public Schools
Published in the NREHG Star Eagle on October 8 and 15, 2026

NRHEG SCHOOLS
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

2027 NRHEG Elementary School Building Envelope Improvement Project

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that NRHEG Schools is accepting bids for the 2027 NRHEG Elementary School Building Envelope Improvement project. Bids shall be submitted upon the form provided at the mandatory pre-bid meeting held October 28th, 2026 at 10:00 A.M. at the NRHEG Elementary School, 600 School St, Ellendale, MN 56026 Bids must be delivered in a sealed envelope and shall be titled: "Sealed Bid 2027 NRHEG Elementary School Building Envelope Improvement Project" no later than 2:00 P.M., November 11th, 2026. Bids received after this time will be returned unopened.

Bids shall be delivered via mail or in person to:
NRHEG Schools
District Office - Attention: Michael Meihak
306 Ash Ave. S
New Richland, MN 56072

Each bid must be accompanied by a bid bond or certified check from a solvent bank in the amount of not less than five percent (5%) of the bid, payable to the Owner, as security that if awarded the work, the bidder will sign a contract.

All Contractors shall attend a mandatory pre-bid conference to inspect the job site and to ensure comprehension of the specifications. Specifications shall be distributed at the time of the pre-bid meeting. Contractors who do not attend the pre-bid conference shall be disqualified from bidding. Please contact Kris Kanak at (320) 290-7135 to reserve a copy of the specifications.

NRHEG Schools reserves the right to reject any and all bids and waive informalities or irregularities and enter into such contract or contracts as deemed in the best interests of NRHEG Schools.

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