NRHEG
Star Eagle

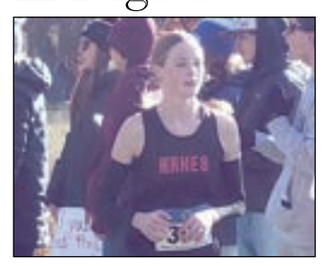
SERVING THE NEW RICHLAND-HARTLAND-ELLENDALE-GENEVA AREA

No. 46 Vol. CXL $2 Office in New Richland, Minnesota 56072 Thursday, November 12, 2026

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State



TOP HONORS - Albert Lea fire captain and Geneva resident Kurt Wallace won numerous awards at the Firefighter World Championship event Oct. 19 in Las Vegas.

Local firefighter shines on world stage

Albert Lea captain, Geneva man earns top honors at championship

By KAALTV

ABC 6 News – Albert Lea Fire Rescue Captain and Geneva man Kurt Wallace returned from a world firefighter competition with three medals and a new Minnesota state record.

The Firefighter World Championship was held Oct. 19 in Las Vegas and brought together athletes from more than 21 countries. Records show 381 medals were awarded across all divisions.

"The grueling nature of this competition directly mirrors real-life emergency scenarios," said Fire Chief Jeff Laskowske. "Kurt's success builds elite endurance and strength that translate directly to on-scene performance. Having him train alongside our crew sparks healthy competition, mentors our firefighters, and ensures our team is even better prepared to serve and protect the community."

Top finishes

Wallace competed in the male 50-59 age division and secured top finishes across three major event categories.

The challenge included carrying a 42-pound hose pack up a five-story tower, hoisting a 42-pound hose roll, moving a 160-pound steel beam 5 feet with a mallet, dragging a hose line 75 feet and pulling a 175-pound rescue mannequin backward for 100 feet.

In the individual race, Wallace took second place with a time of 1:43.44. During qualifications, he set a new Minnesota state record with a time of 1:43.00.

In the tandem event, Wallace and his partner won first place with a time of 1:24.75. They finished 9 seconds ahead of the runner-up team.

In the relay event, Wallace helped his squad finish second with a time of 4:19.49. The team competed with one member short.

What's next?

The individual race winner, Todd Krukow of Iowa, met Wallace at the event. According to a release from ALFR, the two later found out they live close to each other and plan to train together for future competitions.

Following the Las Vegas event, Wallace said he is preparing for future competitions including the FireFit Challenge in Canada.

"My training has been paying off," said Wallace. "I'm looking forward to next season."

ALFR said Wallace pays for his participation through personal funds or sponsorships. No City of Albert Lea funds are used.

The Steele County Toys for Tots Program Toy Drive open now through Dec. 10

New, unwrapped toys may be placed in donation boxes through Thursday, Dec. 10. Find a complete list of box locations at the Steele County Toys for Tots website: https://owatonna-mn.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/donate-toys.aspx Those interested in receiving a toy donation box, call Donation Site Manager Mike at 507-456-0972.

Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Meeting Nov. 12

The SWCD will be holding its monthly board meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 12. The meetings will be held in the SWCD offices located at 300 North State Street - Door 4.

Papa J at Geneva Bar and Grill Nov. 13

Papa J will play the Geneva Bar and Grill at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13. This two time Emmy award winner plays 80s, 90s and 00s.

New Richland Turkey Bingo Nov. 14

The New Richland Commercial Club is hosting Turkey Bingo beginning at 7 p.m. on Nov. 14 in the New Richland city hall community room. Winners take home a 12- to 16-pound turkey. A 21-pound turkey will go to the winner of a final "blackout" game at the end of the evening.

Eighth Annual Designer Purse Bingo and Silent Auction Geneva Community Center Nov. 14

The Eighth annual Designer Purse Bingo and Silent Auction at the Geneva Community Center will open doors at noon, bingo starts at 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14. Food and adult beverages available.

A word from The Word

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Isaiah 1:18



LEADERSHIP, SERVICE - After the Nov. 4 induction ceremony, the members of the NRHEG chapter of the National Honor Society are (back, from left) Jack Bartlett, Brooks Gilliland, Fynn Baumann, Dominic Olson, JP Lynne, (center, from left) Madeline Schlaak, Scarlett Chance, Kylie Olson, Clara Buendorf, Ariel-Star Anhalt, Ezra Boerner, Brooklyn Sommer, Mallory Groskreutz, (front from left) Alexis Olson, Sophia Williams, Avary Riskedahl, Makenna Reeder, Kenley Gehrke, Faith Phillips, Izley Boerner, Alexandra Estrada Mejia. Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

New members join the NRHEG National Honor Society

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

The NRHEG chapter of the National Honor Society inducted nine new members during a 2:30 p.m. ceremony the afternoon of Wednesday, Nov. 4. The nine joined 13 members who were inducted in 2025. Parents and family members of the Honor Society members, as well as students in grades 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12 attended.

Speaker Mark Domeier called attention to the original Star Trek, mentioning a statement attributed to the Vulcan culture and used by the character Mr. Spock: "Live long and prosper."

Domeier told students the blessing is actually drawn from Jewish tradition, where its message was one of finding personal peace.

Domeier went on to associate the saying with the four virtues of scholarship, leadership, service and character–all of which are central to being selected for the National Honor Society. He finished his comments with, "Congratulations on this tremendous honor. I hope that you all live long and prosper." He joked that he was "mixing sci-fi sayings," as he went on to advise members to "go boldly where no person has gone before," and shared his wish, "May the Force be with you."

Inducted this year were juniors Ezra Boerner, daughter of Beau and Ashley Boerner; Scarlett Chance, daughter of Deborah and Wade Chance; Alexandra Estrada, daughter of Oscar and Maria Estrada; Kenley Gehrke, daughter of Ryan and Angie Gehrke; Mallory Groskreutz, daughter to Adam and Jodi Groskreutz; Alexis Olson, daughter of Kim Olson and Kimberly Olson; Makenna Reeder, daughter of Krista Reeder and Deke Reeder; Avary Riskedahl, daughter to Ashley and Jade Riskedahl; and Brooklyn Sommer, daughter of Tony and Amanda Sommer.

Members previously inducted are Ariel-Star Anhalt, daughter to Randy and Anita Anhalt; Jack Bartlett, son of Jason Bartlett and Amie Bartlett; Finnegan Baumann, son to Ben and Meghan Baumann; Izley Boerner, daughter of Beau and Ashley Boerner; Clara Buendorf, daughter to Troy and Theresa Buendorf; Brooks Gilliland, son of Aaron and Lisa Gilliland; Car-

Honor continued on 4

The Quilted Homestead opens in Geneva

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Quilted Homestead opened in Geneva on Saturday, Nov. 7. Located at 101 Central Ave. N., the store is planning a grand opening on Saturday, Nov. 14 with 20 percent off everything storewide and online. This family-run business, owned by Michelle Subbert, employs her four daughters Kailyn, Courtney, Tylar and Halie as well as Wendy Velzke.

Michelle was busy on Nov. 7, helping the many people who were coming and going. She had her hands full, but she tried to make time for the Star Eagle in between customers.

With a husband still on active duty, Michelle brought her daughters to Geneva in 2012, her husband joined them in 2015. "Kevin was originally from Iowa," said Michelle. "I came from western New York. We were looking for a place where we could homestead and raise the kids and we settled here."

According to her daughter Halie, "My mom is definitely a quilter. My sister Courtney just got married and she received nine quilts for the wed-

Homestead continued on 10



QUILTERS UNITED - Wendy Vetzke, Hallie, Kailyn Michelle, and Courtney Subbert were working the grand opening of the Quilted Homestead store in Geneva on Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026. Owner Michelle has been quilting since she was in her 20s. Star Eagle photo by Ben Revermann



Fence Lines

by Mark Bernard

Fallen leaves in the night, who can say where they're blowing

The scurs and the trusty Weather Eye called it about right. Jack Frost made a statement. Will he be a regular or return at Thanksgiving? Starting Thursday, partly sunny with highs in the upper 30's and lows in the mid-20's. Sunny Friday with highs in the low 40's and lows in the low 30's. Sunny on Saturday with highs in the mid-40's and lows in the mid-30's. Sunday, mostly sunny with highs in the low 50's and lows in the upper 30's. Mostly sunny on Monday with highs in the mid-50's and lows in the low 40's. Tuesday, partly sunny with highs in the low 50's and lows in the upper 30's. Mostly cloudy Wednesday with highs in the low 50's and lows in the mid-30's. We'll reach mid-month already on the 15th. Time flies when you're having fun. The normal high for November 15th is 42, and the normal low is 25. The scurs will be starting to stock up for Thanksgiving Day festivities.

Last week's rainfall temporarily put field operations on hold for those wanting to finish harvest, perform fall tillage or put on anhydrous ammonia. Rainfall amounts varied last week, but at the ranch 2.09" were measured, 2.18" was tallied in New Richland and 1.91" in Ellendale. It exceeded the initial NWS forecast amount for that 7-day period substantially. As pointed out in recent columns, it typically doesn't dry very quickly this time of year with shorter days and cooler temperatures. When it does warm up, the high temperature doesn't stick around long either. And it stays cloudy. We recorded measurable precipitation on 10 out of 12 days from October 25th through November 5th. There isn't much for sunshine when it's raining either. More sunny and breezy days are needed to firm ground up and allow farmers to finish the season fieldwork.

Some harvest started again this past Monday, and the forecast looks promising at this point. Our NWS 30-day outlook for November reads better than even odds of above normal temperatures and likewise for precipitation. Since we've already received close to what is normal at the SROC in Waseca for November, that shouldn't come as any surprise. We're also tracking above normal on temperature at this point, so even with some cooler days closer to Thanksgiving, odds are good that will be the case. Much talk about the Super El Niño and what effect it may have. The 90-day outlook is giving us better than even odds of above normal temperatures and even odds of above or below normal precipitation. Unless you're in the snow removal business, I don't think anyone would complain.

Something that has struck me is how quickly it has become quiet in the evenings when letting Poppy out. This time of year it isn't unusual to hear the howl of grain dryers and bin fans across the landscape. With the dry corn being harvested, that was very short lived. There was the sound of air delivery systems for a while, but that came to a halt when harvest ended abruptly. Not that I'm complaining, but after all these years living in rural south-central MN, it just feels odd. One can hear the migrating waterfowl as they splash about in the wetland below the hill or as they fly overhead at a high rate of speed. To be able to savor all that reminds me how lucky we are to live out here. The people who have lived their entire lives trapped in the city have no idea.

We took the time over the weekend to freeze a bunch of the buttercup squash from the garden. They were so nice this time around that it was time to get that done before they start to deteriorate. They have been extremely sweet this season. I was wondering how they'd turn out once we got into July and August. The vines overran much of the garden and the canopy was constantly humming with bees. The growing season agreed with them apparently. I have to laugh when we give these squash to people and they inquire about putting brown sugar on them to sweeten them up. Perhaps on acorns and butternut squash that's not a bad idea. Try it on this crop of buttercup squash and it will likely make them sickeningly sweet. Just add Hope Creamery butter, salt and pepper and let 'er buck.

Looks like the last of the leaves are off the silver maples and the pin oaks at the ranch. After some overnight breezes, about all that are left are the Norway maple and the burning bushes. The vibrant yellow of the maple has been subdued somewhat by the recent hard frosts, and the burning bushes are taking their sweet time turning fire engine red this year. I thought maybe something was wrong with them until I spied one down the street from the office in Bugtussle. It hadn't reached peak color yet either. With Mrs. Cheviot heading out, it'll free up a bay in the garage, so I can swap the regular blades on the mower out with the mulching blades and install the mulching attachment. It'll chew up the leathery pin oak leaves and make short work of those maple leaves once they're dry.

Corgis were in the news this past week after one went rogue during a Corgi race event held during halftime of Sunday's Carolina Panthers/Denver Bronco football game. A female Corgi named Quinn evaded numerous attempts to tackle her before finally being corralled near midfield. Reactions from "dog experts" professing to know how Corgis would behave under the circumstances indicate they've never owned one. Poppy is no different than Quinn. Once Poppy gets into zoomie mode, zigging and zagging, there's no stopping until she wears out. Like most Corgis, Poppy is stubborn too. She'll diddle and dawdle until you lose your mind trying to get her to come inside. When it's time to get up in the morning, she has to be pried out of her nice warm bed. I'm part Corgi many mornings.

https://youtube.com/shorts/kt5a6iIkdt8?si=R9cngnLxon0lssrk

See you next week…real good then.

Get your news in the Star Eagle
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CAPTIVATING CREATIONS - Deb took these pictures of autumn leaves when their striking colors made her feel like their image should be preserved. In this column, she talks about how the beauty of autumn leaves is not the only way they are captivating.
Star Eagle photos by Deb Bently

More than meets the eye in autumn



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

I know I've described moments before when I saw something and just had to stop and take its picture. Most recently it was a red tree along Highway 30. A maple, it was still holding on to about half its leaves while the other half had fallen and, apparently sheltered from wind, formed a large red carpet beneath the spreading branches.

Even though it was a cloudy day, the tree and its carpeting seemed to glow, almost as if someone had highlighted it and drawn an arrow with the words "look here." Or maybe "photograph this."

When I first spotted it, I was on my way to an interview and didn't have time to stop, so I left myself a note to be sure and return to it after my conversation. I am not posting the picture I took that day with this column, but have asked that it be posted on the paper's Facebook page, where you will be able to see it in color, if you are so inclined.

Remembering a column I wrote a few months ago about how tree branches droop when their leaves become heavy with water, I decided to find out a bit more about leaves in general.

According to one online source, a good-sized maple tree produces around 200,000 leaves which together weigh more than 500 pounds.

The components which create the fall colors we enjoy are always in the leaf, which is perhaps why the budding trees on springtime hillsides have a reddish tint to them. As the warming season brings more and more hours of sunlight, the tree pulls nitrogen out of the ground and out of storage in its trunk and sends it into the leaves, where an internal factory creates chlorophyll, the amazing substance that takes in sunlight and carbon dioxide, emits oxygen as a waste product, and produces sugars which are fed back to the trunk and roots of the tree. Chlorophyll is green, and so the yellows and reds of the leaves no longer show under its powerful influence.

The summer solstice arrives on June 21, and by a few minutes at a time, the days become shorter. Online sources say the tree recognizes this, and begins preparing for winter.

Some of the energy that's been stored over the past brightly-lit months is now invested in forming the buds for next spring's awakening. The tiny buds are protected by a waterproof coating: If you've noticed the ground under a tree peppered in spring by a pale green substance, that is probably the coatings being shed as the infant leaves expand.

I found it fascinating to read about this. The solidity of the tree's trunk has always left me with the idea it stays the same, changing only in that it adds a ring of growth each year. The summaries I found made it clear I've been looking at it all wrong. The roots and trunk are the executives of the tree, making investments when the sunlight economy is strong and cutting their losses as it weakens.

The leaves require "investment" in that the materials to make them and the water to keep them functioning must be pumped up through the woody parts of the tree. The vast surface area that comes with 200,000 leaves is a liability because so much water evaporates off it, forcing the tree to water its "crop" almost constantly. The sugars the leaves produce are the "interest" the tree receives.

According to my online sources, when the tree is no longer satisfied with its return on investment, it cuts off the leaves' water supply. No longer able to operate its internal power plant, the leaf stops producing chlorophyll, and the pigments which have been hidden all summer become visible. We humans get a one- or two-week display of color, then the leaves die and fall to the ground.

There, as they decompose, their nutrients seep back into the soil, becoming nourishment for growth in some future year.

The fascinating science behind it all only adds to my appreciation of autumn's beauty. Isn't creation an amazing place?

Child's History of Waseca County

Cont. Chapter XV, 1856. Attempted division of county—Circulation of remonstrance—Tramp on foot through Medford, Clinton Falls, Blooming Grove and Woodville.

The trip was a good deal more of a job than I had anticipated. Much of the way I encountered small groves and brush land where the snow was very deep and the crust not strong enough to bear my weight. After a hard day's work, I reached the house of a pioneer German, named Reineke, about 4 o'clock p. m. Like most of his nationality he did not fall in love with me at first sight, and to my salutation: "It is a wintry day," he replied: "Ich verstehe Sie nicht." This was one of the occasions in my experience where the few words of German I could speak served me well, for neither he nor any of his family could, at that time, converse in English. As soon as he found that I could speak some German, he shook hands with me and became very friendly.

He invited me to remain over night, a proposition that I was only too glad to accept. He entertained me a portion of the evening with stories of the Fatherland, and then drifted into the difficulties he experienced in not understanding English. He seemed much pleased when I offered to write out the names of familiar objects about the house and farm in English, opposite the German names.

After a good night's rest and a hearty breakfast, having obtained his name to the remonstrance, I bade him "lebewohl" and proceeded to visit the settlers in Blooming Grove, Mr. Reineke's farm being in what is now Deerfield, in Steele county.

I proceeded eastward until I struck the settlement known as Swavesey. The first residence I found was that of M. P. Ide, on what afterwards became known as the Patrick Healy farm.

Mel, as he was called, turned out to be a Cornell man and could not be persuaded to sign the remonstrance. I put in the whole day going from house to house, and secured the signatures of all the other men in the settlement that I could find. It was a laborious job to travel about in the deep snow, and night found me at the hospitable cabin of Wm. M. Gray, on section 33, in what is now Blooming Grove.

There was a greeting, a charm, a hospitality, a feeling of fraternity among the pioneer settlers of Wisconsin and Minnesota—especially in the latter territory—entirely unknown at the present day. The stranger was always welcome to such accommodations and fare as the settlers possessed. All gathered around the same table and each served the other. Each told to the other his history, almost without reserve, and in one evening they generally knew more of each other and of each other's affairs than men born and reared in the same town know of each other these days. Not only did they become acquaintances but they took a friendly interest in each other's welfare. There was a sympathy among them which later additions to the population seem not to possess.

I spent the night very comfortably and agreeably with Mr. Gray and his family, and the next morning called upon his neighbors, Messrs. Simeon Smith, Alfred C. Smith and E. K. Carlton, obtained their signatures to the remonstrance, and proceeded homewards, arriving at the McDougall cabin just as darkness covered the prairie and grove.

My only compensation for the laborious tramp was the general satisfaction we all felt in the defeat, for the time being, of the proposition to divide the county. Alas! how little man knows of the future.

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

A reason to get up in the morning

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING

The sun will burn out in 5 billion years.

Oh no, in 5 million years!

No, in 5 billion years.

Oh, that's a relief!

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I was in a hotel in Milwaukee. There were so many people staying in that hotel it was difficult to find room in an elevator. The Milwaukee Brewers were playing a World Series game in Milwaukee. The hotel was filled with children aged 7 to 14 who were there to participate in the Pitch, Hit & Run skills competition. I talked to a friendly fellow who oversaw that. I asked him which stadium he found to be the nicest in the MLB. He didn't pause. He said it was the one in Toronto.

That weekend, I learned that Aunt Ingeborg, who was a teacher, tried bouncing a super ball in her classroom to show her students that she was as human as they were. The bouncing ball was super until it gave her a fat lip. She didn't win the Pitch, Hit & Run skills competition, but gave her students a lasting memory.

The Wisconsin Gas Building is a historic office building in downtown Milwaukee. It's a well-known building for its weather flame on top, which signals the expected change in temperature. A common saying is used to understand what the flame indicates. "When the flame is red, it's warm weather ahead! When the flame is gold, watch out for cold! When the flame is blue, there's no change in view! When there's a flickering flame, expect snow or rain! It was red and true when I saw it.

I gave two thumbs up to the Bronze Fonz statue, which was giving me two thumbs up. It's 5 feet six inches tall, just like Henry Winkler who starred as the Fonz (Arthur Fonzarelli) in the sitcom "Happy Days" set in 1950s Milwaukee.

I'VE LEARNED

My rule of dressing is that any shirt goes with any pants. It makes life simpler.

When I talk to myself, people listen.

"This butter could use more butter" is something you might hear at a lutefisk supper.

Montgomery Ward launched the world's first general merchandise mail-order company and catalog in August 1872. The first catalog was a single sheet of paper offering 163 products with ordering instructions.

Election ads on radio, online and TV make me appreciate junk mail.

If you give 110%, the check will bounce.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

What does a Minnesotan get if he flunks his driving test four times? An Iowa driver's license. What does an Iowan get if he flunks his driving test four times? A Minnesota driver's license.

I invented a new word–plagiarism.

I got a big envelope in the mail that had written on the front, "Photographs: Do Not Bend." Below that, someone had written, "Oh, yes, they do."

If you are feeling listless, drink a gallon of water before going to bed.

That will give you a reason to get up in the morning.

IN LOCAL NEWS

The world has a bit of a wobble to it. Lynden Larson (NRHS Grad 1967) shuffled off this mortal coil on November 6 at his home in Hermosa, South Dakota. Each email I received from him ended with the valediction, "Living the dream." He was a good guy.

NATURE NOTES

The weather is good at what it does. The Farmers' Almanac predicts a cold, snowy and at times, breezy winter for the Midwest. The Old Farmer's Almanac says it will be mild and dry for most of Minnesota. Mild and wet for Iowa, most of Wisconsin and northeastern Minnesota.

Thomas Hood wrote, "No sun—no moon! No morn—no noon—No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day. No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease, No comfortable feel in any member—No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees, no fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds?—November!"

I saw a Minnesota rock band called The Trashmen perform their big hit "Surfin' Bird" to an appreciative audience of adolescents who hadn't a clue about surfing. The Trashmen were America's greatest landlocked surf band. "The bird is the word" was a significant part of that song. "A-well-a everybody's heard about the bird. B-b-b-bird, bird, bird, b-bird's the word. A-well-a bird, bird, bird, the bird is the word. Papa-ooma-mow-mow, papa-ooma-mow-mow." I'll bet The Trashmen didn't know they were singing to more future birders than surfers. Cornfields made for crummy surfing, unless you were a hunting marsh hawk able to surf grasslands, fields and marshes with the best of them.

MEETING ADJOURNED

"To speak ill of others is a dishonest way of praising ourselves."—Will Durant, historian. Be kind.

Gustavus's 'Christmas in Christ Chapel' makes a stop at Vista Lutheran

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

A special preview tour titled, "Christmas in Christ Chapel: A Shoot Shall Spring Forth", care of Gustavus Adolphus College took place for a medium sized crowd at the Vista Lutheran Church of New Richland the evening of Thursday, Nov. 5. This included a Bible study session from Gustavus professor Blake Couey, and featured performances by guest musicians, John Hermanson and Dr. Maren Haynes Marchesini.

Vista church member Gratia Johnson helped schedule the event. She mentioned she was contacted by the Gustavus chaplain, who told her the presenters were looking for a smaller venue with ties to Gustavus. "We fit the bill," she said. "A lot of the students who go there have come from this area and from this church." She added with pride, "This is a Swedish Lutheran Church. There were a lot of Swedes here. My father was confirmed in this church in the 1930s, and they did the confirmation in Swedish."

Up at the podium, Pastor Dan Kordahl introduced Professors Couey, Hermanson and Marchesini, then said, "Thank you all for coming. Vista Lutheran has had a long connection to Gustavus." He mentioned that the university cafeteria is named after area resident Evelyn Sponberg Young, who worked in food service at Gustavus for more than 30 years, and who was married to Gustavus basketball team head coach Verl "Gus" Young. Pastor Kordahl continued, "Another connection to our church would be Alicia Blomquist Hilding, who is a Gustavus Adolphus College alumna who serves jointly with her husband, Ben Hilding as Dean of Christ Chapel and Chaplain of the College. Alicia is important because she had a grandfather who led us here, Pastor Elroy Blomquist."



AWAKE, AWAKE - The duo Storyhill, which consisted of John Hermanson and Dr. Maren Haynes Marchesini, were part of a special preview tour from Gustavus Adolphus College at Vista Lutheran Church on Thursday evening, Nov 5, 2026.

Star Eagle photo by Ben Revermann

The evening opened with a few songs from Storyhill, made up of duo Hermanson and Marchesini. The duo's music is faith based and featured titles like, "The Spirit is On Me," "Did we Wander?" and the hymn "Awake, Awake." They sang 11 songs and encouraged group participation where appropriate.

In between songs. Professor Couey used Bible verses and Hebrew text as he spoke about the prophet Isaiah. There were two Bible study sessions between songs with a question-and-answer session afterwards. When the show was concluded, guests were invited to the church basement for refreshments and fellowship.

The "Christmas in Christ Chapel" Gustavus tour will continue with performances in Minnetonka, Woodbury, and Minneapolis.



CELEBRATING TOGETHER - Members of numerous Ellendale area organizations are working together to organize a "community celebration" at the community building the evening of Nov. 21 where area residents can enjoy some free treats, pass a pleasant hour, and get to know each other better. Pictured here are organization representatives (from left) Jack Harpel, Arlen Brekke, Coleen Brekke, Barb Mrotz, Ross Sletten, Jo Lerberg, Michelle Sletten and Allie Larson. Not pictured are fellow planners Dan Nelson and Alison Muellenberg.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

Ellendale Community Celebration set for Nov. 21

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

"We're seeing a lot of new faces lately," comments lifelong Ellendale resident Jo Lerberg. "We want to hold an event that gives everyone a chance to get acquainted."

The city's "Celebrate Our Community" social event is set for 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. the evening of Saturday, Nov. 21 at the Ellendale Community Building. Organizers want their neighbors to know everyone is welcome, and have arranged for live music, soft serve ice cream, apple cider, and a chance to learn more about service organizations and opportunities.

"Ellendale is a great place to live, work, and raise a family," says Ellendale Area Community Foundation member Coleen Brekke. "We want people to become acquainted with some of the organizations that have been making contributions to our quality of life."

Among these are the Foundation, the local Lions Club, the Ellendale Area Heritage Preservation Society, and the Ellendale Days planning committee, all of which are working together to organize the Nov. 21 gathering. Additional organizations and groups may also set up tables to share information.

Another draw, planners explain, will be a "rib fest" served by Ross and Michelle Sletten of Lerberg's Foods, the local grocery store. Diners will be able to purchase a rack of ribs and a side dish for $20–the meal will be available for takeout or in-house dining.

"The idea is to raise awareness," says Lions Club member Allie Larson. "The organizations and groups that will have displays are integral parts of the community.

"We have a changing population and we want to meet our neighbors, get to know them, and keep our community growing and improving."

Barb Mrotz of the Ellendale Area Heritage Preservation Society says her group will be holding a drawing for one of the personalized four-inch by eight-inch bricks which pave the community gathering spot along main street. Although relatively few spots are left, a few of the paving bricks, which also come in an eight-inch square size, will be for sale.

"Our organization is proud of the area pioneers and what they accomplished," says Mrotz. "We're working to record those memories and some of the others that were foundations of what our community is like today."

Whatever their interests and inclinations, planners hope most households in the community will have representatives at the event. "We want to say hi," says Jack Harpel, a member of the Ellendale Area Foundation. "We want to share some tasty treats and a pleasant hour or so of time.

"Beyond that, it's up to the people who come to decide if there's an organization they want to join or a project they want to help with."





OBITUARIES

Marilyn Loberg

May 23, 1933-October 29, 2026

Marilyn E. Loberg of Ellendale, Minnesota, passed away peacefully at the Benedictine Living Community in nearby Owatonna on Thursday, October 29, 2026 at the age of 93. Marilyn was born on May 23, 1933 to James Christian and Alta (Anderson) Jensen. She attended schools in Ellendale and in California while growing up primarily in Minnesota. She was married to the love of her life, Lavern Loberg, on May 2, 1951. They celebrated 66 years of marriage just before Lavern passed away in 2017. They had a great and inspiring affection for each other.

Marilyn and Lavern raised three children on a farm near Ellendale. In later years they loved to travel west to visit children and grandchildren, as well as enjoying those who remained in the area. Marilyn formed great bonds with her family and friends. She remained determined throughout life to communicate to each one by card, letter, phone, email, or text. She looked forward to visits to the farm from everyone and visits became even more treasured as she lived her last eight years in assisted living.

Marilyn was an active member of First Lutheran Church in Ellendale and participated in Alter Guild, in Bible studies, and in humbly serving others. When attending church services was no longer an option, Marilyn listened to sermons, read books on faith, and encouraged others, including in Bible studies while in assisted living.



Marilyn Loberg

As the children grew up, Marilyn began to work off the farm, first at the local farm cooperative and then in banking, initially in Owatonna and then in Faribault. She retired in 1998 and she and Lavern thoroughly enjoyed the next 19 years of retirement.

Marilyn is survived by her son Greg (Cindy) Loberg and daughters Debra (Patrick) Carlton and Diane (Bruce) Watts; grandchildren, Grant Loberg, Allison Loberg Beckham, and Luke Loberg; Kelly Watts Garland and Ethan Watts; and nineteen great grandchildren. Marilyn was preceded in death by her husband Lavern, a granddaughter Stephanie Works, a brother Cleon Jensen and sister Iris Jensen Kuntz, and her parents.

A private family service will be held at a later time.

Dolores Bartness

Dolores "Dode" Arlene Bartness, age 88, passed away on Tuesday, November 3, 2026. A funeral service will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2026 at 2 p.m. at Hartland Evangelical Lutheran Church. A visitation will be held on Wednesday, November 11, 2026 from 5-7 p.m. at Bayview Freeborn Funeral Home and for an hour prior to the service at the church. Burial shall follow the service at Hartland Cemetery. Pastor Robert Lawson will be officiating.

Dolores was born on August 23, 1938 to Wallace and Florence (Thompson) Seberson in Albert Lea, MN. She grew up in the Hartland area alongside her brothers Harold and Ronald, attending the schools in New Richland and Hartland. On March 16, 1957, she married Delano Bartness, and together they raised two wonderful sons. After the kids grew up, she worked as a beautician for 30 years before retiring.

Dolores had always found ways to occupy her time. She was fond of cardinals, butterflies, and angels and tried to include them in her decorating where she could. She enjoyed bowling, bingo, and playing pool. Most importantly, she loved spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, going out to their events as often as she could. She also enjoyed going on Bingo trips with her daughter-in-law.



Dolores Bartness

Dolores is survived by her sons Alan Bartness and Larry (Rolaine) Bartness; granddaughters Stacy, Ashley, and Heather; brother Ronald Seberson; sisters-in-law Claire Seberson and Jeanie Holland; close friend, Harp Bartness; six great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her husband Delano Bartness; parents Wallace and Florence Seberson; brother Harold Seberson; father and mother-in-law Martin and Minnie Bartness; and many extended family members.

Lowell Nelson

Lowell Bertel Nelson, age 90, of Waseca, died on the evening of Thursday, November 5, 2026, at the Lakeshore Inn Rehabilitation Center in Waseca.

Lowell was born in Waseca on June 16, 1936, to Rueben Andrew and Anna Mary (Schwartz) Nelson. He attended school in Waseca and graduated from Central High School with the Bluejay Class of 1955. He then served with the United States Navy from 1955 until his honorable discharge in 1959. During his time in the service, Lowell married his high school sweetheart, Arlene Rudolph, on September 29, 1957, at Trinity Lutheran Church of Wilton.

Lowell grew up on a farm, but worked in manufacturing at Audio-Visual Research, Brown Printing and E. F. Johnson Company, where he worked for 25 years before his retirement. He assisted his father-in-law with spring planting and fall harvest. Lowell was a proud farmer at heart.

Lowell was a very outgoing man who enjoyed having coffee with friends. In fact, he would sometimes go to multiple coffee-group gatherings in a single day. He also enjoyed fishing, woodworking and repurposing items. He converted a school bus into a camper, used for camping with the family and fishing trips. He was a long-time member of Grace Lutheran Church in Waseca. He will be missed by many.

Lowell is survived by three daughters, Vicki Montgomery of Thurmont, Md., Tammy (Kevin Featherly) Nelson of Bloomington, and Debra (Cris Beal) Nelson of Andover; two grandchildren, Michael (Mary Beth) Montgomery of Frederick, Md., and Nathan Featherly of Bloomington; a great-grandson, Maxwell Montgomery of Frederick, Md.; a sister, Lois Bartz of Hermosa Beach, Ca.; and a sister-in-law, Janet Rudolph of Waseca. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife; a son-in-law, James Montgomery and a grandson, Zachary Featherly.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, December 7, 2026, at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Services in Waseca. Visitation will be held for one hour before the service at the funeral home. Interment will follow at Woodville Cemetery in Waseca. dsofuneral.com



Lowell Nelson



WE SERVE - Domingo and Giovanni Hurta were buying snacks at the Ellendale Lions Turkey Bingo event. Helping out at concessions from left to right were: Becky Lassahn, Allie Larson, Dennis Iverson, Kathy Crabtree Wayne, and Nola Roberts.

Star Eagle photo by Ben Revermann

Ellendale Lions offer Turkey Bingo and raffle

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Lions Club of Ellendale held their annual Turkey Raffle and Bingo event on Saturday, Nov. 7 at the Community Center. Those who attended were treated to concessions, a raffle for full turkeys and Hope Creamery Butter giveaways.

Brenda Dokken, member of the Clarks Grove Historical Society, was at the door helping people fill out turkey raffle forms. There was no cost to enter, but those whose number was drawn would forfeit the prize if they weren't present. Said Dokken, "This is a pretty popular event; people started showing up before 6 p.m. tonight, and the game doesn't even start till 7."

Ellendale Mayor Scott Groth, who is also among the 20 members of the Ellendale Lions Club, was sitting in the front of the room. Although he mentioned he was the caller for the evening's bingo games, it was noted he didn't have a roller or any balls to call from. He indicated his laptop computer and announced, "There's a bingo app on my computer." Called numbers were displayed on a projector screen behind him. "We do this electronically now, and have done it this way for the past three years. Before that I used to roll and call the balls." He said that if a hundred people showed up tonight that would be amazing, "But it's usually between 75 to 80 people; that's pretty good too."

Hope Creamery donated the butter, but the Lions purchased the turkeys and the concession food. Geneva city council member Kathy Crabtree Wayne was one of those working concessions when fellow council member Greg Bartsch showed up to grab some grub before the game.

Proceeds for the event go towards the Ellendale Lions Club and its charitable activities. According to an online source: "Lions Clubs International adopted "We Serve" in 1954 after an international motto contest, selecting it for its clarity, universality, and alignment with the organization's mission of humanitarian service."

■ Honor

from Page 1

alee Koopal, daughter to Jason and Lacey Koopal; John Lynne, son to Mariah Lynne and Chris Lynne; Dominic Olson, son to Dustin and Amber Olson; Kylie Olson, daughter to Erik and Sheena Olson; Faith Phillips, daughter to Aaron and Jeanette Phillips; Madeline Schlaak, daughter to Ben and Erin Schlaak; and Sophia Williams, daughter to Scott and Melissa Williams.

Over the course of the year, the NRHEG National Honor Society plans and participates in service events that include holding a blood drive at the school, ditch cleanups, and volunteering time with Feed My Starving Children.

On the topic of scholarship, reader Clara Buendorf shared that "None of us are perfect, but when we make mistakes, we choose to learn from them." Regarding leadership, reader Izley Boerner stated, "Each of us has the ability to create positive change, to encourage growth, and to serve as a light in our communities. The true test of leadership is not what we achieve for ourselves, but how we inspire others around us to reach their full potential." Regarding character, JP Lynne shared with the gathered group that people who exhibit character "possess integrity, independence, respect and maturity. Personal traits include showing self-confidence and good judgment, along with being honest and courageous.

After the ceremony, NHS members and their guests were invited to a brief reception in the school cafeteria.

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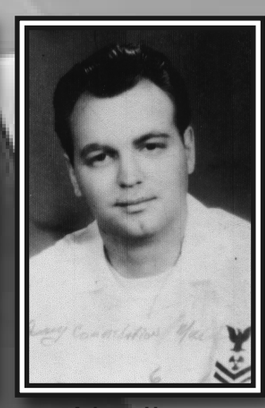
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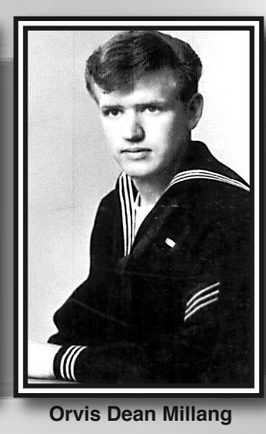

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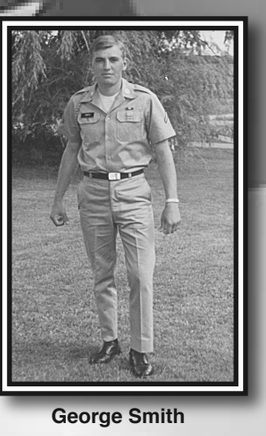

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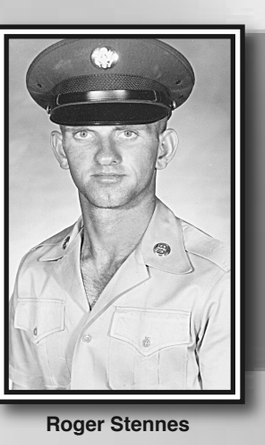

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Brandon Wayne receives 2027 Five Star Wealth Manager Award

OWATONNA, MINNESOTA – November 6, 2026 – Brandon Wayne, CRPC a Private Wealth Advisor with Ameriprise Financial, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, in Owatonna, MN, has been named a recipient of the 2027 Five Star Wealth Manager award by Five Star Professional. The award goes to fewer than seven percent of the wealth managers in the region based on research administered by Five Star Professional, a third-party research firm.

To receive the 2027 Five Star Wealth Manager award, a wealth manager must meet 10 objective eligibility and evaluation criteria associated with providing quality services to clients including client retention rates, client assets administered, firm review and favorable regulatory and complaint history.

Wayne graduated from Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance. He has 25 years of experience serving clients with Ameriprise Financial.

As a Private Wealth Advisor, Wayne provides financial advice that is anchored in a solid understanding of client needs and expectations and provided in one-on-one relationships with his clients. For more information, please contact Wayne Norrid Wetmore Wealth Management at 507-444-0901, visit the Ameriprise office at 1850 Austin Rd Ste 104 or visit their website Wayne Norrid Wetmore Wealth Management - Owatonna, MN: Ameriprise.

About Ameriprise Financial

Ameriprise Financial has been helping people feel confident about their financial future for more than 130 years. With extensive investment advice, global asset management capabilities and insurance solutions, and a nationwide network of more than 10,000 financial advisors, Ameriprise Financial has the strength and expertise to serve the full range of individual and institutional investors' financial needs.

The Five Star Wealth Manager award (the "FSWM award") is administered by Crescendo Business Services, LLC (dba Five Star Professional). Data for the FSWM award was gathered during the current or prior year. Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers. Once awarded, wealth managers may purchase marketing materials from Five Star Professional, including additional profile ad space or promotional products. Eligibility criteria – required: 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative; 2. Actively licensed as a registered investment adviser or as a principal of a registered investment adviser firm for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory, complaint, employment, bankruptcy and felony review (as defined by Five Star Professional); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients. Evaluation criteria – considered: 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention rate; 8. Noninstitutional discretionary and/or nondiscretionary client assets administered; 9. Number of client households served; 10. Education and professional designations. For more information on the FSWM award and the research/selection methodology, go to https://fivestarprofessional.com/ref/research/WM_ResearchMethodology.pdf. FSWM award candidates are identified by one of three sources: firm nomination, peer nomination or pre-qualification based on industry standing.

The FSWM award does not evaluate the quality of services provided and is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance. Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their client's assets. The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional or this publication. Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected Five Star Wealth Managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future. For more information about FSWM market research statistics, go to https://www.fivestarprofessional.com/wmdisclosures.



NRHEG's Julieann Wobbrock competes in the state cross country meet Saturday, Nov. 7 at Ham Lake.
Photo by Larry Nydegger

NRHEG's Julieann Wobbrock competes in state cross country meet

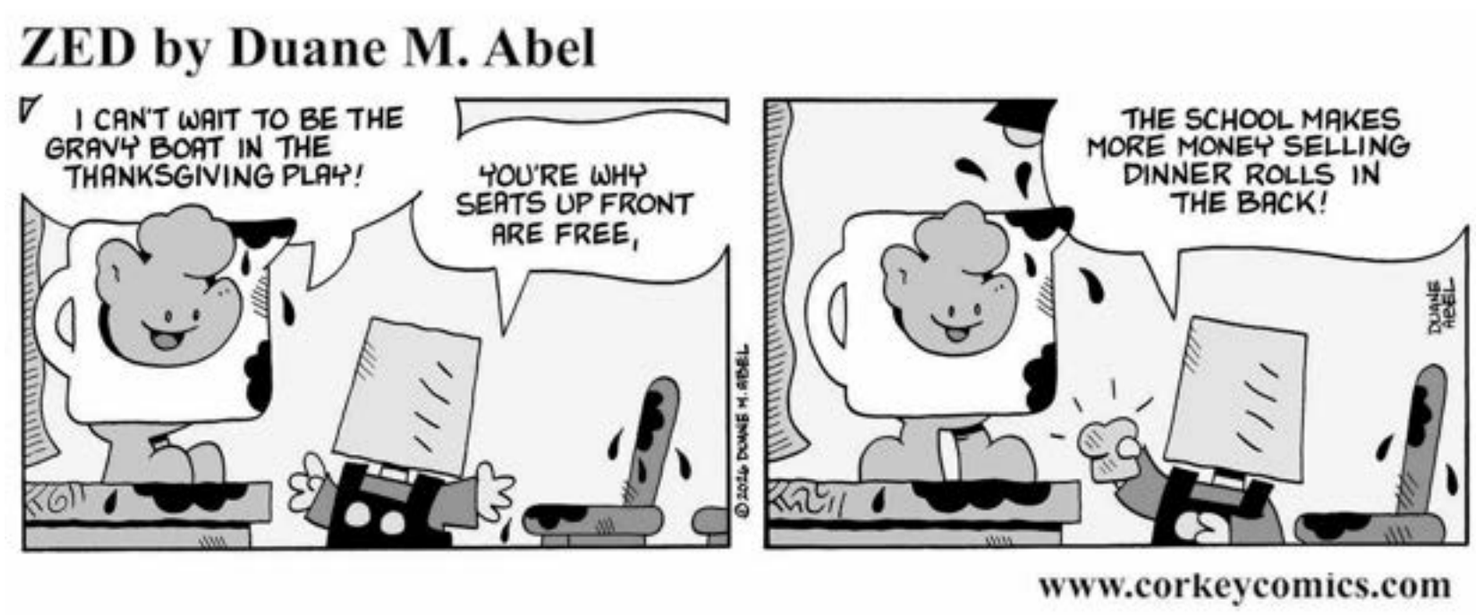
By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

NRHEG High School's Julieann Wobbrock competed at the Minnesota State Cross-country championship meet Saturday, Nov. 7.

It was a cool and comfortable day for a meet at Majestic Oaks Golf Course in Ham Lake.

Wobbrock got off to a strong start, settling into 18th place at the first mile marker. Things started to fall apart from there, however, and she ultimately finished in 42nd place with a respectable time of 19:48.8.

"Although this was not the way we were hoping for her last race of the year to go, I am very proud of her effort and her accomplishments throughout the season," said NRHEG coach Larry Nydegger.



County Board encourage courthouse security scanning

By DEB BENTLY
Staff writer

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

During their Nov. 3 meeting, members of the Waseca County Board directed county department heads to investigate the staffing and procedures that will be needed to begin consistent security screening of people entering the county courthouse starting the first week of 2027.

Grant funds awarded to the county more than a year ago allowed for the purchase of screening equipment, including a walk-through scanning portal and a unit to screen bags and backpacks. The equipment has been set up inside the entry nearest the veterans memorial a number of times in recent weeks with all other public entries closed.

County Attorney Rachel Cornelius pointed out that, of the eleven courthouses in Minnesota's third judicial district, Waseca's is the only one without security screening. Facilities Management Director Brian Tomford pointed out that any violent threat to court proceedings would also be a threat to county employees working in the courthouse, and that the employees deserve protection.

Sheriff's deputies who have staffed the screening equipment told of people approaching the courthouse entrance, seeing the scanners, and returning to their vehicles where they "unloaded their pockets" before coming back to the door. "What was in those pockets that they didn't want us to find?" asked a deputy.

Also part of the conversation was the demeanor deputies at the scanners should show as people entered the courthouse. "They will be the first face people will see as they come in," pointed out commissioner De Malterer. "They need to be friendly, approachable, and willing to answer people's questions."

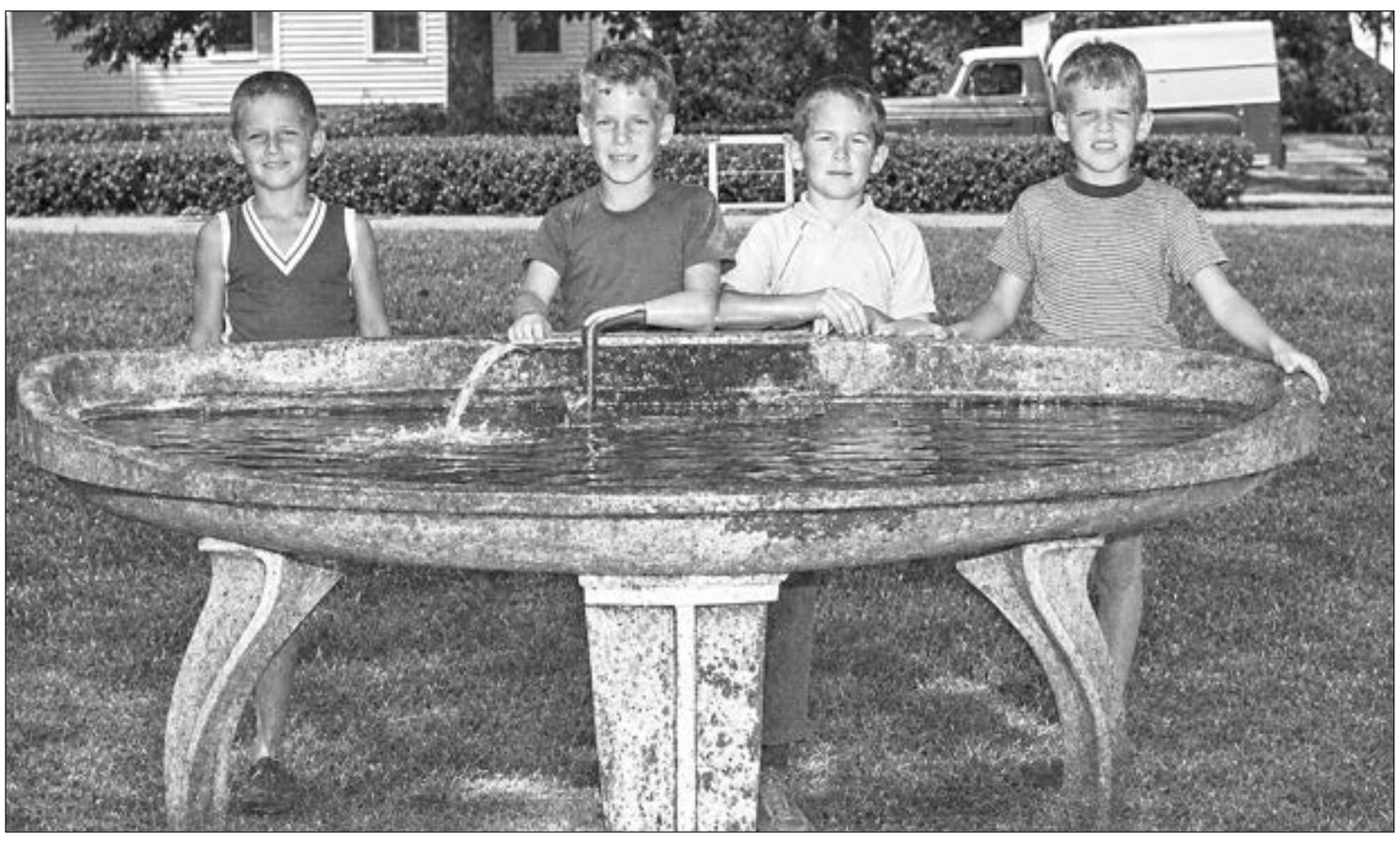
It was acknowledged during the conversation that any routine established for the scanning will need to be changed when the planned Justice Center, with an anticipated move-in date of summer, 2028, is operational.

Land and Water Resources director Chris Howard received board approval for the county "Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Plan," a 17-page document that summarizes what invasive species have been identified in the county and what steps are taken to reduce their impact and prevent them from spreading.

The report states that Eurasian Water Milfoil has been found in Clear and Reeds Lakes. Curly leaf pondweed has been identified in Clear, Loon, Sibert, and St. Olaf Lakes. Numerous prevention, awareness, and removal strategies regarding AIS are listed in the report: These include posting inspectors at lake accesses and using the Blair Nelson Paddle Ship weed harvester to remove curly leaf pondweed in Clear Lake.

Filing an AIS prevention plan is required for the county to qualify for state AIS prevention funding. The county will be receiving just over $23,000 in 2027; because of cuts in state funding, the amount is about half what the county received in 2026.

HERITAGE BITS



From the New Richland Star on July 31 1964. This watering trough was considered a thing of beauty when it was purchased and erected in New Richland in 1900. It was beautiful by comparison for most small towns provided plain ground-level tanks to which farmers could take their horses and other animals when they came to town. New Richland is preserving this relic by erection in the village park. But something of the modern has been added. The new faucet replaces a "gooseneck type" arrangement which poured a constant stream of water about an eighth of an inch in diameter. The faucet pipe, in a perpendicular position, rose about 18 inches then curved gracefully over, much like a letter "J" upside down, bubbling water into the reservoir. People, children in particular, would lean over to position their mouths in line with the water's flow for a cold drink. It was located on the edge of the sidewalk on the street south of the village hall and jail, the portion in the foreground extending into the street. The late F. H. Krueger was mayor when the fountain was purchas-ed. Pictured with the fountain today are Jay Edwards, Richard Westland, James Lillesve and Bobby Westland. How the found survived the scrap iron drives of the recent wars is a mystery except that it was hid in park bushes.

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Woods and Water

by Dick Herfindahl
Outdoors Writer

Remembering veterans is important

This past week we got a little break from the rain. Sunny and cool works for me, when I look back at the hot summer that we just left behind us.

My brother-n-law has been sharing his fish with my wife and me, which we really appreciate. There is nothing better than fresh fish.

I once liked to fish right up until ice-over, but now those days are not at the top of my priority list these days. I have been neglecting my bird feeders lately, but I now have a fresh batch of bird feed, so I will now be on top of it again.

My grandson, Trevor, went on his first deer hunt with his future father-in-law and bagged his first deer, an 8-pointer. He was good at it. He is keeping up a tradition that his dad started. His dad was a bow hunter and was pretty good at it.

I read an article written by an outdoors writer for the Pioneer Press about deer hunting with his son. He said deer hunting is a thankless sport because, as soon as you shoot one, the hunt is basically over and, if it happens right away, he said you leave with an empty feeling. I guess it is the kind of feeling that you have when you stay at a resort for a week and the last evening rolls around and you know you have to leave the following morning.

I have fond memories of camping at Spider Shores Resort on Spider Lake. We would leave for up north early in the morning and arrive around 9 or 10 in the morning. That was when you could rent by the week or the weekend. It changed a few years ago, so only seasonal campers were allowed. I don't know how it is now with the new owners, but I think that I will check it out online. Not that I need a place to stay, but it would be fun to tent there for a couple of nights if my body would tolerate it.

Longtime naturalist and fishing guide honored

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is honored to dedicate the Tioga Public Water Access in Cohasset today in the name of Tom Neustrom, hall of fame fishing guide and conservation advocate. Tom died in July 2026, leaving a legacy as one of Minnesota's most influential anglers.

Neustrom began his professional career as a police officer in Chicago, Illinois. However, after a life-changing call that nearly cost him his life, Neustrom sought a more serene pace of life in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. His curiosity about the habits of fish grew into a second successful career as a guide, conservation advocate, and outdoor communicator. In recognition of his accomplishments, Neustrom was inducted into both the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame and the Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame.

Neustrom was an incredible angler who loved the spirit of fishing and sharing the experience with others.

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.





Shown here is a little bay on Spider Lake that Dick fished quite often. Another is of the camping crew at the campground at Spider Lake.

LOOKING BACK

25 years ago

- The LeSueur-Henderson volleyball team pounded Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton 3-0 in the first round of Section 2AA west subsection playoffs Thursday night.

-New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Genevas volleyball team defeated Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 3-1 in the Section 2AA subsection quarter-final at New Richland Thursday night. Game scores were 15-11, 15-9, 3-15 and 15-5.

50 years ago

- Officers for the New Richland Care Center Auxiliary were elected at their meeting on Friday, November 5. New officers are president, Myrna Raymo and vice president, Jean Horn. As stated in the constitution, two officers were to remain for an extra year. They were Lil Anderson, secretary and Edna Anderson, Treasurer.

- Four Winona State University graduates were elected to the 1977 Minnesota State Legislature in the recent November election.

- Ordwin (Buzz) Hagen, 34, a New Richland Native, was elected mayor of Albert Lea last Tuesday in a two-to-one victory over incumbent Mayor Paul Larimore with decisive margins in every one of the city wards.

75 years ago

- Rex Cyrus, son of Mr. and Mrs. Rex Routh, was baptized at All Saint's Church Sunday morning with Miss Yvonne Striernagle, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Striernagle and Robert Striernagle, son of Mrs. Routh, as his sponsors.

- The 55th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Anton O. Martinson was observed Thanksgiving day at the home of their son, Lloyd Martinson, and family.

- Jean Marie Axelson became the bride of Clair C. Ellingson at a 3 p.m. ceremony in the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Axelson of Ellendale. The bridegroom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Erick Ellingson, also of Ellendale. Mr. Ellingson served in the armed forces in World War II, at which time he contracted malaria.



FACT OR FICTION

...you decide

by Bob Hanson, Emeritus

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

A very nice, very busy Halloween

How did trick or treat go at your place on Halloween?

It was a "very nice" and "very busy" evening at our place in Albert Lea.

We had 255 trick or treaters!!

Did you arrive on time for church Sunday, November 1st? We had a few that forgot about the daylight savings!! (Genie and I didn't goof this year!!)

The trick or treaters ages were from 2 to 93. Little Bo (Age 3) led the show!!

— — —

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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■ Homestead

from Page 1

ding." Michelle was nodding her head and said, "Yes, I included every season and holiday. That took me 10 months, but who am I kidding, I quilt all the time."

Michelle counts having made more than 150 quilts in her lifetime. "My great-grandmother Polly Dixon is the one who taught me how to do it. I started when I was 21 years old." To get to this point where she was proudly standing in her own store took six months of hard work.

On the wall were finished quilts, not just for sale, but as examples.

"Besides the quilts themselves, I also sell quilting kits," Michelle explained. "They include the top fabric, the batting, the backing and the binding." One seasonal kit was titled, "All Dressed up for Halloween." It came with directions and everything one would need to make their own quilt.

For experienced quilters, the store offers a range of supplies.

"We call quilting accessories, 'notions,' and that includes scissors and cutting tools like razor blades, thread, rulers, needles and thimbles." She also explained what applique is, "It is a design that you would add to your quilt, but it doesn't always need to be sewn on." She offered the example of appliques such as ghosts or spooky things that would be suited to the Halloween kit, or a turkey for a Thanksgiving themed quilt.

Kevin Subbert, Michelle's husband, who served onboard the USS Kittyhawk was also present for the day. In his words, "I'm just here to help out if she needs me."

For anyone interested in finding out more about this new shopping opportunity, information is available by using the company email: thequiltedhomestead@yahoo.com. The website is www.thequiltedhomestead.com, and there is also information on Facebook. Starting in January, The Quilted Homestead will also be offering classes.

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National FFA



NRHEG graduate Olivia Johnson is a student at U of W River Falls finishing her double major in Ag Business and Ag Education. She recently attended National FFA to help work her college career booth. While she was there, she received a first place award for her essay, which will be published in a magazine.

Albert Lea Walmart celebrates grand reopening with community grants, ribbon cutting Nov. 20

ALBERT LEA, Minn. — November 5, 2026 — The Albert Lea Walmart is inviting the community to celebrate the grand reopening of its newly remodeled store on Friday, November 20 at 9 a.m. The event will feature a special ceremony, recognition of local nonprofit organizations through community grants, and an official ribbon cutting with the Albert Lea–Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors.

The grand reopening marks the completion of renovations designed to refresh the Albert Lea store and enhance the shopping experience for area residents. "We are extremely happy to give the community of Albert Lea a newly remodeled store that can deliver an even better customer experience," said Walmart Store Manager Eric McKenna. "I would like to thank all of our customers for their patience throughout the project."

The morning's festivities will begin with a ceremony featuring the local American Legion Color Guard, remarks from store leadership, and the presentation of Walmart community grants to organizations serving the Albert Lea area.

Following the presentations, the Albert Lea–Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors will join Walmart leadership and associates for an official ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the reopening.

"This grand reopening is an opportunity to celebrate not only the improvements to the store, but also Walmart's continued presence in our local business community," said Valerie Lockhart, Executive Director of the Albert Lea–Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce. "We're especially pleased to see the recognition of local organizations through community grants, demonstrating the importance of businesses investing in the communities they serve."

Community members, local business representatives, and Chamber members are encouraged to attend the celebration and experience the newly remodeled store.

Event Details

What: Albert Lea Walmart Grand Reopening and Ribbon Cutting

When: Friday, November 20, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Where: Walmart, Albert Lea, Minnesota

Activities: Grand reopening ceremony, American Legion Color Guard, community grant presentations, and Chamber Ambassador ribbon cutting.

Ag educator still on county's chopping block

STEELE COUNTY TIMES

After the smoke cleared from the Steele County Board reversing its decision to cut the Master Gardeners program, another proposed budget cut remains in the shadows—one that could have devastating effects on a county reliant on agriculture.

The county's original budget decision also included slashing the half-time ag educator position. Currently, Steele County splits a full-time position with Rice County in which Ryan Lermon serves as agricultural and natural resources educator through the University of Minnesota Extension.

Steele County has had an ag educator of some form for more than a century, according to Lermon. He noted the position began as an ag agent in 1923 and was later paired with the 4-H program. The ag agent handled 4-H until the current format of 4-H educators came into play several decades ago.

He pointed out that about 30 counties in Minnesota have ag educator positions. Very few remain in southern Minnesota— long considered a key area in the heartland of agriculture. Olmsted County is the closest, he noted, while Blue Earth and Le Sueur counties cut a joint position in 2024.

For Steele County, Lermon said the timing of the decision couldn't be worse.

"The hardest part is, with the harvest going on right now, farmers are busy," said Lermon, who has been in the position since 2024. He also said with the hype surrounding the Master Gardeners in recent weeks, many don't realize that the ag position is still set to go away at the end of the year.

Lermon said he felt blindsided by the county's decision, especially considering that two county commissioners, James Brady and John Glynn, are on the Extension committee.

"I was shocked about it as I never had any communication from them," Lermon said, noting a lack of foresight behind the board's decision.

In recent weeks, Lermon said he has been working to raise awareness and encourage the public to speak up. "I need a voice from the community and from members who use my services," he said.

Lermon said, in a society shifting to artificial intelligence, the need for having an unbiased educator couldn't be more important. "Having someone here in the county is more vital than ever," he said.

> "I need a voice from the community and from members who use my services."
> — Ryan Lermon

If the position is eliminated, Lermon said farmers and landowners will lose local programming and direct access to assistance by phone, email or in-person site visits, such as pasture consultations.

"They will lose (direct) access to someone answering questions," Lermon said, noting in many cases farmers and landowners would be forced to pay consultants.

He fields many inquiries from homeowners regarding trees. "I often check out their trees to let them know why their tree is dying," Lermon said.

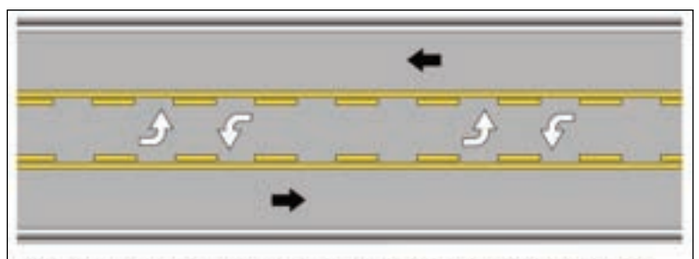
"A lot of people need our guidance and help because they don't have the knowledge."

Lermon also hosts agriculture workshops during the North American Farm and Power Show, one of the largest shows in the country held in Owatonna every March.

One challenge that has become increasingly difficult in recent years is the lack of veterinarians for large livestock. "The more information that we can provide to the community will help them succeed as livestock producers," Lermon said.

Lermon is also involved with land rent meetings for landowners. He said he provides vital information to landowners on what they can expect to charge for rent.

"I would love for the ag educator position to stay," Lermon said. "It's a good resource for the community to have, with unbiased research information to work through problems."



Road with three lanes with traffic moving in both directions. Center turn lane is reserved for traffic turning left from both directions.

'Ask a Trooper': center turn lanes

Question: We have this center turn lane in our town. I witnessed someone passing in this area. Is this allowed?

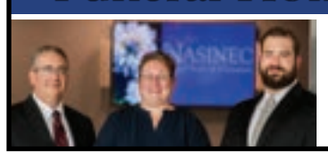
Answer: No. What you witnessed was illegal and unsafe. A center lane between lanes of traffic traveling in opposite directions may be designated for left turns only. This type of lane is marked by parallel solid and dashed yellow lines. These lines are sometimes accompanied by white arrows on the pavement. Vehicles traveling in either direction can use these lanes to make left turns onto another roadway or a driveway.

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

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



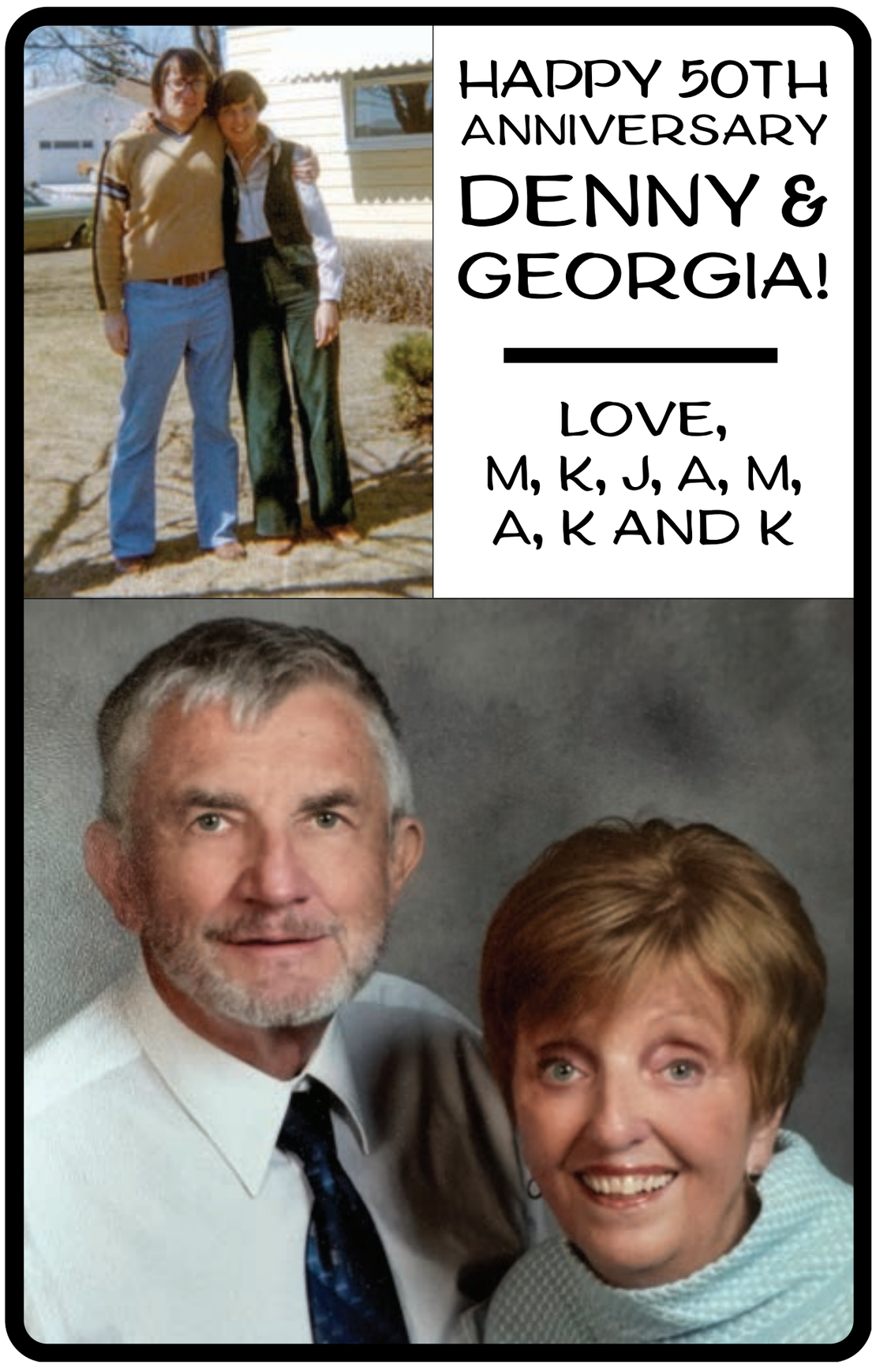
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