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# NRHEG Star Eagle

SERVING THE NEW RICHLAND-HARTLAND-ELLENDALE-GENEVA AREA

No. 7 Vol. CXL \$2 Office in New Richland, Minnesota 56072 Thursday, February 12, 2026



Sports

## Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2026 Board Meeting Feb. 12

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

SWCD Meeting Schedule:  
March 12, April 9, May 14, June 9, July 10, August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12, and December 10.

## Pizza and Puzzles Competition at Farmamerica Feb. 13

There will be a Pizza and Puzzle competition at Farmamerica starting at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 13. Teams in groups of 2-4 will compete with 500 piece puzzles. Pizza from Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm included. Registration required and tickets must be purchased online.

## Soil Health Winter Workshop at Torey's in Owatonna on Tuesday, Feb. 17

Farmers, landowners, and agricultural professionals are invited to attend the Soil Health Winter Workshop at Torey's Restaurant, located at 208 N. Cedar Avenue, Owatonna from 8:30 a.m. till 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17. Advance registration is required. RSVPs due Feb. 10, 2026. Participants register by contacting Lindsey Cornell at 507-320-3728, or email [Lindsey.Cornell@mn.nacdn.net](mailto:Lindsey.Cornell@mn.nacdn.net). The workshop is free with lunch provided.

## Minnesota School Bus Driver Appreciation Day Feb. 18

This day has been chosen for honoring school bus drivers and their role in student safety and transportation. School bus drivers are often the first and last school representatives students see each day, they ensure students arrive home safely in all conditions and throughout the school year. Don't forget to thank your bus driver!

## Open House at the Waseca Soil and Water Conservation District office Friday, Feb. 20

The Waseca Soil and Water Conservation District will host a Tree Day open house from 7 a.m. through 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 20. Community members are invited to stop by, meet staff, and learn about tree planting, care, and local conservation programs. The event is free and open to the public. The SWCD office is in Waseca at 300 N State Street, Door 4.

## Sweetheart Bingo Saturday, Feb. 21

The New Richland ambulance is hosting a Sweetheart Bingo at the New Richland City Hall on Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Cost is \$15 for 15 games plus a black-out game. Cash prizes for each game and raffle drawings will happen between games. Proceeds will go to new supplies and equipment.

## A word from The Word

Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Isaiah 64:8

## Snow Week



CROWNING ROYALTY - The NRHEG Snow Court crowned its king and queen during coronation on Tuesday, Feb. 3. King Quen Meyering and Queen Winter Pederson were honored with the crowns. Star Eagle photos by Ben Revermann

# Meyering, Pederson crowned

## NRHEG's snow week brings pageantry, fun to February

NRHEG Snow Week from Feb. 2 to 6 was filled with activities, most notably the coronation ceremony which crowned Winter Pederson and Quen Meyering from among the 10 members of the snow court, who were Pederson, Meyering, Gabrielle Schlaak, Meela Budach, Nora Flatness, Kaitlyn Dobberstein, Kayden Warke, Ezekiel Morrison, Kaleb Hughes, Justin Beauvais, DeShawn Jones and Isaac Bauleke.

Held early the afternoon of Tues-

day, Feb. 3, the coronation was attended by all secondary school students and many friends and family members of the court. Activity coaches and advisors gave brief summaries of their seasons. Speaking were Krey Cory, wrestling; Brooks Gilliland, boys' basketball; Onika Peterson, girls' basketball; Winter Pederson, one-act play; Krista Reeder, choir; and Seth Schaefer, band.

Dress-up days for the week in-

cluded "Pajama/Comfy Day," "Generation Day," "White Lie," "Dress as your type," and "Meme Day." Daily prizes were awarded; those who dressed up all five days were eligible for a "championship."

A semi-formal dance was held in the high school gym on Saturday evening.

The following introduction was read aloud, introducing the 2026 Snow Court:

Meela Budach is the daughter of

Dan and Kari Budach. She has two older siblings: Hannah and Bo. Meela is involved in volleyball, FCCLA, and NHS. In her free time, she enjoys hanging out with her friends, fishing, shopping, and spending time with her niece, Navy. Meela is good at keeping busy, but is not good at saving money. Her favorite food is any pasta, and she believes the grossest food is

Royalty continued on 3



ALL TOGETHER - Choir students from surrounding areas participated at the 2026 Gopher Conference Fine Arts Showcase on Feb. 7. Star Eagle photo by Eli Lutgens

## NRHEG hosts Fine Arts Showcase

By ELI LUTGENS  
Publisher/Editor

NRHEG Secondary hosted the 2026 Gopher Conference Fine Arts Showcase Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026. A total of 71 band and 87 choir students from NRHEG, Blooming Prairie, JWP, Hayfield, Medford, Kenyon-Wanamingo, Randolph, Triton, USC and WEM participated in this extraordinary event.

Fifteen NRHEG students participated. Playing instruments were Scarlett Chance (clarinet), Alexis Loken (clarinet), Alexis Olson (alto saxophone), Jordan Brouwers (trombone). Singing with the choir were sopranos Amelia Duryee, Kendel Klocek, Madeline Schlaak, and Sophia Williams; altos Kaitlyn Dobberstein, Cloe Mullenburg, Faith Phillips, Abbie Viktora; bass singers Jacob Karl, Wyatt Lar-

son, and Dom Porter.

The "festival" for the students began Friday at 9:30 a.m. as students from the 10 area schools arrived in New Richland. Rehearsals began at 10 a.m. and ran until lunch time. The afternoon began with "Sectionals" before more rehearsals toward the end of the school day.

On Saturday, students arrived by 8:30 a.m. Rehearsals and warm-ups occupied their time until early afternoon.

After a hearty lunch, those orchestrating the music were introduced: guest directors Erin Holmes and Melissa Williams and accompanist Mindy Sletten were introduced.

Guest director Holmes is in her 26th year as a music educator, recipient of the 2022 Schmitt

Showcase continued on 5



ORCHESTRATING MUSIC - Accompanist Mindy Sletten was introduced to the crowd after lunch at the Fine Arts Showcase hosted by NRHEG. Star Eagle photo by Eli Lutgens

## HARTLAND CITY COUNCIL

# Council changes abatement methods

By BEN REVERMANN  
Staff Writer

During their regular monthly meeting the evening of Monday, Feb. 2, members of the Hartland city council learned of a recent donation to the city of \$80,700 from the city fire department's lawful gambling fund. The Hartland PD had no billable calls for the month of February.

The council approved an amendment to Ordinance 92.42 Abatement by City. When there is an issue on someone's property, for example with overgrown weeds or discarded items in the yard like old cars or piles of wood, before, Hartland was unable to clean it up if a warning went unheard or unheeded because the ordinance read as follows: "No person shall enter the property to abate the nuisance, except with permission of the owner, resident or other person in control of the property." The Hartland council approved rewording to include: "As defined in this article and is hereby authorized to enter onto private property for the purpose of conducting such inspection and abatement."

Andy Flatness from maintenance informed council members that an "overflow" problem with the city water tower has been stabilized. He said the cause was a temporary malfunction in a sensor which has now been working reliably. He also reported twelve water meters have been ordered to fix two in town that are malfunctioning and to have extra on hand, but they haven't arrived yet.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Jean Eston of Age Friendly Freeborn County informed the council of an AARP grant application that should be completed and submitted by March 2. If approved, the grant amount could be as high as \$12,000, and could be used for park equipment such as benches, wall murals, or a children's playground addition. The council gave the go-ahead to this idea because they would like to replace the city mural that was lost.

# Fence Lines

by Mark Bernard

## Change, nothing stays the same

The scurs fine tuned the Weather Eye for yet another week of improving temperatures. Is Old Man Winter on hiatus or on permanent vacation? Starting Thursday, mostly cloudy with a good chance of rain and/or snow. Highs in the low 40's with lows in the upper 20's. Sunny Friday with highs in the mid-40's and lows near 30. Sunny on Valentine's Day with highs in the upper 40's and lows in the upper 20's. Sunday, mostly sunny with highs in the upper 40's and lows in the mid-30's. Partly sunny on Monday with highs in the low 50's and lows in the mid-30's. Tuesday, partly sunny with a good chance of rain changing to snow. Highs in the low 50's with lows in the upper 20's. Mostly cloudy on Wednesday with highs in the low 40's with lows in the low 30's. On the 15th, our daylight increases to over 10 hours and 30 minutes. The normal high for Valentine's Day is 26 and the normal low is 8. The scurs have garnered the long awaited Valentine's Day goodies. It's been so long since Christmas.

Someone asked about frost depth the other day. While it tends to vary across the landscape somewhat, I've tended to follow some reliable sources such as the SROC at Waseca. The most recent reading there under bare soil is 26" measured back on February 2nd. My fall-safe measurement at the ranch has gone a bit awry. Like clockwork, when the frost depth measured 19" at the SROC, the walk-in door frame would heave on the barn door at the ranch. It did this every year the building has been there up until this one. What happened? We had to run a new water line to the barn when we had the well project done back in November. There was some excavation done with a backhoe to reconnect the water line to the hydrant. Very likely the soil disturbance changed the building's usefulness for measuring frost depth. We may have to recalibrate.

The alien has taken up residency at the ranch this winter. We've both had the crud for the better part of a month. The first go round included coughing such as I've never experienced. After coughing so hard I could barely breathe, my ribs and diaphragm hurt for days following those episodes. It was tough to laugh let alone cough anymore even though I wanted to. After a couple of weeks I thought I'd beaten it. Perhaps I had, although my stamina wasn't much. I'd get gassed just doing the chores. Otherwise I felt just OK for almost a week before I started to feel crummy again. This time it was more of a head cold with a scratchy throat and copious amounts of nose blowing. Unfortunately, I didn't buy stock in Kleenex last fall.

Of course, lambing has been going on all the while, albeit at a relatively measured pace. As it has progressed, we've run into

more death loss than we've seen in many years. Lambs were born appearing normal, then died within a day or two. More recently we've had a higher than normal percentage of stillborn lambs the first few lings. We blamed the ewes lying on the lambs, which happens occasionally, but it started to manifest itself more as stillborn lambs. Something else was likely afoot, but what? After some research and talking to others, it appears as if we might have an answer. It may explain some other things such as late breeding ewes.

There is a mosquito borne disease known as Cache Valley virus. The symptoms fit with what we've seeing, and the infection happens at breeding time. Lord knows we had plenty of mosquitoes, thanks to heavy July and August prep. The warm September when many of these ewes were breeding also fits the timeline. Typically if the infection occurs early on in gestation, the lambs are aborted and absorbed by the ewe. This may explain why we've seen occasional late lambing ewes over the years. There is no effective vaccine for the Cache Valley virus. The good news is that, once the ewes have been infected, they develop immunity. We'll know more once the group is shorn.

Speaking of shearing, that date is drawing nigh. With our health being a major factor, it hasn't happened. Eventually it will, however, even though the lambing barn hasn't been cleaned yet. As it is, we almost have to wear crash helmets when navigating that barn at chore time to avoid hitting our heads on some of the bracing inside. The muddy yard simply didn't allow it to happen after the well project was completed. Once it's cleaned it will be decision time as to what happens to the building. It served its purpose but needs repair. It is not in a good spot on the yard either for maneuvering with equipment, making right angle backing a necessity at times. When dooryards were first designed for horses and later for small, narrow front tractors capable of turning on a dime, this is not uncommon. However, change is inevitable.

Poppy's chore time has been curtailed lately. First it was the bitter cold and more recently, it's been the arrival of the mud. It probably didn't help matters that on one of her few recent trips to the barn, she apparently ingested lots of things that didn't agree with her tummy. Dogs in general are noted for eating things that they shouldn't. Corgis are noted for their rather sensitive digestive systems, so it's not unusual to find presents on the floor as a result. Fortunately, once the gastric storm has passed, there is a calm following. Poppy's system stabilizes quickly, so she can get back to her regularly scheduled programming.

See you next week...real good then.



## In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

## Fascinating people everywhere

Here I am back in Minnesota after five days in poor, chilled Florida.

In last week's column, I joked my sister-in-law Joan and I were victims of a weather conspiracy-jinxed by snow that delayed our southbound flight and by overnight freezes with low temperatures the state had not seen in 15 years or more.

Perhaps you will be glad to learn the weather did not spoil our trip, but as Joan and I discussed during our on-time northbound flight, had perhaps made it even more memorable. Probably most of you have been to one or more of the Disney theme parks and don't need much description from me. Frankly I hope that's the case, since I did a quick summary of all we saw and did would require many thousands of words of description, even though we were only there for three days.

A point I am focusing on here is that many attractions and locations at the parks offer atmosphere, cuisine and merchandise meant to represent places and practices from all over the world. That led Joan and me to talk about places we have already traveled to and places we would still like to visit.

Both Joan and I had "life abroad" experiences during our years in college. She lived in Great Britain for about a year, I had the good fortune to study in Germany for about half as long. Since then, she has been quite a few places, including Italy, Australia, and the Virgin Islands. I returned to Europe for three weeks on a trip with my mother, but have made much less use of my passport than she has.

Joan listed numerous places she would still like to go, and I bet she'll get to many of them.

My perspective is quite different. I have decided the world is so full of variety and uniqueness I will never experience it all, so I am mostly content to learn what I can through reading, viewing, and having conversations with people whose paths intersect with mine.

Rather than a general acquaintance with many places, I tend to focus on an intimate connection with the places and people special to me.

I am not claiming either approach is better, only that they are different ways of deciding our priorities.

I have said more than once that the best part of being a writer for a small-town paper is getting to know the



**FINE DINING** - Deb Bently's recent trip to Disney World included a meal at a Japanese style restaurant where the chef not only prepared excellent food, but entertained diners with energetic showmanship.

people who live here, their stories, and their connections. There is no one who is not fascinating.

I was reminded of how fascinating people can be when I met "Prince," the chef who prepared our meal at Teppan Edo, a Japanese style restaurant at Disney's Epcot Park.

Prince informed us he had worked at the Disney Park in Tokyo for six years before moving to the U.S.

As he prepared our food at our table, he handled his spatula and other items with remarkable dexterity, flicking them lightly from one hand to another and even tossing them over his shoulder and catching them behind his back. He shared hu-

morous banter the whole time as well.

Along with all that, the food he served us was delicious.

As we asked him questions, he informed us he has always enjoyed preparing food and found it an ideal career. He said the food we were being served was prepared and served much like it would have been in Japan.

But as for the flipping, spinning and showmanship techniques, he admitted lightlyheartedly, "I learned those on YouTube."

There are fascinating people everywhere. The fun is in finding them and getting them to share their stories.



## Just a Thought...

by Eli Lutgens

## Florida's scrapbook



Eli, Deb, and Deb's sister-in-law Joan spent a day in the Everglades during their briefly coinciding trips to Florida. Though wet and windblown thanks to unusually cool weather, they enjoyed a drive through the national park, two rides on airboats, and an alligator show during which all participants were invited to hold an alligator.

## Region Nine Development Commission receives grant

Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) has received a \$10,000 grant from the Mankato Clinic Foundation to be used to develop more consistent routes to food access partners, expand options for the Mankato Clinic Produce Place Fridges program, and support work to begin collaboration with area landfills.

Since launching its food rescue initiative, RNDC has helped distribute a significant amount of surplus food to families across South Central Minnesota. In 2025 alone, RNDC coordinated the rescue of 109,365 pounds of food, valued at approximately \$181,526, which

was distributed regionwide through partner organizations. This work continues to grow in 2026, with seven food rescues completed so far, saving 8,664 pounds of food. The support from the Mankato Clinic Foundation is expected to help expand these efforts and increase the amount of food rescued and distributed throughout the region.

To learn more about RNDC's food rescue efforts, visit [https://www.rndc.org/food\\_rescue/](https://www.rndc.org/food_rescue/).

"We are very excited to have this opportunity through the Mankato Clinic Foundation, and their team has been wonderful to work with in

serving our community. RNDC participates in a partnership with Mankato Clinic for the fresh produce refrigerator program known as Produce Place, and it has turned into one of the greatest successes in our region's food rescue efforts," said RNDC Regional Food Rescue Coordinator Tom Polich. "With this funding, we look forward to expanding our efforts and rescue a larger variety of options for Produce Place, as well as our regional food access partners such as ECHO, SCMNFR, FOCF, and the St. Peter Food Shelf. Thank you to the Mankato Area Clinic Foundation for the generous funding to this

program, as well as all the efforts they have supported in our community."

The Mankato Clinic Foundation provides grants to organizations and initiatives that promote and improve health and wellness in the communities the clinic serves. The physicians at the Mankato Clinic provide the majority of the Foundation's funding as a means to give back to the community and support organizations that strive to improve health and wellness.

For more information, contact Communications Manager Nate George at [nate@rndc.org](mailto:nate@rndc.org).

**Star Eagle**

SERVING THE NEW RICHLAND-HARTLAND-ELLENDALE-GENEVA AREA and the communities of Waseca, Oriskany, Hope, Clark Grove, Milwaukee, Freedom and Waldorf

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GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

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# Compostings

by Al Batt

## Minnesota's 14,444 lakes

**ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING**  
My sister is a librarian. She hit me with a grammar book.  
Did you get a concussion?  
No, but I was in a comma for a week.

### DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. We'd been dodging weather for a month. The temperature had been in the three-dog-night realm, which refers to a night so cold you needed to sleep with three dogs to keep warm. That converts to a 29-dog night if you had Chihuahuas. We talked about baking bread and making lefse at an exercise class. I don't eat breakfast before the workout. The talk of food made me hungry. Remember Euell Gibbons? He became nationally famous back in the mid-70s while promoting Grape-Nuts cereal with his quote, "Ever eat a pine tree? Many parts are edible." No pine tree was safe until I had a bowl of oatmeal.

### ROUNDBALL REPORT

I attended a high school basketball game. While the national anthem played, I held my hand over my heart and faced the flag. When "The Star-Spangled Banner" ended, I remembered Catherine O'Hara, the talented actress from "Beetlejuice" and "Home Alone," who had recently died. She had dextrocardia with situs inversus, a condition in which the heart and other major internal organs are reversed from their normal positions. If she'd put her hand over her heart, she'd have gotten odd looks in the gym.

I played basketball for the Cardinals. After a victory, the bus filled with song. "We are the Cardinals; mighty, mighty Cardinals. Everywhere we go, people want to know who we are. So, we tell them. We are the Cardinals; mighty, mighty Cardinals." My parents moved here from Iowa. If they'd have purchased a farm near Mallard, Iowa, our bus would have been alive with this song: "Black and gold, gold and black, Mallard Ducks go quack, quack, quack."

### SNIPPETS OF CONVERSATIONS

The man introduced me to his dog, who shared his first name. I asked the man why. He said, "Because it's easy to remember."

My wife told me one of her cousins was in a better place. I told her I was sorry to hear that. "Why?" she said. "What's wrong with spending the winter in Arizona?"

### I'VE LEARNED

When the cat lies in the sun in February, she will creep behind the stove in March.

A friend had a hip replaced. She is experiencing some discomfort. She needs hip balm.

I gave a eulogy recently and was reminded once again that it's impossible for words to do a life justice.

It wasn't Camelot, but it had a camel lot. Southdale Center in Edina was the first enclosed, climate-controlled shopping center in the country. When it opened in 1956, it had animal-themed parking lot signs to help people remember where they'd parked. One was a camel.

### BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

What do you call an empty jar of Cheese Whiz? Cheese was a truck filled with Worcester-shire sauce and a truck hauling quinoa collided in front of a charterer shop. When asked by a reporter what had happened, a witness replied, "Well, it's hard to say."

I kept randomly shouting out "Broccoli!" and "Cauliflower!" I might have forests.

Which month has 28 days? All of them.

A misplaced modifier walks into a bar owned by a man with a glass eye named Larry.

### NATURE NOTES

Politifact said Minnesota has 14,444 lakes of 10 acres or more. Ten acres is about seven-and-a-half football fields, including the end zones. The DNR says Minnesota has 11,842 lakes of 10+ acres. Mower, Olmsted, Pipestone and Rock Counties have no natural lakes. The 10 most common lake names are Mud, Long, Rice, Bass, Round, Horseshoe, Twin, Island, Johnson and Spring. The motto "10,000 Lakes" has been on its license plates since 1950.

With Groundhog Day and Elvis singing, "You ain't nothin' but a groundhog," why isn't groundhog a popular team nickname? Why don't we have the Woodbury Woodchucks, Grand Rapids Groundhogs or White Bear Lake Whistlepigs? There is the Punxsutawney High School (PA) Chucks, the St. John (ND) Woodchucks and the Wausau Woodchucks, a baseball team in the Northwoods League. The Princeton Whistle-Pigs were a baseball team in the Appalachian League based in Princeton (WV). Whistle-pig is another name for a groundhog.

The mosquito danger level was low as I walked on a blustery January day. A man asked me to identify scat along a trail. I told him it was a nincompoop.

### MEETING ADJOURNED

"Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough."—Franklin D. Roosevelt.

# DNR proposes harvest limits for native rough fish

New MN DNR rules would improve conservation for many Minnesota fish

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources invites the public to comment on proposed rules related to daily and possession limits on native rough fish. Under the new proposed rules, these fishes—including bowfin, buffalo, carp, carp sucker, freshwater drum, goldeye, mooneye, quillback, redhorse and suckers—would also get a variety of other protections. Some examples of protections include noting that structural practices such as dams that hinder migration of these fish are no longer appropriate or desired, excluding bowfin from commercial harvest, and clarifying that native rough fish and also common carp taken by angling or dip netting can be returned to the water. "We are continuing efforts to conserve these important species," said Shannon Fisher, DNR fisheries populations monitoring and regulations manager. "Over the

last handful of years, we've seen renewed appreciation for the role these fish play in aquatic ecosystems of our rivers and lakes." In 2024, a new state statute elevated the status of native rough fish by modifying their definition from "rough fish" to "native rough fish" and differentiating them from common carp. While many of these proposed rule changes are technical, they would further boost recognition for native rough fish species and provide both direct and indirect benefits to the various species as well as fisheries management and aquatic ecosystems. "There is much we don't know about native rough fish populations, but what we're seeing is increased levels of angling and bowfishing interest and some evidence of population declines," Fisher said. "The proposed limits for these fish are intended to prevent overharvest and help ensure

population viability and sustainability for future generations." Under current rules, there are no limits for bowfin, buffalo, carp, carp sucker, quillback, mooneye, goldeye and freshwater drum for all methods of take—angling, bowfishing, spearing, harpooning and dip netting. The proposed limits are:  
- bowfin, six;  
- bigmouth and smallmouth buffalo in aggregate, five in a northern zone and 30 in a southern zone;  
- suckers and redhorses in aggregate, 30;  
- carpsuckers and quillback in aggregate, 30;  
- freshwater drum, 30; and  
- mooneye and goldeye in aggregate, 30.  
There would also be a minimum

size for some species limits to allow for minnow harvest. If approved, the rules would go into effect March 1, 2027. People can find more information about the proposed rules on the DNR fisheries rulemaking website (mndnr.gov/input/rules/fisheries). The Minnesota DNR is currently taking comment on the proposed rules. People can submit their comments on the proposals until 4:30 p.m. Thursday, March 12, by email to fisheries.rulemaking.comments.dnr@state.mn.us. Please include "native rough fish" in the subject line or body of the email. Phone to the Minnesota DNR at 651-259-5235. Mail to Fisheries Rules and Regulations Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.

## Royalty

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mushrooms. Meeta's heroes are her grandmas, Kris and Cheryl, because they are always so supportive of everything she does and she knows she can always count on them. After high school, Meeta plans to attend Lake Area Technical College for the surgical technician program.

Justin Beauvais is the son of Carina and Matt Beauvais. He has two siblings, Caden and Sean. Justin is involved in football, trapshooting, DECA and track. He likes to hang out with friends, snowboard, watch basketball, and occasionally play games. Justin is good at driving, but not very good at following directions. His favorite food is a grilled cheesesteak burrito, and he thinks olives are gross. Justin's heroes are his parents because they have taught him most things he knows, and they support him with his chores and are always there for him. After high school, Justin plans to become an electrician and make bank.

Kayden Warke is the daughter of Josh and Kelly Warke. Kayden has two sisters, Kylie and Kelsey. Kayden is involved in volleyball, FCCLA, student ambassadors, FCA, and Knowledge Bowl. Her two main hobbies are playing volleyball and bedazzling random things throughout her room. Kayden is good at turning any quiet moment into a full-blown conversation, but not good at knowing when to stop talking once she starts. Her favorite food at the moment is Hibachi or Chinese, and the grossest food she ever tasted is almost any vegetable, especially peas. Kayden's heroes are her parents, because they have always been there for her, supporting her through every challenge and

teaching her everything she needs to know today. Kayden plans to attend Mankato State University and she wants to become a nurse, specifically in pediatrics. Queen Meyer is the son of Tawnya and Terry. He has three siblings, Danica, Bryalynn, and Braxton. Queen is involved in football, and also enjoys fishing and video games. He is good at fishing, but not very good at getting to school on time. His favorite food is pizza and the grossest food he ever tasted is pickled herring. Queen's hero is Curtis, because he stays true to himself and does not give in to peer pressure. Queen's plans for the future are to be awesome and kind to others.

Kaitlyn Dobbstein is the daughter of Josh and Linda Dobbstein. She has two siblings: Ella and Jacob. Kaitlyn is involved in FFA, student council, choir, and National Honor Society. Her hobbies include hanging out with family and friends, tanning, and shopping. Kaitlyn is good at stressing out about anything and everything, but not so good at saving money. Her favorite food is any kind of soup, and the grossest thing she has ever eaten is Creme Brulee. Kaitlyn's hero is Jesus because he has always been her best friend. After high school, she plans to go to Winona State majoring in elementary education and minoring in special education.

Isaac Bauleke is the son of Jerry and Kathy. He has three siblings, Austin, Kaitlyn, and Addison. Isaac is involved in men's volleyball and baseball. His hobbies include fishing, hunting, video games, and eating a lot of food. Isaac is good at fishing, but not very good at cooking. His favorite food is BLTs and the grossest food he ever tasted is a pickled egg. His hero is Tom Brady because he is a cool guy and good at football. In the future, Isaac plans to fish, eat and live a happy life.

Gabby Schlaak is the daughter of Kim and Justin Schlaak. She has two brothers, Kordell and Dakota. Gabby is involved in volleyball, basketball, track and field, NHS, FCA, FCCLA, DECA, student council, student ambassadors, and SALT. Her hobbies include hanging out with family and friends. Gabby is good at sleeping through her alarms, but not very good at waking up for school or morning practice. Her favorite food is sushi, and her least favorite food is plantain. Her heroes are her parents and Jesus, because they guide her in the right direction. After high school, Gabby plans to go to college at MSU and is undecided, but most likely will major in dental hygiene.

Kaleb Hughes is the son of Angie and Zack Hughes. He has a sister, Lily. Kaleb is involved in football and trap shooting. He also likes to fish, hunt, cook and spend his time outside with family and friends. Kaleb is good at cooking, but not very good at doing backflips. His favorite food is grilled cheese, and the grossest thing he ever tasted was crab rangoons. Kaleb's heroes are his mom and dad because they have helped him more ways than he could count. After high school, Kaleb plans to go to college to be an automotive technician.

Winter Pederson is the daughter of Nikki Cromwell and Michael Pederson. She is one older brother, Harbor. Winter is involved in FCCLA, One Act Play, Knowledge Bowl, student ambassadors, yearbook, readers' theater, and state wrestling. Her hobbies include going new places with her mom, and hanging out with her cousins, doing crafts, and working. She is good at sleeping for very long amounts of time, and not very good at being quiet and talking at a normal volume (sorry, Cindy). Her favorite food is French fries, and the

grossest food for her is tomatoes. Winter's heroes are her parents; her mom because she puts up with her and she is super funny and her dad because he makes good food. After high school, Winter plans to attend Southwest Technical College in Winona to get her Esthetician certificate. Ezekiel Morrison is the son of Shayne Morrison and Kim Morrison. His hobbies include playing video games and sleeping. Ezekiel is good at playing video games, but not very good at chemistry. His favorite food is Taco Bell, and the grossest food he's ever tasted is coltslaw. Ezekiel's heroes are his parents because they have always been there for him. His future plans are to work.

Nora Flatness is the daughter of Karen and Brandon Flatness. She has four brothers: Gage, Cale, Zander, and Tucker. Nora is involved in volleyball, gymnastics, and trapshooting. Her hobbies include shopping, spending money and doing gymnastics. Nora is good at doing hair and playing Uno during class, but not very good at showing up to sixth and seventh hours first semester. Her favorite food is tacos, and the grossest food for her is fish. Her hero is her mom because she puts up with all of her brothers' shenanigans. After high school, Nora plans to attend Southeast Technical College for cosmetology.

DeShawn Jones is the son of Mariah Britton. He has six siblings: Serenity, Mya, Josiah, Elijah, Angela and Frank. DeShawn's hobbies include driving and sports. He is good at 2K and Madden, but not very good at art. DeShawn's favorite food is pizza, and the grossest food he ever tasted is mushrooms. His hero is Batman because he always liked Batman growing up. After high school, DeShawn plans to go into trades.

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OBITUARIES

**Kevin Alan Hamor**

Kevin Alan Hamor passed away suddenly at his home on January 20, 2026. He was 70 years old. Kevin was born October 26, 1955 to Jerald and Helen (Lawson) Hamor in Albert Lea. He graduated from Ellendale High School in 1973. He then attended Albert Lea Area Vocational Technical Institute for Drafting. Most of his working years were spent at ALMCO, Inc. in Albert Lea and Lou-Rich in Hayward.

He married the love of his life, Catherine Thompson, on September 28, 1985 at First Lutheran Church in Ellendale. Kevin was a classic car hobbyist, member and Secretary of the Memories Car Club. He loved driving his & Cathy's red 1966 Impala "Suzie" and attending the Back to the Fifties Car Show in the summer with family. He had many special motorcycles and cars in his life. He and Cathy traveled and enjoyed restaurants such as Casa Zamora's in Albert Lea, although they also loved staying in or enjoying Cathy's delicious home-cooked meals.

Kevin was a clever and kind man who liked to have fun and give back to the community. He was an avid fisherman with his brother Vern and good friend Bryce Ingvoldson on Sand Lake. Kevin loved classic rock and going to concerts. He and Cathy participated for many years in Via de Cristo weekend retreats, and Kevin was the Southern Representative. He led the First Lutheran youth group in the 1990s and was in many portrayals of the Living Lord's Supper. Kevin served as president of the church council for two terms and the board of trustees. He had a strong faith in Jesus and was an inspiration to many.

After retirement, Kevin volunteered at the Ellendale food shelf and enjoyed morning coffee with the guys at the Ellendale Cafe. In his life, Kevin was a member of the Jaycees and the Ellendale Centennial Committee. He volunteered with the ALS Associ-



Kevin Hamor

ation as a Home Assistance Provider. He used his talents to lead the 2014 - 2017 First Robotics teams from Austin High School who won many awards at competitions throughout the state.

He will be greatly missed by brothers James & Luverne Hamor, and Cathy's parents Jerry & Ginger Thompson, all of Ellendale, sister Carolyn Anderson of New Bern, NC, sisters-in-law Christine (Tom) Krause, Carrie Thompson, and Carlie (Joseph) Sevcik, nieces Michelle Jones, Cheryl (Troy) Wilkie, Sophia & Sierra Krause, and Annabella Sevcik, nephews Jeff (Rochelle) Anderson, Jeremy Hamor, Gabriel (Desi) Thompson, and Alexander Sevcik, and many other relatives and friends.

Kevin was preceded in death by his dear wife Cathy in 2003, his parents, sisters-in-law Linda Hamor and Carol Hamor, brother-in-law Marlin Anderson, and nephew, Randy Jones. They have been reunited with the Lord in Heaven, along with the innumerable show cats and pets ("The Critters") he and Cathy had in their life together. Their poodle Maggie, cat Olaf, and birds Crash & Rudy Roobee were some of his favorites.

Funeral service will be February 21, 2026 at 2 p.m. at First Lutheran Church in Ellendale with visitation at 1 p.m. Interment will be at First Lutheran Cemetery at a later date.

Donations preferred to First Lutheran Church Ellendale in lieu of flowers or trees.

**Kenneth Eaton**

Kenneth William Eaton, age 101 of Waseca, passed away on Friday, February 6, 2026 at Mill City Senior Living in Faribault surrounded by his family.

Ken was born to Oscar and Mabel Eaton on July 26, 1924. He served as a Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Army during World War II from May 1945 to October 1946. He was honorably discharged. Part of his tour was training new recruits. The trainer never left him. He would lead his children and Bible Campers in the cadence "You Had a Good Home and you Left, Right, Left, Right," where Ken stood at "left" and the children responded "right."

On May 3, 1946 he married Harriet Elaine Peterson. They were married 78 years and began raising children and invested themselves in what they truly loved, farming. Ken ran the family farm for 69 years until he retired at age 90. After doing his part (planting the crop) he would say that "the rest is up to the Lord." His favorite part was bringing in the harvest with people he loved. Ken chose not to work on Sundays to honor the Lord. He wrote and presented The Miracle of Corn to his

grandchildren's school groups, giving credit to God's great design.

On January 20, 1950, Ken trusted the Lord at a Billy Graham gathering in Austin, MN. His life was never the same. His walk of faith guided his life and attitude. He was devoted to Vista Covenant Church and the community.

He held most, if not all, of the church's leadership positions. However, the one that brought him the most joy was Lake Beauty Bible Camp Coordinator for 30 years. One year, he had 75 kids attend camp, a testament to his passion.

Ken was a faithful, generous and joyful man who always made time to be of service to his family, Vista, and the community. He helped organize and went on several mission trips.

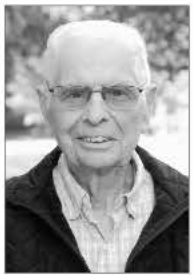
Ken was a faithful, generous and joyful man who always made time to be of service to his family, Vista, and the community. He helped organize and went on several mission trips. His desire to celebrate God led him to learn how to play the trumpet and start a band at Vista, and his kids followed in his musical steps. Ken and Harriet kept "family first" alive, building multi-generational memories by hosting a three-day annual gathering for all the extended family at Cedar Valley Resort near Lanesboro, MN. Ken had a good, dry sense of humor. When a friend asked for a wagon of corn for his horses, Ken delivered the corn in a child's Red Flyer wagon. Evidence of a well-lived life can be seen

in the breadth of connections Ken and Harriet had with friends of all ages, from young to old.

Ken and Harriet loved to travel visiting all 50 states, Canada, Mexico, Panama, Israel, Norway and Sweden. He was blessed with a curiosity about people and places and particularly enjoyed mountain scenery and traveling to the southern states to see the dogwoods bloom in the spring. He converted a van into a camping vehicle in which they traveled across the country for many years. Ken was a physical activity enthusiast. He inspired family sit-up contests and enjoyed bike riding. He could frequently be spotted riding his 3-wheeled bike around Clear Lake until age 98.

Ken was preceded in death by his wife Harriet Eaton, his daughter Gail (Ted) Johnson, his parents Oscar and Mabel Eaton, and his siblings Harold (Donna), Mary (Milan) Prechel, Emory (Paul) Speakman, and Stanley (Dorothy). He is survived by his children, Steve (JoAnn) Eaton, Dave (Shawnee) Eaton, Sherrie (Pat) Murphy, Brian (Cindy) Eaton, and Ted (Mary) Johnson. He leaves behind 14 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, February 12, 2026



Kenneth Eaton

at Vista Covenant Church, 14679 275th Avenue, New Richland, MN 56072. With visitation starting at 10 a.m. Rev. Brian Schanil will officiate. Visitation will also be held from 4 - 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at Dennis Steffel Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Services, 109 3rd Street NE, Waseca, MN 56093. Instead of flowers, memorials may be directed to Vista Covenant Church. Dsofuneral.com

**Cecil Edward Stiermagle**

Cecil Edward Stiermagle, 93, passed away on February 5, 2026 at New Perspectives Senior Living in Mankato, MN.

Born on October 25, 1932 to Herbert and Arnie (Wallace) Stiermagle, Cecil was born in Freeborn County, and raised in Waseca County.

In his professional journey, Cecil was known for his entrepreneurial spirit, owning and operating several businesses. His ventures included working with grain elevators, aerial agriculture spraying, agricultural production and farming, and service stations. His dedication to his professional and personal passions was admired by many. Cecil was loved by many, and his personality shone brightly through his rebellious spirit and zest for life.

His personal life was rich with love, particularly through his marriage to Leota Irene Webster on July 29, 1950

at All Saint's Catholic Church in New Richland, MN. The pair built a loving home together that would create an enduring legacy.

Cecil will be remembered by his children: Kevin (Diane) Stiermagle, Kathy (Merlin) Maass, Keith (Paula) Stiermagle, Karyn (Loren) Kerkisick, and Kurt (Julie) Stiermagle, and Karla (Greg) Christensen; his twenty-three grandchildren; his forty-seven great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren; his two sisters, Nathalie Besser and Rebecca Kunst; brother Rex Routh along with many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Cecil was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Leota; son Kim David Stiermagle; grandsons Rory Philipp and Shaun Maass; his parents, Herbert Edward Stiermagle and Annie Elizabeth Stiermagle; step-father Rex Routh; brother Robert Stiermagle; and brothers-in-law Sylvester "Pickles" Besser and Roger Kunst.

The family would like to express their deepest thanks to St. Croix Hos-

pital for all of their care and assistance throughout the end of Cecil's life. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made in Cecil's memory to St. Croix Hospice, 201 North Riverfront Drive, Mankato 56001.

A visitation was held on Wednesday, February 11, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Friedrich's Funeral Home, 217 Division St W, New Richland, 56072. A second visitation will take place on February 12, 2026 from 10 to 11 a.m. at Saint Peters Evangelical Lutheran Church, 203 2nd St NW, New Richland, 56072, followed by a memorial service at the same location beginning at 11 a.m., with burial taking place at Calvary Cemetery immediately following services.

The livestream link below is a complimentary service provided by Bonnerup Funeral & Cremation Services.

Unforeseen technical, internet, facility, and/or accidental circumstances may produce a diminished end product. Please note, if the livestream does not appear, we are attempting to record



Cecil Stiermagle

and publish the service for later viewing.

To order memorial trees or send flowers to the family in memory of Cecil E. Stiermagle, please visit our flower store.

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# Albert Lea announces Ag Luncheon & Farm Family Nominations

Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce Agricultural Committee is pleased to announce that the 21st Annual Agriculture Luncheon is scheduled for noon to 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at the Fairlane Building at the Freeborn County Fairgrounds.

Join us as we announce the 47th Freeborn County Farm Family of the Year! The annual Agricultural Luncheon is a heartfelt tribute to those who tirelessly cultivate our lands and nourish our communities.

As part of this annual meeting, the Chamber's Agriculture Committee selects and recognizes the Freeborn County Farm Family of the Year and Farm Families of years past.

**Nominations Open**

We are currently accepting applications for the 2026 Farm Family of the Year nominations. To be nominated, the Farm Family must be Minnesota food producers actively involved in agricultural production with one or more agricultural enterprises or have made significant short-term progress and/or innovative contributions with their agricultural endeavors. Winners are selected based on their commitment to enhancing and supporting the fields of agriculture and production and their involvement in their communities.

Farm family nominations were accepted through Tuesday, February 10. Nominations were submitted to: <https://forms.gle/639za1pzcAz1EgHk9>

**Guest Speaker**

This year's event will feature guest speaker Adam Bar, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association.

**Sponsorships & Tickets**

We are currently seeking sponsors for this year's event. Seize the opportunity to connect with fellow enthusiasts, industry leaders, and community advocates at this gathering. Together, let's honor our agricultural heritage and pave the way for a flourishing future. Those who are interested in sponsoring can reach out to Valerie Lockhart at [chamberexec@albertlea.org](mailto:chamberexec@albertlea.org).

Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased through this online registration portal.

For those who prefer not to purchase their tickets online, please visit the Albert Lea - Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce offices at 132 North Broadway Avenue in Albert Lea and we can assist you in person. If you need more information on tickets or sponsorship opportunities, please call the Chamber at 507-373-3938.

# Brandon Wayne achieves recognition

Brandon Wayne is a CRPC a Private Wealth Advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, in Owatonna, has qualified for the company's Circle of Success annual recognition program and will be honored for this achievement in 2026.

Brandon Wayne is a former Ellendale native, whose daughter, Eva, just graduated from NRHEG in 2023.

To earn this achievement, Wayne established himself as one of the company's top advisors. Only a select number of high-performing advisors earn this distinction.

He has 25 years of experience 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 Brandon Wayne at (507) 444-0901, visit the Ameriprise office at 1850 Austin Rd Ste 104 or visit their website [www.ameripriseadvisors.com/brandon.2.wayne](http://www.ameripriseadvisors.com/brandon.2.wayne).

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## HERITAGE BITS

### Thomas Henderson Brown

Ripe in years and a million in good deeds and service, Thomas Henderson Brown, one of Sioux Falls' most useful and delightful citizens, died at noon Sunday, January 22, at McKennan Hospital of complications following dilation of the heart from which he had been in danger for several years.

During the more than twenty-one years of Ellendale's existence, Mr. Brown visited here at least two or three times a year. In business affairs no one can complain of his liberality. He donated sites for all the churches. He furnished a site for the Hotel Ellendale and the first properties of The Eagle were also reimbursed somewhat for the meager business of the early days with a lot on Main Street. The ground

on which the city power plant stands was sold to the village at a normal price. The block of land dedicated to park purposes was given by him and also the east half of the second park now being developed into a public playground.

He never failed to respond to calls for cash donations to various enterprises.

(2/12/26)



### Showcase

from Page 1

Music Educator of the Year Award. She says she strives to live by the phrase "every day is a good day to get better."

Guest director Williams, soprano, is a frequent soloist throughout the Twin Cities, Western Wisconsin and Upper Michigan; she served for several years as the president of the Summer Burst concert series board of directors. She has directed choir and taught piano at Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary, directed the Finlandia choir and taught voice at Finlandia University, and taught voice at Martin Luther College.

Accompanist Stletten is a musician from Lake Mills, Iowa. She attended Augustana University,

currently accompanies for the Lake Mills Community School, is a church musician and runs her own piano studio.

The day's Showcase Program began with the band performing "Burn After Reading" by Andrew David Perkins; "Ten Marches in Two Minutes," arranged by Timothy Loest; "Pastel Sunset" by Heather Hoefle and "Fate of the Gods" by Steven Reineke and Matt Conoway.

"It is such a beautiful, beautiful thing that we get to do," Holmes said prior to the performances. "I'm so proud to be able to play a piece of music that features a bunch of different marches.

"It is important to recognize the arts, so getting the opportunity to bring these students together with kids they don't know gives them a chance to learn from each other," she continued.

Following a brief intermission, the choir performed the follow-



**CELEBRATING THE ARTS - 15 NRHEG students participated in the Fine Arts Showcase hosted at the NRHEG school on Saturday, Feb. 7.**

Star Eagle photos by Eli Lutgens

ing: "Gloria in Excelsis" by Antonia Vivaldi and Ed Mason Martens; "I Sing Because I'm Happy," arranged by Kenneth Paden, adapted by Rollo Dilworth; "When the Light of Morning Breaks" by PinkZebra; "Run!" by One Republic, arranged by Jacob Narverud; and "Muhona" by Cedrick Howoseb and Ed. Ryan Main.

NRHEG Superintendent Michael Meihak included the following messages in the program, Saturday:

"To our students: Thank you

for your dedication to music programs. We are proud of the work you have done and grateful that you are sharing your talents with us today.

"To our directors and staff members: Thank you for the time, energy and care you invest in your students. Your dedication to music education and to building strong programs is evident in the quality of performances we enjoy.

"Thank you for being here and for supporting arts education," Meihak concluded. "We hope you enjoy the festival."

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**MILESTONE** — Camryn VanMaldeghem topped 2,000 career points last Friday, joining Carlie Wagner and Oakley Baker as the only NRHEG players to do so.

Photo courtesy Steele County Times

## VanMaldeghem, Panthers nip Hayfield

By JIM LUTGENS  
Sports Editor

The NRHEG girls' basketball team got the win, and Camryn VanMaldeghem got the milestone. VanMaldeghem, a senior, scored the 2,000th point of her career in the first half Friday as the Panthers prevailed 56-53 at Hayfield.

"We came out swinging and had a dominant first-half effort," said NRHEG coach Onika Peterson, whose team won its 21st consecutive game.

The Panthers played solid first-half defense and VanMaldeghem supplied the points.

"It seemed like whatever Camryn shot in the first half went in," said Peterson.

She needed 18 to reach 2,000, becoming the third NRHEG player to do so behind Carlie Wagner and Oakley Baker.

"Congratulations to her on this huge accomplishment," said Peterson.

The Panthers led 32-17 at halftime, but things tightened up in the second half.

"Hayfield came out in the second half and made some big shots and had a couple bounces go their way,"

## Senior tops 2,000 points as NRHEG completes 3-0 week

said Peterson. "We started playing not to lose rather than playing to win. We missed some shots we normally would hit; that's part of the game. I'm proud the girls held their composure and were able to pull off a solid conference road win."

Camryn VanMaldeghem finished with 39 points, including five three pointers. Her twin sister, Quinn, led the team with 14 rebounds.

Totals: C.VanMaldeghem 39 points, 5 rebounds, 3 steals, 1 assist; Q.VanMaldeghem 12P, 14R, 10S, 3A; Gabby Schlaak 1R, 3S; Ezra Boerner 1R, 1A; Clara Buendorf 5P, 4R, 1S, 3A; Savannah Farr 1R; Chloe Stork 4R.

The Panthers survived a scare at Southland Tuesday, where they trailed 32-21 at halftime before rallying for a 58-57 victory.

"What a game," said Peterson.

"We had two to three great possessions to start the game and then the rest of it seemed like an uphill battle. Hats off to a tough Southland team. Their mid-range jumpers are extremely impressive; they have a solid defense and rebound very

well. We ended up looking to our bench in the first half with three starters having three fouls."

Southland stretched the lead to as many as 14 in the second half before the Panthers regained their composure.

Boerner's three-pointer won it. Quinn VanMaldeghem had 14 steals.

"This was truly a team win," said Peterson. "We had a lot of kids step up. I'm very proud of this team, their resilience, and their ability to play and step up for each other when things get tough. I'm sure we will be seeing Southland again come playoff time."

NRHEG totals: Schlaak 20P, 4R; Boerner 3P, 4R; Q.VanMaldeghem 11P, 15, 14S, 6A; Buendorf 5P, 5R, 3S, 2A; C.VanMaldeghem 15P, 2R, 3S; Farr 3R, 1S; Stork 4P, 3R, 2S.

The game was a sharp contrast to Monday, when the Panthers led USC 56-4 at halftime en route to a 77-25 decision at New Richland.

"We knew going in that we would have a good opportunity to pick up a win, because USC is adjusting after

the loss of their point guard and one of better guards in the gopher conference, Olivia Bungum," said Peterson.

The Panthers came out firing, making 10 threes in the first half, led by Schlaak with three.

In the second half, Peterson rotated her lineup hockey-style, running five in and five out while mixing starters with our subs/younger players.

"It was great to get everyone meaningful time on the floor," said Peterson.

Totals: Schlaak 13P, 1R, 1S, 2A; Boerner 3P, 1S, 2A; Q.VanMaldeghem 6P, 10R, 7S, 5A, 1 block; Buendorf 8P, 1R, 2S; Kenley Gehrke 1R; C.VanMaldeghem 31P, 4R, 4S, 4A; Farr 11P, 4R, 1S; Stork 2P, 3R, 4S; Emelia Stadler 1R; Joey Rossing 3P.

After a Tuesday game at St. Clair, the 21-2 Panthers play Friday at 7:15 at Alden-Conger. They host the Gopher Conference championship game Saturday against an opponent to be determined.

## NRHEG matmen drop two

### Tufte 5th in girls' section tourney

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School wrestling team finished the regular season last Thursday with a triangular at New Richland.

The Panthers first faced the Maple River/United South Central Longhorns and dropped a 54-18 decision. Victories for the Panthers were by Owen Schlaak, 107 pounds; Graham Jacobson, 114; Dakota Schlaak, 133; and Ryan Schlaak, 189. Dakota Schlaak won by forfeit. The Panthers forfeited the 285 match.

Also wrestling for NRHEG were Charlie Tufte, Bo Holland, Chase Johannsen, Adrian Nasser, Wyatt Hendrickson, Noah Weller and Wyatt Larson.

The Panthers fell 54-18 to Grand Meadow/LEROY-Ostrander/Southland, with NRHEG victories by Owen Schlaak, Jacobson and Ryan Schlaak. All won by fall.

First-year Panthers head coach Krey Cory was pleased with his wrestlers' effort.

"Everyone went out and competed very hard tonight," said Cory. "Everyone is getting more confident with their offense attacks. Our team is young and lacks a lot of experience at most weights, but we go out there and try to compete with whoever steps on the mat."

It was also Senior Night for the Panthers. Recognized were senior wrestler Larson, manager Winter Pederson and cheerleader Madison Bogue.

The Panthers finished the season with a dual-meet record of 5-16.

NRHEG's Josie Tufte completed in the Section 2A girls' individual wrestling tournament Friday and



**PANTHER POWER** — Above left, the Panthers' Wyatt Hendrickson lifts his Maple River/USC opponent last Thursday in New Richland. Above right, Bo Holland battles in the 127-pound bout. Below left, Charlie Tufte tangles with his opponent. Below right, Noah Weller, left, clashes with his foe at 172.

Photos by Jim Lutgens



Saturday at Rochester.

On Friday, Tufte received a bye in the first round and won her quarterfinal match by a major decision, 11-1.

On Saturday, Tufte got pinned in

her semifinal match and battled a hard-fought match in the consolation semifinal, where she lost 14-12.

In the fifth-place match, Tufte wrestled tough and won by a score of 25-17.



"Josie wrestled great, and I'm really proud of how she finished her first-ever season of wrestling," said Cory. "It was very encouraging to see her apply everything she's learned this year and see how far she

has come. She has a great work ethic and attitude towards the sport and I'm extremely excited to see what the future holds for her."

The first round of boys' team sections is tonight, hosted by the higher

seeded team, and the semifinals and final are Saturday at WEM High School.

## NRHEG boys can't hold on against Cleveland at MSU

### Panthers start week with win at United South Central; Mack Gilliland breaks thumb Friday at Hayfield to end his season

The NRHEG boys' basketball team traveled to Minnesota State-Mankato Saturday to face Cleveland in a Coaches vs. Cancer Showcase.

After losing Mack Gilliland for the season Friday to a broken thumb, the Panthers started strong, roaring to a 37-27 halftime lead, but the Clippers rallied in the second half for an 82-70 decision.

"The boys came out very tough on defense, and capitalized on open looks on the offensive end," said NRHEG coach Dan Schmidt.

The second half was another story, with Cleveland battling back to take the lead about five minutes to play, getting to the basket and hitting their free throws while the Panthers struggled to get rebounds while

"This was a very tough loss as it was a section opponent, and we played so well in the first half," said Schmidt.

Calvin Nissen led the Panthers with 17 points, 4 assists, and 4 steals. Dom Olson added 16 points, Brock Holland 13 points and 9 rebounds. A.J. Deen added 11 points, and 11 rebounds.

Totals: Deen 11P, 11R, 2A, 2S; Olson 16P, 3R, 2S; Nissen 17P, 1R, 4A, 4S; Brooks Gilliland 10P, 8R, 3A, 1S; Fynn Baumann 2P, 1R, 1A; Brendan Schmidt 2P, 3R, 4A, 2S; Holland 13P, 9R, 5A.

A night earlier, the Panthers played at Hayfield in the second half of a girl-boy doubleheader and lost 86-47.

"We were never really in this game," said Coach Schmidt. "We failed to execute

everything that we had worked on all week. Hayfield plays very tough defense, and doesn't really throw anything complicated at you on the offensive end, yet had their way with us."

The Vikings led from start to finish and the Panthers could not fight back.

"Hayfield shot very well from the field, as a result of slow closouts and late switches, so a lot of credit goes to them for exploiting us in that regard," said Schmidt.

Nissen led in scoring with 14 points. Deen, Olson, Brooks Gilliland, and Mack Gilliland all had 6 points. Brendan Schmidt added 5, and Brock Holland finished with four. Deen had another great night on the glass with 13 rebounds.

"He's really done a good job this last

month with the work we've done at practice on positioning and physicality when it comes to rebounding," said Schmidt.

Holland added 9 rebounds of his own. Brendan Schmidt had 6.

Individual totals: Deen 6P, 13R, 1 block; Olson 6P, 1S; Nissen 14P, 4R, 1A, 2S; B.Gilliland 6P, 2R, 2A, 2S; Baumann 1R, 2A, 1S; B.Schmidt 5P, 6R, 3A, 1S; M.Gilliland 6P; Holland 4P, 9R, 1A.

The Panthers started the week Monday with a solid 74-58 victory at United South Central. They trailed only once, 2-0, and led by 17 at the halftime break.

"It was a great defensive effort by all the guys, and we kept going with great balance on the offense," said Coach Schmidt.

Olson came off the bench and continued

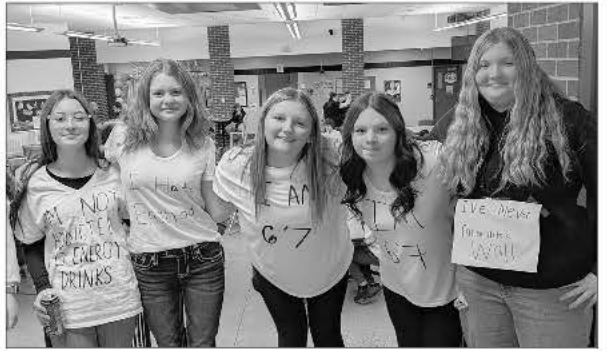
to play well on both sides of the ball with 19 points, including 8-for-8 from the free-throw line down the stretch. Nissen added 15 points, Brendan Schmidt 10, Deen 9 to go along with a team-high 12 rebounds.

NRHEG totals: Deen 9P, 12R, 1A, 1B; Olson 19P, 1R, 4A, 1S; Nissen 15P, 1R, 1A, 1S; B.Gilliland 5P, 5R, 2A, 1S; Baumann 6P, 1S; B.Schmidt 10P, 3R, 1A, 3S; M.Gilliland 4P, 4R, 3A, 3S, 1B; Holland 6P, 6R, 2S.

The Panthers, 8-13, played Tuesday at 16-3 Madelia. They host Alden-Conger Friday at 7 p.m. and face Nicollet at home Saturday at 2:30.

"We have a very tough week ahead of us," said Coach Schmidt.

**NRHEG Snow Week Dress Up Days Feb. 2-9**



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## Woods and Water

by Dick Herfindahl  
Outdoors Writer

# Perks of growing up in the country

When I look back at it, I am grateful to have been raised in the country. As a kid I caught frogs, toads, turtles and tadpoles in the "crick." Summer was a time to explore the nearby slough, build forts and play cowboys and Indians. We would take turns being our favorite cowboy heroes and there were never any winners or losers. When we got called home for supper, we would go in, eat fast and head back outside until dark. After sunset we would play tag, kick the can or chase fireflies and see how many we could catch. You don't see many fireflies around anymore. Maybe it has something to do with the insecticides that is sprayed, so that you don't get bitten by mosquitoes.

You could ride your bike anywhere without worrying about anything. My friend Pat Smith lived a few miles away from my house on the east side of Hwy. 65 across from the state highway department. I would sometimes ride my bike over there and play with Pat and ride his pony, Scout. Now I had been around horses for as long as I could remember, but for some reason Scout took great pleasure in seeing how many times he could make end up laying on the ground. Pat and I would also ride our bikes to the milk farm. The milk farm sat where Bancroft Bay Park is now. We would buy some horse meat which Willie Schneider would cut up in small



Here is a picture of Hammer School where Dick Herfindahl spent grades 1 through 6 making lifelong friends and learning many life lessons.

chunks for us and use for bait to catch big sunfish and huge yellow-bellied bullheads. All that I needed was an old tin aspirin box, a couple of hooks and some weights inside it. I wrapped my fishing line around the box and stuffed it into my pants pocket along with an old thermos bottle cork which I used for a bobber. I would find a long stick and use that for my fishing pole. It was simple but effective. We would also play pickup games of baseball and football. I had a good football but no baseball glove. When I batted, I didn't

need a glove, but when I went into the outfield, I had to borrow a glove from a player on the opposing team. This is how we rolled, pretty much whatever it took to make a game work. These are some of the memories that I cherish from growing up in the country and when times were simpler and much less stressful. 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

David Haugh and his father Howard, an attorney in Mankato, were among a Global Volunteers team who assisted with construction-related projects in Los Tornos in Costa Rica's northwestern highlands near Monteverde Cloud Forest. "My most memorable moment was witnessing the appreciation for the work that we did," said Howard. "I was pleased to be referred to by my host as a 'very good carpenter.'" Howard and David helped build door frames and tables for a community in Los Tornos.

Jill Anderson of Ellendale, Laura Edwards of Hollandale and Ryan Fure of Kiester completed academic requirements for degrees following fall semester 2000 at Winona State University. Anderson earned a Bachelor of science degree in physical education and school and community health. Edwards earned a bachelor of science degree in recreation and leisure sciences. Fure earned a bachelor of science degree in computer science.

50 years ago



David Schlaak of New Richland has taken over the management of Dick's Mobil station in New Richland. He is an experienced mechanic. His open house at the station will run through Saturday, February 14.

Kristine Hagen and Sarah Hagen, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Hagen of rural New Richland, won the honors at the Waseca County 4-H Public Speaking contest held at the county extension office in Waseca, Monday, February 2. Kris won the Senior division title and is overall county champion. Her sister, Sarah Hagen, was the junior division winner.

Christopher Harrison, Schiebel, son of Mr and Mrs. William Schiebel, was baptized at All Saints Catholic Church, Sunday, January 25 with the Rev. Patrick Russell officiating. Sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Larry Bull of Clear Lake, S.D.

Waterville-Elysian took the Gopher Conference Wrestling Tournament the past weekend at Blooming Prairie with 138 1/2 points. Champions in the various weight classes were: 98 lb. - Mike Wallin of New Richland. 105 lb. - Craig Bailey of Ellendale-Geneva. 112 lb. - Bob Quarm of Waterville-Elysian. 119 lb. - Terry Keller of Medford. 126 lb. - Paul Vauth of Blooming Prairie. 132 lb. - Pat Sheehy of Waterville-Elysian. 138 lb. - Randy Warke of New Richland-Hartland. 145 lb. - Barry Reayack of Morrisstown. 155 lb. - Brad Wickler of Morrisstown. 167 lb. - Cliff Keyes of Janesville. 180 lb. - Tom Glende of Waterville-Elysian, Hwt. - Steve Quam, Ellendale-Geneva.

75 years ago

Coach Bob Westland of the New Richland high school has been named to the All-City team picked from players in the Albert Lea City Basketball League by the Evening Tribune, entered in league play as the Morica team.

Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Berg of Albert Lea are the parents of their second son, born at the Navee hospital, March 2. Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Berg of near New Richland are the paternal grandparents.

Got news? • 463-8112

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Wednesday - 5:15 p.m. Supper; 6 p.m. Bible Study

**WEST FREEBORN LUTHERAN**  
Hartland, Minnesota  
Rev. Marcia Pedersen  
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship  
Monday - Council meeting (First Monday of the month)  
Friday - Quilting meets 9:00 a.m. twice a month, see newsletter for dates.

**FIRST LUTHERAN, AFLC**  
Ellendale, Minnesota  
Pastor Kyle Smith  
Saturday - 8 a.m. Men's Bible Study  
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship  
Monday - 7 p.m. Call to prayer  
Wednesday - 9:30 a.m. Bible Study; 6 p.m. Confirmation; 7-9 p.m. Youth Group (No confirmation during summer)

**FAMILY OF FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
Rev. Neal Ooms  
101 East Park Avenue  
Hollandale, Minnesota  
Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship  
10:45 a.m. Sunday School

**ST. JOHN LUTHERAN**  
Minnesota Lake, Minnesota  
Rev. Larry Sipe, pastor  
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship

**ST. PAUL UNITED**  
Minnesota Lake, Minnesota  
Interim Pastor  
Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Sunday School; 10:30 a.m. Worship

**ST. PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Otisco, Minnesota  
Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor  
Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship

**HARTLAND EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN**  
Hartland, Minnesota  
Pastor Phillip K. Lepak  
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship

**ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST**  
Ellendale, Minnesota  
Randy Cirksena, Pastor  
Sunday - Summer Service time is 9:30 a.m. Worship; 9:15 a.m. Sunday school. (No summer Sunday school)

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN, ELCA**  
Meriden, Minnesota  
Deacon Billie Jo Wicks  
Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship

**PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
Minnesota Lake, Minnesota  
Interim Pastor  
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship

**IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Freedom Township  
Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor  
Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship

**TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
New Richland, Minnesota  
Pastor Mary Iverson  
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, Sunday School; 10 a.m. Coffee  
Monday - 9 a.m. Quilting  
Wednesday - 6:15 p.m. Confirmation; 7 p.m. Council meeting (First Wednesday)

**MANCHESTER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN**  
Manchester, Minnesota  
Pastor Phillip K. Lepak  
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship

**ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST**  
Ellendale, Minnesota  
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Sunday - Summer Service time is 9:30 a.m. Worship; 9:15 a.m. Sunday school. (No summer Sunday school)

**PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN**  
Lemond Township  
Pastor Gena Parker  
Sunday - 10:15 a.m. Worship

**IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Freedom Township  
Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor  
Sunday - 9:15 a.m. Worship

**ZOAR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
Pastor Ava Adams-Morris  
Waldorf, Minnesota  
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship

**LESUBER RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
New Richland, Minnesota  
Pastor Dan Kordahl  
Sunday - 9 a.m. Worship; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School  
Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting

**ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
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Sunday - 8 a.m. Worship

**TRINITY LUTHERAN**  
Wilton Township  
Rev. Larry Sipe, Pastor  
Sunday - 10:45 a.m. Worship

**VISTA LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
New Richland, Minnesota  
Pastor Dan Kordahl  
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship

**COMMUNITY LUTHERAN**  
Geneva, Minnesota  
Pastor Leandra Anderson  
Sunday - 10 a.m. Worship (times vary for holidays)  
Monday - 8:30 a.m. Quilting

**EAST FREEBORN LUTHERAN**  
Pastor Matt Griggs  
Sunday - 8:30 a.m. Worship  
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**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
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**SIMPLY CHURCH**  
105 Second Street North East  
Geneva, Minnesota  
Todd Lundgren, Pastor  
Sunday - 9:30 a.m. Bible Study; 10:30 a.m. Worship

**FAMILY OF FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
Hollandale, Minnesota  
Rev. Neal Ooms  
Sunday - 8:45 a.m. Worship; 9:20 Worship and kids church (now an eagle brook viewing church)

**HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Pastor Peter Schuster  
Sunday - 8 a.m. Sacrament of Reconciliation; 8:30 a.m. Mass with Children's Church; Pre-school Sunday School during Mass  
Wednesday - 6:30 p.m. - Faith Formation classes for grades K-Confession  
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