



PATRIOT



LAUREN WOELFEL finished in 10th place at the state swim and dive meet at the University of Minnesota on Nov. 16. Woelfel advanced through several rounds and reached sixth place in the finals before her last two dives. See Mark Kolbinger's story on page 13. (Submitted Photo.)

Inside

COLORING CONTEST
Hey Kids! Be sure and check out the Patriot and Sherburne State Bank's annual Christmas Coloring Contest on page 3!

SHERBURNE COUNTY
The Sherburne County Board of Commissioners approved a 2023 agreement with Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail. See the story on page 5.

BIG LAKE
Eleven Big Lake High School students signed contracts with area businesses as part of the school's youth apprenticeship program. Read and learn all about it on page 10.

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BECKER CHAMBER HAS CHRISTMAS BLAST



GUESTS FOR THE BECKER CHAMBER AFTER HOURS CHRISTMAS GATHERING posed for a group photo at the Patriot offices, donning their "ugly" sweaters and fun Christmas attire. Becker Chamber of Commerce Director of Operations Amity Felton (inset) won the contest for "ugliest" sweater and she posed with her badge ala Elf on the Shelf. (Patriot Photo by Katherine Cantin).

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Swanson recognized as President's Award Winner

Becker Public School Board Chairman Mark Swanson was recently recognized for earning the President's Award for the 2022-23 school year.

By Bill Morgan, Editor, Staff Writer
reporter.bill@patriotnewsmn.com

The President's Award is given to those individuals who complete 300 or more hours of attendance at Minnesota School Board Association-sponsored meetings and activities. The award is only being bestowed to 15 board members throughout the state in 2022.

"We are extremely grateful for Mr. Swanson's 12 years of service and dedication to the school board," said Supt. Jeremy Schmidt.

The Becker School Board consists of six members elected at-large for terms of up to four years. Swanson is ending his term as Chairman of the Board, having served alongside Aaron Jurek (Director), Connie Robinson (Vice Chair), Pete Weismann (Director), Ryan Obermoller (Clerk), and Troy Berning (Director) over the past calendar year.

The Minnesota School Board Association will be hosting the 2023 Leadership Conference and Recognition Luncheon Thurs., January 12, 2023. Swanson will be presented with a certificate and pin recognizing his many hours of service as a school board member.



BECKER SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRMAN Mark Swanson. (Submitted Photo).

"Thank you, Mark, for your many years and hours of service on behalf of Becker Public Schools," said Schmidt.

Donovan appointed to Governor's Advisory Council on Opioids, Substance Use, and Addiction

(Editor's Note: The following article was submitted to the Patriot by the Recovery Community Network of St. Cloud.)

Submitted Article

Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan recently appointed Maj. John Donovan, U.S. Army, Retired to the Governor's Advisory Council on Opioids, Substance Use, and Addiction. "I am thrilled and honored to be serving on such a prominent panel and to be doing such meaningful work for the citizens of Minnesota," said Donovan.

Donovan is a long-time resident of Central Minnesota. He and his wife moved to the Big Lake area in 2010. Donovan recently received the St. Cloud State University Alumni Service Award for 2022 and the Advocate of the Year Award from the prestigious Faces and Voices of Recovery organization based out of Washington, DC.

"The Advisory Council, along with the recently appointed Addiction and Recovery Director, will provide valuable insight from a variety of perspectives, including those with lived experiences and those from communities that



MAJOR JOHN DONOVAN OF BIG LAKE was recently appointed to Gov. Walz's Advisory Council on Opioids, Substance Use and Addiction. (Submitted Photo).

are disproportionately impacted by addiction," said Governor Walz.

"Minnesota continues to fight against the growing opioids crisis, especially in our Native and Black communities that are disproportionately affected. I am grateful to these community leaders for partnering with our Administration, and with their unique professional and personal experiences, leadership, and dedication to this work, we will be better poised to create more effective solutions," said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan.

Maj. Donovan currently serves as the Board Chair for the Recovery Community Network

(RCN) based out of St. Cloud. The RCN is devoted to providing services to people living with or seeking help with substance use disorders. To learn more about the RCN visit their website at: recoverycommunitynetwork.com.

Donovan was recently heralded in two articles published by the Patriot. The first was when he was honored with an award for his service to people through the RCN and the second was an in-depth story on Donovan and his organization for our special Veteran's Day section.

Both articles ran in our Nov. 3 issue.

SCHOOL to page 2

School board hears from students

Last Monday evening, the Becker School Board met for their regularly scheduled meeting. All members were present.

By Bill Morgan, Editor, Staff Writer
reporter.bill@patriotnewsmn.com

There was no public comment.

Student School Board Representatives Kayla G. and Emilia H. spoke about winter sports (basketball, dance, wres-

tling, hockey) kicking off and doing very well overall in their opening events. In addition, activities updates were shared about Robotics,

GSA, NHS, Student Council, Speech, and One Act.

The school reps shared the successes of the fall including the recent musical, "Beauty and the Beast," which re-

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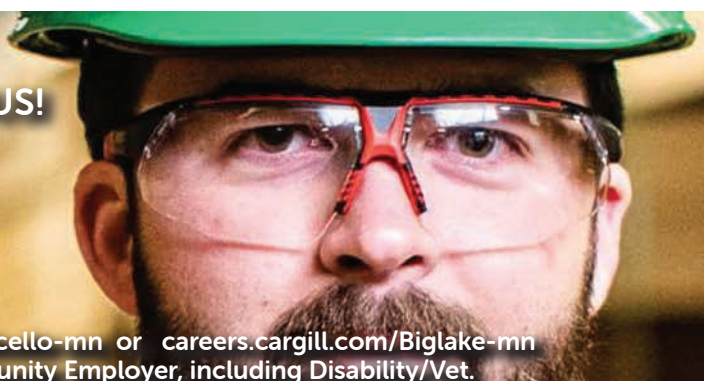
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Becker Evangelical Free Church
 Pastor: Gerald Deppa, 763-261-4125, Becker High School, Office: 11373 150th Ave SE. Services: Sun. Worship/Teaching/Fellowship 10am • www.beckerfreechurch.org
Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church
 Father: Mike Kellogg, 763-447-3339, 12100 Sherburne Ave. Services: Sat. Mass 5pm, Sun. Mass 8:30am & 10:30am. Masses held 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays of the month. (Masses held on 2nd & 4th Sundays in Big Lake) • www.maryofthevisitation.com
Faith (Becker) Lutheran Church (ELCA)
 Pastor: Yolanda Denson-Byers & Vicar Molly Wills, 763-261-5751, 11755 Sherburne Ave. Services: Sun. Worship 9:30am (Holy Communion on the 1st & 3rd Sundays) • www.faithlutheran-becker.org
Oakwood Community Church Assemblies of God
 Pastor: Gerry Bass, 763-220-6004, 13140 1st St (SW Corner of Becker Furniture World). Services: Sun. Worship 10am. • www.oakwoodccbecker.org
Snake River Free Church
 Pastor: Steve Johnson, 612-219-8648, 180th St SE. Services: Sun. Worship/Sun. School 10:30am • sites.google.com/view/snakeriverchurch/home
Becker Christian Center & Abundant Grace Church
 Pastor: Ken Hanson, 763-262-2177, 15455 59th St SE. Services: Sun. Praise & Worship 9:30am • beckerchristiancenter.org/becker-christian-center-church
Beacon House of Prayer
 Pastors: Brian & Linda Holmes, 763-263-3771, 12264 Pleasant Ave. Services: Thurs. Worship 6:30pm. • <http://mnhouseofprayer.org>
Free Grace United
 Pastor: Kevin Wilson, 763-245-0001, Becker High School, 12000 Hancock St, Enter door 11. Services: Wed. Worship 6:30pm. <https://freegrace.tv/locations/becker>

• BIG LAKE
Acts Seventh-Day Adventists Community Church
 Pastor: Bill Nixon, 763-263-2287, 20455 187th Ave NW. Services: Sat. Worship 9am • <https://acts7mn.adventistchurch.org>
Bethany Bible Church
 763-263-2167, 511 Eagle Lake Road. Services: Sun. Worship 10am. • www.bethanybiblemn.com
Bridgeview Assembly of God
 Pastor: Steve Royalty, 763-263-6274, 20500 County Road 11. Services: Sun. Worship 9am & 10:45am • <https://bridgeviewchurch.org>
SVSEA Hill Covenant Church
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Cornerstone Baptist Church
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Hope Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Orrock
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Riverside Church
 763-263-2410, 20314 County Road 14. Services: Sun 8:45am, 10:30am & 12:05pm. • www.mnrcchurch.org
Saron Lutheran Church
 Pastor: Kyle Sidlo, 763-263-2209, 311 Lake St. S. Services: Sun. Worship 9:30am, indoors or livestream. • www.saron.org

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Editorials/Opinions

The Best Gift of All



By Penny Leuthard
Contributing Writer

It's less than two weeks to Christmas and I still have most of my Christmas shopping to do. Other than finding time to shop, my biggest problem is that I have no idea what to get anyone. And the biggest reason I don't know what to get anyone? None of us actually need anything.

This seems to be the case for most. Today we can buy everything we need ourselves. It's there with a click of a button or swipe of a credit card. We don't have to wait for holidays and birthdays anymore.

I grew up in a very small town and the few toys to be had could be found at the local hardware store. I would go in there and gaze longingly at them all, wishing they were mine.

Like every kid in the 70s, getting the Sears and JCPenney's toy catalogs was one of the highlights of the Christmas season. My sister and I would pour through them over and over, circling the toys we wanted and dreaming about finding them under the tree. Deciding what we wanted wasn't a decision to be made lightly, so circled items often had a big X over them as we found something we wanted even more.

The best gift I ever received came when I was four or five years old. Although there were dolls, there weren't any extra clothes or accessories you could buy for them, so whatever they came with was what you were stuck with. But part of the joy I found in playing with dolls was dressing and undressing them. In my imagination, they were real. And like any real person they needed to have more than one outfit to wear.

My mom used to sew a lot, and that year she made a bunch of doll clothes to give to my female cousins for Christmas. They were wonderful, miniature dresses and pajamas, all with snaps so they were easy for little fingers to get on and off.

I was so jealous of those clothes. I begged my mom to make me some too, after all, she'd used my dolls as models to make sure the clothes would fit!

She told me she didn't have time to make more and I would have to wait until after Christmas. I was devastated. Remember how long time was when you were a kid? How waiting always felt like an eternity? I felt like my dolls would never have any new clothes.

Imagine my surprise on Christmas Day when, after watching my cousins excitedly open their presents, I opened one to find it stuffed full of my mom's homemade doll clothes. She'd been planning on giving them to me all along.

I was overjoyed. It was a Christmas miracle! As soon as we got home from my grandparents' house that day I grabbed my dolls and started playing. I was in heaven.

Back to my current dilemma over what to buy members of my family for Christmas. I realize it's really not that big of a dilemma after all. What matters is the thought behind the gift, not how much it cost or if it's the latest, greatest thing.

Today we can buy just about anything we want whenever we want it. It's all available and we can have it immediately. Although that's incredible, it's also made us, and our kids, immune to actually having to wait for something. We've lost the feeling of anticipation. That loss has taken away much of the magic of gift giving. Most kids today will never feel that same sense of joy that I felt over a simple, handmade gift.

The best gifts are the ones that come from the heart. Although I don't have many of my old dolls any longer, I still have most of those wonderful clothes.

SCHOOL from page 1

ceived rave reviews and achieved record attendance.

Supt. Report
 Supt. Jeremy Schmidt included an update for the MSBA Conference, which will take place Thurs., Jan. 12 and Fri., Jan. 13.

The January school board meeting date will be Jan. 9 at 6:30 p.m.

Schmidt said the transportation department has received grants to outfit their buses with cameras inside and outside. The goal of the grant is to keep drivers and riders safe as they board buses.

Members of the cabinet attended a two hour group workshop with Dr. Dave Webb, author of "Homerun Leadership".

New board member orientation took place Nov. 28.

The calendar committee will be provided a survey about next year's school calendar (staff will also receive an input survey).

Congratulations to Chair Mark Swanson on being recognized as a President's Award Winner by MSBA. He was recognized as one of 15 board members throughout the state to achieve this honor. In addition, thanks was shared for Chair Swanson's 12 years on the board and Clerk Ryan Obermoller's one term.

Committee Reports were shared from SNWSEC, who had an upcoming meeting Dec. 7 in Big Lake, District Office Negotiations, Finance, Curriculum Advisory, and Activities.

The consent agenda was passed on a unanimous vote.

Gifts were also approved and recognized on a unanimous vote.

"Thank you to everyone who has supported our school programs with donations," said Schmidt.

The board approved the official general and special election resolutions and abstract of votes cast on a unanimous vote.

Approval of the resolution authorizing certificates of election and directing school district clerk to perform other election related duties was also approved on a unanimous vote.

The WBWF Summary Report was approved in accordance with Policy 601. The vote was 6-0 in favor.

Audit and Levy
 The audit was presented by Bergan KDV and approved unanimously by the board. The audit reported no issues and alignment with District Policy 714.

The annual Truth in Taxation information was presented by Kevin Januszewski. The levy includes an additional 4.67% increase in the amount of just over \$500,000 over the 2022 levy.

Readings
 A first reading of Policies 201, 203.2, 223 and 534 were shared and discussed. These were the changes being recommended:

- Policy 201: Modified the legal reference to match MSBA;
- Policy 203.2: Has been reordered to match the school's current agenda order;
- Policy 223: There are some minor recommended changes due to the school's recent approval of the 2022-

2027 Strategic Plan;

- Policy 534: Brought to the board to share information related to a new AG opinion from Nov. 18, 2022 that requires an end to "lunch shaming". Becker Public Schools has no changes, because they do not follow any practice of "lunch shaming";
- Policy 722 had a second reading. The recommendation was MSBA Model Policy 722. After a motion and a second, there was much discussion on the reason for the change and the board was able to recommit a resolution to have a policy brought to the board within 60 days. Included in this was a legal review, policy committee meeting, and improvement to the policy to limit liability to the district, improve timing of data requests and improve technology.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Reminder: The January Regular Board Meeting will take place on Jan. 9.

Elusive Quetzal in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a wildlife photographer's paradise. I just returned from two weeks of trekking through the hot and humid lowland tropical jungles and hiking high up in the cold cloud forest mountains, over 8,000-foot elevation, all in search of a wide variety of birds and mammals. But for anyone who travels to this Central American country, there is one species of bird that everyone wants and desires to see and photograph. It is the Resplendent Quetzal (Pharomachrus mocinno). This is a magnificent green bird that lives only in southern Mexico and parts of Central America in the high elevations of the cloud forests. My group of intrepid photographers made the full day drive up to the cloud forests of Costa Rica and we arrived at a location where several of the birds have been reported. The Quetzal is well known for feeding on wild avocados. So, after a short hike on a muddy trail, we set up near a large avocado tree. The surrounding area was beautiful and there were several perches the bird might use that would allow the possibility of some great images. We stood there in the light rain, everyone hopeful for the arrival of the Resplendent Quetzal, but no one was reporting any sightings this morning. Several hours passed and still nothing, but then our local guide's phone rang, and in half English and half Spanish he said pack it up let's go quickly to another location. We piled out of the van and trekked across several open fields to the edge of the jungle where another avocado tree stood. We waited and waited. The rain stopped for a few minutes and the sun came out and warmed us up. After a while it was decided that the bird wasn't coming back to this location, so the next location had a long steep muddy trail up to the avocado tree. Again, after eating,

we waited a little longer and still no bird. We headed back down the steep trail doing our best not to slip and slide down the hill. We gathered for lunch and made a plan to return to the last location where we ate breakfast to wait out the afternoon to see if we can capture some images of the Quetzal. When we returned everyone was wet from the rain and had muddy boots. In these conditions we needed rain gear for our cameras and ourselves. Again, the waiting game started. One hour passed, then another. The sun set was around 5 p.m. and it was getting towards 4 p.m. with very light rain falling. Suddenly a flash of bright iridescent green shot past the group and landed in the avocado tree. After the initial gasp of delight, everyone fell silent and concentrated on capturing some images of this unbelievably beautiful bird. The bird moved around the tree and three times came out into the open allowing everyone a good chance to see and capture stunning images.

Until next time...

Stan Tekiela is an author / naturalist and wildlife photographer who travels the world to study and capture images of wildlife. He can be followed at www.Facebook.com and www.Instagram.com. He can be contacted via his website at NatureSmart.com.

2027 Strategic Plan;

- Policy 534: Brought to the board to share information related to a new AG opinion from Nov. 18, 2022 that requires an end to "lunch shaming". Becker Public Schools has no changes, because they do not follow any practice of "lunch shaming";
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Clean driving record. Pass and carry a DOT physical. Class B drivers license, endorsements of school bus, passenger and air brake. Experience with CDL vehicles is preferred. We are willing to train the right candidate.

Position Details:

This is a 3 hour and 30 minute position, Monday through Friday. Start and end times will vary based on the needs of Becker Public Schools, and the route. Transportation Employee Agreement is available on our District website.

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Area News

BHS to host combined Holiday concert

Music aficionados should circle Monday, December 19 on the calendar, as Becker High School will

By Mark Kolbinger, Contributing Writer
production@patriotnewsnmn.com

be presenting a combined Holiday concert, with performances from both the Band and Choir programs. “We will start and end the concert with combined music and there will be refreshments served after the concert is over in the HS Commons sponsored by Dr. Eron Bordson and Clearwater Family Chiropractic,” BHS Band Director Craig Vogl says. The concert begins at 7 p.m. and will be held in the Performing Arts Center. Performing groups

will include: Acapella group, ninth grade choir handbell choir, ninth grade band carol groups, Concert Choir, Concert Band, Bella Voce Choir, Wind Ensemble and Chamber Choir. In addition to the free concert, the music programs will be conducting a drive to benefit the Becker High School Food Shelf. “Free will donations will be accepted and all proceeds will be donated to the Becker HS Food Shelf to help students and families within the Becker school community,” Vogl added. BHS Choral Director Gretchen Bordson said the students are excited about performing in front of

what figures to be a robust crowd. She is hoping many members of the community come to hear the incredible music. “Please join us as our student musicians can’t wait to share their love of music with all of you during this holiday season,” Bordson says. Vogl reiterated that the entire community is invited to the program. “You don’t need to have a student in the band or choir to attend this show,” Vogl reminded. “This concert will be something that the entire community will enjoy, and all of the proceeds go to support local families who might need support during this season.”



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County okays 2023 Northstar agreement

The Sherburne County Board last week approved the 2023 Subordinate Funding Agreement with Met-

By Ken Francis, Contributing Writer
production@patriotnewsnmn.com

ropolitan Council for the Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail. The county’s share in the agreement is \$1,117,526, which will come from the county’s local option sales tax. The approval took place after a discussion about the past, present and future operations of Northstar, which has been a controversial subject with many residents of the county. Ed Petrie, Director of Finance for the Met Council, and Tony Herbert, Director of Northstar, gave a presentation about operations, ridership and funding for 2022 and 2023.

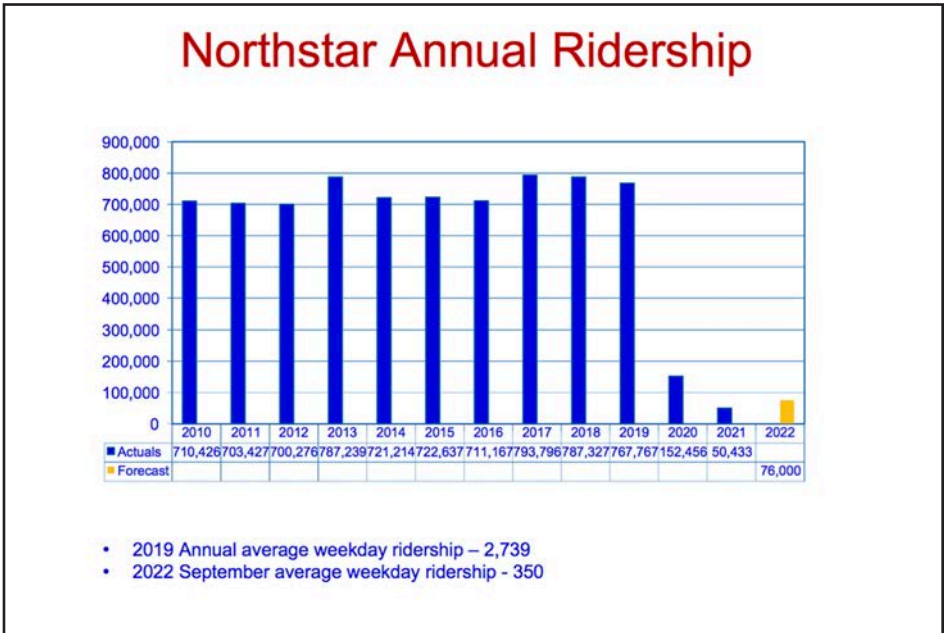
come back. The potential is out there.” He said projections for 2023 reflect that trend. The year-end forecast for 2022 is 76,000 rides. They are budgeting for 143,000 rides in 2023, which includes an increase to eight trains per day on weekdays, no weekends, but includes special events service. Commissioner Felix Schmiesing, who retires from the board at the end of the year, has been outspoken about Northstar’s performance over the years. He said he wanted to reflect on what the newly-elected county commissioners should consider when they take over in January. “I’m leaving this board after 20 years. I promised to my constituents I was not in support nor denial of Northstar,” he said. “My promise was to review and make the



MET COUNCIL FINANCE DIRECTOR ED PETRIE addresses the Sherburne County Board. (Submitted photo.)

team that made it to the championship. That really helped us,” he said. Schmiesing said over the years, the ridership numbers never reached the projections. “I’m not willing to roll back time and say that COVID was responsible.

Northstar. “I wanted the record to reflect that we did not get what we bought,” he said. The issue now, he said, is what to do in the future. The county has lots to consider about Northstar, including millions in financial commitments. All the partners need to work on a solution. “We have to come together and come to a resolution. There’s work to do,” he said. “It’s not as simple as saying, ‘it was fun, we’re out.” Petrie agreed. He said there is currently a study taking place that will lay out impacts of all the options, including costs and other challenges. He said that study is expected to be completed in January.



ANNUAL NORTHSTAR RIDERSHIP shows a marked deterioration in rides per year since 2019. (Submitted photo.)

Herbert said the rail is doing well “under the circumstances,” referring to the drop in ridership over the past few years due to COVID. He said the rail is currently running four trains a day (two each way) with 100% on-time performance. He said there hasn’t been much other activity, other than minor upgrades to some of the station platforms, heating upgrades and adding informational signs. Petrie got right down to the actual numbers that the commissioners were interested in. He said ridership in September of this year is 350 per day (175 passengers). That number is down 88% from the historical forecast. Daily ridership in Sept. 2019 was 2,800 rides (1,400 passengers). Petrie said the Met Council is using Federal Relief Funds to fill the gap and offset the decline in ridership revenue as well as maintenance and cleaning. He also said they continually monitor and compare ridership numbers, and are starting to see a slow increase. “Even though ridership is down, it’s up 55% from 2021,” he said. “We’re seeing ridership slowly start to

best decision that I possibly could.” He said when the concept was first presented to the county, numerous consultants were telling everyone what the ridership would be. “We thought the potential was there. Then came along the housing crisis. We struggled the first year but we also had a baseball

Northstar was failing at least to live up to the expectation that had been established for us by the consultants,” he said. “We have fallen short. Even with this doubling of small numbers, we’re a long ways away.” He said if he was presented with the numbers as they turned out today, he would never have voted for

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Palmer Board considering ARPA expenditures

The Palmer Twp. Board met Monday evening and examined several potential uses for their remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Thursday of every month and more volunteers are needed.

He also provided the annual announcement that the channel between Rush and Briggs Lake is never fully safe due to thin ice - flowing

By Mark Kolbinger, Contributing Writer
production@patriotnewsnm.com

Awarded at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ARPA funds were Federal dollars that flowed to local units of government, who must earmark the funds by the end of 2024.

The board reviewed several quotes for security upgrades at the Town Hall, including new locking mechanisms, before tabling the idea until next month. The board also approved approximately \$7,700 for the basic remodel of the front entrance area in the Town Hall, which will include the installation of a service window and counter area to better serve the public.

Supervisor Richard Larson requested that some of the funds be pledged to crosswalks and flashing lights for the town, which is basically bisected by Co. Rd. 6. Larson felt that safety could be greatly enhanced by the flashing lights, similar to what are used in Duell.

Chair Mike Ganz and Supervisor Steve Demeules agreed with the concept, but noted that Co. Rd. 6 is governed by Sherburne County. Larson agreed to tackle the project and do the "arm-twisting" necessary to move forward with getting the costs and next steps outlined before the next board meeting.

Lake News

Demeules updated the board on several lake related issues, including the BLCA weed spraying notices that were mailed out to anyone who participated last year. For any new participants, they should check the BLCA website for the form. Most everyone reported excellent results a year ago and the same vendor is slated to provide the service.

Demeules also announced that the Healthy Lakes committee was looking for new members. The group meets the first

water.

Additionally, the board discussed the ongoing issue of trash and other waste left on the ice during the ice fishing season.

Mitch Wipper from the Briggs Lake General Store and Paul Braun from The Palmer House were both present at the meeting and reported that they will be putting up signs reminding people to take care of their garbage in a responsible manner. Dumpsters are located at the landings and should be used to keep trash off the ice.

The board is hoping for patrol from both the DNR and SCSO to help cite offenders who leave garbage or human waste on the ice. All in attendance felt that a little enforcement would go a long way in addressing the nasty human behaviors that leave the lakes littered with unwanted materials.

In Other Business, the Board:

- Approved the Assessment Services Agreement with Sherburne County;

- Discussed the renewal of the lease for space between the Township and the SCSO;

- Heard an update on plans to cut the dead trees at Palmer Park;

- Reviewed a quote from Kraemer's for the 2023 Clean Up Day, with the costs being approximately half of last year's vendor;

- Discussed snowplowing at Cedar Point and what can be done to get the road cleared;

- Heard from Sgt. Geoff Dowdy about last month's 91 calls for service from the SCSO, including 35 traffic stops, one burglary, one DUI and several fraud calls;

- Received the fire department report, outlining 18 total calls for service, including eight in Palmer Twp.

Good attending medical school at KU

Ryan T. Good, a Becker High School graduate of 2017, was recently selected to attend medical school at Kansas City University in Missouri.

of medical school at KU after completing his pre-med courses at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. He made the Dean's list and was a resident advisor while being recognized for his achievements in community involvement and volunteer services.

Good, 24, whose parents are Tom and Heather Good of Becker, graduated from BHS with highest honors and was



RYAN T. GOOD, a Becker HS grad of 2017, is currently attending medical school in Missouri after completing pre-med course at UMD. (Submitted Photo).

part of the National Honor Society while attending school there. He played baseball and basketball and was part of the high school band.

"Ryan has always excelled in academics and we are all very proud of his achievements," his grandmother, Mary Jane Roering said.

Xcel Energy giving campaign raises over \$5 million for communities

(Editor's Note: The following article was submitted to the Patriot by Kevin Coss, Xcel Energy Media Relations.)

utive vice president, group president—Utilities, and chief customer officer.

Carter chaired the United Way Giving Campaign alongside Amanda Rome, executive vice president and chief legal and compliance officer.

"The generous gifts from our employees, contractors and retirees will help ensure our communities receive shelter, food, job training, medical care and more."

"We were excited to see \$77,000 more in donations over last year's giving campaign," added Rome. "Our workforce not only donated to nonprofits important to them, but they also connected with one another through fun and inspirational events, such as an online auction, worksite kickoff events and virtual coffee chats."

In Minnesota alone, contributions from donors and the Foundation totaled \$986,000,

a 16% increase over the 2021 campaign.

"Even as their own costs of living rose, our employees made it a priority to step up and help out the communities they live and work in," said Chris Clark, president, Xcel Energy-Minnesota. "Giving is an important part of who we are. It's another way for us to remain connected to the people we serve."

Over 1,800 nonprofits received funding that supported their work to benefit community members' health and quality of life by providing shelter, food, job training, medical care and more to those in need. As part of the campaign, several Xcel Energy employees received Participation Prize Grants to make an additional donation to a nonprofit of their choice. Kara Gibson, an engineer in Minneapolis, selected Paws and Claws Humane Society to receive her \$5,000 grant. "Throughout the pandemic, it became apparent that most people needed a pick-me-up and a reason to smile," said Gibson, who has donated to the campaign for more than 10 years. "What better way to achieve this than with an animal that provides nothing but unconditional love? Animals give humans so much — me included — so I felt that the least I could do was help an organization that assists them."

The annual United Way Giving Campaign is one element of Xcel Energy's year-round commitment to giving back. Through the Xcel Energy Foundation, the company supports programs and organizations that fall under its focus areas of STEM Career Pathways, Environmental Sustainability, and Community Vitality.

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Obituaries

Elvin J. Gilyard, Age 90
Clear Lake, MN
April 19, 1932 – November 29, 2022

Elvin J. Gilyard was born in Princeton, MN to Ervin and Ellen (Gustafson) Gilyard. He died peacefully at the CentraCare Monticello Care Center, on November 29, 2022.

Elvin requested no funeral service and burial will be at South Santiago Lutheran Cemetery.

Elvin proudly served in the US Army from 1955 to 1957. He was stationed at Fort Bliss Army Base, in El Paso, TX. He enjoyed sharing memories from his military era. He often talked about the twelve letters his father wrote to him, while he was in the service. These letters were his most prized possessions. He felt it was important to eat healthy, and stay away from food preservatives. He developed COVID-19 twice in 2022.

Elvin takes with him many historical facts and stories about days gone by in the Glendorado, Santiago, Becker, and Clear Lake areas, where he spent most of his life. His mother died when he was six years old, and his father raised

five sons. Elvin worked various jobs throughout his life, in Anoka, St. Cloud, Santiago, Becker, and Princeton. He was a hard worker. His coworkers spoke highly of him.

Elvin had connections with many people; his friends were like family to him. Elvin is survived by brothers Virgil, Lee and sister-in-law Dorothy, and eleven nephews and nieces, Marcy (Rau), Kermit, Carol, Nancy (Wagner), Dwight, Kristine (Kelly), John, Julie, Joel, Maxine (McClellan), and Tom. He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers John and Austen, nephew Alan Gilyard, and sister-in-laws Muriel and Joyce Gilyard.

A special thank you to the staff at the CentraCare Monticello Care Center, and CentraCare Hospice, for their compassionate care provided to Elvin. Serving the family is Peterson-Grimsco Funeral Chapel of Monticello, MN.

Joseph “Joe” D. Jansky, Age 73
Clear Lake, MN
May 18, 1949 – December 9, 2022

Mass of Christian Burial was held Thursday, December 15, 2022, at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Clearwater. Rev. Dennis Backer will officiate, and burial will be in the parish cemetery. Visitation will be 4-8 p.m. with a time of sharing at 7:00 PM Wednesday at Williams Dingmann Family Funeral Home in Becker and one hour prior to the services Thursday at the church.

Joseph “Joe” D. Jansky, age 73, passed away surrounded by family on December 9, 2022. He died after battling a long cancer illness. Despite his health issues, he always led a life of positivity and optimism. He fought hard to be with his family as long as he could.

On May 18, 1949, Joe was born to Gilbert and Irene (Watts) Jansky in St. Cloud. The fifth of ten children, he grew up in the river town of Clearwater. Joe was a volunteer fire fighter along side his brothers and his father, the fire chief. His mother and sisters aided the firefighters. Joe graduated from Tech High School in 1967. He admirably served in the Marines. The majority of Joe's work life was as a steam fitter welder at the Xcel Sherco Plant. He married his dedicated and devoted wife, Mary Lynn (Runck) on August 7, 1971. They were blessed with 51 years of marriage and two girls, Jill and Shari, and 5 grandchildren. In his younger years, Joe enjoyed playing baseball and softball. To fulfill his competitive streak, as he got older, he started playing golf which became a true

passion. His claim to fame was being the first golfer to sink a hole in one at the Pebble Creek Golf Course in Becker. He later got a second hole in one and a double eagle. Joe loved golfing, playing cards, fishing, hunting and traveling. He always knew how to draw a crowd with his realistic elephant call and loud whistle, a man of many talents.

Joe is preceded in death by his parents; sister, Janice Wicks; and in laws, Alvin & Alpha (Rongstad) Runck, Kenny & Joan (Runck) Schultz, Ron Wicks and David Dockendorf. He will be lovingly missed by his wife, Mary Lynn; daughters, Jill (Paul) Anderson of Lino Lakes, MN and Shari (Ryan) Anderson of Hastings, MN; grandchildren, Brody, Reed, Raelyn, Isley and namesake Joey; brothers and sisters, Jim (Sharon), Jerry (Barb), John (Bev), Tom (Barbe), Patty (Gene) Miller, Eugene (Jackie), Denny (Bev), and Mary Ann (Dockendorf); brother in law, Bob (Glenda) Runck; and several nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews, including Godchildren, Liana Henkel, Amy (Jansky) Buttweiler, Adam Dockendorf, Garrett Seeley and Stacey Heaton.

A special thank you to all of Joe's friends, coffee buddies, neighbors and family that visited and helped our family as Joe fought his illness. Your kindness and generosity will never be forgotten.

Obituary, Guest Book, and Video Tribute available online: www.williamsdingmann.com



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Public Notices

Masford Lake Notices

SECOND NOTICE

Masford Lake in Clear Lake Township, T-33, M-34, R-29W, has a aeration device causing open water until ice is out.

Area affected are marked as of DNR requirements.

(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/17/22.)

Township Public Notices

NOTICE OF FILING FOR TOWN OFFICES TO BE ELECTED BECKER TOWNSHIP

Notice is hereby given that a town election will be held in the Township of Becker, Sherburne County, Minnesota, on Tuesday, the 14th day of March 2023.

The first day for filing affidavits of candidacy will be Tuesday, the 3rd day of January 2023 and the last day will be Tuesday, the 17th day of January, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

Filings may be made with Clerk Lucinda Messman at the Becker Township Hall, 12165 Hancock Street, Becker, MN during regular hours (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 8 am – 5 pm) or call for appointment. Town hall will be open from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 as required

The following terms will be expiring:

Supervisor, Seat #1 – for the term of three (3) years
Supervisor, Seat #2 – for the term of three (3) years
Filing fee is \$2.00.
December 2, 2022
Lucinda Messman, Clerk
(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/17/22; 12/24/22.)

CLEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF FILING FOR TOWN OFFICES TO BE ELECTED

Notice is hereby given that a town election will be held in the Township of Clear Lake, Sherburne County, Minnesota, on Tuesday, the 14th day of March 2023 to elect Supervisor A: for a 3-year term.

Filings are to be made at the Clerk's' office at the Clear Lake Township Hall, 7938 116th ST SE from January 3rd to January 17th, 2023 during regular office hours: Thursdays 9:00 am to Noon or Tuesday January 17th from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Filings may also be made with the Clerk, Nancy Betzler by making an appointment by calling the Town Hall at 320-743-2472 or by emailing ClearLakeTwp@hotmail.com. The last date for a candidate to withdraw from the election is Thursday, January 19, 2023 by 5:00 pm. Filing Fee \$2.00
Nancy Betzler, Clerk
Township of Clear Lake
(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/17/22.)

TOWNSHIP OF LYNDEN, STEARNS COUNTY, STATE OF MINNESOTA CANDIDATE FILING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to qualified voters of Lynden Township who wish to be candidates for office in Lynden Township, must file an Affidavit of Candidacy with the Township Clerk

Filing for town office will be held for a two week period beginning January 3, 2023 and closing on January 17, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. Affidavits of Candidacy are located on the web: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/election-administration-campaigns/> or by contacting the clerk.

The Clerk's office located at the Lynden Town Hall 21367 Co Rd 44 will be open from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the last day of filing, January 17, 2023. The Annual Election will be held on March 14, 2023.

One Supervisor / Three year term
One Treasurer / Two year term
Jenny Schmidt
Lynden Township Clerk
clerk@lyndentownship.net
320-774-8507
(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/17/22; 12/24/22.)

Big Lake Senior Center

The Big Lake Senior Club meets Tues., 1-4pm, Big Lake City Hall, 160 Lake St. North.

We would love to have you join us for card games, refreshments & conversation. For More Information Call: (763) 309-1010 and/or (763) 207-8703

Township Public Notices

FILING NOTICE FOR QUALIFIED VOTERS IN SANTIAGO TOWNSHIP

Notice is hereby given that a town election will be held in the Township of Santiago, Sherburne County, MN., on Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

Notice is hereby given to qualified voters of Santiago Township, Sherburne County, State of Minnesota, that filing for town office will be held for a two week period beginning, Tuesday, January 3, 2023.

Affidavits of Candidacy shall be filed by appointment with the town clerk, Kathy Woolard. Affidavits will be accepted from January 3, 2023 through January 17, 2023. The Clerk's Office will be open for filing January 17, 2023 from 1:00 pm until 5:00 pm.

There will be a \$2.00 filing fee.

Offices to be filled at the Annual Election in March are as follows:

1 Supervisor for a three year term
1 Treasurer for a two year term

The clerk's office, located at 16943 20th St., Santiago, MN. 55377, will be open Saturday, March 11, 2023, from 10 am- 12 pm, for the purpose of absentee voting.
Kathy Woolard, Clerk
Santiago Township
(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/17/22; 12/24/22.)

Probates

STATE OF MINNESOTA DISTRICT COURT COUNTY OF SHERBURNE TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT PROBATE DIVISION

Court File No.: 71-PR-22-172
In Re the Estate of Charlene Merna Kosloski, Decedent.

ORDER AND NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION OF INTESTACY, DETERMINATION OF HEIRS, AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

It is Ordered and Notice is hereby given that on the 12th day of January, 2023 at 11:00 A.M., a hearing will be held in the above named Court at Sherburne, Minnesota, of the formal adjudication of intestacy, determination of heirs, and for the appointment of Tammy Leanne Wesely, 12832 - 296th Avenue NW, Princeton, MN 55371, as personal representative of the estate of the above named decedent in unsupervised administration, and that any objections thereto must be filed with the Court. That if proper, and no objections are filed, said personal representative will be appointed to administer the estate, to collect all assets, pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, and sell real and personal property, and do all necessary acts for the estate. Upon completion of the administration, the representative shall file a final account for the allowance and shall distribute the estate to the persons thereunto entitled as ordered by the Court, and close the estate.

Notice is further given that ALL CREDITORS having claims against said estate are required to present the same to said personal representative or to the Clerk of the Court within four months after the date of this notice or said claims will be barred.
Dated: December 8, 2022
/s/ Jordan Gregorich
Deputy Court Administrator
April A. Lindstrom (ID#0386599)
Attorney at Law
545 Highway 23 East, Suite 203
P.O. Box 2
Milaca, MN 56353
320-982-1144
(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/17/22; 12/24/22.)

www.patriotnewsmn.com

Becker Area Senior Center (BASC) Upcoming Events

BASC NOW AT BCC! ALL AREA SENIORS WELCOME.

SENIOR CENTER OPEN MON. - FRI. 5AM-5PM. COFFEE IS ON AT 5AM. COME DROP IN!

Tues., Dec. 20: 7am: Walk up Walk; 7:30am: Boosted Walk; 9am: Cards & Conversation; 11:30am: Birthay Potluck BCC Gym w/St. Cloud Fun Singers Holiday performance.

Wed., Dec. 21: 1pm: Activity Meeting.

Thurs., Dec. 22: 9am: Cards/Conversation; 6:30-8pm: Dance w/Abe Maier-Christmas Party w/Dancing.

Fri., Dec. 23: Have a joyous Christmas! Becker Community Center: 763-200-4271

Blood Pressure available whenever BASC is open
Send activity/class opportunities to: basc.becker@gmail.com
Planning Mtg.: 3rd Wed., 1pm;
Next Board mtg.: Jan. 18, 3-5pm

Summons

STATE OF MINNESOTA DISTRICT COURT COUNTY OF REDWOOD FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT Court File Number: 64-JV-22-110

Case Type: CHIPS - Permanency

In the Matter of the Welfare of the Child of: Jontue Marie Braun, Mother (deceased) and Christopher Reed Braun, Father
ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION
FINDINGS

The Court finds the following:

- The Court has reviewed he Affidavit of Diligent Efforts to Locate Parent/Legal Custodian, which was filed by Southwest Health and Human Services on November 21, 2022.
- Southwest Health and Human Services has made diligent efforts to locate Christopher Reed Braun, who is a parent in this case.

ORDER

Based on the above findings, as well as the court record, the Court orders the following:

- The Redwood County Court Administration shall serve the Permanency Petition-Termination of Parental Rights upon Christopher Reed Braun by publication in a qualified newspaper in Sherburne County pursuant to Rule 16.02, subd. 3, of the Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure.
- Service by publication is complete upon final publication of the Summons as specified in Juv. Prot. Rule 53.02, subd. 3, regarding service of process in TPR and permanency proceedings.

Dated December 7, 2022
BY THE COURT:
/s/ Patrick Rohland
Judge of District Court
(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/17/22; 12/24/22; 12/31/22.)

Sherburne County Water Plan Advisory Public Notices

Sherburne County Water Plan Advisory Committee Meeting Notice

The Sherburne County Water Plan Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, December 28th at 5:30 p.m. at the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District office, 425 Jackson Ave NW Elk River, MN 55330.
(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/17/22.)



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GENERAL OVERVIEW OF POSITION

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BENEFITS Group health, dental, vision, life, disability, critical illness, hospital, and accident insurance. Two-week's vacation and sick leave accrual annually, 1 personal day, 11 paid holidays, and 7.5% employer contribution to PERA (retirement).

REQUIREMENTS Bachelor's degree preferred in Nursing, Social Work, or a behavioral science field. Experience in health insurance, Medicare, prescription drug program and medical institution billing practices and relevant experience working with seniors and senior programs helpful.

EMPLOYMENT VARIABLES The typical schedule is 37.5 hours per week, Monday through Friday. Additional hours may be required but vary based upon workload demands.

DEADLINE: 4:30 p.m., Friday, December 30th, 2022

To apply visit www.co.stevens.mn.us under Employment Opportunities. ADA accommodations available. Stevens County is an EOE.

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website:
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Announcements

Becker Legion, Lions, & Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Becker American Legion Auxiliary

Auxiliary has suspended their monthly meetings through February 2023. For information contact Paula Hinds at (763) 262-6679 or Nellie Simpson at Becker True Value.

Becker American Legion Post 193

Second Tues. of every month at 7pm at Becker Legion (old fire hall).

Becker Lions Club

Second Mon. each month, 6pm at Becker City Park. Emma Cook (763) 691-3852 or beckerlions@gmail.com.

Becker Lions Collecting Items to Recycle

The Becker Lions are collecting used eyeglasses (no cases please.) Collection buckets are located at the Becker Community Center, Insight Eye Care and Becker City Hall. Contact Lion Kurt Anderson at (763) 234-6883 (phone or text) or by email at beckerlions@gmail.com.

Becker Sons of the American Legion Squadron 193

Third Tues. of each month at 7 pm at Becker Legion (old fire hall). Commander John Fischbach (320) 249-0579.

Becker Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Meeting

6 pm the third Thurs. of the month, Becker City Hall. (320) 980-2752 or see the state website at www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org.

Becker Support Groups

Becker AA Meeting

Thurs., 8pm at Mary of the Visitation, 12100 Sherburne Ave, Becker. Call/text (320) 247-4732 or email beckeraagroupmn@gmail.com

Compassion Connection

A 501(c)(3) community-based non-profit. We partner with local & private child welfare agencies. For more info: www.thecompassionconnectionmn.com.

Dementia Support Group

Fourth Wed. of each month at 10-11am, Room 19 at Becker Community Center, 11500 Sherburne Ave. Tami Kolbinger at (612) 590-2449 or email tkolbinger@gmail.com.

Great River Faith in Action

If you are a senior, age 60 & above, family caregiver or an individual in need of services, Call (763) 263-4277 or www.grfia.org.

Becker Ministries

Becker Evangelical Ministries

Every Wed., 6-7:30pm at Becker Middle School. GYM 45 - growing young men. HIS KIDZ - K-3rd grade. G.I.R.L.S. GROUP - 4th & 5th grade girls. Becker Free Church (763) 261-4125 or register online at www.beckerfreechurch.org.

Snake River Free Mission Church

Hymn sings are held every other month on the second Sun. at 4:30pm. Check Snake River Church Facebook page for updates. Mary (612) 219-8648.

Becker Boy Scouts, Quilt Guild & SNWR

Becker Boy Scout Pack 92

Cardboard, Paper & Aluminum
Bring your aluminum cans to the trailer located near Becker True Value. Paper & cardboard recycling location is at the Becker Community Center, please remember to flatten the cardboard & absolutely no garbage on the first Sat. of every month. There will be a Scout there to help unload between 9am-12pm.

Becker Hearts & Hands Quilt Guild

Second Mon. of month, 7pm. Becker Baptist Church. Contact Elizabeth Steckelberg (320) 259-9542 or email: beckerlions@gmail.com.

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

The Refuge is open to visitors year-round during the daylight hours. The Refuge is located at 17076 293rd Ave, Zimmerman. Call (763) 389-3323 or sherburne@fws.gov

Big Lake Legions, Lions & Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

Big Lake American Legion Post #147

First Thurs. of the month, 7 pm. 29 S Lake Street, Big Lake 55309. Please contact Commander Paul Seefeld (612) 801-7731.

The Big Lake American Legion Auxiliary

First Tues. Mar.-Dec., 6:30pm. in the Senior Citizen Center at Big Lake City Hall. Kathy at (763) 263-6093.

Big Lake Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

The Big Lake Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, 6:30pm, third Mon., of each month at 29 S Lake Street, Big Lake. www.biglakebtyr.com.

The Big Lake Lions

Looking for community minded people to join our organization. Contact any Lion member or send a note to P.O. Box 128, Big Lake, MN 55309 or (763) 263-2218.

LC of Big Lake Lioness

If you are interested in learning more about the LC of Big Lake Lioness you can catch us on FB: www.facebook.com/BigLakeMnLionessClub, or second Mon. of the month at the Lions Park on CR5. social starts 6:30pm, meeting 7pm.

Big Lake Support Groups

Big Lake OPEN AA Meetings

Mon., 7pm, Church of Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church, Big Lake. Contact: Rob, (763) 218-5328.

Big Lake Al-Anon

Mon., 7pm at Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church - Big Lake Annex. Laurie (763) 218-5330.

Living with Parkinson's Under The Age of 65

If you or anyone you know is 65 or under & have been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, third Tues. of each month, 6pm at Saron Lutheran Church, 311 Lake Street So., Big Lake, MN 55309. Camille Johnson at (763) 350-7401.

Big Lake Ministries, Ambassadors, Mops & Women of Today

Big Lake Ambassador

"Empowering young ladies of Big Lake to be women of tomorrow through Community Service. Email: biglakeambassadors@gmail.com or biglakejuniorambassadors@gmail.com.

Big Lake / Becker Mops

Mother's of preschoolers Group, second & fourth Wed. of the month (Sept.-May) at Becker Baptist Church, 9-11:30am.

Big Lake Day of Prayer

First Wed. of the month, 7am for a prayer breakfast at Big Lake High School flag-pole.

Big Lake Women of Today

Senior Activity Center located in the Big Lake City Office Building, third Thurs. of the month, 7pm. Contact Natalie (612) 518-3504, Facebook or www.biglakewomenoftoday.webs.com.

God's Grub Community Meal

Second Sun. of every month, 4:30-6:30 pm. Saron Lutheran, Big Lake, 311 Lake Street South.

Moms in Prayer

Meets weekly to pray for their children & the school they attend. Information: www.momsinprayer.org or Colene Stenberg (763) 263-6809 or stenbergic@outlook.com

Area Food Shelves

Becker Food Shelf

Tues., 9-11am & Thurs. 4-6pm. The food shelf is located 12060 Sherburne Ave. in City Hall. (763) 261-4612.

Big Lake Community Food Shelf

Mon. & Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm & Wed. 9-11am. "Freebie Friday", 11:30am-12:30pm. "Pop-up Pantry", 11:30am-12:30pm every Tues. To volunteer call (763) 263-2432 or www.blcfs.org.

Clearwater/Clear Lake Food Shelf

Mon. 5:30-7pm, Tues. 9-11am & 6-8pm, Wed. 3-5pm & in the brown Lions Community Building beneath the water tower in Clearwater.

Christmas Party Sponsored by the Becker Area Senior Center

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Area News

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SANTA VISITS PALMER. Gretchen and Sam Kelash and their little guy, Thilo, found a spot on Santa's Nice List this year at Briggs Lake General Store in Palmer last weekend. (Submitted photo.)

Clearwater organizations host holiday parties, goodies, and crafts

Christmas is a busy time with lots going on and the Clearwater area is no different. Christmas cheer has been in abundance as a number of organizations held their annual Christmas events recently.

Sale. Served by Sunday School children dressed in their holiday finest, guests were treated to Scandinavian and Christmas cookies, candies and hors d'oeuvres, as well as flavored coffees, teas and lemonade.

Attendees could also purchase a variety of handmade crafts and homemade holiday goodies, including breads, lefse, rosettes, krumkake, cookies, and candies donated by members of the

By Penny Leuthard, Contributing Writer
production@patriotnewsnm.com

Rejoice Lutheran Church started things out with their annual European Christmas Coffee and Bake



NOAH, PAIGE, AND JADYN enjoy their freshly decorated cookies. They were at the Kids Christmas Party with their Aunt Sarah. (Photo by Penny Leuthard.)

congregation. Vendors were also in attendance this year as well, offering attendees even more gift options.

Later that day the Clearwater Legion Auxiliary held their Kids Christmas party with Santa and local businesses took part in Toys for Tots.

The Clearwater Legion Riders continued the festivities the next day, as the Legion held their popular made to order breakfast and hosted Clearwater Christmas Central, one of their annual fundraisers to help support veterans. The craft and vendor sale featured a large variety of gift ideas from local crafters and ven-

dors.

Last Saturday The Church of St. Luke's was filled with fun and goodies during their annual Cookie Stroll and Craft Sale. Tables were lined with homemade holiday goodies galore, from gingerbread cookies to decadent candies.

Along with all the goodies, guests could purchase handmade crafts and gift items and relax with rolls and coffee. All items were donated by members of the congregation.

Although those events are over, there is still time to find special gifts for friends and family at Clearwater's local businesses.



CLEARWATER CHRISTMAS CENTRAL attendees look over a selection of brightly colored hats and scarves last Saturday. (Photo by Penny Leuthard.)




HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS. Left: The Radeke family of Becker ventured out to B & J Evergreen near Clear Lake in search of their Christmas tree. Pictured: Steve, Michelle, Aiden and Quinn Radeke enjoyed family time and a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Claus at B & J Evergreen. Right: Carl the Camel cozied up to Santa (Daryl Moller). (Submitted photos.)



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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BASC BIRTHDAY POTLUCK, TUES., DEC. 20, 11:30 AT BCC. We are so happy to welcome this group of 24 senior performers for the first time since COVID. Join us for lunch and watch the performers 12-1 p.m. (Submitted photo.)

BL Lionesses host "Shopping with Santa"

Last weekend, the Big Lake Lionesses held their annual "Shopping with Santa" event at Lions Park.

By Katherine Cantin, Staff Writer
reporter.katie@patriotnewsnmn.com

Shoppers purchased tickets at the front door which could be exchanged for Christmas gifts for friends and family. Lionesses, with the help of the Big Lake Ambassadors, sold various items arranged on tables.

The Lionesses said the event is a big hit with kids, as they can use the tickets to buy the perfect gifts for

parents and grandparents. One Lioness noted how much fun it was to see the kids' eyes light up when they spotted the perfect gift for someone they love.

Of course, kids and families attending were also very excited to see Santa Claus, who always makes an appearance at the event. Santa posed for pictures with the kiddos and asked what they wanted for Christmas.



LIONESSES DEE LESLIE (L) AND SANDY RENZ (R) greeted customers and sold tickets at the door. (Photo by Katherine Cantin.)



SANTA CLAUS was on hand to take pictures and ask kiddos what they wanted for Christmas. (Photo by Katherine Cantin.)



THE BIG LAKE AMBASSADORS gave a hand at the annual Big Lake Lionesses "Shopping with Santa" event. (Photo by Katherine Cantin.)



BIG LAKE LIONESSES sold Christmas gifts last weekend at the annual "Shopping with Santa" event. (Photo by Katherine Cantin.)



11 BLHS YA students sign on with area businesses

Big Lake High School celebrated its annual Youth Apprenticeship Signing Day Tuesday in the Big Lake High School auditorium.

By Bill Morgan, Editor, Staff Writer
reporter.bill@patriotnewsnmn.com

Eleven BLHS students were introduced along with their business partners and parents. The Youth Apprenticeship students and businesses they've paired up with are: **Bailey Muehlbauer** - Agriculture at Iron Shoe Farms; **Caleb Kvilhaug** - Diesel Technician at GATR Truck Center; **Natalie Ulven** - Manufacturing at Lisi Medical Remmele; **Broden Johns** - Manufacturing at Lisi Medical Remmele; **Shelby Baufield** - Animal Science at Big Lake Area Veterinary Hospital; **Jaxyn Tschritter** - Cabinetmaking at McChesney Cabinets; **Lilliana St. Jean** - Early Childhood Education at Big Lake ECFE; **Johnathan Levreau** - Agriculture at Minnesota Native Landscapes; **Levi Rengel** - Agriculture at Minnesota Native Landscapes; **Emily Lemire** - Healthcare at St. Benedict's Community; **Westin Christian** - Diesel Technician at New Look Contracting.

Big Lake High School

is an award-winning College and Career Readiness school. They strive to provide opportunities for all students to identify career interests and skills by providing connections to industry professionals and opportunities to experience career interests



TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION/WORK-BASED LEARNING COORDINATOR WADE OLSON emceed the event and conducted all the introductions and recognitions. (Patriot Photo by Bill Morgan.)

first hand.

Big Lake Schools' motto is *Career by Choice*, rather than a career by chance. With this motto in mind they have developed what they call the 3E model



THE 11 BLHS STUDENTS who signed up for employment at area businesses posed for a group shot with the business owners after the Youth Apprenticeship program concluded Tuesday morning. The students included are Bailey Muehlbauer, Caleb Kvilhaug, Natalie Ulven, Broden Johns, Shelby Baufield, Jaxyn Tschritter, Lilliana St. Jean, Johnathan Levreau, Levi Rengel, Emily Lemire and Westin Christian. (Patriot Photo by Bill Morgan.)

which is unique to Big Lake Schools.

EEE Model

The first "E" is *Exposure*. The focus is to expose students to as many different career opportunities as possible.

The second "E" is *Exploration*. Students get a chance to dive deeper into career pathways, visit businesses around the community, tour area colleges as well as take part in hands-on experiences.

The final "E" is the capstone, *Experience*. Students learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation while working on the job, receiving high school

credit, and earning a wage through employment as a Big Lake High School Youth Apprentice.

They recognize the commitment between students and employers with this signing day event. A celebration for the students who decided to invest in their future, their parents for supporting them throughout their education, and the partnering businesses for investing in students to address the needs of today's workforce.

Through Youth Apprenticeship, classrooms extend beyond the school walls. These students leave the building to attend REAL (Relevant Experi-

ence Apprenticeship Learning) class at their place of employment. The youth apprentice model is governed by an industry recognized checklist of tasks that YAs will learn through real world work experience. These are relevant, high tech, industry current career based learning experiences.

Big Lake High School is very proud to provide these experiences. They are proud of the partnerships that have been cultivated with business and industry. Most of all they are proud of these students that made this commitment to their future.

SNWR Christmas Bird Count upcoming

(Editor's Note: The following article was submitted to the Patriot by Jade Pederson of the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.)

Submitted Article

The Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge's Christmas Bird Count will be held on Tues., Dec. 20 starting at 7:30 a.m. at the Oak Savanna Learning Center.

A nation-wide activity organized by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count is held from Dec. 14 to Jan. 5 annually, with 10's of thousands of volunteers participating in this citizen science project.

This year marks the 123rd year of the survey of winter bird species and participation now ranges from Alaska to Antarctica. Sherburne's Refuge volunteers will survey within a 7.5-mile radius from the intersection of Sherburne Co. Rd. 9 and Co. Rd 5.

Although additional volunteers are not needed for this year's count, the refuge could still use one's help! If one lives within 15 miles of the count area, it would be greatly appreciated if one cleaned and filled one's bird feeders at least three days before the count. Additionally, please be aware that vehicles may be driving slowly past one's

home with binoculars fixed on one's property. Know that one shouldn't be concerned! The observers are only interested in the species and numbers of birds on one's property.

Reports from participating groups all across the country are tallied by Audubon and other birding organizations, including the Minnesota Ornithologist's Union. The final tally provides valuable information on the number of bird species present during that 23-day time frame. Nationally, this data is used to track long-term trends in bird populations and distribution; both declines in populations and increases in species like bald eagles.

Local data for the Ref-

uge is used to track changes in the bird populations over time, and it can also be pooled with other areas to detect patterns over a larger area. The Minnesota Ornithologist's Union maintains records for the Sherburne Refuge count dating back to 1966.

Last year, the Refuge's Christmas Bird Count observed 42 species of birds including numerous common species such as black-capped chickadee and snow bunting to less common species including spotted towhee and hoary redpoll. This important count would not be possible without a dedicated group of refuge volunteers!

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge is managed

by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and is located near the cities of Princeton, Zimmerman, and St. Cloud, in central Minnesota.

The mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. They are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for their scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service.

For more information on the work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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Christmas Church Services

Catholic Charities, U.S. Marine Corps reserves sponsor St. Cloud Area Toys For Tots

(Editor's Note: The following article was submitted to the Patriot by Keri Bösl, Marketing & Public Relations Manager of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud.)

Catholic Charities Emergency Services, in conjunction with the Valhalla Detachment of the

For more information about registering, drop-off locations and donating to St. Cloud Area Toys for Tots, visit ccstcloud.org/toysfor-tots.

About the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program

Toys for Tots, a 75-year national charitable program run by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, provides happiness and hope to less fortunate children during each Christmas holiday season. The toys, books and other gifts collected and distributed by Marines and volunteers offer these children recognition, confidence

Department of Minnesota Marine Corps League, annually sponsors the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program for children in the St. Cloud area who would not receive

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS. Snake River Free Church youth are pictured during their Christmas musical production Sunday, December 11th. Pictured in front: Charge Schmidt. Second row: Abby and Anna Person, Savannah Schulte, Alison Pramann, Clayton Hurd, James Erickson, Levi Schultz, Caden Hoeft, Carter Kirk, Austin Hoeft. Back row: Charlotte Gallagher and Connor Kirk. (Photo by Mary Nehring.)

Church of St. Luke's
Father Dennis Backer

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve: 4pm Mass, 9pm Mass
Christmas Day Mass: 8am Mass, 10am Mass
Feast of Mary, Mother of God Holy Day:
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a gift without this program. Deliver new, unwrapped toys to any of the Toys for Tots Marine drop boxes located throughout the community as early as possible, as client distribution begins Dec. 13. Emergency Services prefers to have toys placed in these drop boxes.

Emergency Services is accepting toy donations on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the loading area of 157 Roosevelt Road, Suite 100, St. Cloud, Door D (back of building). Do not leave donations outside the doors, as they must be collected by Catholic Charities staff. The 2022 holiday season marks the 75th anniversary of the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program.

Online registration for the St. Cloud Area Toys for Tots program continues through Fri., Dec. 2.

and a positive memory for a lifetime. We believe it is such experiences that help disadvantaged children become responsible citizens and caring members of their community. For more information, visit toysfor-tots.org.

About Catholic Charities Emergency Services

Catholic Charities Emergency Services, a program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud, works to provide food, basic everyday essentials and financial assistance to those in need in our community.

About Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud

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#LiveBetter

Library winter reading program begins January 2

(Editor's Note: The following article was submitted to the Patriot by Breanne Fruth, Communications and Development Coordinator with GRRL.)

Submitted Article

Cozy up with a good book and challenge oneself to read more this season with the Winter Reading Program!

“Read for a Better World,” the 2023 Winter Reading Program begins Mon., Jan. 2, 2023, and runs through Tues., Feb. 28.

The program provides fun incentives for readers to settle into cozy winter reading habits. It is designed primarily for teens and adults and is open to anyone in the sixth grade or older.

Each of the 32 branch libraries in the GRRL system will have prize drawings for participants. All book lovers need to do is register for the program at a branch library, online at griver.beanstack.org, or on the Beanstack Tracker app.

Readers can log their winter reading either using a log from their library or our tracker app, Beanstack. By downloading and using the app, readers can keep track of their reading, get book recommendations, and earn online badges to help make reading a habit. Count each day one spends reading, so any amount of daily reading will make participants eligible for online badges and prizes.

Branches will have drawings for special “Read for a Better World” mugs at the end of the program.

The library’s first Winter Reading Program took place in 2004, and participation has increased every

year since. Many of the region’s libraries now schedule special events to support the program and encourage winter reading. Visit events.griver.org to see the full events calendar.

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) provides library services at 32 pub-



lic libraries and one to-go system in Benton, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd and Wright Counties. GRRL2GO is a locker system that allows one to pick up items at the Sartell Community Center. GRRL supplies the residents of Central Minnesota with nearly one million books, CDs and DVDs, 250 public computers, and information services.

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Bulldog matmen pin Princeton in opener

The Becker Bulldog wrestling team started right where they left off last season, scoring a dominant

By Mark Kolbinger, Contributing Writer
production@patriotnewsnm.com

win in their season opener, 49-16, over Mississippi 8 foe Princeton.

Bennett Kujawa set the tone in the 106 pound match with a first period fall, while eighth grader Tyler Hall scored a second period fall at 120. Nolan Jurek followed with a pin just seven seconds before the end of the first period at 126 to give Becker a commanding 18-3 lead.

Kaden Nicolas pushed

the lead to 24-3 after his fall at 3:21 of the 132 pound match.

A pair of decision wins (8-2 for Drew May at 145 and 5-2 for Adam Jurek at 160) set the score at 30-10 in favor of the Bulldogs before the team went 4-0 in the four matches to seal the win.

Winners included Owen Angell (9-6 decision at 170), Tyson Ricker (fall 5:32 at 182), Dylan Weber (Maj. Decision 17-5 at 195) and Dylan Kolby (default at 220).

Paul Bunyan
Last Friday and Saturday, the team participated in the Brainerd Paul

Bunyan Individual Tournament and came away with enough points for a second place finish as a team.

Bemidji ended the tournament with 212 team points, followed closely by the Bulldogs at 210.5.

The tournament wrestled in individual brackets and the Bulldogs came away with three weight class champions: Landen Kujawa (138), Tyson Ricker (182) and Dylan Kolby (220).

Kujawa amassed a tech fall, fall and two major decisions en route to his title, while Ricker used a major decision and two decisions to win his.

Kolby wrestled ex-

tremely well in winning the 220 class, opening with a decision, followed by two falls to get to the finals, where he won by major decision.

Other place finishers for the Bulldogs included: Boston Kuschel (second at 106), Bennet Kujawa (fifth at 106), Blayne Kuschel fourth at 113), Tyler Hall (fifth at 120), Kaden Nicolas (third at 132), Drew May (fifth at 145), Ethan Duncombe (second at 152), Adam Jurek (third at 160), Owen Angell (fourth at 170), and Dylan Weber (fifth at 195).

Woelfel competes at State Diving

The Becker Bulldog fall sports season wrapped up with Lauren Woelfel diving at the MSHSL state

By Mark Kolbinger, Contributing Writer
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meet at the U of MN the week before Thanksgiving.

According to Coach Tina Tamm, the Preliminary and Semifinal rounds were completed on Wednesday, Nov 16th.

“Lauren needed to finish in the top 16 in order

to move on to the finals round on Friday,” Tamm said. “After the Prelim round she was in 16th place which moved her into the semi final round.”

From there, Woelfel then completed her next three dives and moved up to 15th place, securing her spot in the finals where she would complete her dive list by doing her final three dives.

“Lauren’s first dive in the finals round received



LAUREN WOELFEL. (Submitted Photo).

the highest points given for any dive during the state competition which moved her up to sixth place,” reported Tamm. “She finished her last two dives and finished in 10th place (just seven points shy of a podium appearance).”

Tamm congratulated Woelfel for a “great finish to a great season.”

Festival of Trees open at Wright County Historical Society

(Editor's Note: The following information was derived from the Wright County website.)

Submitted Article

Go visit the largest indoor decorated tree display in Minnesota!

The Wright County Historical Society’s 16th Festival of Trees – “Gingerbread!” – is bigger and better than ever and runs through Sat., Jan. 7, 2023.

Located in the Wright County Heritage Center (2001 Hwy. 25 N, Buffalo, MN), the Festival of Trees is a gift to the community – an indoor winter wonderland for all to enjoy. Visitors can vote for their favorite trees, engage in

family-friendly activities, write Santa (he always writes back!), make a holiday photo memory, and browse in the newly expanded holiday gift shop.

Each year WCHS highlights a different tree decorating “battle” and this year’s category is Wright County History Groups. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. WCHS is closed Sundays and Mondays.

Admission to the galleries, library, and Festival of Trees is free, though free-will gifts are greatly appreciated and used specifically to enhance next year’s display, as well as continuing to provide free programming for the community.



For more information visit www.wrighthistory.org, Facebook, Instagram, or contact Sally Stevens,

WCHS Business Manager, at 763-682-7323.

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Becker dance has great meet in St. Francis

The Becker Bulldog Dance Team began its competitive season over the last two weeks in Rocori, St. Francis, and competing with many of their fellow state participants in Eastview.

The Bulldogs had a great night Dec. 9, starting off their Mississippi 8 Conference schedule with two varsity

By Bill Morgan, Editor, Staff Writer
 reporter.bill@patriotnewsnmn.com

wins and breaking another school record by dancing the most kids in team history. Placements from the St Francis meet are: Bsquad Jazz - second place; JV Jazz - first place; Varsity Jazz - first place; Varsity Kick - first place.

"After having two successful competitions last weekend, the team is excited to compete at our first an-



nual home invite (Dec 17th) where we will be hosting many conference and section teams," said Senior Captain Amanda Krenz.

THE BECKER 2022-23 DANCE TEAM was all smiles after competing in St. Francis recently where they took first place in varsity jazz and kick competitions. (Submitted Photo).

NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY IS QUICKLY EVOLVING

According to data from the Newspaper Association of America (NAA), trends reflect that the print industry is evolving its business model in significant ways. Some of these ways include connecting with developments in technology, tapping into consumer behavior, understanding advertiser interest, and more in order to grow audiences and diversify its revenue stream.

Becker Sports News

Bulldogs hit century mark in win over Thunder

It was an offensive explosion for the Becker Bulldog boys basketball team last Thursday, as they scored a 102-38 win over the Zimmerman Thunder.



BECKER'S KYAN BLOMQUIST powers to the hoop in the season opening win over Zimmerman. (Submitted photo.)

The game had been postponed from two nights earlier, as Zimmerman's team was battling illness, and the Bulldogs showed their dominance early. "We came out aggressive against Zimmerman and found our half court defense suffocating to them," Coach Josh Ihrke said. "I was proud of how many of our guys had big contributions against Zimmerman. It was also fun to see how many energy raisers we

have on this team and supporting each other." A total of 14 Bulldogs saw game action, with many starters playing less than the full first half. Becker led 60-28 entering halftime, as they dominated in every

Becker scoring: Ryan Bengtson two (four assists), Landon Peterson two, Alex Weiss 11 (four assists), Kevin Vogl three, Kyan Blomquist 23, Zach Bengtson six, Kyle Vogl five, Sawyer Brown eight, Julius Hendricks 20, Brady Paumen nine, Josh Groskreutz two, Mitchell Soltau nine (four steals), Connor Gass two.

Cards
Last Friday against Annandale, Becker came from behind to squeak out the win over the Class AA defending state champs, 57 to 56.

"Against Annandale, we found ourselves in a tough game and a tough place to get a win," Ihrke said. "Alex Weiss had a number of key buckets in the second half that helped us push into the lead."

Weiss was efficient, hitting five of seven shots in his 35 minutes of action. Ihrke said his team also found its defense in the second half to erase an Annandale six point halftime lead.

"We had to refocus defensively to get that win and it was a team effort," Ihrke said. "Julius Hendricks was hot early and kept us in the game by knocking down some big shots. We found a way to grit out a win, which is fun to see."

Becker was dominant in the paint, outscoring their opponent 28-18 from the inside.

Becker scoring: Ryan Bengtson two, Weiss 12, Blomquist 14, Brown two, Hendricks 20, Paumen seven.

Bulldog girls bomb Cardinals, remain undefeated

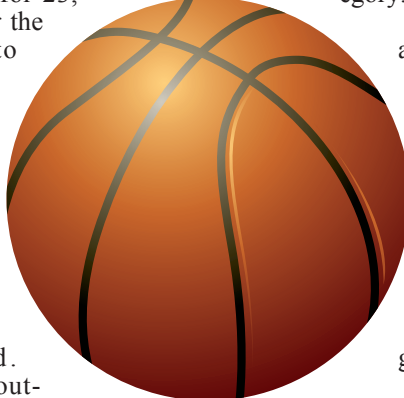
The Becker girls basketball team was dialed in from long range last Friday when they used a flurry of three pointers to down the Annandale Cardinals, 72-37.

By Mark Kolbinger, Contributing Writer
production@patriotnewsnm.com

"We shot really well from the three point line (10-for-23, 43.5% for the game) to pull away from Annandale in the second half," Coach Dan Baird reported. Becker outscored the Cardinals 39-13 in the second stanza to put the game out of reach and re-

main undefeated on the season.

Both teams played a clean game, with Becker attempting just three free throws and Annandale six. Baird also credited his reserve players with their contributions in the game. "Evelyn Kreft came off the bench and played a huge role in this victory," Baird said, not-



ing her four points, four rebounds, four steals, and four blocks. "We also had only nine turnovers, and forced 32 from Annandale."

Ayla Brown led Becker in scoring with 18 points, four assists, and four steals. The Bulldogs, ranked #1 in Class AAA, were scheduled to play host to the Class AA #2 ranked Minnehaha Academy team Tuesday evening, but inclement weather forced a postponement. Becker was set to host Eden Prairie Friday evening.

Becker scoring: Dani Nuest 16, Maren Westin 16, Hannah Dierkes nine, Ayla Brown 18, Reese Hausmann two, Lexi Rose five (four steals), Evelyn Kreft four (four blocks), Liz Mackedanz two.

Bulldog gymnasts dominant in M8 opener

The Becker Bulldog gymnastics team took some risks in last Thursday's Mississippi 8 opening win over St. Francis and came away with an impressive 133.875 to 126.525 victory.

By Mark Kolbinger, Contributing Writer
production@patriotnewsnm.com

"We decided to take some big risks on vault with a couple of our gymnasts competing much more difficult tricks in that meet," Coach Jen Harmoning said. "It takes a lot of courage and mental strength to put yourself on the line like this, so I'm really proud of Lauren Woelfel, Alison Woodward, and Chloe Spear for really going for it. It's common to have struggles with getting your best landing when you're competing new and difficult things, so sometimes you have to be willing to risk your best scores at first. We believe that it will pay dividends down the road for the team."

Harmoning said the team knew it could count on Hailey Duncombe, Emma Hennessey, and Karli Kirk to be steady and deliver, which they did. Hennessey placed first with an 8.95, followed by Kirk (second at 8.9) and Woelfel (third at 8.55). Duncombe

was fourth with a score of 8.5.

On bars, Becker improved by nearly 2.5 points from their first meet.

"We just worked in practice to execute more cleanly and consistently," Harmoning said.

Becker took the top four places: first - Hennessey 8.225, second - Kirk 8.05, third - Cassie Larson 8.025, and fourth - Woelfel 7.925.

Harmoning said the team was a little less solid on beam, but still came through with good performances.



"I've really noticed some mental toughness in these athletes on beam, however," Harmoning said. "They do such a great job of staying calm and collected when little things

here and there go awry during their routines."

Woelfel picked up the win on the event at 8.75, followed by Spear and Hennessey, who tied for second at 8.45.

On the floor exercise, Becker dominated, winning the top five spots. Hennessey was first at 8.65, followed by Woelfel (8.35), Kirk (8.225), Bella Kuschel (8.2) and Spear (8.175).

Hennessey was the all around winner at 34.275, followed by Woelfel (second at 33.575) and Kirk (third at 32.85). Spear won the combined varsity/JV all-around (some events are varsity and some are JV but they still compete all four events) and the JV team was victorious over the Saints, 121.95 to 75.75.

"We are so excited to have earned our first Mississippi 8 Conference win of the season over St. Francis," Harmoning said. "It was great to get out on the floor and compete again in just our second meet of this season. We had a lot of the first-meet jitters going on, but everyone managed to control their nerves fairly well and it was a really good night!"

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