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New Hampton TRIBune Chickasaw County

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Supervisors want third new rig

Board votes 3-2 to seek bids for third ambulance for Chickasaw County EMS

BY BOB FENSKA
editor@nhtrib.com

If Chickasaw County EMS does purchase a third ambulance — something its director thinks is a must — it will be a new rig.

The Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors, after a lengthy discussion, voted 3-2 to have Chickasaw County EMS Director Joel Knutson draw up

COUNTY, NASHUA STRIKE
LAW-ENFORCEMENT DEAL.

— PAGE 4

specs so that the county can take bids to purchase a new ambulance to join its current fleet of two rigs.

Knutson said he would highly recommend the county have a third

"back-up" ambulance so that if one of its two rigs needed maintenance work, the county would still be able to put two rigs on the road to answer calls.

A fellow Chickasaw County EMS Advisory Board member, Bridget Edson, said that a third rig would allow the county to be "opening yourself to more transfers, which is where the revenue is at. I feel like the benefit of having the third rig outweighs not

having it, knowing you can do more transfers, which we've always said is where the revenue is."

The question Monday, though, came down to used or new, and Chickasaw Ambulance Service owner Jeremy McGrath offered the county his one remaining rig, a 2003 with 144,000 miles on it, new tires and two new bat-

teries, to the county for \$18,000.

Knutson told board members that if they decided to go used, McGrath's

SEE AMBULANCE, 3

Hinson likes what she sees in her first visit

U.S. representative appreciates touring two new businesses, says bipartisanship needed in D.C.

BY BOB FENSKA
editor@nhtrib.com

If first impressions really do matter, New Hampton hit a home run in the eyes of the woman who represents the city in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I'm impressed to say the least," U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson said last Wednesday after visiting two of the city's newest businesses — the coffee shop Muscari and the new office building Union Block Suites — during her first trip to New Hampton since this past fall's election. "I love seeing a vibrant Main Street, and I love talking with people who come up with some unique and

SEE HINSON, 3



Union Block Suites owner Tessa Reicks talks with U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson about the vision she has for the office space she is renting out in a building that once was home to Wilshire Jewelry.

The Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors start off their meeting Monday morning in the courtroom to accommodate the number of librarians and residents protesting a proposed cut to funding for the six libraries located in the county.

Board gets an earful on libraries

Librarians, patrons take county leaders to task for proposed 19 percent cut to request

BY BOB FENSKA
editor@nhtrib.com

Librarians and their patrons turned out en masse on Monday to give the Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors a piece of their collective minds about a proposed cut in funding to the six libraries in the county.

Many took direct aim at Supervisor Jake Hackman, but other supervisors said they felt like they had little choice when it came to a con-

sensus decision they reached the week before to give county libraries \$100,000 — down from the \$129,311 librarians requested — in the new fiscal year that begins on July 1.

Still, library supporters said they were disappointed that the \$100,000 supervisors reached on a 4-1 consensus vote — with only Board Chairman Matt Kuhn voting against — represented a 19.6 percent drop in county funding for libraries in New Hampton, Alta Vista, Fredericksburg, Ionia, Lawler and Nashua from

what they received for this fiscal year.

"I'll tell you the library services are a service to the citizens of the county," county resident Pam Pickar said. "I think it's as important as anything else ... I see a lot of other budget items here that have not been cut, and I'd like to know your reasoning."

Pickar specifically asked Hackman to explain his decision, and he used a worksheet he had

SEE LIBRARIES, 3

For a day, Turkey Valley's a speech capital

Plenty of folks come together as small school hosts a big event — speech large-group contest



Bob Fenske/Tribune

Students from several area schools spend some time in the Turkey Valley gymnasium while waiting to compete at Saturday's large-group district speech contest.

BY BOB FENSKA
editor@nhtrib.com

Hosting a district speech contest has been on Michelle Nystel's radar for a few years, but the Turkey Valley coach wasn't quite sure her school could handle a large-group contest.

"I've always thought of hosting, but just the sheer size of some large-group teams, I just didn't think we'd be able to do something like that," Nystel said. "But I was talking to Lisa Phyfe, she's from Waverly but a Turkey Valley grad from Lawler and she said, 'You guys could totally do it.' And then one thing led to another..."

So on Saturday, Turkey Valley played host to the Iowa High School Speech Association's large-group district contest. And guess what? It turns out little Turkey Valley could indeed pull off a large-group speech contest.

Twenty-two schools brought 34 teams — speech teams can bring "ninth-grade" teams — to Jackson Junction for a full-day

SEE SPEECH, 2



Bob Fenske/Tribune

There's a new sheriff in town!

Moments after the Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors unanimously appointed him sheriff, Ryan Shawver takes the oath of office from Magistrate Court Judge Christine Skilton Monday morning. Shawver replaces Marty Hemann, who officially retired last week after more than 32 years with the Sheriff's Office.

First one out

NH/TV coach says team will use regional duals snub as motivation in coming weeks

Page 11

Solid hoops win

New Hampton boys put it all together in victory over NEIC rival Waukon

Page 11

Wedding guide

Check out special pages and 11 couples who can tell us how marriage works

Pages 15-18

Long day is worth it for Turkey Valley speech coach

SPEECH: FROM 1

of speech in categories like one-act play, choral reading, musical theatre, solo mime, readers theatre, television news, short film, ensemble acting, group improv, radio broadcasting and group mime.

The contest was originally scheduled to be held in Decorah, but when that school had to bow out because it was hosting a wrestling tournament the same day, Nystel and Turkey Valley took the plunge.

The school's classrooms and multi-purpose room became seven "centers" where students from Clarksville to Waukon and everywhere in between performed, judges handed out advice and ratings and parents and speech fans — yes, they do exist — came and went throughout the day.

Nystel will be the first to admit that she "typically gets stressed out" with a project of this size, but it helped that the Iowa High School Speech Association provides plenty of support — taking entrants and turning out a schedule — to schools hosting district contests.

And then there were the Turkey Valley students and organizations — along with more than 40 community volunteers — who turned out for a special day.

The best guess is there were at least 500 speech competitors in the building Saturday and hundreds of parents, other family members and friends roaming the hallways of Turkey Valley.

Add it all up and the little school was home to more than double — maybe even triple — the number of people that call it home on a typical school day.

"So many people came together to make this work," Nystel said, "and it was strange because I wasn't stressed out at all."

She paused and laughed.

"OK, most of the time, but seriously, it was just a great day."

It was also a money maker, and not just for the Turkey Valley speech team, which took in more than \$3,000 at the door from "suggested donations." It was also a big day at the concession stand and Java Junction, a student-led and operated coffee shop that supports the Turkey Valley Robotics Club. Meanwhile, the Turkey Valley FFA chapter served a lunch, which did brisk business



Photo courtesy of Michelle Nystel

The only downside of hosting the large-group district speech contest for Turkey Valley coach Michelle Nystel was the fact that she missed her team's performances — including the musical theatre group that received a Division I rating and included (from left) Savannah Solheim, Megan Blong, Jaclyn Schmitt, Bre Moudry, Olivia Snyder and Aubrey Hoffert.

during an extended noon hour.

"Because of where we're located," Nystel said, "I felt like we needed something more than a concession stand. So I approached [vocational agriculture teacher] Steve Pfaffle, and he didn't even hesitate. That's one of the things I just love about Turkey Valley; everyone comes together to make it work."

It was a busy day for Turkey Valley's speech coach, and about the only disappointing part of the day was the fact that she didn't get a chance to see her team perform their pieces.

One team — a musical theatre piece titled "Gee Officer Krupke!" from West Side Story — earned a Division I rating, which means Savannah Solheim, Megan Blong, Bre Moudry, Olivia Snyder, Aubrey Hoffert and Jaclyn Schmitt — earned a trip to Waterloo West for the Feb. 4 state contest.

"All of our speech kids are so busy," Nystel said. "I bet you half of our kids

played basketball at MFL on Friday night, and they were all here by 6:45 on Saturday. They did a great job today. You always hope they all get Division I's, but I'm proud of all of them for putting themselves out there."

For a day, at least, Turkey Valley was a speech capital, and judges and competitors alike lauded the efforts of the small school.

"It's so neat to see a contest in a different school," said judge Laurie Wild, who judged TV broadcasting and short film in "Center Four," aka Mr. Rodgers' health classroom, "because it opens up speech to a whole new audience. There's a lot of talented, creative kids here and they've done a really nice job hosting."

Nystel appreciated the compliment almost as much as the good night's sleep she got Saturday night.

"I went home, took a hot bath and went to bed," she said with a laugh. "I was tired, but it was a well-worth-it-kind-of tired."

New Hampton advances five to state speech contest

BY BOB FENSKE
editor@nhtrib.com

It didn't matter if they received Division I or Division II ratings, as far as New Hampton speech coach Kassie Bercik was concerned, all of her students did "some really good work" at Saturday's large-group district contest.

"I am proud of all my speech students regardless of the outcome of the day," she said. "I know they all did their best on Saturday and that's what matters the most to me."

Five of New Hampton's eight groups earned coveted superior Division I ratings that will send them to the state contest at Waterloo West on Saturday, Feb. 4.

Advancing on to state were:

- Choral Reading - Grace Baker, Emily Manweiler, Beth Pickar, Izabel Willadsen and Kaydence Zack.

- Ensemble Acting - Miranda Buckley, Natalie Hidding and Catherine Pethoud.

- Group Improv - Buckley, Annala Elliott, Syd Hyer and Willadsen.

- Group Improv - Madi Dreckman, Pethoud and Caydney Phillips.

- Radio Broadcasting - Cam McMorris and Lee Reicks.

Three other groups received excellent Division II ratings, and they included:

- Readers' Theatre - Baker, Piper Hackman, Jarrin Robinson, and Shelby Springer.

- Ensemble Acting - Elleri



Bob Fenske/Tribune

New Hampton's group improv team of (from left) Madi Dreckman, Caydney Phillips and Catherine Pethoud get feedback from their judge after performing Saturday.

Eike, Karla Pickar, Robinson and Springer.

- Group Improv - Hackman, Tanner Hubka, Xander Meyerhoff and Easton Montieth.

"So many of them are first-year speech members, and nerves were on high alert for them most of the day," Bercik said. "However, I am so proud of their resilience and see so much potential in all of them. Now that they've got one com-

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Patrie to go on trial in October

Charles City man accused of killing retired grocer living in rural Nashua

BY BOB FENSKE

editor@nhtrib.com

A new trial date for a Charles City man accused of killing a retired grocer in rural Nashua in September 2012 has been set.

Chickasaw County District Court Judge Richard Stochl on Tuesday set the first degree trial date of Randy Patrie, 40, for Oct. 18. Patrie is accused of murdering Kenneth Gallmeyer during a burglary of the retired grocer's home more than 10 years ago.

The trial had been set to begin later this month, but in December, Patrie's attorney, Steven Drahoszal, filed a motion for a continuance because the defense "continues to review information provided by the state and prepare for trial ... additional time is needed for trial."

Stochl granted the continuance on Dec. 8, and the two sides met Tuesday to discuss setting a new trial date. Along with setting the new trial date, Stochl scheduled a pretrial conference for Oct. 3.

In June 2014, Patrie was sentenced to life in prison in federal court after he pleaded guilty to possession of firearms by a felon as an armed career criminal and possession of sawed-off shotguns, but that sentence was later overturned and Patrie was re-sentenced to 20 years in federal prison.

Gallmeyer was a 70-year-old retired grocer who had moved to rural Nashua after selling his store in Clarksville.

In a complaint and affidavit filed in federal court, law enforcement authorities said they discovered that Gallmeyer



had suffered a gunshot wound to the head and that numerous items — including several firearms and a Samsung 40-inch flat-screen television — had been taken from his home.

The affidavit went on to say that when the Charles City Police Department executed a search warrant at Patrie's residence in Charles City, it was discovered that several of the items seized were items taken from Gallmeyer's home. They included three firearms, one of which, according to the affidavit, as "consistent with the firearm used to kill" Gallmeyer.

An additional search warrant was then executed by the Chickasaw County Sheriff's Office and the DCI at Patrie's home, and additional items belonging to Gallmeyer were located and seized. During the second search, officers discovered a Samsung 40-inch flatscreen TV mounted on the wall of Patrie's bedroom.

On Jan. 25, 2022, a criminal complaint was filed by the Sheriff's Office, and Patrie, who had been serving time at the Federal Correctional Facility in Fairton, New Jersey, was returned to Iowa. He is currently being held at the Fayette County Jail, which has the ability to better segregate prisoners of different classifications than the jail in Chickasaw County can.

Student Briefs

HCC dean's list

Hawkeye Community College announces the Dean's List for the fall 2022 semester. The Dean's List is an official recognition of outstanding academic accomplishment by full-time students. To make the Dean's List, an individual must be a full-time student with a semester GPA of 3.50 or better for courses taken at Hawkeye.

Students from the local area included:

Fort Atkinson: Breanna Busta, Marcus Herold.

Fredericksburg: Austin Langreck, Emma Pitz.

Ionia: Sophie Phillips.

Lawler: Garrett Kurtenbach.

Nashua: Chase Rust.

New Hampton: Kennedy Nie, Sanja Noehl, Gavin Rings, Colton Rochford, Ethan Theis, Preston Trower.

Waucoma: Dylan Reicks, Kourtney Schmidt.

U of I dean's list

More than 7,500 undergraduate students at the University of Iowa were named to the dean's list for the 2022 fall semester. Guidelines for inclusion on the list are students who achieve a grade-point average (GPA) of 3.50 or higher.

Local students, their majors and year at Iowa include:

Ionia: Joshua Finnegan, Major: History, fourth year; Kelsey Klassen, Major: Speech and Hearing Science, first year.

Lawler: Jalissa Blazek, Major: Biomedical Engineering, first year.

New Hampton: Jerzi Gitch, Major: Pharmacy Interest, second year; Kori Jirak, Major: Psychology, fourth year; Bailey Kriener, Major: Human Physiology, second year; Sydney Wegner, Major: Speech and Hearing Science, third year; Paige Wisner, Major: Nursing, third year.

Waucoma: Reese Manderfield, Major: Psychology, fourth year.

Fredericksburg: Kallison Rochford, Major: Human Physiology, third year.



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Supervisors say more cuts to budgets coming

LIBRARIES: FROM 1

compiled to show how tight the rural services basic (RSB) budget will be for 2023-24.

According to his calculations, even if supervisors raised the RSB levy rate from its current \$3.05 per \$1,000 valuation to the max levy rate of \$3.95 per \$1,000 valuation, the county will still be short \$61,399.10 to fund services like secondary roads, its portion of the new ambulance service and other items.

"If we raise RSB to the max levy rate, that's 90 cents per \$1,000," he said. "Do you know what that will do to your property taxes?"

The meeting that was held in the courtroom to facilitate the larger crowd turned testy at times as library supporters urged supervisors to reconsider and also pleaded with them to be equitable.

"Everybody isn't getting cut 20 percent," resident Steve Murray said. "That is a fundamental problem for us. ... I've been going to the New Hampton library for 60 years now, and libraries are important to all of our communities."

Several supervisors said they understood the frustration being expressed, but they also said that they weren't singling out the county libraries.

"Everything is going to have to be cut somewhere," Travis Suckow said, and fellow Supervisor Scott Cerwinski said that "it may appear that we're picking on the library, but that just happens to be where we started."

Still, librarians and their supporters pressed on.

Rural New Hampton resident Gary Griffin said he felt that libraries made the county more attractive.

"I guess my only comment is that if we want to attract people to come to our county, some of these smaller towns don't have too much else besides this for their library budget," he said. "How are you going to attract industry to come in with hopefully younger people and new ideas if we don't have the things that everyone else has."

The testiest exchange, though, came when New Hampton Public Library Director Carrie Becker and Hackman exchanged words over a phone conversation they had.

During her presentation, Becker claimed Hackman had

targeted libraries in the past, and she took issue with how Hackman had talked to her on the phone.

"You yelled at me, you bullied me," she said, "you tried to intimidate me and get me to back down by shouting at me."

Hackman, though, declined to apologize "because I'll tell you why — because you kept talking, too. You were disrespectful."

Becker had a one-word reply. "False."

The New Hampton librarian made an impassioned plea for her library and those around the county.

"I could speak at length about what we do every day for our communities, for the citizens of Chickasaw County, but I will keep my comments short this morning. ... Libraries are far more than books. We provide services that you may not even know about."

"We meet safety needs. We meet educational needs. We meet employment needs. We teach children to dream. We comfort elders, providing friendship and community. We teach classes. We promote technology. We highlight social issues. We act as a center for the arts. We strive to be everything to every person."

Hackman, though, expressed concern that the county's valuations may be reduced by a potential new state law that could cut \$14.2 million, or about 1.4 percent, of its current valuation. And he pointed out that the law requires that the county only provide about \$45,000 to its libraries.

"You can continue to cite the Iowa law," Becker said, "that requires counties to provide a pittance of support for their libraries knowing that rate went into effect in 1977 and hasn't ever been revisited since. We think it's egregious to think that a 46-year-law should never get an increase."

Hackman, who during the discussion mentioned that he will not seek re-election in 2024, expressed frustration when it came to funding.

"Are there other solutions to fund public service? Is there sponsorship? Is there a donation? I went to a play at the Gallagher-Bluedorn on Friday, and they only charged the people that went a dollar. They had seven sponsors on the screen as sponsorships ... why is it always property tax?"

McGrath said he didn't care if the county bought his or a different used ambulance, but he urged supervisors not to buy a new ambulance.

"A, are you going to have enough money to build a building and B, do we need to spend every last ARPA dollar on ambulance," he said.

"when we have roads ... [like] Kenwood or the North Washington blacktop, it'll rattle the dash off your trucks. ... Can ARPA dollars be utilized for replacement or repair of roads?"

Board Chairman Matt Kuhn said either way, he felt that the county would be "setting ourselves for better success with a third rig."

And Kuhn ended up casting the deciding vote

to pursue a third new ambulance and was joined by Steve Breitbach and Travis Suckow in voting for new over used while Jake Hackman and Scott Cerwinski cast the two dissenting votes.



Bob Fenske/Tribune

U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson and Muscari Coffee Shop owner Anna Havlik talk about Havlik's new business that opened last month on Main Street in New Hampton.

Hinson makes pitch for bipartisanship in D.C.

HINSON: FROM 1

neat ideas."

Hinson, a Republican, won re-election in the fall in the redrawn Second Congressional District, which gave her six new counties — Chickasaw, Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Grundy, Butler and Hardin — which were moved from the Fourth Congressional District during redistricting after the 2020 census.

"For me, it's important to get out and meet the constituents in my district, especially the new counties," she said. "I don't want to sound like a politician, but it's refreshing to get out of Washington and see everyday Iowans doing some extraordinary things, and today, these two women showed me that dreams do become realities."

The two women she was referring to were Muscari owner Anna Havlik, whose coffee shop opened on Main Street Dec. 17, and Union Block Suites owner Tessa Reicks, who is offering businesses unique office opportunities.

Before sitting down for a short interview, Hinson couldn't help but laugh.

"I got a great cup of coffee and saw just how cool old Main Street buildings can be," she said. "Seriously, that's a winning day."

Hinson worked as a television news anchor in Cedar Rapids before casting her lot with politics in 2016, when she won the first of two terms in the

Iowa House of Representatives.

In 2020, she knocked off Democratic incumbent Abby Finkenauer in what was then Iowa's First Congressional District.

This past fall, she won what some considered a surprisingly easy victory over Democratic challenger Liz Mathis in the Second Congressional District.

Unlike her first two years in Congress, Hinson will be in the majority for the next two years, thanks to Republicans regaining control of the House of Representatives this past fall.

"I think Americans wanted a counter-weight to Democrats," she said. "They're worried about inflation, the crazy amount of government spending and they want it reined in."

She said the battle over the raising the government's debt limit is one in which Republicans must hold the line, and Hinson used her family to express her philosophy

when it comes to the debt limit.

"I have two kids," she said, "and if they blow their allowance and I still give them more money, what am I teaching them? That's basically what the federal government has been doing — blowing their allowance and asking for more."

Still, despite taking control of the House, Republicans failed in their efforts to dislodge the Democratic majority in the Senate and obviously President Biden will remain in office until 2025.

Asked if gridlock was going to be the rule rather than the exception in Washington, Hinson was adamant that bipartisanship can be found.

"I have many Democrats that I work with," she said, "and I think it's important that both sides reach across the aisle. Look, I blame both Democrats and Republicans for the mess we're in, so it's up to both sides to fix the problems."

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Watch Out For Tax Season Scams

It's that time of year when we do our taxes — but it's also the same time that tax scammers go to work. What scams should you watch for — and how can you avoid being victimized?

Sadly, the list of scams is pretty long, including demands for payment or requests for "additional information" pertaining to your tax refund, in which the sender asks for your Social Security number and other personal information. These scam emails can look quite official, often incorporating the IRS logo. You might also receive scam text messages containing bogus links claiming to be the IRS website or an online "tool" that can help process your refund faster.

But keep these points in mind:

- The IRS generally won't contact you by phone and won't contact you by email, text messages or social media channels to ask for personal or financial information. The IRS begins most correspondence to taxpayers through regular mail delivered by the U.S. Postal Service.

- The IRS won't call to demand you make an immediate payment through a prepaid debit card or wire transfer. If you owe taxes, the IRS generally will mail you a bill. And the IRS won't threaten to bring in the police or another law enforcement group to arrest you for not paying your taxes.

In general, be extremely skeptical about any type of communication purporting to be from the IRS that sounds bullying or over-inquisitive — and certainly don't give out any personal or financial information. But these fake messages aren't the only tax-season scams out there. You might even receive a direct deposit from what appears to be the U.S. Treasury Department — but if you weren't expecting it, something's likely not right. This payment could be a sign that a fraudulent tax return was filed in your name, and it might be followed by a communica-



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tion from a supposed IRS agent requesting this overpayment be sent to them. If this happens to you, you'll want to contact the IRS right away, and you could also ask your bank to return the deposit to the government.

Other scams don't claim to originate directly from the IRS, as scammers pretend to be from real or imaginary tax organizations. For example, you could get a message from the Taxpayer Advocate Service, an independent organization within the IRS, but this agency won't contact you without a legitimate reason. Or you could receive a message from the nonexistent "Bureau of Tax Enforcement." Your best bet is to delete these messages immediately or send them to your spam folder.

Not all tax season scams originate from fraudulent IRS representatives or fake agencies. You also need to be careful about whom you hire to prepare your taxes. If possible, get a recommendation from a trusted friend or family member. And keep in mind that a legitimate tax preparer must have a valid Preparer Tax Identification Number and must sign your tax return. If someone doesn't have this number or is reluctant to sign your return, it may well be a sign that this individual is a "ghost preparer" who only wants to pocket your fee.

Tax scammers are, unfortunately, here to stay — but remaining vigilant can help you keep them from causing problems for you in this tax season and all the ones in the future.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC



Bob Fenske/Tribune

Shortly after their new sheriff, Ryan Shawver, took the oath of office Monday, Chickasaw County deputies — (front row, from left) Zach Isakson, Adam Hanson, Matt Blaess, KJ Miller, Steve Johnson, (back row) Jordan Gansen, Dakota Gaede and Braxton Rash are sworn in by Magistrate Court Judge Christine Skilton.

Board appoints sheriff, OK's contract with Nashua

By BOB FENSKE
editor@nhtrib.com

The Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors appointed a new sheriff and they approved one of his first recommendations during their regular weekly meeting on Monday.

Board members voted 5-0 to follow through on their notice of intent to appoint Chief Deputy Ryan Shawver to fill out the term of former Sheriff Marty Hemann, who began his retirement last Thursday.

The appointment came almost two months after Hemann announced his intention to retire, leading the board to take "applications" for the job. Earlier this month, board members interviewed Shawver and Floyd County Deputy Dan Sargeant, and made the decision to appoint Shawver, who will serve out the term that

Hemann won during the 2020 election.

Under state law, residents do have the right to petition for a special election as long as the petition is turned into the county within 14 days of the appointment.

Later in Monday's meeting, the city of Nashua and the supervisors reached a tentative agreement for the Sheriff's Office to continue to provide law-enforcement services to the city.

But the new one-year contract that begins on July 1 comes with some changes.

During this fiscal year, the county is providing 2,880 hours — or an average of 240 hours a month — to the city, but next year's contract will require the Sheriff's Office to devote 2,080 hours — an average of just over 173 hours a month — to the city.

Under the agreement reached on Monday, one that still needs to be approved by the Nashua City Council at its meeting

on Feb. 6, the county will receive \$65 per hour for the 2,080 hours and also receive \$23,265 in "drive-through" fees.

That means Nashua will pay the county \$158,465 next year, a decrease of 7.5 percent from the \$171,360 it is paying for services this year.

Earlier this month, the Board of Supervisors raised the cost per hour from \$59.50 to \$65, and if Nashua had contracted for that amount of hours, it would have paid the county \$187,200.

Nashua Mayor Alex Anthofer and City Councilwoman Rhonda Dean attended Monday's meeting and told board members that the council would sign off on the agreement.

"I'm OK with the contract," Supervisor Jake Hackman said. "I think it's going to be up to you Ryan to schedule this. It's your department now."

Briefs

Iowa PBS presents the 2023 Iowa State Dance Championships

Iowa PBS will present exclusive coverage of the 2023 Iowa State Dance Championships on Saturday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.

The 2-hour coverage will showcase winning routines and interviews with coaches of the teams.

The competition will be rebroadcast Sunday, Jan. 29 at 1 p.m.

Approximately 5,000 of Iowa's best young dancers showcased their talents in what is considered to be one of the nation's largest and most prestigious events of its kind. Teams from 255 high schools and 25 colleges competed for state championship top honors.

The dance championships were held in Des Moines at Wells Fargo Arena and Hy-Vee Hall last month on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1-2, and New Hampton High School's dance team took first place in its props division.

For more than four decades, the talents of Iowa's young dancers have taken center stage at this event. Teams perform

in a variety of categories including pom, jazz, hip-hop, contemporary, kick, lyrical, prop, novelty, color guard, co-ed and all-male.

Cowboy Poetry returns to Starlite Ballroom this weekend

The Lawler Lions Club will host its annual Cowboy Poetry Show this weekend at the Starlite Ballroom with all proceeds benefiting Kindness Square, an inclusive park that will be built in New Hampton.

Shows will be held Friday and Saturday, with a Swiss steak dinner being served at 6 p.m. and the show to start at 7:15 p.m.

Putting on the show will be cowboys Paul Larson of Hill City, South Dakota; Jake Riley of Riverdale, Nebraska; and Marty Blocker of Cody, Nebraska.

Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased at Bank Iowa, Fidelity Bank & Trust, Luana Savings Bank, First Citizens Bank and Security State Bank.

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State senator will hold town hall meetings in coming weeks

Upcoming town hall meetings for State Senator Sandy Salmon, Senate District 29, will be held at locations around Northeast Iowa in the weeks to come, including:

- Saturday, Jan 28 at the Floyd County Museum in Charles City from 11 a.m. - noon.
- Saturday, Feb. 4 at the New Hampton library from 11 a.m. - noon.
- Saturday, Feb. 11 at the Nashua Welcome Center from 11 a.m. - noon.
- Saturday, Feb. 25 at the Fredericksburg library from 9 to 10 a.m.

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HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS: REGISTER TO EARN A \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP

Iowa high school seniors may register for a chance to receive one of 50 scholarships worth \$1,000 each. To be considered, students should:

- Register between Nov. 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, at www.IowaStudentLoan.org/Know-How
- Follow the emailed instructions to complete two online tutorials before 4 p.m. on March 31.

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When winter lasts too long

Remember God provides the warmth we need even on that coldest day

Sometimes winter lasts too long. The winter I speak of is not referring to the weather, but rather a season of life when pain, suffering, disappointment, confusion, and helplessness fall on you like snow on a cold, gray February day.

Sometimes life is like spring when everything is new, growing, and beautiful. The temperature is perfect with a slight breeze that kisses your face.

But in this journey called life, we know winter will come, but some winters stick around way too long. I'm in a winter season currently, and it's never been so cold.

I grew up in an environment of poverty, abuse, and violence; even though I was raised in the hot state Texas, winter has always followed me. In many ways, I'm thankful for the winter seasons of life because the cold wind of suffering blew me into the arms of Jesus where I found the warmth of his love. The heat of his embrace comforted me and melted my hard, insecure heart.

So what do we do when winter lasts too long?

1. We must grieve.

Grief is saying, "Jesus, this is so hard, and I feel like I'm going die of a broken heart. Jesus, I'm so disappointed by what's happening." Grieving is essential to healing.

King David is a great example of what grieving looks like when he writes to God: "You hid your face; I was dismayed" (Ps. 30:7b, NIV).

2. We must remember Jesus never promised a winter-free life.

He actually said, "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, ESV). Jesus overcame the world and powers of darkness through his perfect life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Because of his work, it will eternally be spring. But until that day, he alone is the coat I wear to keep me warm on bone-chilling days.

3. We must remember that Jesus is sovereign over the seasons of our lives.

The same God who blessed me in spring is the same God who blesses me in winter. The words of Job are a winter season encouragement, "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (Job 2:10, NIV).

Paul reminds us, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:28–29, NIV).

4. We must remember that in our weakness, Christ makes us strong.

During prolonged winter seasons, our strength and resources are exhausted and we are left with nothing but Jesus. But Jesus is all we need, for in him is his life, love, and limitless power.

The words of the apostle Paul have never meant more to me: "Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power

is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:8–12, NIV).

5. We need the warm embrace of Jesus through his people, the Church.

One of the blessings of my current winter season is that my family and I have never been so beautifully loved by God's people. And not just by my local church, but by God's people from all over the country.

Another blessing of this long winter is that it has reaffirmed my passion for the local church to be more than a Sunday event but to be an everyday family that cares for one another during difficult seasons of life.

Because I've experienced winter before, I know the snow will melt, the temperatures will eventually warm, and new things will come to life and spring will smile at me.

But I don't ever want to forget the man, husband, father, friend, and pastor that God has shaped me to be in this winter that has lasted too long.

So, wrap yourself up in the blanket of his love, and remember, God is that burning bush even on the coldest of days.

Marinate on that.

— This blog by Derwin L. Grey was written for christianitytoday.com.

Church Services

NASHUA

LITTLE BROWN CHURCH
littlebrownchurch.org
Pastor Drew McHolm
Service times: Sing-A-Long Service, 10:15 a.m., Sunday; Traditional Service, 10:30 a.m.

REPUBLIC CHURCH

1794 280th St., Ionia
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Service time: 10:30 a.m. Sundays.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

314 Brasher Street
Pastor Sarah Namukose
Service time: 9 a.m. Sundays.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN

300 Merrill St.
Pastor Todd Burrichter
Service time: 9 a.m. Sundays.

CEDAR POINT CHURCH

310 Main Street
Pastor Darin Cerwinski
Service time: 6:30 p.m. Friday.

ST. MICHAELS CHURCH

602 Cedar Street
Father Tom Heathershaw
Service time: 6:30 p.m. Saturdays

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10009 Union Ave.
Pastor Drew McHolm
Service time: Sunday, 9 a.m.

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Pastor Roberta Robbins
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OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL CATHOLIC CHURCH
3030 Highway 24
Father Nick Radloff
Mass: Saturday, 4 p.m.

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2616 140th St, Lawler
Student Pastor Sue Cira
Service time: 9:30 a.m., Sundays.

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222 S. Washington Ave.
Pastor Ron Koch
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PEACE UCC CHURCH

221 Oak St.
Pastor Scott Smith
Service time: 9 a.m., Sundays.

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218 3rd St. NW
Father Nick Radloff
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ST. LUCAS

ST. LUKE CATHOLIC
215 East Main
Father Nick Radloff
Mass: Saturday, 6 p.m.

PROTIVIN

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124 N. Main St.
Father Nick Radloff
Mass: Sunday, Feb. 5, 8:30 a.m.

LITTLE TURKEY

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
3303 160th St.
Father Nick Radloff
Mass: Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

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Proverbs 14:23



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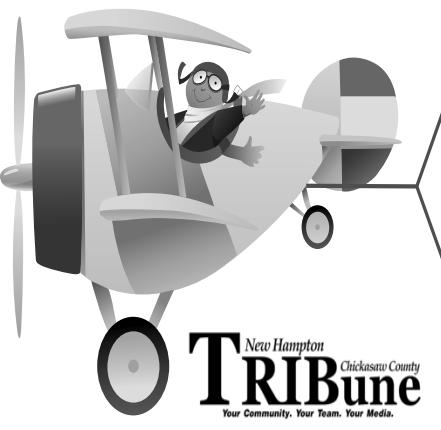
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Dorothy Huber/Tribune

Celebrating the season in Nashua

Dallas Weiss gets ready to slide a case of Bud Light in the beer case curling event that was part of a fun-filled Winterfest celebration put on by the Nashua Park Board at Cedar View Park on Saturday. And just what is beer case curling? Well, whoever put the case closest to the mark got to take the case home!



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A 'loss' may hurt but maybe it should make us smile, too

My dad would be celebrating his 90th birthday on Friday. It hit me last week, and for a moment, I was thinking my math was off. But then I completed the equation 2023 - 1933 and by God, it equals 90.

Dad passed away in October 2004, just a few months shy of his 72nd birthday, and I've written about him often in this space so even though he never stepped foot in New Hampton, Iowa, some of you have come to know how special he was to me.

I won't go through the whole litany again of how he grew up on a farm near the small Minnesota town of Gibbon, Minnesota, joined the Air Force, saw the world (and thankfully for me, met Mom, a native of Sweden), retired from the service, worked in a flour mill for 12 years and then sold insurance for another 20 ... oh wait, I just did, didn't I?

Save for the last couple of years of his life when he battled lung cancer, he was always a man on the go. He never really retired from the insurance business; he just cut back a little. He didn't want anyone else going out to his clients and selling them a "policy they didn't need." It hurt his pocketbook, I'm sure, but that's just the way he was.

But right up to the end of his life, he loved going to the Legion, playing cards, roughhousing with his grandchildren and talking to anyone and everyone.

Look up the phrase "never met a stranger" and there's a picture of Mel Fenske. At least there is in my "book of phrases."

So I have a hard time imagining Dad at 90.

Would he finally lose that full head of hair? Would it finally go all gray? Would he still be going to the Legion? Would he still yell at the officials who cost the Red Sox, Twins and Vikings God only knows how many games?

I didn't mean for this column to just be about my father and the fact that he would have turned 90 on Friday. No, this column is about loss, and the pain that never quite goes away. The heartache dulls, for sure, over time, but the pangs remain.

Take my Dad's death in 2004, as just one example. Josh was 5; Noah was 4, and they have fleeting memories of Grandpa Mel. During a recent trip to Illinois, we sat around and talked one night, and maybe Noah said it best when I asked him if he remembers my dad?

"I do, but sometimes I wonder if they are real memoires," he said. "I remember he was tall, and he liked to play with me on the floor, but maybe that's just because you told me that stuff."

I think about what my boys lost on that fall day more than 18 years ago.

They lost someone who would have been their biggest fan. They lost a man who would have told them many wonderful stories. They lost the guy in their life who could have told them what it was like to hear the news that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. They lost a man who would have been their mentor, who would have taught them to learn the lessons he didn't.

On an almost daily basis, there's a point when I miss my dad. Maybe it's after another Vikings' early playoff exit. Or maybe it's when I've written what I think, at least, is a really cool story.

And sometimes I don't really need a reason. I just want to pick up the phone and give him a call and chat about anything and everything.

Today, I want to call him and tell him that Mark Spangler died.

Unless you were around in the 1990s and listened to Mason City radio, you probably have no idea whom Mark Spangler is.

But for a few years, he was one hell of a buddy. Jeff Wilford (another guy you've probably never heard of), Mark and I were drinking buddies whose friendship survived my sobriety.

Before I found this new life, we'd end up at Jeff's or Mark's for the "after-bar party," and we would solve all the world's problems. Politics, religion, sports, we took it all on and came up with solutions that, because it was like 4 in the morning, no one ever heard.

After sobriety, my two drinking friends made sure that we had a weekly movie night, and we found out that even without a drop of alcohol in our systems, we still had all the answers.

My dad met Mark once, and they talked for two hours. They were, in a way, kindred spirits — incredibly social and interested in everything.

Mark and I were Facebook buddies, but truth be told, we hadn't seen each other for years. He moved to Mankato, got out of radio, got into education as a para and battled kidney disease for years.

As I sat down to write this column, I checked Facebook and saw the news, delivered by Mark's son, Garrison, that Mark was gone.

And I felt loss.

I don't know what the point of this column should be, I really don't. I could come up with something trite and say I should have been a better son to Dad and a better friend to Mark Spangler.

But that's not the point I want to make. Sure, I could have been that better son, and I certainly should have stopped in to see Mark when I was in Mankato.

No, the point is this, when we feel loss at someone's passing, maybe we should smile a little because that feeling comes because you have some wonderful memories that you cherish, that make you laugh a little.

With Dad, it was the Twins games, the card games, the B.S. sessions. With Mark, it was those after-bar parties and movie nights.

All I know is that on Friday, I'm sure Dad and Mark will be solving all of Heaven's problems over a few cold ones. And that makes me smile.

Happy birthday, Dad. Hope you can get in a word edge-wise with Mark around.

Have an opinion? Write a letter!

Even though we don't have a regular opinion page, the New Hampton Tribune welcomes letters to the editor.

Deadline for letters is noon on Mondays, and all letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification purposes.

Letters from local residents or letters dealing with local issues will be given first priority, and writers are limited to 600 words per letter and one letter per month.

The Tribune reserves the right to edit letters for space and libel reasons.

To submit a letter to the editor or a Guest View, e-mail editor@nhtrib.com.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

CHICKASAW BOYS USE BIG SECOND HALF TO COMPLETE SEASON SWEEP OF WAUKON

BY BOB FENSKA
editor@nhtrib.com

Reid Rausch laughed when asked about the shot he made at the end of the first half in New Hampton's Northeast Iowa Conference game against Waukon Friday night.

"I don't think I could hit it ever again," the Chickasaw sophomore said, "and I don't know if my coach wants me to be shooting it ever again unless there's a second left."

True that, but if there was an omen in Friday night's game, it was Rausch grabbing an offensive rebound and throwing the ball over his head — while, mind you, being fouled — and completing an old-fashioned three-point play to give New Hampton a 25-22 lead heading into halftime.

"I was going to square up but then I caught that there was only a second left on the shot clock on the other end," Rausch said, "and I figured I didn't have much choice but to toss it up there."

It turned out to be the correct choice, and the second half was all New Hampton as the Chickasaws outscored Waukon 32-15 to run away to a 57-37 win.

The victory not only improved New Hampton to 6-8 overall and 3-4 in the NEIC but it also gave the Chickasaws a great ending to an up-and-down week.

SEE NH Boys, 13



Bob Fenske/Tribune

New Hampton's Reid Rausch (above) takes a contested 3-point shot while teammate Carter Steinlage (left) is fouled hard under the basket during Friday night's Northeast Iowa Conference game against Waukon.

Bob Fenske/Tribune

CHICKASAW

Chickasaw girls light up Sailors, fall to NEIC foe

Wegner scores career high 23 in Columbus win; coach finds positives in loss to Waukon

BY BOB FENSKA
editor@nhtrib.com

David Leichtman knows enough about basketball to realize that if his New Hampton girls basketball team has two girls combine to score 53 points ...

... Well, the Chickasaws have a good chance to win. A really good chance.

He has the proof as senior Carlee Rochford scored 30 points and junior Molly Wegner added a career-high 23 in a 66-53 victory over Waterloo Columbus last Tuesday, and although the Chickasaws would come up short in a 51-38 loss to Waukon last Friday, Leichtman believes even in that game his team showed that it can play with virtually anyone.

Start with that Columbus game in which the Chickasaws KO'd the Sailors with a 1-2 punch. Rochford hit 11 of 17

shots from the field, including going 3-for-6 from 3-point range, while Wegner hit 7 of 14 shots, including a 4-for-8 showing behind the arc.

"Carlee obviously had a great game, and really filled up the stat line," Leichtman said, "but it was definitely a Molly Wegner highlight night."

Wegner credited her outburst to practice.

"I think I'm getting more confident," she said, "because I'm getting into the gym, getting shots off and working on it. I'm not going to lie, that was really fun. We all know it can't just be Carlee. Everyone face guards her so that means one of us is going to be open and we need to knock down those shots."

The key quarter for the Chickasaws at Columbus was the second, when New Hampton outscored the Sailors

SEE NH GIRLS, 13

New Hampton's Taylor Ries makes a valiant effort to "save" the basketball during last week's game against Waukon.

Mustangs provide tough competition for Chickasaws

BY KELLY TERPSTRA
sports@nhtrib.com

The Independence Mustangs can sure roll.

The New Hampton bowling squads took on those talented Mustangs last Friday at Bowlaway Lanes in New Hampton.

Indee (4-2) came up with a resounding victory over the host Chickasaws by a score of 2,966 to NH's total of 2,468.

"They've come a long ways since the beginning of the year," said Chickasaw head coach Andy Aries. "They bowled very well. We just so happened to run into a very, very qualified team. That happens."

Independence's Teegan Cross and Michael Decker each qualified for the individual state bowling tournament last year at Maple Lanes in Waterloo and

SEE NH BOWLING, 12

they were in competition last Friday at New Hampton.

But it was the Mustangs' Ethan Gonzalez who stole the show as he compiled a 457 series to nab medalist honors. His high game was 255.

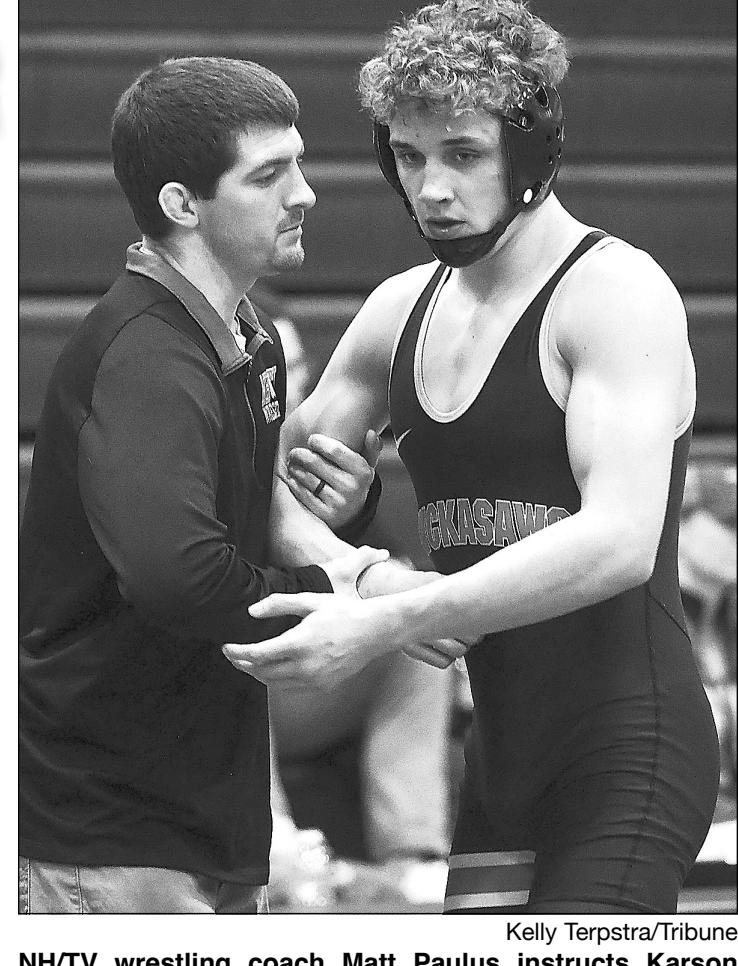
Chickasaw sophomore Landon Mart was the top roller for New Hampton as he shot a 371. His high game was 188. Jaxson Porath was next on the scorer's sheet with a 331, followed by Jackson Brincks' 317. Chase Gebel was three pins back of Brincks with a 314. Jamison Porath (279) and Jarrin Robinson (203) were NH's other varsity scores.

"As long as they hold their heads up high and realize they did shoot well — things will fall into place. It's a few pins here, it's a few spares here that they could have got," said Aries.



Kelly Terpstra/Tribune

New Hampton's Mary Jane Schmitz watches her bowling ball head down the lane during a meet with Independence that was held at Bowlaway Lanes on Friday.



Kelly Terpstra/Tribune
NH/TV wrestling coach Matt Paulus instructs Karson Kolbet on a move during Saturday's Denver Duals.

Chickasaws drop NEIC finale, go 2-1 at Denver Duals

NH/TV heads to Waukon for conference, but Chickasaws denied regional duals bid

BY KELLY TERPSTRA
sports@nhtrib.com

state's current setup in how it determines regional dual qualifiers.

"I did not think we would get bumped out. The ranking system is a flawed system. The state has to switch to putting a committee in charge of dual rankings. Until they do that, the system will never work," said Paulus.

Regional duals are set to take place in all three classes on Tuesday, Jan. 31. The state dual meet is now held when Class 1A and 2A sectionals were previously held on Saturday, Feb. 4. There are no sectional tournaments this winter as all three classes will compete solely in district competition in order to determine the traditional state tournament field.

NH/TV (14-12, 3-2) finished up the regular season at the Denver Duals on Saturday and closed out the NEIC portion of its slate last week Thursday against No. 3 Waverly-Shell Rock. The Go-Hawks defeated the Chickasaws, 52-9.

NH/TV wrestled in three duals at Denver over the weekend. The Chickasaws avenged a prior dual loss to North Fayette Valley by overcoming the Tigerhawks, 39-33. NFV defeated NH/TV, 44-36, in a dual back in December in West Union by a score of 44-16.

"This was a great win for us because it showed our guys that we are getting better. We put a lot of emphasis on being at our best late January — early February," said Paulus.

The Chickasaws also topped Garner-Hayfield-Ventura, 63-12.

NH/TV lost its last dual of the day to Fennimore, a powerhouse squad from Wisconsin that won last year's Division 3 state team tournament. The Golden Eagles have won three state team tournaments in the dairy state since 2016. Fennimore defeated the Chickasaws, 51-21.

NH/TV senior P.J. Anderson (20-20) came up with a huge pin over NFV's Caden Kerr at 138 pounds. Anderson stuck Kerr in 5:06. Kerr defeated Anderson in that aforementioned dual, 10-8.

Anderson said his scoring has improved this year — especially on his feet.

"That's where I'm better. I need to get to that right away and just keep it going. I've kind of struggled on offense in year's past. This year I've really found out how to score on my feet," said Anderson.

Kerr, along with Crestwood's Cade Korsmo and Decorah's Lane Rolfs, will be Anderson's main competition at districts. Anderson will have to beat two of those wrestlers in order to qualify for his first state tournament ever. He did not compete in districts last year because of a concussion.

"I think I got a good chance. It will be a tough district, but it's winnable," said Anderson.

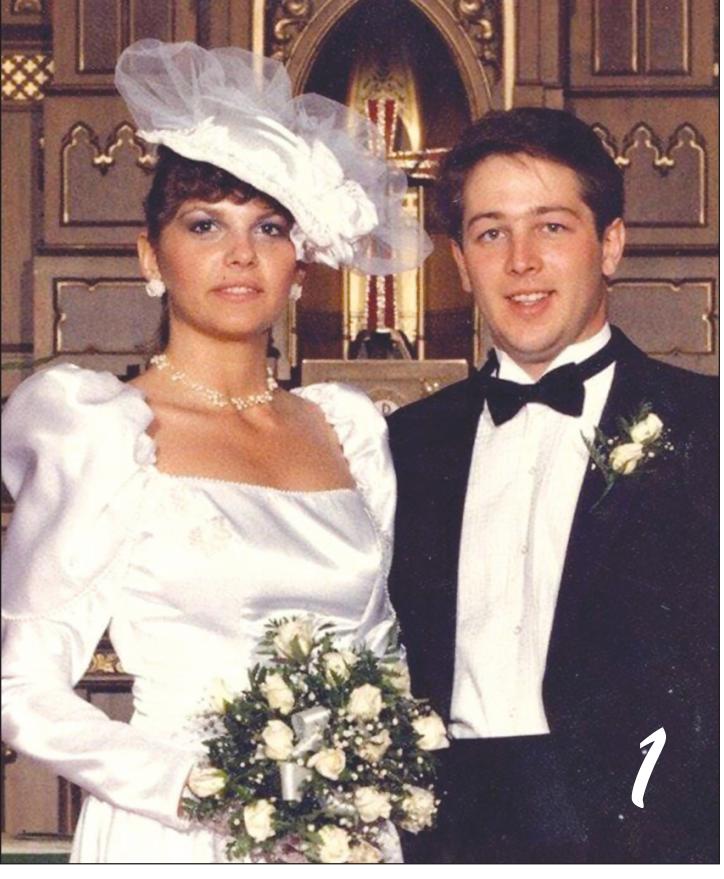
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2023 Wedding Guide

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Thursday • 01.26.23

Years upon years of wedded bliss



Young couples thinking about getting married might be wise to get advice from any of the couples on the first two pages of our wedding section ...

... However, the Tribune is going to make you guess who they might be; the answers are on Page 18!



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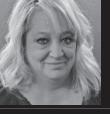
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Say yes to the dress!

Tips on how to find the ideal wedding dress

Planning a wedding requires making many different decisions.

The choice of wedding attire is among the most crucial decisions that couples must make.

Whether the wedding is traditional or customized to suit couples' personalities, brides and grooms want to look their best when they say, "I do."

Many brides-to-be spend a significant amount of time looking for their ideal wedding dresses.

What defines the right gown depends on personal preference and is unique to the person doing the search. For example, a dress that sets a fairy tale scene for one bride may not necessarily align with the tastes of another.

According to Bridal Atelier, the average bride-to-be tries on three to seven dresses before finding the right one.

The following tips can help

those shopping for dresses find a look that makes their big day even more special.

1. Don't get hung up on perfection

Many brides get caught up as they search for the one dress they consider perfect.

No dress is likely to check every box.

Getting hung up on a desire to find a dress that has it all may make it hard to see the beauty in other dresses.

Remember, with the talents of an experienced tailor or seamstress, most dresses can be tweaked to suit your vision of the ideal gown.

2. Consider the season

Getting married during the hazy and humid days of summer is an entirely different experience than tying the knot during the heart of winter.

The fabric of the wedding dress should complement the season, whether it's lightweight

and breezy for a warm day, or more substantial and cozy when darting to the ceremony in snowfall.

3. Flatter your figure

Chances are brides-to-be know which cuts and styles are most flattering. Mimic those style choices in the wedding dress.

If you want to take focus off of full hips, choose a basque or asymmetrical waistline. Gowns with substantial straps or higher necklines may be better if you have a larger chest.

. Sheath and mermaid style gowns are options if you are confident with your figure and want to show off your curves.

4. Try a bit of this and that

Don't go into a wedding dress appointment with firm parameters. Although you may have a ball gown style in mind, after trying on other options something with a less voluminous

silhouette may actually catch your eye.

Many brides also automatically defer to strapless gowns, when various straps and sleeves can be very appealing.

5. Arrive with a firm budget

Weddings can be costly. It's important to set a budget for the wedding dress just as you will with other expenses.

There are plenty of dress designers across a wide spectrum of price points.

A willingness to consider and ultimately purchase a less costly dress can help you stay on budget.

Browsing through magazines and looking online can provide wedding dress inspiration as well.

Also, when in doubt, defer to the experts at bridal shops who have experience choosing dresses that brides are inclined to love.

Great gift ideas for wedding party members

Brides- and grooms-to-be select people who are near and dear to their hearts to be special parts of their momentous days. So the chance to participate in a friend's or family member's wedding is a great honor.

A wedding party plays a key role in both the ceremony and reception. Participants do everything from helping couples make decisions to addressing invitations to providing emotional support. As so much is asked of the wedding party — particularly the maid/matron of honor and bridesmaids — it's customary to bestow gifts on those people who devoted so much time and effort to the wedding. These potential bridesmaid gifts can serve as a thoughtful and unique way to thank bridesmaids for all that they've done.

- Photo books: Gift the bridesmaids with photo books of carefully curated photographs taken throughout the wedding planning experience. Pepper the books with other photos, such as images of you with the bridesmaids at fun moments throughout your lives together.

- Portrait wine or champagne glasses: Beverage glasses customized with the bridesmaids' likenesses painted or printed onto them make for great gifts. Bridesmaids will enjoy sipping their favorite drinks in special glasses for years to come.

- Personalized phone cases: Who doesn't rely on their mobile phones these days? Treat your bridesmaids to something special with colorful phone cases with their names embossed or printed on the outsides.

- Wellness or spa gift card: After all of the running around for the wedding, bridesmaids may need a little extra pampering. Gift cards to a local spa can fit the bill.

- Birthstone jewelry: Necklaces, rings or earrings become that much more special when they're customized to the recipients. Purchase jewelry with your bridesmaids' birthstones so they'll be as unique as each woman.

- Friendship bracelets: Gift each bridesmaid with beaded friendship bracelets that features all of the ladies' initials. Be sure to keep one for yourself, and you all can enjoy nights on the town showcasing your special bracelets.

- Monogrammed robes or purses: A customized pocketbook, robe or another item bridesmaids will use every day can make for an extra-special item that will serve as a daily reminder of how much you appreciate them.



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It adds up to a lot of years

We started our wedding guide with two pages of pictures from 11 couples' wedding days.

Add them all up and on those two pages represent 464 years of wedded bliss.

And who are the couples who were nice enough to share their photos with us?

- 1. Gayla and Bryan Hugeback (37 years)
- 2. Glennda and Wally Murphy (58 years)
- 3. Kris and Ron Markham (55 years)
- 4. Kathy and Mike Babcock (44 years)
- 5. Deb and Jay Jurrens (38 years)
- 6. Linda and Mike Kennedy (57 years)
- 7. Connie and Bill Boyd (34 years)
- 8. Jeanette and Mitch Laures (20 years)
- 9. Jeff and Jennifer Monteith (21 years)
- 10. Joe and Mary Sharon Peraud (52 years)
- 11. Lynn and Linda Schwickerath (48 years)



Budgeting for your big day

Wedding planning is a unique experience unlike any endeavor most couples will ever encounter. Much effort goes into planning a wedding, and that includes building a budget that ensures the big day will be fun without breaking the bank.

Most couples planning a wedding have never tied the knot before, so it can be difficult to determine a reasonable amount to spend.

It's easy to go overboard when planning a wedding, and couples may find their list of wants and, consequently, their expenses, growing as they get into the weeds of wedding planning. Though it might require some difficult decisions, couples can keep these tips in mind so they can build a wedding budget that won't land them in debt after saying, "I do."

Determine funding. The days when a bride's parents would finance the wedding entirely on their own are largely a thing of the past. According to a recent WeddingWire Newlywed Report, parents now pay for 52 percent of wedding expenses.

As couples begin establishing a wedding budget, it's imperative that they first determine who, if anyone, will be helping them finance the big day.

Fifty-two percent of wedding expenses is a significant amount of money, but in that scenario, couples will still need to come up with roughly half of the money needed to fund their wed-

dings. Couples without substantial savings may be forced to cut back in order to avoid beginning their life as a married couple in debt.

- **Make a list of potential expenses.** It's important that couples get an accurate estimate of how much it may cost them to get married in a given city. Couples who met in a city and still live in a city but grew up in a suburb might save a considerable sum by getting married in their hometowns.

Compare and contrast prices in locales you're considering, and then build your budget accordingly. This can help you avoid sticker shock and going over budget.

Notable expenses to budget include the venue, attire (i.e., wedding dress and tuxedo rental), hairstyle and makeup, entertainment, photography, and transportation, among others.

- **Make a list of what's most important.** Most couples will have to compromise in order to avoid taking on debt to finance their weddings. An earnest discussion about what's most important to each person can ensure you both get what you want.

Each person can make a list of their priorities, ranking them from most important to least important. Once lists are shared, couples can see where their priorities converge and where they diverge.

Any items that rank low on each person's list of priorities can be afforded less funding, while those that are high on each list can take up more of the budget, if necessary.

- **Commit to a limit before spending a dime.** Committing to a limit before spending a dime can help couples keep wedding costs more manageable. Once that number is defined, couples can then work within its parameters, which can make potentially difficult decisions a little easier by narrowing options.

Make that Valentine's Day proposal extra special

Feb. 14 is a day dedicated to love. And for couples who are pondering their futures together, Valentine's Day may seem tailor-made for wedding proposals.

According to a survey of 1,000 married adults by James Allen, an online diamond and bridal jewelry retailer, people really love getting engaged on Valentine's Day.

Forty-three percent of Millennials report favoring Valentine's Day for proposals — whether they're doing the asking or being asked.

There are a few things to keep in mind when considering whether or not to pop the question on Valentine's Day.

Here are some ideas for planning the proposal on the day made for love:

Make it your own

Even if the proposal is taking place on one of the most popular days of the year to get engaged, interject some personality into the occasion. Include important elements that are dear to the person to whom you are proposing, such as favorite flowers or a preferred restaurant.

Restaurant reservations may be hard to come by on Valentine's Day, so you may want to select a more private meal at home or something catered unless you want to share your proposal with a crowd.

Visit possible locations in advance

Think about where you would like to propose and visit those areas at different times of the day.

Timing a proposal during sunset with the rays creating a warm glow on a park bench or on the incoming tide can make it more magical.

Adjust proposal area plans for busier crowds expected on Valentine's Day.

Have the ring at the ready

Jewelry shops are in demand around Valentine's Day, so be sure to choose and have the ring sized well in advance of the proposal.

This ensures the ring will be ready in time. If the ring will be a surprise, get hints beforehand to understand your loved one's design tastes.

Consider bringing a friend along when shopping to offer support and advice.

Use chocolate to your advantage

Boxes of chocolate are ubiquitous on Valentine's Day. Nestle the ring inside of a box of truffles or another favorite confection and have the question "Will you marry me?" attached to the inside of the box.

Hire a photographer

Work with a photographer to capture the moment, whether it's a professional photographer or a friend enlisted for the task.

This way you can be fully immersed in the moment as it unfolds, and then look back on the experience from a different perspective when the photos are printed.

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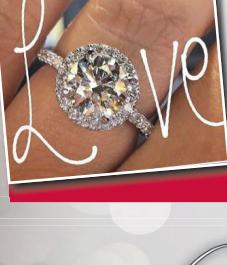
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