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BALATON PRESS TRIBUNE

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TAHS graduates ready to meet challenges in next phase of life

By Per Peterson
Tracy Area Headlight Herald

"Today, we say goodbye to a formative chapter in our lives, the most significant to this point. We bid farewell to many luxuries and anxiously, but eagerly, welcome the coming of new responsibilities. Although change is uncomfortable it is the sole way in which we as individuals can hope to progress. On behalf of the class of 2019 I would like to thank this community that has raised and supported and will continue to guide us in this coming, unwritten chapter of our lives. Congratulations to the graduating class



Amaya Swanson gives a thumbs-up during TMB's graduation exercises on Sunday.

of 2019."

With those words from Fritz Landherr, Tracy Area High School's Class of 2019 closed a major chapter in the book that is their lives and opened another.

Sixty-four Panthers graduated Sunday and are moving on with the next phase of their lives. At Sunday's 126th Commencement Exercises, class speakers looked back on their high school years with fondness and ahead to a big and challenging future.

Bobbi Jo Evers gave the welcome speech Sunday and shared the collective excitement the students had as they begin the journey into the next chapter of their lives.

"Today is a bittersweet day, as we say goodbye to one another and hello to our futures," Evers said. "I can personally say that after seeing your faces every day for the last four years, whether I wanted to or not, I will truly miss you all."

Cassidy Smith shared her thoughts of the "past" during her commencement address

Graduation 2019:
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Tracy Area High School graduates Cassidy Smith and Kelley Hoek show their excitement following the 2019 commencement ceremony on Sunday in Tracy. Photos by Jenny Kirk

Community Happenings

BLOOD DRIVE

Once again you are able to the gift of life. On Tuesday June 11th from 12:30 to 6:30pm the American Red Cross will be at the Community Center for our summer blood drive. Call 507-734-5021 or 507-829-1615 to schedule a time.

MEN'S GOLF

Men's Golf League will be getting together Thursday May 30th at 5:00pm on EastBay Golf Course.

June Fun Fest Winner
Jill Gilman

Lemburgs are making positive strides

According to a Caring Bridge post from Sunday, 18-year-old Malinda Lemburg, who was seriously injured in a car crash north of Balaton on the morning of Thursday, May 9, was moved out of intensive care at Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis and into a different room that had been previously occupied by

Lemburgs:
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McDonnell awarded Balaton's first-ever POW medal

By Jenny Kirk

Stone and Groeneweg Post 237 in Balaton awarded its first-ever Prisoner of War medal during a special presentation that was part of the Memorial Day program sponsored by American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary on Monday at the Ralco Technology Campus auditorium.

Recipient LeRoy McDonnell received the POW medal posthumously.

"It means a lot to our family," daughter Glenda Roe said.

Roe and her brother, Duane McDonnell, were joined by their families as they accepted the award in their father's honor.

"It's just great to have him recognized," Duane McDonnell said. "We also appreciate all the research that was done



As the daughter of Balaton's first-ever POW medal recipient, Glenda (McDonnell) Roe gets a respectful handshake from Army Col. Kyle Nordmeyer as her husband, Jon Roe, and other family members look on. Photos by Jenny Kirk.

because Dad never talked about it.

Roe agreed, noting that

the family is grateful for the Balaton natives who found out more of the World War II

POW's history.

"He never talked about it when we were growing up," she said. "I imagine he probably would have talked to somebody else who went through it, but to tell someone who hadn't was too horrific and painful. We weren't really aware enough to ask the right questions either, until it was too late. He died young, at age 62, so this is so special. (Guest speaker) Duane (Loeck) worked so hard on this."

Loeck, a member of the Balaton Class of '66, shared some of Private First Class LeRoy McDonnell's history on Monday.

"When I first started putting this presentation together on LeRoy, nobody knew that he was a POW in Germany" Loeck said. "He was a great American. And after we

POW Medal:
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Lake Yankton water levels main topic of recent meeting

By Jenny Kirk

More than a dozen local officials and area residents gathered recently to continue discussing potential solutions regarding Lake Yankton's near record-high water levels and the destruction it has caused.

Current conditions seemingly mirror those that occurred in fall 2010 and spring 2011, when recurring major rain-storm events caused a significant rise in Lake Yankton. The spike in water levels sparked the need for a 2012 drainage study, which was conducted for the Balaton lake by consulting engineers and surveyors representing Bolton & Menk, Inc.

"In reference to the study, I think there's some upstream retention opportunities and downstream flood management things that can help the lake out, so it doesn't have such drastic swings in elevation," said John Biren, Lyon County Soil and Water Conservation District administrator.

Utilizing information provided by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the study reveals that the lake level rose approximately a foot over a one month period to its highest recorded level — almost two feet above the ordinary high water level of 1511.2 feet — eight years ago. And two weeks ago, the water level recorded in Lake Yankton was nearing the all-time high of 1513, prompting more discussion.

"We had a lot of snow last year and we're in a wet pattern again, so that's a big factor," Biren said. "It's important to note that we're in a historical high of precipitation — Mother Nature has given us a lot in the last two years. We're pretty close to the highest ever on record."

In the study, seven potential ponding locations where



Several city and county representatives were present at a recent meeting centered around potential efforts to improve Lake Yankton water level issues. Pictured (from left) include: Devin Ryan, Spencer Smith, Mitch Holm, Rick Anderson, Nick Seaton, Kent Henkel, Bryan Smith, John Biren, Lars Johansson and Jim Wichmann.

dams could be constructed to control downstream flow were identified, though limited interest from private landowners along with funding issues — estimated to be as high as \$450,000 — reportedly put a kibosh to the possible projects. Recently, however, Biren said there have been positive signs that efforts could move forward in the somewhat near future.

"The solutions are all on private land, so we have to have

a program that is enticing enough for a private landowner to participate," Biren said. "That's what we're working on. (Recently), some of the landowners said, 'John, why don't you go check it out on my property and see how that would work?' So, our next step from that meeting is to do some survey work to see how it would impact the landowners' property."

The completed study of the watershed contributing to Lake Yankton in the upper part of the Des Moines River watershed in Lyon and Murray Counties found three primary issues:

- During major storm events, there appears to be an inadequate outlet into the upper reaches of the Des Moines River. As a result, flow is routed backwards on the system into Lake Yankton. Operable gates have been installed on the box culvert downstream from Lake Yankton in order for the City to prevent backflow into the lake during high storm events.
- A small dam type of structure is located on the downstream system near the northeast corner of 120th Street and 230th Avenue intersection. When boards are placed in this structure during times of drought, water can be routed from the stream back into Lake Yankton.
- The outlet channel from Lake Yankton to the east is very flat and poorly maintained, thus limiting discharge from the lake.

While the Marcotte Dam located near the Troy Wendland farm is more of a diversion dam, which allows water to back into the lake on low-flow situations, Biren said the Brockway Dam acts more like a screw gate.

Lake Yankton:
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