



BILL STICKELS III | COUNTY STAR

Too hot to handle

Travis Johnson, age 9, tries to blow out his flaming marshmallows before they get too burnt to eat as part of the free s’mores offered during Feb. 20’s “Third Thursday” in downtown Cambridge. This month’s event featured a fire pit, free s’mores, hot chocolate and coffee, along with horse-drawn carriage rides on Main Street.

Crikey! Council declines to change animal ordinance

BY BILL STICKELS III
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The Feb. 18 Cambridge city council meeting sounded more like a segment from the Animal Planet channel as the council heard a request from a resident to change the city’s animal ordinance to allow for the keeping of wallabies within city limits.

Channeling his inner Steve Irwin, Cambridge police chief Todd Schuster presented the council with a zoology lesson as he relayed a litany of information regarding the Australian

animal.

“To start this process, I had to look up what a wallaby was,” Schuster told the council. “Basically, they’re a small kangaroo native to Australia and New Guinea.”

After giving several other factoids regarding wallabies, Schuster went into the care of the animal. He explained according to research he did, wallabies are not domesticated, cannot be housebroken and can be costly to keep; however, they “can make a great pet in the right household.”

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Act your age!

Leap year babies stay forever young

BY LORI ZABEL
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Have you ever been told to “act your age?” It can hurt – “Just grow up and cut the shenanigans!” – unless you’re someone born on Feb. 29.

Leap-year babies, or “leapers,” are immune to the insult. They’ve spent their lives telling people they’re turning 4 on their 16th birthday or 10 on their 40th. Any attempt to tell them to act their age will be met with irrefutable evidence that they are, in fact, acting their age. They will always win.

With the next Leap Day occurring this Saturday, Feb. 29, four local leapers share the ups and downs of acting their age when their birth date shows up on the calendar only once every four years.

MEMORIES OF THE EARLY LEAPS

Curt Olson, of Cambridge, was born in 1940 and will turn 20 (80) this weekend. He grew up celebrating his birthday on Feb. 28 on the off years. He remembers his two older brothers teasing him about his odd birthday, but he came back with ammunition of his own.

“When I’d get in trouble growing up,” he said, “they would kind of bawl me out, and I’d say, ‘Just remember how old I am now! That’s why I’m acting the way I am!’ I used it to my benefit – I still do!”

Nathan Keech, of North Branch, turns 12 (48) on this leap day. He also celebrated his big day on Feb. 28 growing up, but for a reason he can’t recall he tried it on March 1st one year.

“But it didn’t feel right,” he said, “so I never did it again.”

His earliest memory of being different from the other kids is the “hoopla” surrounding the year he turned eight.

“It was a big deal that it was my ‘second’ birthday,” he said.

When he was younger, he remembers his mom telling him his birthday would fall on a different date than the year before – and he couldn’t understand it no matter how she explained it.

TWINS PREFER NON-LEAP YEAR BIRTHDAYS

Twin sisters Jessica Blais and Jill Mattson, of Isanti, hit the birthday jackpot by being born identical “mirror” twins on leap day in 1984 – a 1 in 50,000 chance. They’re turning 9 (36) on Saturday.

“When we were born,” Blais said, “they actually asked my mom if she wanted to put the 28th or

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Curt Olson



Nathan Keech



Jessica Blais



Jill Mattson

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