

75 years.
That's how long he's served in the Legion.

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Auditions for Spiderman



Lee Zion • Lafayette Nicollet Ledger

Students at Lafayette Charter School received special training to learn how to walk at a perfect right angle to gravity. All of these are contenders for the role of Peter Parker in an upcoming production of "Spiderman: The Musical." The Lafayette Nicollet Ledger reminds its readers that today is April Fools Day, and people should all be watchful lest any further nonsense comes their way.

Road fix is in the pipeline

By Lee Zion
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The work to repair Highway 12 took a giant leap forward Saturday afternoon, as a construction crane, courtesy of Schaefer, dropped off a culvert where the water now overruns the road.

Seth Greenwood, engineer for Nicollet County, said the road has been underwater since 2018. He hopes the road will be opened again before the year is out, although it's hard to make any promises.

The culvert — its official name is an "equalization pipe" — is one of the next steps in the process. The pipe, 110 feet long and 3 feet across, will be placed under the roadway, at a right angle to the road. This will allow water to flow through and make sure that the water level of Kuester Slough on one side of the road is at the same height as the water level other side of the road, Greenwood said.

Already, the area was filled with enough dirt to raise the height of the road well over the waterline. Over time, the dirt will settle, lowering that height but forcing the soil to become more compact and solid. This is needed because of the poor quality soil in the area, he said.

In the end, the road will be 2 feet above the level of the slough.

For now, the county must wait for the dirt to settle. County workers come by every week to measure how much farther down the dirt goes.

"That trend line is continuing to show a consistent downward trend," he said.

Right now, it's impossible to tell when the dirt will settle enough. Once that happens, the next step is to remove any extra dirt. After that, Mathieowetz Construction will install the culvert. The road will



Lee Zion

Workers get the culvert pipe off the truck Saturday, setting it down near Kuester Slough, at the part where it overruns Highway 12. The pipe will be installed later this spring.

then be repaved and opened, he said. "We're hoping that it's open some time this year," he said. "I want to open it as soon as anybody, but really, we have to wait and see just how

that settlement goes. And until the settlement slows down, and almost stops, we can't move forward."

The total cost of the project is just short of \$6 million.

Now you can get a vaccine

On Friday, Governor Walz announced that all Minnesotans 16 years of age and older will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.

The day this went into effect was Tuesday, March 30.

The final eligibility expansion comes as the federal government has promised an increased supply of vaccine by April. By expanding eligibility to all Minnesotans,

providers across the state will have the flexibility they need to fill appointments and support the state's most critical goal: to get as many Minnesotans vaccinated as quickly as possible to end this pandemic, according to a statement from Gov. Tim Walz.

"Minnesotans have done a remarkable job helping our most vulnerable get vaccinated and waiting

their turn. Now, as we prepare to receive more vaccine heading into April, it's time for all Minnesotans to get in line," Walz said. "Minnesota has been leading the nation in getting shots into arms, and we plan to continue that leadership. By expanding eligibility to all Minnesotans, we will give providers the flexibility they need to keep getting shots into arms quickly, efficiently, and equitably."

Raiders close out season with 10-9 record, 6-6 in conference

By Ruth Klossner

The Nicollet Raiders had some ups and downs this year but ended up with a winning record, going 10-9 overall and 6-6 in the Valley Conference.

When the team's first scheduled game of the season was canceled, the Raiders were able to pick up a game — against Redwood Valley.

Of that, coach Martin Stevens said, "We started the season with some tough competition against Redwood Valley, a very solid 2A school. That gave us a very good idea of the level that we wanted to play at."

Although a number of games had to be rescheduled — or other teams booked — as

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2021 BOYS' BASKETBALL STATISTICS

Name (Grade)	Total Points	Avg. Pts./Game	2 Pt. FG%	3 Pt. FG%	FT %	RBS	Assts.	Steals	Blks.
Shane Stevensen (12)	417	21.9	56.1	38.5	74.4	251	83	25	40
Colton Thomsen (11)	193	13.8	57.8	36.8	57.1	147	80	13	14
Collin Bode (12)	191	10.1	42.3	30.4	60.7	74	33	16	6
Riley Mans (12)	115	6.1	44.4	37.8	66.7	58	59	28	9
Dylan Willaert (12)	96	5.1	51.6	19.0	64.5	83	62	11	12
Drew Grommersch (12)	71	3.7	31.0	29.3	40.0	50	46	4	3
Grant Bruns (10)	50	2.9	33.3	42.9	57.1	39	13	9	4
Tyler Laven (12)	44	2.9	44.1	0.0	36.8	53	16	12	4
Raider Totals/Averages	1198	63.1	51.0	33.7	38.2	774	393	118	95
Opponent Total/Average	1183	62.3							

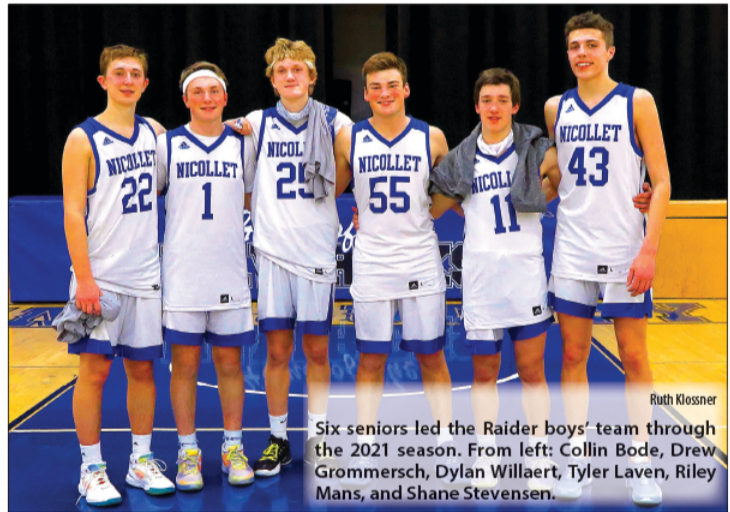
Also on the varsity roster were juniors Dominic Rosin, Joe Ogden & Edward Carleton; and freshmen Cody Strunk & Connor Martens

Coaches: Martin Stevens, Sid Brown & Kevin Calsbeek

Student managers: Tori Adams & Morgan Arndt

All-Conference: Shane Stevensen

All-Conference Honorable Mention: Colton Thomsen



Ruth Klossner

Six seniors led the Raider boys' team through the 2021 season. From left: Collin Bode, Drew Grommersch, Dylan Willaert, Tyler Laven, Riley Mans, and Shane Stevensen.

Nicollet unveils memorial of Jill Thompson

By Ruth Klossner

Since the tragic death of then Nicollet High School senior Jill Thompson 14 months ago, classmates and school staff have pondered how to honor her.

The 2020 seniors wanted to do a memorial that would remember Jill's love of volleyball and art. They talked to teacher Lisa Fischer, who then went to NPS art teacher Nicole Lecy.

"Several friends and classmates had ideas and they reached out to Jill's family. They didn't want just a portrait," Lecy said. "I mentioned volleyball as one of her major passions, and they wanted to see what I could come up with."

Lecy started work on the pencil, colored pencil, and charcoal creation in early December, finished it the end of February, then had it framed.

"We were in and out of quarantine," Lecy said. "I spent a couple months of work here and there."

With Jill's mom Rae Ann, dad Wayne, and sister Jackie on hand, the print was hung in the school

hallway last week, right outside the door of the gym where Thompson loved to play volleyball.

"It was an emotional unveiling," Lecy said. "I think they liked it."

Volleyball, obviously, is the major focus of the print, with Lecy using photos taken over the years to represent the sport, Jill's teammates, and Jill's emotions.

"I kept it all black and white except for Jill to draw attention and to make it special about her," Lecy said.

The central image is a volleyball huddle with Jill, wearing #5, in color. Teammate and best friend Hailey Stoecker (#7) and Jill's sister, who wore #10 when she was playing, are visible with her.

Ideas for the images around the print's edges came from classmates.

"There's volleyball, obviously — her face when she made a kill, flying through the air when she made a volleyball tip," Lecy said.

Jill's "goofy" personality is represented, along with remembering that she was always taking selfies, and her friends.

Dory the fish is included because

Thompson loved Disney.

"All of her art pieces were Disney-related," Lecy said. "She did a Dory piece. Dory reminds us to 'just keep swimming, to keep on going.'"

Paint brushes are included, along with a clarinet that Jill played in the high school band. There's a feather and birds.

"Jill was ready to fly. ... She went to heaven before we were ready," Lecy said.

The hand in the print has several implications — God reaching out to Jill, reaching us with memories, reaching out to her family.

The turtle in the lower right corner was something that Stoecker suggested, noting that Jill loved turtles and planned to get a tattoo of a turtle.

In addition to the original framed print hung at the school, several smaller prints were made for Jill's family and a few classmates.

Thompson's life was cut short in a car accident Jan. 20, 2020, north of Nicollet. At her funeral Jan 28, 2020, coach Judy Radke remembered her time as an athlete.

"I believe most of us will remember Jill on the court or on track. Last year ... she did very well. This close to state," Radke said, holding up her fingers with a narrow gap in between. "This year, I'm going," she told me and anyone else. That this year, she was going to make it to state."

Radke said that when she was asked to identify Thompson's "group," she realized that her group included everyone.

"She didn't care if you were young or old, a jock or nerd, a musician or artist. Because she loved all and treated everyone with the same beautiful smile," she said.

On the basketball court, she practiced and worked with her coaches. "And she'd look over at her coaches with that big grin," Radke recalled. "She loved to rebound, and we loved to watch her rebound. She had elbows everywhere."

Her true love, however, was volleyball.

"You all got to see her in her happy place, and boy, did she shine. She made the match so exciting, and she was everywhere," Radke said.

