



Power of prayer

Wieneke finds his calling of making rosaries

Growing up, Gene Wieneke had two essential values instilled into his life: the importance of Mass and the power of praying the rosary.

Those values came from his parents, who were both strong Catholics.

"None of us did sports. We didn't have a TV or phone until the mid '60's," Wieneke said. "Our evenings were spent washing dishes, saying the rosary, then sitting outside as a family."

The rosary meant the world to Gene's dad (Vincent). So not only did he pray it, he made them as well.

"If you asked my dad for a rosary, he'd make you two. The rosary was very important to him," Wieneke added.

When Vincent's health began to slip, and he could no longer make rosaries, Gene knew someone had to take it over.

That someone turned out to be Gene, who has been making them for approximately the past 18 years.

At the time, Wieneke didn't realize how important making rosaries was, but over the years, he discovered just how deeply impactful it really was.

"I really enjoy it. I get more out of this than I would have ever imagined," Wieneke said.

A main highlight for Wieneke is making rosaries for the 2nd grade First Communicants, both for the Family Faith Formation students and Guardian Angels Central Catholic students.

To this day, Gene and his wife, Deanne, continue to donate rosaries to those students.

"Every kid making their First Communion needs to have a rosary," Wieneke said. "The neatest thing about it is all the thank you's from all the kids."

Another neat aspect for Wieneke is being a bus driver at GACC. Driving to





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Trinity Heights the past couple years has been special for him.

“I get to know the kids a little more personally that way,” Wieneke said.

Gene said it takes him about 90 minutes to make a rosary. The chain he uses is a shiny silver, and he loves when it changes color for a very specific reason.

“The neat thing is, the more you pray with that rosary, they turn to a gold color,” Wieneke said. “So if it’s gold, you know it’s being used a lot.”

Gene noted the strength of the rosary is well taught in West Point.

“The teachers here are incredible. The way they teach religion to the students; those kids are on top of things,” Wieneke said. “By the

time they make their First Communion, they are very educated in the Catholic religion.”

For Gene, that is what matters.

“The rosary is just a tool that keeps track of your prayers. I just make that tool,” Wieneke said. “The teachers who are teaching about the Catholic religion, that is what’s important.”

Gene has also learned how to make rose petal rosaries, along with Marjorie Batenhorst.

Making rosaries for others is a tradition Wieneke is proud to carry on. Gene noted that his dad used to make rosaries for the Winnebago tribes and their CCD programs.

He also made rosaries to sell to anyone who wanted to buy one. Carol Schuetze sells them at Schuetze Plumbing in West Point.

Every penny of those sales went directly to Relay for Life. And now, Gene does the same thing. Wieneke also fixes rosaries. And while he doesn’t charge, any money that is given for a fixed rosary also goes directly to Relay for Life.

Wieneke wants to continue making rosaries for as long as he can. He also wants to start making them for the Knights of Columbus, and well as some extra ones for his grandkids.

During his time of making rosaries, Gene has encountered various experiences that have reinforced the importance of the rosary and knowing how powerful praying it really is.

“I never dreamt doing this would be so meaningful,” Wieneke said. “Now I know why he [my dad] did it.”

Remembering Halle

Her smile. Her love. Her compassion. Her spirit. Those were just a few of many wonderful traits that Halle Kreikemeier possessed.

Those, and many more, will be remembered as West Point, Guardian Angels Central Catholic School and surrounding communities are left mourning the loss of Halle.

Kreikemeier, an 18-year-old senior at GACC, was killed in a farm accident on Thursday, May 11 just north of Snyder.

“Halle was an incredible young woman of faith. Everyone who met her remembers her wonderful smile,” GACC High School Principal John McAndrews said.

“She would just fill the halls and classrooms with her contagious joy. Halle had so many talents, and was a great friend to students. She will always be remembered fondly by her GACC family.”

Halle was involved with her school and active in her parish, and was beloved by many.

“Halle spread joy through our hallways with her huge smile. She laughed easily and often. One of her favorite school activities was game days and picking themes for ball games,” GACC School Counselor Leslie Kreikemeier said.

“She gave others a sense of belonging by encouraging them to dress up and join in the student section. She was our Homecoming Queen because she was so kind.”

GACC High School was open Thursday evening as counselors, GACC staff members and the ESU2 Crisis Team were available.

“ESU2 commented on how impressed they were with our students. In the midst of their mourning, they were composed and kind to one another,” Leslie said. “It was so hard to see them so deeply sad, but it was also beautiful to see them hold each other, to go into the church together to pray.”

With summer vacation arriving and school no longer being in session, Leslie’s message to students



is “keep in touch.”

“Students, send a text to a classmate that you may not text daily just to say hope you are having a good summer. Meet up and attend summer baseball games the way you go to fall football games. Go get shaved ice or ice cream. Spend time together,” Leslie said.

“Parents, when you don’t know what to say, just be present. Be in the same room. Give your child a hug on his or her way out the door. The human touch is incredibly healing.”

Those who knew Halle will remember her genuine approach to

life. The love she shared with those around her didn’t go unnoticed.

“Halle was kind and engaging to all she met, and made an effort to include everyone. She was creative and loved giving gifts or nice surprises. She was enthusiastic about school, her activities, and most importantly her faith,” GACC teacher Matt Schlaebitz said.

“Her relationship with Jesus was genuine and deep. Halle was always smiling because she was able to focus on the good in life and never dwelled on the bad. Halle made me, and everyone in her life, feel truly loved and appreciated.”



Bluejay athletes of the year

GACC honored their 2022-23 Athletes of the Year. Reese Throener was the Female Athlete of the Year. Dax Doernemann was the James Ridder Male Athlete of the Year.

Alumni Banquet 2023

Delores Meister

The spirit of Guardian Angels Central Catholic consumed the Nielsen Community Center as alumni gathered in merriment and joy to greet and reminisce at the annual Alumni Banquet June 10.

Father James Weeder led the before meal prayer. Delayna Minnick Hunke extended the welcome. Photos were taken. Following dinner, honorary classes were recognized.

Impromptu class reports were given by selected class reporters. Richard Knobbe reported on the Class of 1948. Delores

Prinz Meister covered the Class of 1953. Speakers were Harry Beck '58; Walter Ernesti '63; Dave Schuetz '68; Greg Strehle '73; Kim Schlautmann Murcek '83; Angela Cihacek Roeber '98; Kim Kreikemeier '03; Johnny Guenther '13.

Slide videos of every class were shown throughout the evening.

The Class of 1978 assisted with the afternoon 4:30 Mass at St. Mary's. The event was hosted by the Class of 2013 led by class president Delayna Minnick Hunke. Dinner was prepared by Graybeal Foods.

JayFest event held at GACC

Delores Meister

Jayfest was held June 9 at the Nielsen Community Center with a purpose of having fun while being a fund raiser for the Guardian Angels Central Catholic High and Elementary School and a community project.

Recreating high school prom for fun was the 2023 theme. Guests were invited to come attired in prom clothes of their youthful high school days. Guys showed up in tuxedos, leisure suits, white dinner jackets with bow ties while their "dates" were wearing glitzy glamorous gowns of taffetas, laces, silks with ruffles, bouffant skirts or long slender skirts in black or tantalizing colorful hues. Guests not in prom attire were also numerous.

Father James Weeder and Tyson Dinslage welcomed the guests. Prime rib dinner was served by GACC classes of 2025.

Silent auction items were numerous. Matt Brester was the auctioneer for the live auction. Specialty items, student created art books were for sale.

The selection of eight candidates for prom king and eight for prom queen was made through a series of games and the judgment of an audience audiometer.

Sister Joy Rose and Sam Ulrich were crowned Prom Queen and Prom King. They split a \$1000 prize.

Live music was provided by Pink Kadillac, Omaha, for dancing.

Funds were 90% to education and 10 % to the Cuming County Fair Foundation.

Honorary co-chairs were Ben and Kelly Dinslage, Tyson and Pam Dinslage, Alex and Olivia Walker and Chris Hutchinson, treasurer.

Committee members were Nate and Tori Bruning, Roger and Paula Buss, Nick and Katie Huges, Todd and Amber Hugo, Travis and Angela Oligmueller, Sam and Stephanie Prokopec, Kevin and Sarah Thiele, and Tyler and Sarah Toline.

BIRTHS

Jacquelyn (Steuter) '07 & Brian Hendricks, daughter, Hallie Rita DOB 5/22/23

Bradee (Rief) '12 & Travis Schiefelbein, daughter, Blakelee Jo DOB 4/29/23

Jeff '04 & Kaylie (Wietfeld) '06 Bracht, son, Asher Hayes DOB 5/28/23

Emily (Knobbe) '13 & Eric Wietfeld '14, daughter, Collins Elizabeth, DOB 5/29/23

Krista (Fischer) '15 & Josh Batenhorst, son, Judson John, DOB 6/1/23

Ben '11 and Julia Eilerts, daughter, Avila Grace, DOB 6/7/23

Kylie (Kreikemeier) '10 & Brenn Kai, daughter, Colette Halle, DOB 6/13/23

Andrew '08 & Kelly Wiechman, son, Walker Aloysius, DOB 6/19/23

Drew '05 & Anna Wimer, daughter, Sophie Jean, DOB 7/12/23

Greg '06 & Aliza Brusning, daughter, Nellie Max, DOB 7/18/23

WEDDINGS

Connor Klitz '17 married Katie Tobin on 5/20/23

Allyson Plagge '19 married Jakob Meier on 7/15/23

Meghan Brusning '20 married Xavier Steffensmeier '19 on 7/22/23

DEATHS

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD Edward Wortman 1950 DOD 4//23

Henrietta (Knievel) Grewe 1948 DOD 4/28/23

Carol (Dinslage) Greve 1963 DOD 5/3/23

Halle Kreikemeier 2023 DOD 5/11/23

Mary Ann (Luebbert) Kamp-schneider 1957 DOD 6/4/23

Emails Wanted:

Please send your current email address to ranaeobrien1@gmail.com to receive our online edition of "News from the Nest" throughout the year.

Bluejays at State Track & State Golf



Mackenzie Schmid



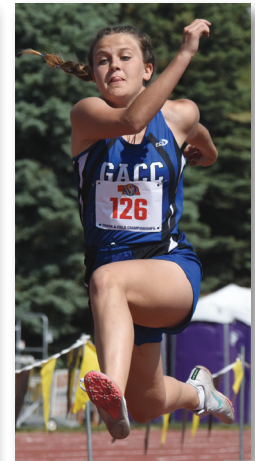
Reese Throener



Jocelynn Skoda won 3 medals.



**Above: Kolton Kralik
Right: Jesse Steffen**



Isabel Hass won one medal.



Ryan Hrbek



Cassie Peatrowsky

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