



**SALUTE TO GIRL SCOUTS
PAGE 3A**

Cascade Pioneer

YOUR HOMETOWN PAPER SINCE 1876



**GIRLS' WRESTLING
IN REVIEW
PAGE 8A**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023

WWW.CPIONEER.COM

\$1.50



Daniel Charland • Staff Photo

From left, Giancarlo Bernini invites Marty Mausser, of Cascade, on stage to assist in a trick where Bernini transports Mausser's driver's license into a block of ice that must be broken out with a hammer.

Catholic magician merges faith, magic tricks

BY DANIEL CHARLAND
daniel.charland@wcinet.com

"Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31), is a concept international Catholic stage magician Giancarlo Bernini takes to heart as he merges sharing his faith with illusion entertainment.

Bernini's show was brought to the Peosta Community Center Feb 28-March 1 by St. Elizabeth and St. Thomas Aquinas Pastorates. According to Jim Hammerand, coordinator of religious education for the St. Elizabeth Pastorate, the purpose of the show was to demonstrate to children, teenagers and families that faith and fun can easily go together.

"It started with a theme of having our students understand they can merge their faith and fun," he said. "Faith might not always be fun, because sometimes you have to put in the work, but at times we can have a good

message along with entertainment. There can be joy in our faith life."

Nicole Casey, director of Faith Formation for the St. Thomas Aquinas Pastorate, said she, Hammerand and other members of their ministry-affiliated cohort were looking for someone who could bring both the right message and quality entertainment since today's children are working with a lot of competition for their time.

Casey said, "Because he's a Catholic magician, who I saw in 2019 at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), I knew what his performance was like, what his message was and how well received he was at NCYC. I wanted to provide that opportunity for our students to get a glimpse of what some of the entertainment at NCYC is like."

Two performances were held at the community center to cater to different age brackets. The Feb. 28 performance catered to young families and

elementary children with a focus on the identity of self and how they see themselves as Christians. The March 1 performance was for middle and high schoolers with a message about the difference between sacraments and illusions. A total of 801 people turned out across both nights from St. Elizabeth and St. Thomas Aquinas pastorates, Dubuque, Key West, Dyersville, Manchester and Anamosa, vastly exceeding attendance expectations.

Bernini said he started merging his lifelong loves of magic tricks and the Catholic faith during in his college years at the University of Texas. Since then, he has traveled the country performing at colleges, cooperate and church events.

"In college, I decided I wanted to do the two together," he said. "I can do magic shows and share my faith as separate things, but there's also a unique

MAGIC ~ turn to page 5A

Supervisors approve maximum levy for Jones County

BY JAKE BOURGEOIS
jake.bourgeois@wcinet.com

Feb. 28, at the regular meeting of the Jones County Board of Supervisors, the supervisors voted to approve the county's max levy as proposed.

In the published proposal, the county proposed an increase of the general fund tax funds of 13.71%, or equal to a \$955,538 increase in tax dollars. The explanation for the increase cited funds needed to "maintain existing programs and services and additional personnel costs." The rural fund has a proposed max increase of 11.46%, equaling \$301,653 in tax dollars. The increase there was "needed to maintain existing rural programs and services, for a maximum transfer to the secondary road fund and to move some personnel costs from the sheriff's department into the Rural Services fund."

No public comments were taken about the maximum levy that was published.

In years past, supervisors had

gone on to approve the max levy immediately after with some reductions of what was published based on where they were in the budgeting process. This year, with the state legislature approving a rollback that will see assessments decreased, auditor Whitney Hein said she hadn't had time to take a look at how the decrease would impact the budget as she's been working to get the new taxable valuations sent out to the other entities.

The county has an extra month, until the end of April, to get its final budget approved with the late assessment adjustment. That, however, wasn't a roadblock to allowing them to approve the max levy at this point in the process.

"That's OK because it just holds us to the same tax dollars," Hein said.

Those dollar amounts could still be lowered when the final budget is approved, but they cannot be increased.

The supervisors approved the max levy rate unanimously.

Merritt embraces lifelong love of pets with Unleashed Paws pet-sitting business

BY DANIEL CHARLAND
daniel.charland@wcinet.com

As a kid, Natalie Merritt was the girl who would walk a mile down the road to play with the neighbor's dogs and stay up until 9 p.m. to play with puppies. Now an adult, she has transformed her love of animals into a pet-sitting business, "Unleashed Paws," that cares for almost any pet residing from Coggon to Galena, Ill.

"I've always loved animals,"

said Merritt, "so I knew, at some point in my life, I was going to find something related to animals."

Merritt attended Kirkwood Community College from 2017-19 for Animal Health. While she entered with plans to be a veterinarian, she ended up changing her focus to animal control. She moved back from Kirkwood to Cascade two years into college,

PAWS ~ turn to page 5A

CascadePioneer
A DIVISION OF
WC
WOODWARD COMMUNICATIONS
INCORPORATED
A DIVERSIFIED, EMPLOYEE-OWNED COMPANY



Enter to Win Cascade Lumber's

Celebrating 70 Years!!!

MARCH PLATINUM PRIZE!

Win a Raised Garden Bed!
Includes Garden Seed Packets!

ENTRY FORM GIVEN WITH ANY
IN-STORE PURCHASE.
WINNER WILL BE DRAWN ON MARCH 31ST

Building With You Since 1953.

1000 1st Ave E, Cascade, IA 52033 | 563-852-3232

Cascade Lumber Co.
BUILD YOUR FUTURE WITH US

adno-331800

Obituaries

Robert B. Steffen



Robert B. Steffen, 79, of Dubuque, formerly of Bernard, passed away Monday, Feb. 27, 2023, surrounded by his family at Dubuque Specialty Care in Dubuque.

Visitation was 2-6 p.m., Sunday, March 5, at Reiff Funeral Home in Peosta, where a wake service was held at 5:30 p.m. Friends also called after 9 a.m., Monday, at the funeral home.

Services were at 11 a.m., Monday, March 6, at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Garryowen, with Rev. Phil Gibbs officiating and Rev. Mark Osterhaus concelebrating. Burial was in St. Aloysius Cemetery in South Garryowen.

Bob was born Oct. 20, 1943, in Dyersville, the son of Bernard and Laurabelle 'Betty' (Jacobsmeier) Steffen. He received his education in the Bernard Country schools. He was united in marriage to Melinda Breitbach at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Epworth, April 20, 1968.

At the age of 17, Bob began working on the farm at the New Melleray Monastery in Peosta. He went to work at Trust Joist as a forklift operator in Dubuque and Horsfield Construction as foreman in the shop for over 10 years. Bob also farmed alongside his brothers, Gary and Phil, for over 25 years, raising livestock and crops.

He enjoyed life to the fullest. He enjoyed going to tractor pulls with his brothers, mowing the lawn, attending stock car races, time in his shop just tinkering - as he always working on something. He loved to travel and went to Vegas three times, once with HCI construction, to Apache Junction, Branson, Florida, and taking his entire family on a Jamaican Cruise. He also enjoyed country dancing at the fairgrounds, playing cards - especially euchre - visits to the casinos and eating out with friends. Most of all, he enjoyed time spent with his grandkids.

He is survived by his loving wife of 64 years, Melinda Steffen of Asbury; four children: Robert Steffen Jr. of Peosta, Melissa McAfee of Cedar Rapids, Marsha (Tim) Current, and Ryan Steffen (friend, Amy Winger), both of Bernard; grandchildren, Malorie and Jake Steffen, Peyton and Kai McAfee, Rylee and Dalton Steffen and Thad and Breckin Current; three siblings, Mazie Arthofer of Peosta, Gary (Patti) Steffen of Cascade and Phil (Vicki) Steffen of Zwingle; brothers- and sisters-in-law, Connie Steffen of Dubuque, Robert Kirby of Keywest, Eldon (Mary) Breitbach of Marion, Betty (Paul) Theisen of Epworth, Mary Westermeyer of Dubuque, Sharon (Ron) Schaul and Rosie Breitbach, both of Farley.

He was preceded in death by his parents; three sisters: Carol Steffen, Diane Steffen and Jane Kirby; one brother, Tom Steffen; father- and mother-in-law, Bernard and Bernice (Oberfoell) Breitbach; brothers- and sisters-in-law: Mike Arthofer, Jerry (Mary) Breitbach, Darlene (Wilferd) Vorwald, Gene Breitbach, Gary Westermeyer; two nieces, Michelle Arthofer and Julie Kutsch; a nephew, Cameron 'Cam' Breitbach.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.reiffuneralhomeinc.com

Card of Thanks

• The family of Steve (Budda) McCabe would like to thank all who supported them, and prayed for Steve, during his illness and hospitalization in Iowa City and after his passing, to the Reiff Funeral Home staff, Fr. Mark Osterhaus and Deacon Dan Kurt, the Dubourg Assn. #1573 4th Degree Knights of Columbus Casket Guards and Honorary Escort and the 3rd Degree Knights of Columbus Council #930 for reciting the rosary, the pallbearers, lecturers, gift bearers, Jeanne for her very touching "A Tribute to my Brother Steve", Darlene Meyer, Marty Mausser, Fillmore Tap, those who brought desserts for the dinner, for all the memorials, cards, prayers, and to anyone who was there for us in any way when Steve passed. Our sincere appreciation is endless.

Prayer

• Oh, Holy St. Jude, Apostle and Martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near kinsman of Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke your aid in time of need. To you I have recourse from the depth of my heart. I humbly beg you, to whom God has given such great power, to come to my assistance. Please grant my present and urgent petition. I promise to make your name known. Say three Our Father, Hail Mary's and Glory Be's. Publication must be promised. St. Jude, pray for us and all who invoke your aid. This Novena has never been known to fail. Thanks to St. Jude and St. Joseph for favors granted.

J.H.

PAWS: Amount of time spent depends on client's need

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

working at the PetMed vet clinic in Dubuque and spending two summers working with dogs at Stone Hollow. Throughout this time, Merritt was trying to figure out how best to turn her love for animals into a career, since the focus on animal control wasn't quite scratching that itch.

"I liked it, but I didn't love it," she said. "There was always something missing - I realized my favorite part was helping clients with their pets, so I decided to make a business of pet sitting. With every job I took there was something missing, and then COVID hit, and every pet-sitting place shut down. Somebody needed their pet taken care of and, out of nowhere, I knew this was what I was going to do."

With a new direction established, Unleashed Paws officially started in 2021.

While Merritt takes on other jobs like dog walking, her main focus is pet-sitting. The amount of time spent with any particular pet is determined by the needs of the client. Merritt said she's spent up to three weeks taking care of a pet and will take on multiple clients if their schedules allow.

"It all depends on what they want - if I'm doing a pet-sit where I stay at their house, one person can't be in three different places, but if someone is okay with me coming during the day, then I can book another person at night."

According to Merritt, clients usually hire her for pet sitting because they're out of town, on vacation or working long hours in the day. For dog walking, clients may have broken legs or be too busy working from a home office. Merritt is also capable of caring for horses, thanks to her experience working at Meyer Horse Company in Bernard. According to Merritt, client



Natalie Merritt, owner of Unleashed Paws Pet-Sitting, plays with Willow the golden retriever in Cascade. *Contributed Photo*

satisfaction is her top priority when pet-sitting.

"I have a great relationship with all my clients - I stay in touch with them, follow up on how I did and how the pet was when they got home. I constantly send updated pictures and messages if they're on vacation. I do as much as the client wants to make the client as happy as

possible."

Unleashed Paws has a bigger future in Merritt's mind, with a physical location capable of taking care of multiple pets at once. While she is not actively searching for a location right now, Merritt said she's open to possibilities if something should fall in her lap.

"My ultimate goal is to

open a storefront, offering doggy daycare where people would bring their dogs to me, and I'd still offer my pet-sitting services at night. It's my dream and a five-year goal, but if it happens anytime sooner, it happens."

For more information on Unleashed Paws, contact Merritt at nsmerritt14@gmail.com or call 563-258-1575.

MAGIC: Message of truth, goodness in the show

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

opportunity in certain circumstances where I can do them together as a ministry.

"When I'm not doing church events, I still try to convey a message of truth, beauty and goodness in the show, which are still Catholic themes in a show where I'm not explicitly sharing a Catholic message. I love shows like this one where we do faith education during the magic show."

Bernini said he sometimes brings direct lessons into his performances, such as card tricks to talk about the odds of finding the right card versus the odds of the universe coming into existence without an intelligent creator. Other times, rather than using magic tricks as tie-ins to specific lessons, he ties in his own story as a magician and finds his identity to encourage young people.

Another lesson Bernini likes to share is how illusions make

people believe things that aren't real and are fought by seeking truth. Bernini said there are spiritual illusions, such as feeling that one isn't loved by God, and these must also be fought with the truth. The exact lessons of his show change depending on the audience and reason for the gathering, but are always meant to encourage and spiritually empower his audience.

"I want people to find their own talents and gifts, figure out how to use them to love the people around them, and share truth, beauty and goodness with the world."

Thanks to the large turnout for the shows, Hammerand said the pastorate is hoping to make this faith-based entertainment an annual event with a new speaker each year.

"There's interest and hunger in the community to do things

like this," he said. "We're excited about what this can do for our local Christen community. We're excited for the response and the opportunities it gave us to connect with people."

For more information on Giancarlo Bernini, find him on Instagram at [berninimagic](https://www.berninimagic.com), <https://www.berninimagic.com> or <https://www.catholic-magician.com> for faith-based shows.

