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SPECIAL FEATURE BY WAVERLY NEWSPAPERS SPONSORED BY RADA MANUFACTURING

THE ODD JOBBER'S JOB: GET IT DONE

Waverly boy is ready to tackle your tasks



ANELIA K. DIMITROVA PHOTO

Prentice is about to enter high school in the fall and when he does, there is no doubt that he will have lived a whole summer's worth of experiences he never would have had, had it not been for his dynamic mind and his interest in getting a job done.

He owns his landscaping business, but 'really' wants to be a firefighter like his grandpa Happel

BY ANELIA K. DIMITROVA

editorcft@gmail.com

His given name is Prentice Ruyle and he's wise beyond his years.

And he's also harder working beyond his years.

That explains how the 14-year-old Waverly boy whose name means "Learner" – and boy, does he love to learn —got his two nicknames.

One is the Odd Jobber and the other, the Mogul.

The Odd Jobber emerged when earlier this year Prentice first came up with the

name for his business. It sums the nature of the services he provides – he's the guy you call when you can't get the job done, but need it done.

And he gets it done with a handshake and a smile to boot. Prentice's tasks run the gamut from lawn care to snow removal, meaning he is ready to help not just during the summer break but year round.

As one might expect, his hard work is his calling card.

With his Odd Jobber logo stamped onto his t-shirt, he's come a long way from

See **JOBBER'S, A2**



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HE DID IT:

Todd Dralle lifted Scotland's 733 lb Dinnie Stones

BY ANELIA K. DIMITROVA

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Lifting Scotland's Dinnie Stones to join the ranks of a select few who have conquered the challenge has been a long-held dream for Waverly's Todd Dralle.

On Tuesday, June 20, 2023, he put a mouthguard in, and, after a period of heavy breathing and intense concentration, he lifted the 733-pound rocks.

On his second try, he held them steady for almost 3 seconds, enough to make it count.

He did it. He may be the first Iowan to claim that victory.

It bears repeating: Todd Dralle did it, and now his name will officially be added to the record keeping book, featuring the names of the 238 lifters who had accomplished this since the 1860s.

As Todd worked on his focus prior to tackling the rocks that sit outside the Potarch Cafe in the town of Potarch, Aberdeenshire, the tension on site in Scotland transpired in the conference room at the Waverly Public Library, where Todd's family

See **DRALLE, A3**



COURTESY PHOTO

On Tuesday, June 20, 2023, Todd Dralle put a mouthguard in and, after a period of heavy breathing and intense concentration, lifted the 733-pound rocks and held them steady for almost 3 seconds, enough to make it count.

Miracle Field's first games, a day filled with fun, cheer and community



AUBREY SCHAFBUCH PHOTO

Players gather for pictures in between the games

BY AUBREY SCHAFBUCH
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Families and friends came to support their young loved ones at Waverly's Miracle Field inaugural games on Saturday, June 17.

Children of all abilities gathered to play their favorite sport, breaking in

the fresh new ball diamond at Cedar River Park. The inclusive space, laid with flat diamonds and a cushioned, rubberized surface, allowed players to interact with their peers and move freely with assistive devices.

Miracle Field is located front and center to all neighboring diamonds,

with sidewalks, concessions and sitting areas all designed with accessibility needs in mind.

With all the neighboring diamonds packed full at 10 a.m., residents enjoyed stopping by multiple games and watching the Guardians and the

See **MIRACLE, A3**

Bremer Co. Attorney's Office to prosecute truancy

BY AUBREY SCHAFBUCH
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In an effort to tighten truancy guidelines, the Bremer County Attorney's Office will begin looking into cases of students with 20 or more absences starting in the fall of 2023. The number of absences will be counted within each academic year.

The new truancy prosecution procedures, written by Bremer County Attorney Darius Robinson, outline clear standards for schools and parents.

After eight days of absences, schools will attempt to resolve the issue by sending out a letter to all parents. The County Attorney's Office will also receive a copy. If absences continue, rising to 13 days, the school will alert Robinson, who will send a follow-up letter directly to the parents or guardians. After 20 days, the school will get in contact with Robinson's office to determine a course of action, including prosecution.

See **COUNTY, A3**

AUBREY SCHAFBUCH

Starting this fall of the 2023-24 school year, the County Attorney's Office will begin looking into cases of students with 20 or more absences.



Four injured in collision on Hwy 3

Four people were injured in a collision on Highway 3 on June 16.

The investigation by the Bremer County Sheriff's Office determined that the driver, Michael Weidemann, of Sumner, who was driving a gray 2023 Chevy Traverse, was eastbound on Highway 3 when driver Zachary Meunier, of Le Claire, who was driving a blue 2014 Ford Focus was on the northbound off ramp from Highway 63 pulled out in front of the Chevy Traverse to go west on Highway 3. The Chevy Traverse hit the Ford Focus in the driver's door. Weideman and the two other occupants of the Chevy Traverse were transported to Allen hospital for evaluation as was Meunier. Meunier was cited for failure to yield upon entering a through highway.

The Bremer County Sheriff's Office was assisted by Iowa DNR, Denver Ambulance Service, Denver Fire, and Del's Auto Service.



COURTESY PHOTO

Above left: Meunier was cited for failure to yield upon entering a through highway. Above right: Four people were injured in a collision on Hwy 3 on June 16.

Miracle Field's first games, a day filled with fun, cheer and community

CONTINUED FROM A1

Diamondbacks play. Viewers stood, propped up lawn chairs, or sat on the built in, wide-stair bleachers. Players from other fields came to watch in between their games, too, sitting on handrails in their uniforms.

The games at Miracle Field featured a wide age range of players who were paired with a buddy from the boy's Go-Hawks High School baseball team to ensure safety and mobility. All the kids were able to go up to bat, take a swing and make their way around the diamonds, accompanied by a thick crowd of enthusiastic observers giving encouraging shouts and claps.

It made for a perfect afternoon, with sunny clear skies and a nice breeze. Young siblings, cousins, and friends buzzed around the scene, making friends and cheering for everyone up to bat. Parents and grandparents hooted in support and connected with fellow community members.

Melissa Simpson rooted on her child, Andrew, on the Guardian's team.

"He has always loved sport," she said. "It's so amazing to have an inclusive league where everyone can play sports and be inclusive themselves."

Many of the children have been playing at the inclusive field at Parkersburg, but parents hope that Waverly will continue their plans for accessibility by forming their own league to bring more opportunities to kids in the area.

"I'm excited for kids to have an opportunity to play the sports they love. I love seeing support from parents, families and other kids," Melissa said.

Matt Waller, a key organizer of the event, was on the field pitching.

"It's been rewarding to help facilitate Miracle League baseball games here in the Cedar Valley since our inaugural season in 2019," he said. "There are 50 players in the league now and it's growing almost weekly. With Waverly having the vision and commitment to add a second Miracle League field in the Cedar Valley, that number will continue to grow for many years to come."

The games, an hour long each, were filled with



AUBREY SCHAFBUCH PHOTO

Brooklyn Dane is reunited with her friends after playing hard on the field.

laughter, cheer and occasional entertaining song or dance breaks from players.

Strong hits were made, with multiple home-runs from both teams. Kids got the chance to interact with the crowd as they did joy runs and poses after crossing home plate with the encouragement of a lively audience.

Long-time player on the Diamondbacks team, Brooklyn Dane, had a blast playing on the new field. With a bright, energetic smile she stated that play-

ing on the new field was, "Really good!" After her game, Brooklyn was cheerfully joined by happy, chaty friends. Lycia, Brooklyn's friend, said that it has been "very fun" to watch her friend play.

Tony Hobson, a recently graduated W-SR high schooler, was a proud speaker for the baseball players who were more than happy to help out with the event. "I am very grateful that our team was able to have a new perspective on the game," he said.

Bremer Co Attorney's Office to prosecute truancy

CONTINUED FROM A1

Any and all documents regarding attendance, such as medical notes and notes sent by parents or guardians referencing absences, will be sent to the Attorney's Office. Excused absences will not be counted towards the 20 days, nor will legitimate medical issues that cause such absences. However, tardies will be counted as full days missed.

The County Attorney's Office will work in cooperation with Deputy Sheriff Kyle Shores, who works as a school resources officer during the academic year.

"We are doing all we can by using the law to get students to school," Shores said. "My goal is not to prosecute parents, but my goal is to be proactive to get students in school, we want them there. I work closely with schools and education is our number one thing."

Truancy issues have been a concern of Robinson's since becoming a prosecutor in Black Hawk County. Robinson has been able to analyze the current situation with Bremer County school administrators and create a solid, consistent plan to help students and hold parents accountable.

"We are setting new policies, standardizing them, and then getting out to schools, partnering in a proactive manner to open up lines of communication," Robinson said.

A first truancy offense is a simple misdemeanor and may lead to a 10-day holding sentence. A second offense is a serious misdemeanor. A third or subsequent offense is considered an aggravated misdemeanor.

Robinson says that although there have been a number of second offenses in his time, he has never seen a third.

The County Attorney's Office, in association with school administrators, are still attempting to determine the number of students that fall over 20 days of absences in Bremer County.

Robinson only began working with the guidance of schools in mid to late spring. He hopes to be able to efficiently track absences to have an exact number by next year.

It is up to the County Attorney Office, schools' administrative teams, and the parents to work together to discern every child's situation, Robinson noted.

In cases where there is a reason beyond a parent's control and the parent is making reasonable efforts to get their child to school, prosecution is not an option, Robinson said. If the issues lies with the student, they may be referred to Juvenile Court Services. In situations where the child is 16 years old or older, the county attorney cannot initiate a case.

"Our major concern is the students," Robinson said. "It will help students by getting them back into school, for not only professional reasons, but to help sustain and satisfy their personal lives. We've seen it again and again, that it enhances the whole of the person. Also, education is the best tool we have for equality, so by ensuring that students get there, we can give them tools to advance themselves and their families."

HE DID IT: Todd Dralle lifted Scotland's 733 lb Dinnie Stones

CONTINUED FROM A1

had gathered for a Facebook Livecast to witness the event.

His mother, Pam Turner and his stepdad, Curt, brought Todd's son, Calvin, 4. His grandmother, Shirley Bonzer, his aunt, Ann Seggerman and her husband, Rich, were there to cheer him on and be a part of a journey that started at least three years ago, when Todd started actively training for the challenge.

Prior to his departure for Scotland, Todd spoke to Waverly Newspapers at length about his dream and how he imagined it might turn out.

In training, he had lifted 750 pounds, so he was fairly confident he could handle the weight, but was also aware that training for a goal is not the same as being on the mat and doing it in real time. That's exactly how it played out.

On his first try, Todd lifted the stones— 318 pounds in his left hand and 414 pounds in his right—but somehow got off balance and the stones moved back and forth, their weight pulling him down. He sat briefly on one of them, realizing that he may have missed the mark.

That did not stop him, in fact, it may have steeled his determination to get it done.

He walked around a bit and after another man lifted the stones successfully, Todd straightened his weight-lifting belt, repositioned his mouthguard and returned to the mat.

Putting his left leg ahead, and breathing heavily, his eyes closed, he gripped the rings that hold the stones, and when his mind and his muscles clicked, he lifted.

Or, as they say, he put the wind under the stones.

For what may have seemed an eternity to him, he held them steady.

"You can do it, you got this!" his aunt, Ann, exclaimed.

"Come on, baby, come on," grandma Shirley Bonzer kept saying as she watched the hardship of the effort.

A collective sigh of relief marked the moment when he dropped the stones



ANELIA K. DIMITROVA PHOTO

As Todd worked on his focus prior to tackling the rocks, the tension on the site transpired at the conference room at the Waverly Public Library, where Todd's family had gathered for a Facebook Livecast to witness the event.

From left: Rich and Ann Seggerman, Todd's uncle and aunt, Pam Turner, Todd's mother, Curt Turner, Todd's step-father, Shirley Bonzer, Todd's grandmother, and Calvin, Todd's son.



ANELIA K. DIMITROVA PHOTO

Todd's family watches from the Waverly Public Library as he accomplishes his long-held dream.

after the victory.

It was a labor of love, one might say—intense, difficult and glorious all at once.

If one were to look just at the stones, they were in tranquil suspension with plenty of air under them.

If one were to look at Todd's face, while the stones had the wind under them, every muscle strained, almost to a snapping point and his eyes looked like they might pop out of their sockets.

After the lift, Todd told Waverly Newspapers this about the experience:

"It feels like time slows down," he said. "The lift only takes 3 seconds, but

it feels like much longer.

"Not being able to work my way up to the weight made it a lot more challenging. One thing I love about stone lifting and strongman is that there's a kind of fraternity amongst the lifters. Whether you're new to the sport or a veteran, everybody is cheering for you to do your best. I had a great time hanging out with the other three lifters, and I felt a real sense of camaraderie. Anyone who joins this sport will find a community that welcomes everyone with open (and muscular) arms."

The words reflect the images the watch party saw as Todd was going through the moment.

Afterwards, it looked like he was hurting, but beaming, as one would after the accomplishment of a big life goal.

There to support Todd no matter the outcome, the family cheered and clapped at the victory here in Waverly that sounded louder than on the ground in Scotland.

One of the watchers, Todd's son, Calvin, was the only one who never doubted his dad could conquer the stones. Playing with his set of plastic dinosaurs and occasionally glancing at the TV screen set up in the conference room to transmit the livefeed, Calvin was somewhat confused about why his dad could not see him or hear him.

Here's why he was sure of his success. "Because he's strong," Calvin said.



ANELIA K. DIMITROVA PHOTO

Family members watch on Facebook Live as Todd attempts to lift the Dinnie Stones. From left: Son Calvin, step-father Curt Turner, mother Pam Turner, and grandmother Shirley Bonzer.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

The June 20 edition of the Bremer County Independent incorrectly listed the locations of the new elementary schools being built in Waverly. The North Ridge Elementary is located on Horton Road and the Prairie West Elementary is located on 5th Avenue Northwest, opposite the Public Works building. Waverly Newspapers regrets the error. Waverly Newspapers strives for accuracy in its reporting and when an error is made, it is corrected expeditiously. Please call us at 352-3334 or email news@waverlynewspapers.com or editorcft@gmail.com.



ANELIA K. DIMITROVA PHOTO

Prairie West Elementary is located on 5th Avenue Northwest, opposite the Public Works building.



ANELIA K. DIMITROVA PHOTO

North Ridge is located on Horton Road.

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