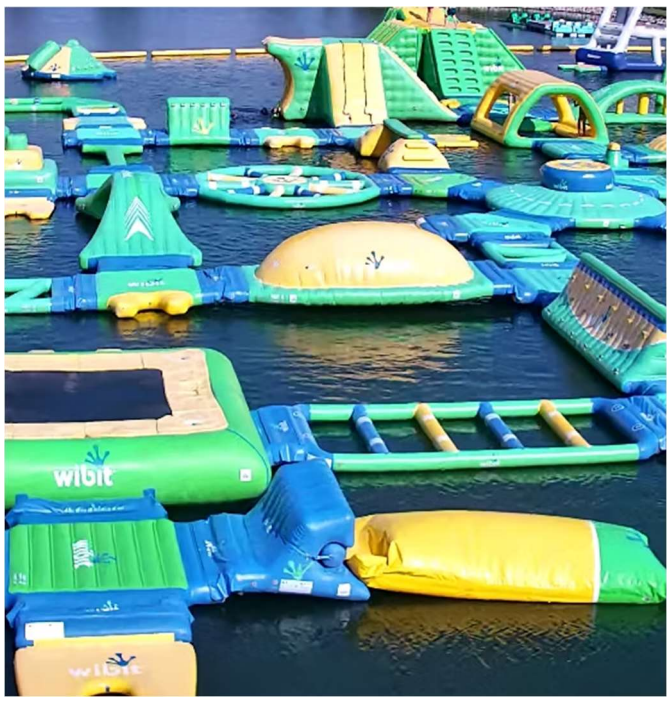
THE
LEDGER PICK-AXE

SMSA'S STUDENT NEWS SOURCE MAY 2026

Summer Fun in Fondy

Gwyneth Haubenschild

Do you need ideas for summer activities? There are many fun things to choose from to have a fun-filled summer. Keep reading to discover your next summer adventure!



The Fondy Sports Park offers many opportunities for outdoor fun

The Fond du Lac Public Library offers a summer reading program, where you can earn prizes for reading. It is free to join and offers a great opportunity to learn new and wonderful things from so many different books and hone your reading skills. In addition, there are some great prizes, including coupons for bowling alleys, pizzerias, and more!

Kelley Country Creamery, located on County Road B in Eden, is a 163-year-old, 200-acre farmstead and family-owned facility where friends and family can spend time together and enjoy fresh ice cream. With a wide variety of flavors from banana cream pie to brownie cheesecake to black licorice, as well as ice cream cakes and pies, there is something for everyone. They also host an annual "Sunflowers Taking Flight" event, when their sunflowers are in full bloom.

The Fondy Sports Park has many different activities to offer with something for everyone! Activities include go-karts, paint-ball, mini-golf, batting cages, a climbing wall, and so much more! Right next door is Fondy Aqua Park, featuring countless water inflatables, water trapeze, and a zipline in the water. It is the perfect place to go to escape the summer heat!

Looking to soak in some local history? The Galloway House is an historic mansion that dates all the way back to 1880. It features 30 rooms, and is believed to be haunted, too. Come explore on your own, or they offer daily tours, which include an historically accurate village surrounding the mansion. Tour the candy store and factory, dress shop, FDL Historical Society Library, and the Newspaper & Print Shop.

There are many other opportunities for fun in the sun; you just have to explore. No matter what you choose to do over the summer months, relax, and enjoy the warm sunshine!

Boys Tennis Season Underway

Bellana Weaver

As busy as the spring season gets with end-of-the-year pressures to keep up with academics, plans for summer break, and a multitude of other responsibilities, we can usually find a pleasant distraction in sports. Away from exams and tests and final projects, sports bring a new diversion to focus on and an enthusiastic community of encouragement in which to participate.

This year's boys tennis team, made up primarily of juniors, just completed ACT preparation and testing, and they are definitely ready for summer break. However, the constant commitments of practices and games lead to missed classes and late night sessions for completing homework: balancing the two is definitely a challenge.

Along with managing the chaotic schedule of participating in a spring sport, members of the boys tennis team shared that there is also the challenge of finding their confidence on the court. Both Andrew Slinde (sophomore) and Brody Stephany (junior) mentioned that sometimes the biggest challenge they face is a mental block from overanalyzing the match. Fortunately, they added, that once they get out of their heads and into the flow of the match they find their confidence.

Most of the members of the team have been playing tennis for years, while others only began recently. Regardless of experience, the athletes reported that they find themselves enjoying it more with such a supportive team.

Come watch the exciting matches and cheer on our boys tennis team at Buttermilk Park. We wish them the best of luck for the rest of the season, and hope to see the team state bound!

Antonio Krizenesky serves

Students Attend CSA Event

Annabelle Seel

On March 5, 2026, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes held its annual Breakfast with "Women: Energizing Spirits." The purpose of the event was to foster connection and promote spiritual growth. The presentation and conversation focused on creating a spiritual legacy, a concrete way to pass on your faith and your relationship with God to others. The event featured a delicious breakfast, time for fellowship and networking, and a presentation by Sister Anita Henning, CSA. She discussed the practice of leaving a spiritual legacy by conducting interviews with those at the end of their life, in order to learn more about their understanding of God and their faith. She shared her personal experience of interviewing her

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THANK YOU SENIORS!

Senior Pick-Axe Members

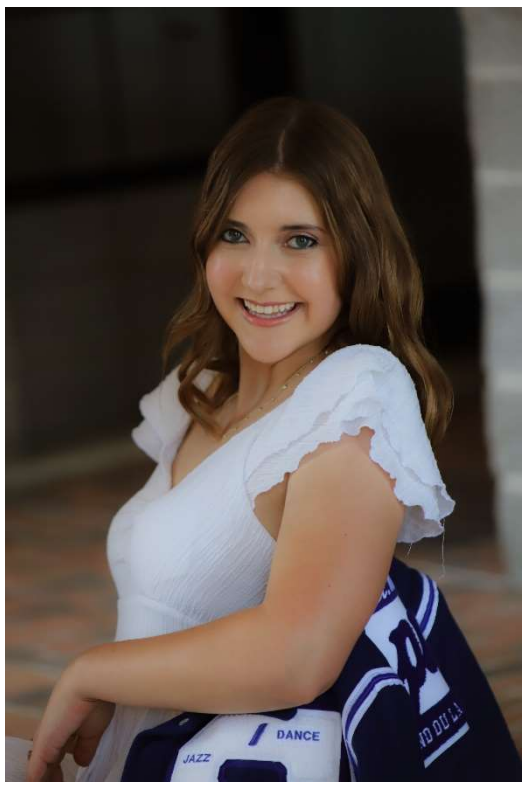
Carson Kaufman
Years on Staff: 2

Carson Kaufman's favorite thing about high school was meeting all the people and creating friendships. As for the newspaper club, his favorite part was being able to view other areas of the school and interview people. "You get a taste for everything SMSA offers," he explained. Carson was also able to get a behind-the-scenes look at everything that goes on, as he was Student Council President his senior year. "It helps me get to know not only other students, but faculty," he shared. Carson's favorite memory from his senior year was participating in the spring musical. "It was so fun because I promised my dad I'd do one year of theatre in high school, and I eventually loved it so much that I wished I could do it again. The experiences were just perfect." By the time he retires, Carson wants to be an anesthesiologist, his dream job. He wants to be settled down and be able to take life "one step at a time." Carson's advice to SMSA students is to "just have fun with it. You wish your life away, and it's just gone. And you'll miss these days. It may seem like 'I just wanna move on, get out of high school,' but you're going to miss it looking back. So just enjoy each and every day, each and every year while it lasts.'"

Sophia Loehr
Years on Staff: 3

Senior Sophia Loehr has been a member of the Ledger Pick-Axe for three years, and the newspaper staff appreciates her dedication over the years. In an interview, Sophia shared some insight on her time writing for the Pick-Axe and being a high school scholar. "I've enjoyed improving my writing skills and being in the know about school activities. I've also enjoyed interviewing people, whether for sports events or for other smaller, enjoyable things." Besides the student newspaper, Sophia was also a member of the National Honors Society and an active participant in other school clubs. She shared her favorite thing about high school, noting that having the opportunity to build friendships with her fellow students in all grades through clubs and social events has been a highlight of her high school career. Still, being so involved can have its downsides. "It's hard to balance everything. Making schedules or having a planner really helped me," she shared. Above all, she found her community in her family and friends and looked to God when she was stressed, sharing she would, "Just pray, or take some quiet time" when she began to feel overwhelmed, and sometimes that's all we need! By the time she retires, Sophia hopes to be a successful, well-liked teacher, and she wants to have a big family. Good luck at St. Norbert Sophia!

Annabelle Seel
Years on Staff: 4



For Annabelle Seel, being a member of the SMSA Dance Team has been her favorite experience in high school, improving her skills and building relationships with her teammates. However, she also enjoyed being a part of the Ledger Pick-Axe school newspaper, interviewing people in the school and community, writing articles, and designing the monthly issues. "I like when I get to shine a light on a person or current event that people may not have known about," she shared. "It has helped me grow my writing and interviewing skills." By the time of her retirement, Annabelle hopes to "have lived a happy, healthy life. I'm not sure where life will take me, but hopefully I have been able to do something I'm passionate about and help others." So, what advice does she offer to SMSA's underclassmen? "Get involved with sports, drama, or clubs. It's a great way to meet people and make new friends." Good luck, Annabelle, in all of your future endeavors and know that the Ledger Pick-Axe writers and advisors will miss you next year!

THANK YOU SENIORS!

Class of 2026 Future Plans

Chase Abler	University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Benjamin Baker	University of Oklahoma
Tate Baker	University of Mississippi - Ole Miss
Marley Bauer	University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
Garver Buechel	University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
Delaney Cribb-Fichtner	Workforce
MaCenna Crofts	Waukesha County Technical College
Margaret Dalzell	University of Iowa
Angel Diaz Jaramillo	Moraine Park Technical College
Joshua Dux	Moraine Park Technical College
William Everson	University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Sianna Feucht	St. Norbert College
Havah Fleisner	Liberty University
Presten Flood	University of Iowa
Christian Flores	University of Wisconsin - Whitewater
Thomas Fouch	University of Wisconsin - Madison
Katelyn Frohrip	Workforce
Scarlett Gaertig	Marquette University
Cameron Galecke	Liberty University
Erika Gehring	University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
Rylee Gilgenbach	University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
Kellan Gill	Northern Illinois University
Porter Golla	University of Wisconsin – Whitewater
Haden Hinojosa	Milwaukee School of Engineering
Ryan Holder	University of Wisconsin - Madison
Jack Holzman	University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
Katherine Howard	Gillette College
Carson Kaufman	University of Wisconsin - Madison
Claire Knowles	Concordia University
Cooper Krug	Moraine Park Technical College
Kale Krusick	University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
Jaxson Lenz	Workforce
Sophia Loehr	St. Norbert College
Beckett Longley	University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Jasline Loynes	University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Jackson Mand	University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
Ana Luisa Moreno Melo	University of Notre Dame
Lynsey Morris	University of Wisconsin - Green Bay
Morgan Nachreiner	University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
Ephraim O'Brien	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
Jackson Pelz	University of Notre Dame
Estella Pleuss	College of Charleston
Gabriella Rademann	Iowa State University
Madelyn Reilley	University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
Maxwell Sadownikow	Undecided
Stephanie Salas	St. Norbert College
Annabelle Seel	University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
Gavin Slinde	University of Wisconsin - Madison
William Stellmacher	University of Iowa
Stella Vande Slunt	University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
Ally Vercauteren	Marian University
Teigue Wagner	Juniors Hockey
Memphis Young	Workforce
Mason Ziebell	Workforce

FAITH FOCUS

Keeping Faith Over the Summer

Isabella Theel

Amidst the sunny and joyfully chaotic days of summer, it can be easy to unintentionally set God aside. Life moves quickly; no school, friend hangouts, countless beach days, and thrilling adventures can easily make it feel as though life couldn't be better. This is when it's easiest to lose your childlike dependence on God and feel habits of prayer slipping away. During the school year, we are constantly surrounded with reminders of our faith; the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the celebration of the Holy Mass weekly, as well as theology classes, nourish our souls and fuel us with Catholic knowledge. Our challenge this summer is to continue to seek this nourishment and remain on fire for Christ amidst the fast-paced summer life.

There are countless opportunities to encounter God this summer and spend time with His Son. One of the most obvious encounters is the Holy Mass. What better way to center your day around God than to begin your morning with Mass? Holy Family offers daily Mass Monday through Friday at 7:00 a.m. and at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, in addition to regular Sunday services.

Adoration also presents an opportunity to set aside time to be still and grow in your relationship with the Lord. Adoration may look different for each person. Some use the time in front of the Blessed Sacrament to read the word of God through practices such as Lectio Divina, while others may journal, pray the rosary, read a devotional, or simply quiet their minds and hearts while patiently seeking God's voice. This summer, you can encounter Christ in Adoration anytime from 4:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. in the recently renovated Adoration Chapel at Sacred Heart. Come for 15 minutes or stay for an entire holy hour.

Christ, being an endless fount of mercy and compassion, granted the faithful the Sacrament of Reconciliation to cleanse our souls and renew us on the path to eternal life. Confession is not meant to be an intimidating experience, but one of love, hope, humility, and forgiveness. That being said, we are all sinners in need of God's mercy, and Heaven rejoices when even one sinner repents and returns to a state of grace. Holy Family offers Reconciliation after every weekday Mass service. This summer, I encourage you to receive the forgiveness Christ so lovingly won for us on the cross and continues to offer to us every single day.

Lastly, daily prayer is like food for the soul, sustaining us and giving us the strength to avoid sin. Our souls yearn to be in communion with God, and when we neglect prayer, we look for a substitute to fill the space in our heart. When this happens, we can easily get distracted by the appeal of secular society and fall into traps of sin. The worst part? We can never be fully satisfied by the material things of this world, and by seeking happiness apart from God, we are destroying our relationship with Him. Daily habits of prayer can be hard to develop, but I find that one of the best places to start is with a morning devotional. Whether you start the day with a rosary, contemplating the day's Mass readings, or by reading a devotional book, it prepares you to encounter the upcoming day in the light of Christ.

Despite the busy thrill of summer, we can still prioritize our relationship with God through the Holy Mass, Adoration, Confession, and daily prayer. Christ constantly seeks us out, and it's time we accept His invitation, even when we are having the time of our lives without school. The Lord wants to celebrate with us when our life is going well, and He wants to comfort us when it's not. Take the opportunity this summer to deepen your relationship with Him, and you may be surprised by how frequently Christ appears in both the seemingly insignificant and joyful moments of your life. For more information regarding Mass, Adoration, and Reconciliation schedules, visit hffdl.com.

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sister and what she learned from this experience.

Nine senior girls from Saint Mary's Springs Academy were invited to attend the event. While this topic may seem far from the minds of young high schoolers, the girls found the experience enriching and informative. They shared that they learned it was important to give those who are nearing the end of their lives a chance to discuss their spiritual journey. One student shared, "This inspired me to be more thoughtful about my relationships with elders. It motivated me to talk with my grandparents more." Additionally, an interactive activity during the presentation invited attendees to set up a "date" with themselves for reflection. Many of the high schoolers followed this instruction and found it to be useful for their spiritual development. Printed journaling guides and times for discussion also helped to aid in their learning and understanding.

Overall, the students left the event feeling welcomed, inspired, and fortified. "We felt like special guests because so many people knew we were going to be there, greeted us, and took time to talk with us one-on-one," one student shared. Another student enjoyed seeing "so many women from so many different backgrounds and stages of life." Each girl attending the breakfast was able to take away a new connection or a bit of spiritual guidance to help her grow in her relationship with God.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

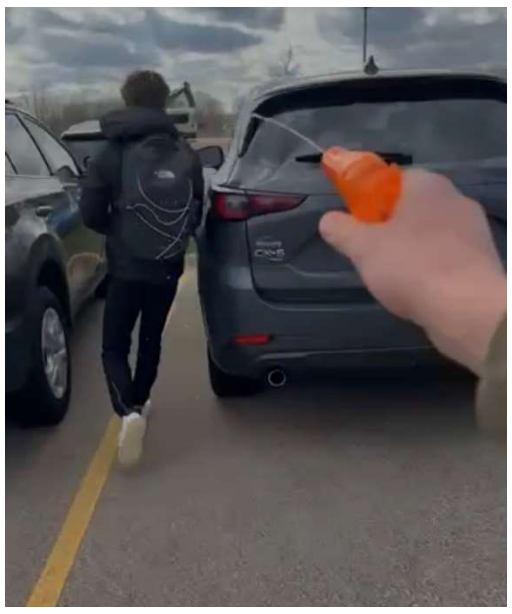
Senior Splashin' Brings Fun to End of School Year

Sophia Loehr

If you've wondered why members of the senior class are suddenly walking around wearing swim goggles, here is your explanation. Senior Splashin' is a water fight game that has recently been growing in popularity among high school senior classes. The SMSA class of 2026 decided to make a splash and play it this year, following the example of last year's seniors.

How our version of Senior Splashin' works: The goal is to eliminate people by shooting them with a water gun. If they are wearing goggles or pool floaties, they are safe. If they are in school, church, a school event, or at their practice or game, they are safe.

Senior Splashin' creates competition and nostalgia. When asked why she joined the game, Claire Knowles simply said, "My competitive nature wants me to win." The award "most likely to win senior splashin' was even selected for a senior superlative this year. There are safety rules, including no entering houses without permission from a resident, and no playing while driving, or while your target is driving.



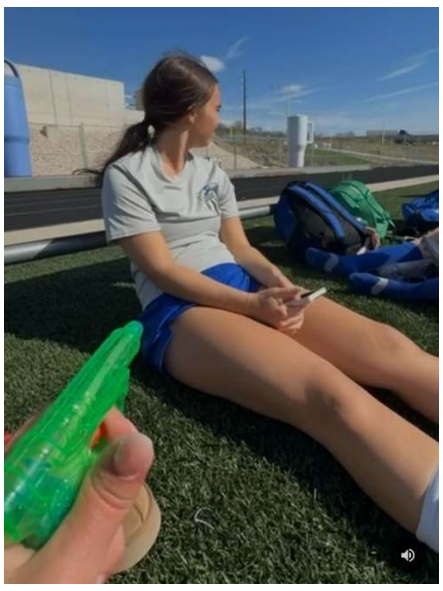
Teigue Wagner was eliminated by Porter Golla

Participants who have already been eliminated have varying feelings about it. When asked about his thoughts, Max Sadownikow joked, "I don't want to get interviewed for that. I got out right away." On the other hand, Carson Kaufman shared, "I feel so free. I'm a free man now that I got out." Wearing goggles in public - to grocery stores, family events, and in the church parking lot - is not a practice that everyone necessarily wants to do for the rest of the school year.

There are many creative ways in which people have been eliminated. Gabi Rademann shares her story, remembering, "He already knew I had him so there was nothing to lose. I walked into Kwik Trip to fill up my water gun, and it was just like perfect timing." Carson was placing his order at A&W and Gabi was able to get him through the window of his car.

All seniors participating contributed ten dollars to a pot. The last person standing wins the prize money. Each of the thirty-two players got an app for the game and were assigned a target for round one. Rounds last as long as the game leader decides. The app enables the player to see his or her target's location. Kellan Gill shared, "It's scary knowing that someone has your location but you don't know who." According to Kellan, Senior Splashin' "is the last game of our childhood." Aside from the money, Senior Splashin is a fun and entertaining activity for senior year.

For more updates:
@smsaseniorsplash26 (Instagram)



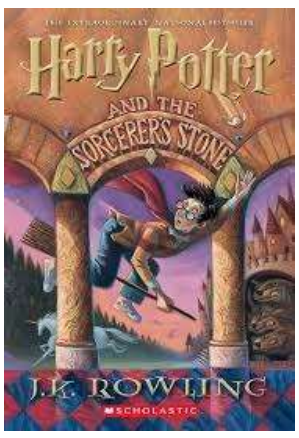
Morgan Nachreiner was eliminated by Marley Bauer

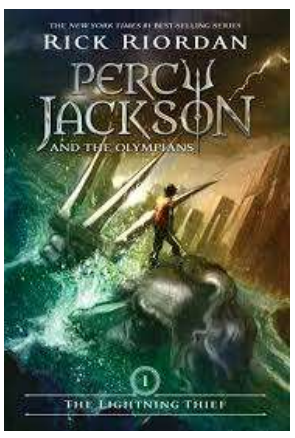
POP CULTURE

Benefits of Reading

Lauren Pelz

Whether you are a bookworm or just read every once in a while, anyone can pick up a book and get lost in the relatable characters and engaging story. Students around the school love reading different genres from dystopian and fantasy to mystery and historical fiction. "I enjoy reading for how it feels like an escape from the real world. I feel like I have lived a thousand different lives because of reading," shared sophomore Greta Buelow. Even with sports and other activities, students can read before bed to unwind and relax. Freshman Hunter Schneider shared, "I like to read about every other day if I can fit it in." No matter your interests, there is a book for you. Do you not like reading words on a page, or maybe don't have the time for reading? Audio books are for you. Freshman Lucia Loehr said, "I love talking about the books I have read and sharing my opinions during Chapter Chats."





Meeting once a month, Chapter Chats is a club to discuss your favorite books with other readers. Aside from being entertaining, books can leave you with lasting life lessons and give you a new perspective. Even books that seem light-hearted or silly can leave lasting impressions on the reader. "Reading *The Naturals* taught me that it's okay to break, and you don't always have to be strong," shared freshman Charlotte Sielaff.

Do you already read or want to get into it? The Fond du Lac Library offers a teen summer reading program where you can log your reading hours to earn coupons for fast food and other fun activities. Next time you're bored and looking for something to do, try reading.

SPORTS FEATURE

Baseball Team Looks Forward to Strong Season

Audrey Bonen

The Ledger baseball season has begun! Both the varsity and junior varsity teams have been working very hard, and they are very proud about what they have accomplished so far. Five players were interviewed about challenges, successes, and their thoughts on the season.

Killian Stoffel prepares to catch the ball.

As the season is just beginnings, the baseball team has gone through many challenges. One of these challenges was all of the new faces on the team. Sophomore Barron Kluck said, "We have a lot more freshmen, which is something we had to get used to, but now we can play like a family." Because of the new people, the team can lose focus during practices, which freshman Hunter Schneider pointed out. "We need to focus more during practices so that we can be prepared for games."

Even though the team has had some struggles, they do have many strengths. Senior Kale Krusick shared, "Our biggest strength is the camaraderie. We love to get behind each other and pick our teammates up. Baseball is a sport of failure, and, being a mental game, having each other's backs is a huge part of our success." Hunter added, "We are able to work together well. That's super important." Junior Killian Stoffel commented on the team's hitting abilities during games. "Hitting is our biggest strength," he noted. "We do a good job of getting the bat on the ball." Barron Kluck agreed, saying that they are a "very good hitting team" which is important in baseball, as you are able to control the game better.

Max Sadownikow stands on the mound, preparing to pitch.

The boys were asked what they think it will take in order to have a successful season. Hunter answered that he believes practice will lead to the improvement the team needs. Sophomore Micah Schneider replied, "For this year to be successful, I think we need to try to have fun and have more energy." Killian added, "We need to have our pitchers pitching their best game and hit the heck out of the ball."

Overall, the boys are excited to continue the season, and they plan to not only improve individually, but as a team in hopes of making it to state.

ARTS

Please make plans to join the SMSA Concert Choirs and Concert Band for their Spring. This free concert will take place at the Prairie Theatre on May 20th at 7:00 PM.

Thank you Pick-Axe Staff for an amazing year!

**denotes a graduating senior*

Students:

Audrey Bonen
Gwyneth Haubenschild
Carson Kaufman*
Sophia Loehr*
Lauren Pelz
Isabella Theel
Annabelle Seel*
Bellana Weaver

Teachers: Mrs. Sales and Mrs. Besson

Want to be a part of an awesome team? Interested in writing about important people and events at SMSA?
See Mrs. Besson or Mrs. Sales about joining the Pick-Axe staff for the 2026-2027 school year