

# Mondamin's

May 2025



**Mission:** To help residents learn what is happening in town and around the area.

## CITY COUNCIL NEWS

The regular monthly Mondamin City Council meeting was held Monday, April 7, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. After approving the agenda, the March minutes, and financial claims, the council addressed questions that the public has had about the future of the old city hall/former library building now that it is no longer used by the city for a water treatment plant. No formal plans have been developed by the council as the public works supervisor and RP contractors are still removing old equipment and pipes. It will continue to be the location used by the public to buy bulk quantities of water for a fee. For the time being, it will be also used by the city for storage. A new garage door has been installed at the building.

Reports were provided to the council by the community center board, the librarian, Marla Rife, and the building inspector, John Harrison. Letters will be sent to property owners to remind them of the upcoming clean-up day on Sunday, May 18 to clear their property of unwanted items. Council member Seago reported on her research about the process for capital improvement projects such as adding infrastructure for housing.

Several other topics were discussed by the council. Suggestions were discussed about the responses to the recent March 18 blizzard that resulted in the town being without electricity for seventy-two hours. Fortunately, the town was able to supply water throughout that time to the residents because the new water treatment plant's design includes a back-up generator specifically to operate the pumps at the plant. The council also discussed other measures that may be taken in the event of future disasters.

Other topics discussed were the tree inventory of trees on city property, building permits, setting the hearing date for FY2025/2026 budget, animal nuisances, and a cybersecurity contract with Shrock Innovations. The budget hearing date is set for Monday, April 28, at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall. Kevin Brenneis from Brenneis Insurance was there to address the council about an insurance proposal.

Mondamin Community Partners representatives, Maggie Rains and Mary Seago, asked the council for permission to use city property at 111 Maple Street for a farmer's market one day a week for the summer. Permission was also requested for the group to apply for grants to be used in the city park.

City clerk A. Hirst reported that she is continuing to work on the city's budget. The public works supervisor M. Kelley gave information about the quality of water coming from the new water plant. The results indicate much better quality by lessening the amount of manganese in the

water after treatment. He is scheduled for Wastewater Treatment classes in April. Later in the year, he will be able to take classes in Water Treatment for his certification requirements. With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

The next city council meeting will be May 5 at 7:00 p.m. at the city hall.

## COMMUNITY NEWS



**Take advantage of the Spring Clean-Up Day on May 18.** If you have accumulated “stuff” over the winter that you need to get rid of, you can haul your items to the dump area just north of the library on May 18. The city workers will make sure they dispose of these items properly. If you need help, ask. Possibly help can be found to help you haul these items. If you have a question about whether something is permitted in the dumpster, call city hall. The **Spring Clean-Up Day is set for May 18 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.** Let’s clean-up Mondamin!

**Heritage Day**  
**June 14th**

The Heritage Day committee is always looking for volunteers to help with the events that take place in the park. If you’d like to help, contact Mary Seago at

[mcp@bettermondamin.org](mailto:mcp@bettermondamin.org) , Maggie Rains at (712) 420-6036, or Lary Clark at (402) 290-2312. People are needed to sell raffle tickets, help with the baked goods auction, help with the games, etc. You would only need to work for an hour or so. We want you to enjoy the day too.

The Mondamin Community Partners and the Mondamin Community Center’s Board have been planning many activities for this year’s Heritage Day. Next month’s newsletter will have a complete schedule of events, but for those of you who like to plan ahead, here is a taste of what you can expect at Heritage Day 2025: the Church of Christ will be having breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. Registration for the parade starts at 9:00 a.m. in the West Harrison parking lot with the parade beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Larry Stevens will have the following historical buildings open for touring from 11:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. - Holton House, the Drug Store, and the upstairs of the former Keith’s Store.

Following the parade the fun activities start in the park with a dunk tank, kiddie train rides, bounce houses, games sponsored by the Loess Hills Lancers, face painting, vendors, Loli Pop dah Clown, a lunch stand by Bill Nelson and the Jiffy Crew, desserts and root beer floats by the K-Kids and Builder’s Clubs, Tropical Sno, raffles, a fish/chicken fry starting at 12:30 and, one of the most important events of all- the **Baked Goods Auction at 11:45!** Proceeds from this celebration help pay for next year’s Heritage Day so come and spend an outlandish amount of money on some

delicious cakes, cookies, breads, or other goodies.

### **New Water Treatment Plant Is Officially Fully Operational**

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new water treatment plant was held on Friday, April 25, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. It was a windy, chilly morning for the ribbon cutting, but it was attended by City Clerk Alyx Hirst, Public Works Supervisor Mike Kelley, three current council members, former mayors, JEO project engineer and staff, RP contracting staff, and presidents from MidStates Bank and SWIPCO who provided funding and guidance for this project. According to JEO head engineer, Ethan Joy, the project cost was \$5 million that was funded by USDA grants and loans. It took seven years for the project to be completed to upgrade the water quality and to be able to reliably provide service for all who use Mondamin's water system. Check the city's Facebook page for more information and pictures of the ribbon cutting.



NOTE FROM MAGGIE RAINS: For me personally, this is the realization of a goal I have had since I first moved to Mondamin in 2009 and was asked to be on the city council in 2011. Now we have clear,

healthy, tasty water quality available for the school, residents, visitors and businesses in Mondamin!



### **Loess Hills Lavender Farm opens for the season on May 3, 2025, for Spring Fling.**

They will be open May 3 from 9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m. Stop by the Farm to buy lavender plants, enjoy lunch from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. and shop the handmade items in their large, fully stocked craft store! Raffle tickets will be available for purchase for your chance to win a basket of Lavender Farm goodies on this day during the lunch hours.

**Lavender Stock** is scheduled for the third weekend in July. July 19-20, 2025, is festival time at the Lavender Farm. It's the peak bloom for the lavender, when Mother Nature cooperates. Come cut a lavender bundle, attend a craft class, enjoy live music, and browse the many vendor tables throughout the fields.

They have many other events scheduled throughout the summer so be sure to check their schedule online.

Information for this article was taken from the Loess Hills Lavender Farm's website at <https://loesshillslavender.com/> Check there for events and farm information.



**If you have a question about recycling,** contact the Harrison County Landfill at 1-800-672-3093.

This article is being repeated, but if you haven't tried the Hefty Renew Orange Bag program, give it a try. Recycling items that are allowed in the orange bag really cuts down on the amount of garbage you have. Just from your kitchen alone, you can put these items in your orange bag:

- |                                     |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| candy wrappers                      | cereal box liners         |
| chip bags                           | cookie/cracker box liners |
| dry mix liners                      | foam egg cartons          |
| fresh/frozen vegetable & fruit bags |                           |
| granola & energy bar wrappers       |                           |
| plastic pet food bags               |                           |
| salad bags                          | snack food bags           |
| foam peanuts                        | stand up pouches          |
| foam to-go boxes                    | foam cups                 |
| plastic food wrap                   | food storage bags         |
| plastic grocery bags                | plastic straws            |
| plastic cups                        | plastic utensils          |
| plastic & foam plates & bowls       |                           |
| shredded cheese packages            |                           |

Put the orange bags in the bins with other plastics.

The Hefty orange bags can be purchased in stores such as Menard's, Lowe's, and some WalMart's.

**Just a reminder that the Avenue of Flags renewals are due May 15.** If you are not a

subscriber and would like to be one, contact the city clerk at (712) 646-2431 for a form. The cost the first year is \$35.00 and after that the fee is \$15.00 per year.

This is a great way to honor a member of your family or simply to show your patriotism. If you'd like more information about this service contact Maggie Rains (712) 420-6036, or Ben Nuzum, Becky Coyle, or Bobby Neill.



**Remember you can drop off dry cleaning at the Jiffy Mart.** Drop your items off by Tuesday and they will be back by the next Tuesday.



**Memorial Day Services** will be conducted by American Legion Jesse Strong Post #378 on Monday, May 26, 2025, at the following cemeteries:

- 9:00 a.m. Calhoun Cemetery
- 9:45 a.m. Soldier Valley Cemetery
- 10:30 a.m. Little Sioux Cemetery
- 11:15 a.m. Noyes Cemetery at Mondamin

The services will consist of a rifle salute, Taps, and a brief message by Commander Dave Tallon.



## Retiring West Harrison Teachers

By Donella Pauli

### Gina Birdsall: From Lesson Plans to Retirement Plans

Speech Professor Biggs from Iowa Western Community College had no idea what impact he had on Gina Birdsall's life and the lives of hundreds of students when he told her that he thought it would make him sick if she sat in an office all day long. (Originally Gina planned to become an accountant even though that wasn't her favorite subject.) Biggs suggested that Gina should consider becoming a teacher. He could tell that Gina was a "people person." That day Gina changed her major and has never regretted it.

Mrs. Birdsall obtained her Associate's Degree from Iowa Western and a Bachelor's Degree from Dana College. (Later on in her career Gina received a Master's in Education from UNO.) Following college, Gina began her teaching career in 1990 at Manning Community School District where she taught 7-12 English classes.

In 2002 Gina took a position at West Harrison Community School where she has taught mostly high school English classes and been a successful speech coach. During her time at West Harrison, she taught library classes part time at Woodbine for two years and co-taught English classes with Mr. Nuzum at West Monona. Gina

estimated that she has taught over a dozen different English classes during her career.

During her 35 years in education, Gina has loved getting to know her students and enjoyed working with such a caring staff. She commented, "It's like having a second family." One of her mentees gave her a plaque that said, "Unofficial 'Mom' for West Harrison's New Teachers." Other new teachers will miss going to Mrs. Birdsall when they need a good listener.

When asked what were some of the biggest challenges and most stressful times during her career, Gina mentioned teaching during COVID and trying to balance working full time while visiting her dad who had a 78 day hospital/nursing home stay prior to passing away. Gina didn't miss one day of school during that time until her dad's death.

### Retired But Forever A Teacher



Gina will miss the students and staff and the strong relationships that were built over the years. Her advice to young teachers is that teaching isn't a job for lazy people. It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to be successful; however, in the end, the rewards you receive for touching so many lives makes all the work worthwhile.

Like with all professions, there are things that Gina will not miss. She really disliked creating sub plans. It was just too much work to be gone! She won't miss creating lesson plans each week and correcting papers for "an unbearable amount of time each week."

Gina and her husband, Craig, have three children. Kayla and her husband, Caleb, live in Elkhorn, NE with their two daughters Rowen (5) and Brooklyn (3). Kayla is a nurse at Methodist Hospital. Tyler and his wife, Brie, live in Grimes, IA where Tyler works for Midwest Foundation. Nolan is a member of the West Harrison Class of 2025 and will be attending Iowa Western this fall to major in Construction Management. You could say that Mrs. Birdsall and Nolan are exiting West Harrison together!

After retirement, Gina will have more time to spend with her family, do a little traveling, and work part time as a substitute teacher. Gina said, "I'm not a person to sit on a couch and watch TV all day!"

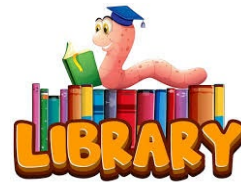
Mrs. Gina Birdsall concluded her interview with the following statement, "I'd like to thank the community for all the support they have given me over the years. I always tried to be a good role model at the school; I did what I thought was best for students. Not only did I grow up in the West Harrison Community School District and graduate from here, but I also made my career in a community that I loved. Some people take for granted the strong ties of a small community, but I will be forever grateful for this 'family'."

Thank you, Mrs. Birdsall, for everything you have done for students and staff during your thirty-five year career as an educator. You will be missed!

NOTE FROM DONELLA PAULI: I not only had the opportunity to be one of Gina's high school teachers, but also had the privilege to be one of her co-workers when she returned to West Harrison. She was an

outstanding student and a dedicated, professional educator! West Harrison will miss her.

**Elementary Teacher Angie Smith is also retiring at the end of this school year. The Spotlight will be on Angie next month.**



## LIBRARY NEWS

The elementary book club is over for this school year. Watch for details for next year when school starts.

The adult book club will meet on May 28, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. when they will discuss *The Overstory* which is a 2018 novel by Richard Powers. Just stop by the library to talk to Marla about joining this group.

Coming soon .... details about the Summer Reading Program!



**May 11, 2025**

"To the World you are a Mother,  
but to your family you are the World!"

"A mother is your first friend, your best  
friend, your forever friend!"

"Mother is one to whom you hurry when  
you are troubled." Emily Dickinson



## Just to Bring a Smile ....

What did the momma pig say when her piglet had nightmares?

Don't worry, they're just a pigment of your imagination!

Why was the golfer also good at Formula 1 racing?

He had a strong driver!

What do you call chiropractors who work for the zoo?

Animal Crackers

Why do dogs make great meteorologists?

They can tell when there is a **PAW**sibility of rain!

Where do milkshakes come from?

Nervous cows!

# Mondamin Memories

## Dancing, Sioux City to Omaha

Pair Make Eighteen  
Miles Tuesday and  
Spend the Night in  
Mondamin



Sioux City, IA September 12, 1928

Dancing eighteen miles of the distance from Sioux City to Omaha, Tuesday, Willie Reinbold, of New York, and May Brown, of South Sioux City, Neb., reached Mondamin Ia., at 8:05 p.m. and lodged there for the night.

The couple were delayed in starting from Blencoe, Ia., Tuesday morning because of muddy roads, but left there at 12:45 p.m. They arrived in Little Sioux, Ia., at 4:35 p.m. and danced away again at 5:05 p.m. on their way to Mondamin, which they reached just in time to escape being drenched by a heavy rain.

Four miles of the distance over which they danced Tuesday was graveled road and the other fourteen miles were dirt which was in bad shape because of the recent rains. They expect to be in Missouri Valley, Ia., on Wednesday evening.

Article printed in the Omaha World Herald submitted by Larry Stevens

## DID YOU KNOW?



Most of you have gone through a graduation ceremony whether it was at the completion of high school or college. Many of you have had children or grandchildren graduate and you have attended their commencement exercises and even a few of you have someone graduating in 2025. But what do you know about the cap and gown that each graduate wore?

The cap and gown for graduation have a long history without many changes. When universities began forming in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, many of the professors were affiliated with the church so they already wore long clothing every day. Historians believe that scholars wore long robes and hoods to keep warm as most of the buildings were unheated.

Oxford and Cambridge were the first recognized schools that had official graduation attire. All graduates were required to wear long gowns during the ceremony to create unity. Graduation caps did not become popular until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17 centuries, it was called a “corner-cap”. The original European academic style was kept throughout the centuries and spread to colonial America. After the Civil War, academic regalia was reserved strictly for graduation. By 1950, a catholic priest and an inventor worked together to file a mortarboard patent in the United States. By the end of the decade, graduates all over the country were wearing mortarboards at graduation. The cap and gown came to be symbolic of recognition and achievement.

The music that most of us recognize as graduation music, “Pomp and Circumstance,” was composed in 1901 and first played in 1902 to honor the coronation of King Edward VII of Great Britain. It was first played at an U.S. graduation in 1905 when the song’s composer, Edward Elgar, received an honorary degree from Yale. The music quickly spread to other schools and is still used at graduation ceremonies today.

The 1895 rule makers would be horrified with the messages and decorations students use to adorn their caps today. Some of the earliest examples of this started in the 1960’s and were associated with Vietnam War protests.



What about tossing those graduation caps in the air following the ceremony? The 1935 code stated that graduates were to keep their caps on “throughout all academic exercises except during prayer. The cap is not to be removed at any point in the conferment of a degree.” This tradition was undone by the United States Naval Academy’s graduating class of 1912. They had already earned the right to wear officer hats so they did not need their midshipman hats. Their tradition soon spread to other colleges, universities and high schools.

Now you know that there is a great deal of history and tradition involved in wearing that cap and gown worn by all high school and college graduates.

**NOW YOU KNOW!**



## SCHOOL NEWS

If you didn't keep the athletic schedules that were attached to last month's newsletter, you will need to check online. Go to <https://www.movalleyschools.org/>, click on Menu, then Athletics & Activities, next click on MVCSD Bound site, choose the activity from the left, and then click on schedule.

To purchase a ticket to attend an athletic event, go online and start at the MVCSD Bound Site and then click on Tickets. If you are attending an event in Missouri Valley and don't purchase a ticket prior to the event, they do have a card reader at the door.



Baccalaureate for this year's seniors will take place on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. following the Senior Awards Night which will begin at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend.

West Harrison's graduation ceremony will take place on Sunday, May 11, 2025, in the high school gym at 3:30 p.m.

Congratulations to the members of the Class of 2025! You are wished the best of luck in your future endeavors!

## EVENTS

Tuesday, May 6, 2025 7:00 p.m.  
8-12 Spring Band Concert  
9-12 Spring Choir Concert  
Onawa

Wednesday, May 7, 2025  
Senior Awards Night 6:00 p.m.  
Baccalaureate 7:00 p.m.  
West Harrison Gym

Friday, May 9, 2025  
Elementary Track Day  
4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades start at 9:00 a.m.  
K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades start at 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 10, 2025  
State Large Group Music Festival

Sunday, May 11, 2025 3:30 p.m.  
West Harrison's HS Graduation

Sunday, May 11, 2025  
Mother's Day



Tuesday, May 20, 2025  
Last Day of  
Preschool



Friday, May 23, 2025  
Last Day of School

Monday, May 26, 2025  
Memorial Day

Memorial Day Services at local cemeteries. See schedule in article in Community News.

