



Parker pulls off a playoff upset

The Vikings beat the crosstown rival Craig Cougars—the No. 1 baseball team in the state in Division 1—in a WIAA regional championship game Thursday. **Page 1B**

Law enforcement decries hemp bill

Measure with bipartisan support would allow people to have trace amounts of THC from CBD in system while driving. **Page 2A**

The Gazette

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Misery deepens

Flooding leaves Midwestern farmers with few good options

By Scott McFetridge
Associated Press

DES MOINES, IOWA

Between the country's trade dispute with China and the seemingly endless storms that have drenched the central U.S., Iowa farmer Robb Ewoldt has had plenty of time to think about whether it's too late to plant this season, how much federal aid he might get if he does, or whether to skip it altogether and opt for an insurance payment.

Instead of driving his tractor, he's driving a truck

these days to earn a living while wondering how long it will be before he can return to his fields.

"Sometimes I think, what the heck am I doing farming?" he said recently by phone while returning home after hauling a shipment of dry ice to Chicago. "When you owe the bank money, you do some pretty crazy stuff."

Ewoldt is one of thousands of Midwestern farmers facing such decisions as they endure a spring like no other. It started with poor corn and soybean

Turn to **DEEPENS** on Page 7A



Associated Press

Jeff Jorgenson looks over a partially flooded field he farms near Shenandoah, Iowa, on Wednesday. About a quarter of his land was lost this year to Missouri River flooding, and much of his property has been inundated with heavy rain and water from the neighboring Nishnabotna River.

Back to the beginning



Above: Soon-to-be Craig High School graduate Olyvia Booker rides on 'the vortex,' a piece of playground equipment installed at Adams Elementary School in Janesville when Booker and her classmates were students at the elementary school. The Craig students took a tour of their former elementary schools Thursday afternoon. **Right:** Future Craig grad Amanda Carlson hugs Joan Spafford, an employee in the office at Adams.



Photos by Angela Major
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At sentencing, a family forgives

Two families, one grieving a death, the other grieving a jail sentence, pray together in court

By Jonah Beleckis

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ELKHORN

It took more than a month for Doretha Lock-Davis to put her anguish on paper.

She described in a statement—crafted during the same month as Mother's Day, no less—what it was like to lose her son, Christopher J. Davis, in February 2016, two weeks before his 22nd birthday. The process felt "like ripping your heart out."

"It's not easy for me to get through one sentence," she said in Walworth County Court on Thursday.

Nevertheless, she relived her agony at the sentencing hearing for Jose G. Lara, the man in the driver's seat next to her dying son, whom then-Deputy Juan Ortiz shot as Lara drove away from an East Troy parking lot.

Looking intently at one of the last people to see her son alive, Lock-Davis forgave Lara, the man who would leave the courtroom Thursday to begin a four-year prison term. Her forgiveness came "with no strings



Lara



Ortiz

attached."

Lock-Davis said she needed a break after speaking and listening to her other son, Paul Davis, who also forgave Lara over the death of his younger brother who was "taken too soon." So Judge Daniel Johnson called for a five-minute break.

Without speaking, Lara then stood up, walked over to Paul and hugged him. He then did the same with Lock-Davis.

The unity in words between opposite sides of the courtroom—brought together by the death of a young man from Milwaukee who won't ever know his nephews—became unity in action. The Davis family and Lara moved to the other side of

Turn to **FORGIVE** on Page 6A

Average assessments on Janesville homes to increase 31%

But that doesn't necessarily mean higher tax bills for owners

By Jim Dayton

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JANESVILLE

The relationship between property values and the tax levy is like a pizza.

Bear with us because it's

the only way to make property assessments sound sexy. Or interesting.

The pizza's size is based on the money a municipality needs to pay for different services. Each slice represents a property, and each slice contributes its share of taxes to complete the pie.

In this pizza analogy, the slices are irregular. Bigger slices pay more in taxes. Smaller slices pay less.

The analogy is one method city Finance Director Max Gagin uses to simplify the complicated and mundane topic of property valuation.

Public confusion over the issue might arise in the next few weeks as city officials mail assessment change notices to property owners after a nearly year-long revaluation process.

The first thing residents should understand? An increase in a home's value does not necessarily mean the owner will pay more in

property taxes, City Assessor Michelle Laube said.

The revaluation process began last summer with the aim of aligning property assessments with fair market values. Assessments had fallen to an estimated 82.7% of fair market value, meaning the city was out of compliance with state law, she said.

The revaluation looked at all properties—residential, commercial, industrial. The average residential property value increased by 31%, from \$122,200 to \$160,800, Laube said.

That surge reflects a tight housing market that was deemed by Realtor.com last summer as one of the

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OBITUARIES AND DEATH NOTICES, 6A

- William "Bill" Bever
- Richard "Rick" Ericksen
- Ruth Igoe
- Daniel Scott Nenneman
- Timothy M. Page
- Alicia Robson

TODAY'S WEATHER

High 85 | Low 62
Times of clouds and sun
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