



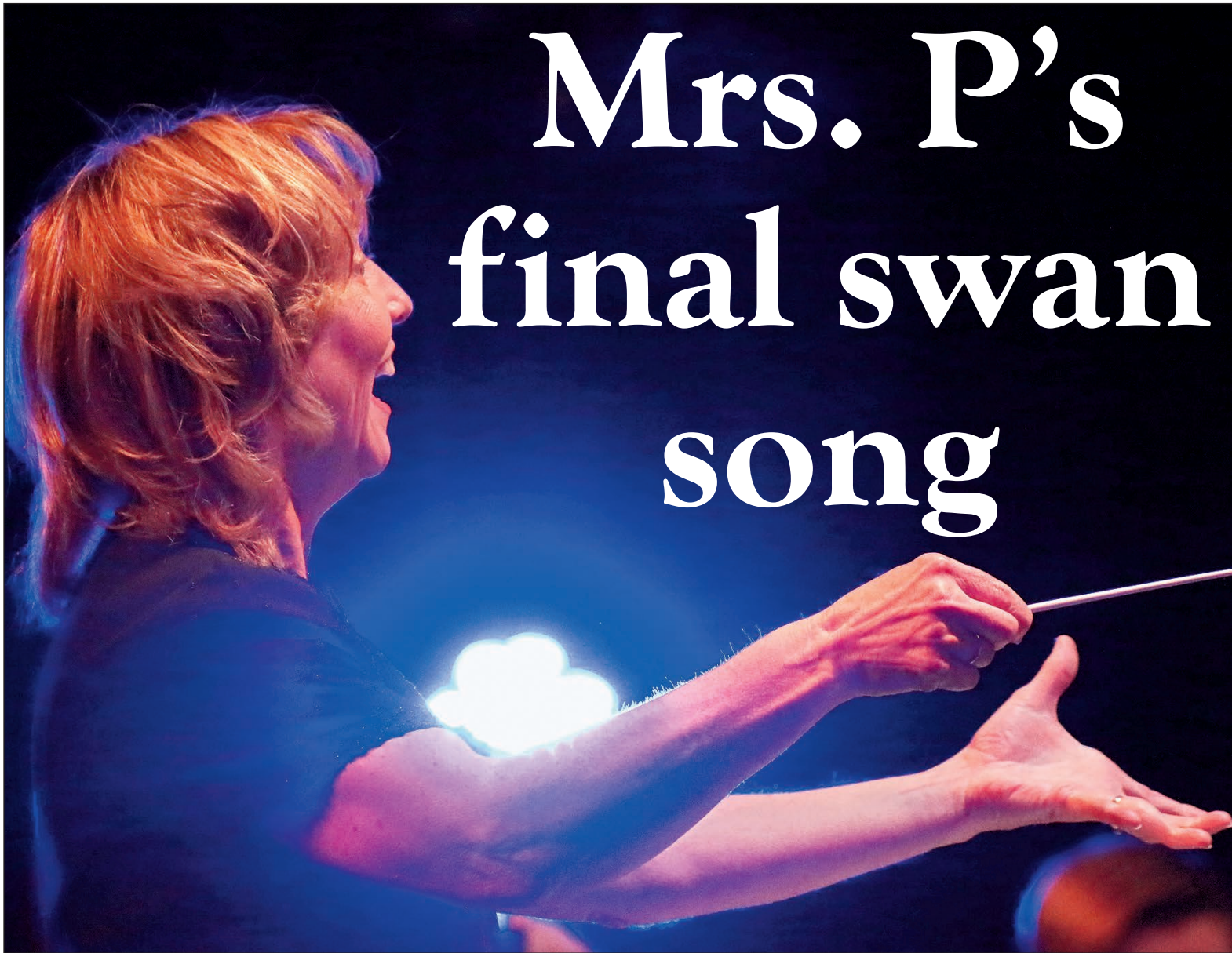
Green Lake students meet first responders, p. 12



Competitors brave weather for RC2 Run/Walk, p. 13



Ripon executes rundown to top Lomira, p. 14



Mrs. P's final swan song

Retiring RHS band teacher conducts her last concert

After helping Ripon's youth spread the joy of music for 22 years, Ripon High School (RHS) band director Sandy Polcyn conducted her final concert Monday.

Polcyn came to RHS in 2000 after teaching at Green Lake School for many years and has spent 35 years teaching music.

During Monday's concert, Polcyn was honored for her contributions to RHS and passed the baton to Ripon Middle School band teacher Sam Erickson, who will take over the high school position from her next year.

For more information and pictures, see page 7.



LEFT, RIPON HIGH School band teacher Sandy Polcyn conducts her final concert before she retires at the end of this school year. She has taught at Ripon High School for the past 22 years. Right, Polcyn hugs Ripon Middle School band teacher Sam Erickson, who will take her position. *Jonathan Bailey photos*

RHS seniors team up with local charity to raise awareness for mental health in honor of late classmate

By Joe Schulz

jschulz@ripontpress.com

Ripon High School (RHS) seniors are teaming up with a local charity to raise awareness for mental health to honor the memory of a classmate who tragically died nearly two years ago.

Gabe Karsnia lost his battle with mental health in May 2020, at age 16. He would have been a senior at RHS this year.

His friends and parents remember him as someone who always was willing to lend a helping hand to brighten others' days.

Following Gabe's death, his parents, Philip and Mary Karsnia, created the Gabriel's Wings Foundation to carry on Gabe's memory

by bringing hope and resources to those struggling with suicide.

"He cared about his friends, and he wanted to be there for his friends," Mary Karsnia said of her late son. "He liked nothing more than to make people laugh and feel included. It's something that we knew, early on, that we wanted to continue to share."

Likewise, Philip Karsnia said another motivating factor behind launching the foundation was to provide support to other families going through what the Karsnias went through.

"As a community, we need guidance and a foundation like us to help those individuals and families to get through another day," he said. "It's not easy."

This month, the foundation is partnering with RHS seniors for a



A GROUP OF seniors that Gabe Karsnia, inset, would have graduated with pose for a photo. Gabe's death has had a profound impact on this year's senior class. One senior has led a partnership with a local charity to raise awareness for mental health in honor of Gabe. *submitted photos*

T-shirt sale, spearheaded by senior Erika Mills, aimed at raising awareness for suicide prevention and stopping the stigma surrounding seeking mental health resources.

Shirts are available by clicking a link available on the "Gabriel's Wings Foundation, Inc." Facebook page and must be ordered by

Wednesday, May 11 at 3 p.m.

On Friday, May 20, those who purchased T-shirts will be asked to wear them to stand in solidarity with those struggling with mental health.

Philip Karsnia said the T-shirt sale isn't being used as a fundraiser, rather it was created to increase

awareness as Gabriel's Wings Foundation is charging just enough to cover the cost of the shirts.

The T-shirt sale was Mills' brain child as she wanted to do something to honor the memory of her late friend, Mary Karsnia added.

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