

Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader

Friday, Jan. 5, 2018
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Est. 1995

Town Crier

Winter market to be held Saturday

The Sartell Winter Market will be held from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 6 and Feb. 3 at Sartell City Hall, 125 Pinecone Road. Some of the many items you will find include the following: eggs, beef, chicken, vegetables from storage, canned goods, baked treats, breads and many craft items. Come show your support for your local farmers' market. All items are grown, produced or crafted locally.

K of C breakfast set for Sunday

A special Knights of Columbus breakfast partnering with the Sisters of St. Benedict will be held from 8:30 a.m.-noon Sunday, Jan. 7 at Heritage Hall in the Church of St. Joseph, 12 W. Minnesota St., St. Joseph. Proceeds will go directly to help support Colegio San Benito, a Kindergarten-ninth-grade school administered by the Sisters of St. Benedict monastery in Humacao, Puerto Rico, the area hit hardest from the devastating hurricane. This monastery was founded by the Benedictine Sisters in St. Joseph. Also learn about the people you'll be helping. Masses are at 8 and 10 a.m.

Senior Connection hosts therapy animals Jan. 9

The Sartell Senior Connection will host CentraCare's therapy animals and volunteers at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9 in the Sartell Community Center Senior Center, 850 19th St. S., Sartell. Marlene Dingman and Paulette Levasseur will share the benefits of interaction of the therapy animals (dogs) with patients, staff and family members; what it takes to become certified with a therapy animal; and what they've experienced with their own therapy dogs. Their furry therapists will accompany them for their visit.

Site to accept Christmas trees

The Sartell Compost Site will accept discarded Christmas trees at no charge for all Sartell residents from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 6. City officials do, however, request each motorist bring along a non-perishable food item to help restock local food shelves after the holidays. To get to the compost site, go west on the roundabout at Heritage Drive and Pinecone Road S. and go two miles on CR 133. Take a right at the four-way stop onto CR 4 and then take another right on 30th Avenue N. The site will be on the right.

INSERT:
City of St. Stephen
Good to Go

2017 Year in Review – Part 1

2017 – the year the Sartell Center finally opens

by Dennis Dalman
editor@thenewsleaders.com

The year 2017 in Sartell could well be known as the year a Sartell Community Center was finally built and opened for residents.

For two decades – at least – residents and city officials had wanted a city center. At long last, revenue from the regional half-cent sales tax made the center a possibility. The \$11-million facility in south Sartell opened to the public in late fall. It has three gyms, an elevated walking track, a senior center, a books and learning area, a kids' play center, locker rooms, kitchen facilities and public-meeting rooms.

Other upbeat news from Sartell included the city and school board getting excellent marks

from auditors about their handling of finances, more business and residential growth, and the start of construction on the new Sartell High School.

One concerning note at the end of the year was the possibility of a strike by 83 school-district employees who said they are frustrated by lack of progress in labor negotiations and what many of them consider nearly unlivable wages. They are still working under a contract signed in July 2016.

The following are just some of the highlights of the year as culled from the 50 issues of the *Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader* during the past year.

January

An under-river gas line is installed 50 feet under the Mississippi River. The "tunnel" line



art work from City of Sartell website

This is an artist's conception of how the Sartell Community Center will look on a summertime day.

will house the Xcel-gas line from a point on Benton Drive N. to directly across the river. The new line will replace a much older one on the "old bridge" near the River Boat Depot bar-restaurant.

Three Sartell residents win "Under 20" and "Under 40" awards in the 11th annual St. Cloud Times Media contest honoring achievers in central Min-

nesota. The honorees are Bryan Burns, president and CEO of the DeZurik valve plant, 17-year-old student Josh Maricle-Roberts and Kate Hanson, vice president of commercial brokerage for Granite City Real Estate, who now lives in Annandale but grew up in Sartell.

The city council lifts a mor-

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Residents recall Sartell history on website

by Dennis Dalman
editor@thenewsleaders.com

Spoken glimpses into Sartell's past can be heard and seen on the City of Sartell's website.

Residents in video presentations reminisce about various aspects of the city, including the East Side, the School District, the Police Department and Rivertown.

The videos were produced by the Sartell Senior Connection in partnership with the Sartell-St. Stephen School District. Organizers of the videos would like to produce more of them. To

make a donation for more segments or to offer suggestions, contact Ann Doyscher-Domres at 320-253-4036, ext. 4.

To watch the videos, go to the Sartell website at www.sartellmn.com, then scroll down until you see "Sartell Stories" in blue on the left.

The following are brief summaries of two of the videos:

East Side

Resident Jan Sorell, a founding member of the Senior Connection, knows the east side of the city like the back of her hand. Originally from Richfield,

Sorell and her husband, Dale, bought a motel on the east side many decades ago – the Winter Haven Motel. There was another motel in the same area, known as the Lackawanna.

Sorell recalls how her grandmother told her purchasing the motel in Sartell would be a smart move because the World's Fair was about to open in Seattle, and so the motel would get good tourist business from people on their way Northwest to the Fair. Jan and Dale laughed at the idea, but, in fact, that is exactly what happened – lots of tourists passing through, and

many of them stopping for a night at Winter Haven. The cost was \$4 a night for a single, with \$1 extra for TV service, with the TV brought to the room on a wheel cart.

At the time, early 1960s, there were only about 800 people living in the city. However, there was a lot of through traffic because at that time, what is now Benton Drive was busy Hwy. 10, and because of that the Sorells' motel did a brisk business, even after the World's Fair in Seattle closed. The Winter Haven was located near the Commodore

History • page 2



contributed photo

Volunteers, including some Boy Scouts, take a break in June 2014 from the difficult, hot and sweaty task of removing buckthorn from Lions Community Park in Sartell.

Lions Park volunteers honored

by Dennis Dalman
editor@thenewsleaders.com

Volunteers who make Lions Community Park in Sartell an ongoing reality were honored at a recent Sartell City Council meeting with a presentation of certificates by Lions Club member Phil Ringstrom and other members.

Sartell Mayor Sarah Jane Nicoll and council members also thanked the honorees, who through the years have contributed thousands of hours to keeping Lions Park in fine condition.

Those honored will have their names engraved on a plaque that will be kept in Sartell City Hall.

Originally, the Lions wanted to honor one of the most outstanding volunteers, Judy Pohlkamp, but she said she would not accept recognition unless the others were recognized, so the Lions decided to include all the names on their plaque.

Those honored are Kim Allar, Katie Kitzmiller, Melissa Kitzmiller, Kris Menke, Bud and Lorna Nestel, Mitze Olson, Judy Pohlkamp, Diane Schellinger, Sue Tembrock, Adam Wenker, Kaye Wenker and Mary Wenker. Also honored was Lions member Karen Maruska, the leader of the Leo Lions, a youth group who also worked hard to make the park a success.

Lions Community Park, established in 2002, was – and is – a partnership among the Sartell Lions Club, the City of Sartell, local and statewide Lions clubs and Lions International. Located across Pinecone Road from Sartell City Hall, the scenic wooded park was designed for access by the visually impaired and/or the physically challenged.

Many individuals, businesses and volunteers contributed money, time or in-kind work to create and maintain the park.

In the future, the Sartell Lions Club plans to build a sheltered picnic area with a kitchen and restrooms.

In Business

Stearns County earns grant to form sex-trafficking task force

The Stearns County Attorney's Office in partnership with the Stearns County Sheriff's Office, the St. Cloud and Waite Park police departments and the Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center was recently awarded a \$313,000 grant from the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs to form the Central Minnesota Sex Trafficking Investigative Task Force.

The task force will coordinate with state and federal agencies to investigate and prosecute sex traffickers and provide services and support for adults and children being exploited in Stearns County and across central Minnesota. On Dec. 19, the Stearns County Board of Commissioners approved re-allocation of allotted dollars to support a crime analyst to complete the team assigned full-time to combat this public safety problem.

Waite Park Police Chief Dave Bentrud told the Stearns County Board when investigators started digging into the problem of trafficking, they found it extended beyond the metro area into smaller communities. "It ties to gangs, violent offenders and drugs," he said. "We felt trying to figure out a way to allocate more investigative resources to the problem made sense."

Stearns County Attorney Janelle Kendall added trafficker prosecutions have been successful in part because of the County Attorney's Office expertise in prosecuting domestic violence, echoing that trafficking prosecutions involve not

only domestic and sexual violence, but often drug use and sales and other related property crimes to ensure profitability for the career criminals involved.

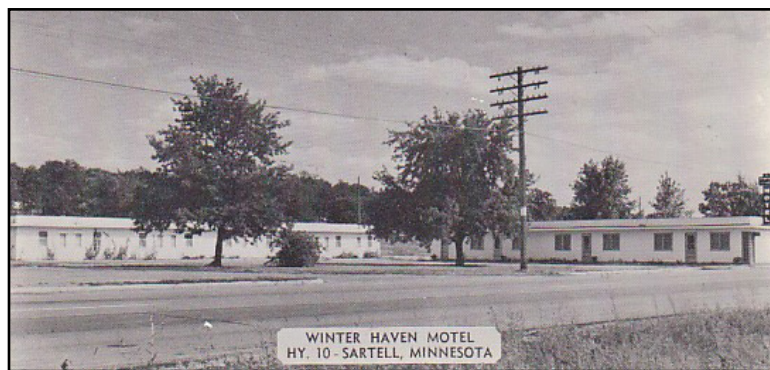
Partner agencies include not only Waite Park and St. Cloud Police as well as the Stearns County Sheriff and County Attorney, but also the Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center, the Safe Harbor Regional Navigator, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Terebinth Refuge, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, Stearns County Human Services homeless outreach, child protection and gateway support divisions, the Salvation Army, Anna Marie's Alliance, the Children's Response Initiative, CentraCare's Child Advocacy Center, and representatives from the Stearns County Board of Commissioners and numerous Congressional and state legislative offices. State Rep. Tama Theis, State Sen. Jerry Relph, and State Rep. Tim Miller all played important roles in acquiring this state funding. Rep. Tom Emmer and Sens. Klobuchar and Franken have been kept advised of the developing needs as well. The task force would not be possible without the financial support of the partner agencies who jointly recognize sex trafficking is a clear and present danger that significantly affects the public safety of Central Minnesota.

Since 2010, investigations across Stearns County have demonstrated the trafficking of women and children in Central Minnesota

is a significant public-safety issue. The St. Cloud area, sitting at the intersection of I-94 and Highway 23, is a natural crossroads for both sex traffickers and sex buyers, creating the highest demand outside the Twin Cities metro area. Individual and later coordinated efforts by law enforcement in Waite Park and St. Cloud involved numerous buyer stings and prosecution of several traffickers, demonstrating the significant supply and demand for purchased sex that could not be adequately addressed with a part-time or ad hoc approach. In 2016, the partner agencies collaborated to better coordinate both investigations and victim services and to address the need for full-time dedicated resources to attack the problem. From this collaboration, the need for resources was clearly identified, leading to the grant application and county board request.

The Task Force will utilize two full time investigators, one each in the Waite Park and St. Cloud police departments, plus a portion of a full-time detective in the Stearns County Sheriff's Office to concentrate exclusively on reducing both the supply and demand for purchased sex. Investigators will coordinate with other state and federal agencies to share information and to conduct joint investigations. Such cooperation is necessary as traffickers remain mobile to avoid detection and seek greater profit. Investigators will be aided by the crime analyst in the Stearns County Attorney's Office to provide technical assistance to law enforcement including forensic analysis and collection of electronic evidence including social media.

Questions may be directed to: Janelle Kendall, Stearns County Attorney at 320-656-3880; Dave Bentrud, Waite Park Chief of Police at 320-251-3281; Don Gudmundson, Stearns County Sheriff, at 320-259-3700; and Blair Anderson, St. Cloud Chief of Police, at 320-345-3201.



contributed photo

During its heyday, the Winter Haven Motel in east Sartell was a thriving business, owned by Dale and Jan Sorell. The facility was located on busy Hwy. 10, which was later moved to the east. The road is now Benton Drive.

History

from front page

Supper Club and two gas stations. When Hwy. 10 was moved to the east, business at the motel naturally declined.

Ken Schulte, a retired member of the Sartell-LeSauk Fire Department, recalls how his father owned a gas station near Winter Haven and how fun it was to grow up in east Sartell playing baseball with the east-side kids often versus the west-side kids. The expansion of the paper mill was a "huge thing," and the building of the new bridge was a good development because people didn't have to cross the railroad tracks anymore to use the old bridge, Schulte recalls in the video.

School District

It was a long and vigorous fight to get Sartell its own school district back in the late 1960s.

In the video, Bill Galarneault and Pat Saltzer recall the struggle, which at times resembled a virtual feud.

Starting about 1908, Sartell had its own school, where the School District Office Building now stands, but for many decades it was for grades 1-6 only. After grade 6, students would have to bus to St. Cloud for further schooling.

In the mid-1960s, a divisionism developed. Many Sartell residents wanted their own independent school district; many did not and preferred to consolidate with the St. Cloud School District. Many professional people in Sartell thought Sartell, on its own, would never have enough technical courses, like St. Cloud had, for students to get a well-rounded education to prepare them for good jobs. Thus, they argued in favor of consolidation.

At the time, there was virtually no state-aid to schools available as now, and just about everything had to be paid for via local taxes. Sartell's biggest taxpayer was the historic and thriving paper mill.

The election campaign began, with arguments flying pro and con. A big blizzard hit the area on election day in January 1967. The City of Sartell made sure all the streets were plowed early so voters could make it to the polls.

The referendum for Sartell to create its own school district was approved by voters. However, not long afterward, there were four lawsuits filed against the school board saying the decision should not be honored. The state legislature, despite opposition, validated the decision.

Construction of Sartell High School began in 1968. A new one, at a cost of nearly \$100 million, is now under construction.

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YIR

from front page

atorium on three parcels of property along the Mississippi River in Sartell at and near the former paper-mill site. The moratorium was imposed so a task force would have time to study past, current and possible future land uses for those parcels, now zoned “Heavy Industrial.”

Sartell’s oldest continuous resident, Rollie Weis, is honored for seven decades of service in the American Legion of Sartell. Weise, now 93, is a World War II veteran born in Clear Lake but raised in Sartell since boyhood. He served aboard a destroyer in the Pacific in the big war. An older brother, Phillip, was killed in Europe during the war against Nazi Germany.

Sartell seems to be in a “boom” period. The total valuation of permits issued by the city last year for projects was \$57,266,554, far ahead of the total for previous years. In addition, the valuation for new single-family homes in 2016 totaled a healthy \$20,217,00.

Mike Chisum and Ryan Fitzthum are welcomed to their first Sartell City Council meeting. Both newcomers won the November election for the two open seats on the council, seats formerly held by Steve Hennes and Amy Braig-Lindstrom.

February

Korean War veteran Duke Knafla of Sartell is honored by the American Legion for his many years of dedicated service to the organization. Knafla, who turned 83 in 2017, has been a member of the Legion for 70 years.

Sartell City Engineer Mike Nielson’s term as city engineer comes to a close. A member of WSB & Associates, Nielson advised the city, on a contract basis, for four years, attending scores of council meetings and consulting often with city staff. Another engineer, Jon Halter, assumes the position.

Michelle Meyer is chosen chair of the Sartell-St. Stephen School Board for 2017. Meyer has dedicated many years to duties on the school board and to school issues in general. (Toward the end of 2017, Meyer resigned from the board because she and her family are moving from the area for other opportunities.)

The Sartell Police Department had a very busy 2016, with 10,859 complaints received, an increase of 1,069 compared to 2015. The complaints had to do with every conceivable kind of problem: traffic accidents, domestic disputes, burglaries, medical calls, juvenile problems and many upbeat calls for which police officers helped residents with non-crime problems.

At a city-council meeting, it was reported the Sartell Fire Department answered 160 incident calls in 2016, fortunately none of them ending in tragedy. Many of the calls were false alarms – warning systems going off when they shouldn’t have.

St. Francis Xavier Elementary School celebrates Catholic Schools Week with guest speakers, fun games, prayers written by students and guest speakers.

Sartell student Rylee Molitor wins his 150th high-school wrestling match. He started his wrestling wins when he was in eighth grade as a 106-pounder. Molitor said he is happy about his 150th win, but that it has never been his big goal. His sight is set on more improvements and perhaps winning a state title.

Three students take top honors at Sartell-St. Stephen Middle School. They are Anthony Berndt, Jayke Peters and Nivanthi Wijetunga.

The Retired Firefighters organization in Sartell gives an artist’s print of a river view of the former historic Verso paper mill to the city council so it can be displayed at city hall.

The Sartell Sabre Dance Team wins third place in the Class AA Jazz division at the state tournament in Minneapolis. To top off that triumph, the next day the team went on to win the state championship for their high-kicks performance, which wowed not just judges but a wildly cheering audience.

March

The Sartell-St. Stephen School Board continues to fine-tune the budget for the new high school under construction. Voters previously approved spending \$89.5 million for the new facility. The superintendent and the board, working together with the architect and construction officials,

found five areas in which the budget could be trimmed, including the use of less-expensive building materials.

Sartell High School sophomore Cole Fibranz is only the second student in the school’s history to win the state wrestling championship. He won in the 220-pound division in St. Paul.

The Sabre boys’ swim team takes fourth place at the state swimming tournament at the Minneapolis Aquatics Center.

Sartell Middle School fifth-grader David Zhang, winner of the MathCounts contest, will go on to state competition. This is the third year Zhang proved himself to be a math prodigy by winning in the contest. He scored tops among 135 competitors in Plymouth.

Three Sartell Youth Hockey Association teams advance to state competition.

Local grocer and benefactor Daniel Coborn, a resident of Sartell, dies at the age of 86. His grandfather began the first Coborn’s store in 1912 in Sauk Rapids. Through three generations, the stores proliferated in central Minnesota and elsewhere, including the two in Sartell.

Two Sartell Boy Scout teams will compete in the VEX Robotics world competition in Louisville, Ken.

Karrie Fredrickson is named Sartell Teacher of the Year by her peers. She teaches leadership and personal-development classes at the high school. Fredrickson said, “I think kids today are awesome. I love them. They are very talented and insightful.”

April

The Sartell City Council approves a plan to landscape three roundabouts in the city at a total



photo by Carolyn Bertsch

Bill Vankoevinger and his daughter Erin Vankoevinger thrill the audience with a belly bump. Erin is a senior this year and has danced with the Sartell Community Education Danceline for 15 years. In the background from left to right, Dana Justin, Kent Gehrke and his daughter Alyssa Gehrke, and Randy Somadlen and his daughter Samantha Somadlen get ready to perform in the dad-and-daughter danceline during the Sartell Community Education Dance Show which took place at the Sartell High School on April 22.


YEAR IN

Review

2017

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Public invited to come Jan. 6 to VEX Robotics Tournament

by Dennis Dalman
editor@thenewsleaders.com

The public is invited to observe nifty robots and their ingenious makers perform won-

derous feats at the statewide VEX Robotics Tournament Saturday, Jan. 6 in Sartell.

The competition, which is a free-admission activity, will take place from 9:30 a.m.-4

p.m. at Sartell Middle School.

Sartell participants will include award-winning teams from the middle school and the high school.

The competitive game is called "In the Zone." Winning is vitally dependent on seamless teamwork known as "alliances." In each two-minute round, two alliances (each consisting of two teams) first let their robots maneuver on their own for 15 seconds, after which the participants then control their robots via remote-control devices for one minute and 45 seconds. After the two minutes, points are added up and the winning alliance moves on to another round of competition.

At the very end of the day, the winning alliance is determined in the elimination round.

Each round takes place in a zoned-off area of the gymnasium, enclosed spaces measuring 12 feet by 12 feet. The zones are filled with plastic cones. The robots pick up the cones, move them across barriers and park and stack them. There are both mobile and stationary goals and the robot makers/controllers must work fast with great precision to accomplish their tasks in so little time.

The event at Sartell High School will involve 42 teams from schools throughout Minnesota.



contributed photo

A previous VEX Robotics Tournament at Sartell High School clearly shows the four "zones" in which robots and their makers compete. A statewide tournament is slated for Sartell High School from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 6. The public is invited to attend the free event.

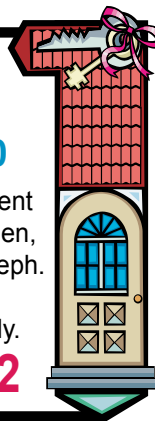
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YIR

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cost of up to \$100,000. The vote was 3-1 (council member David Peterson not present), and council member Mike Chisum vigorously opposed the plan, saying it was far too expensive. Members of the public, later in the month, also speak out against the expenditure.

The city and school district will both chip in \$100,000 in hopes of getting a \$100,000 state recreation grant that could be used for ongoing improvements to Champion Field.

Sartell Middle School students Riley Hengel and Shea Stuckey win an essay contest sponsored by the Optimist Club of St. Cloud.

The Sartell High School Sabres baseball team gets the happy chance to play ball at the new US Bank stadium in Minneapolis. They and the Moorhead Spuds were the first high-school teams chosen to play this year at the stadium, and everyone involved thought it was an experience never to be forgotten.

Sartell High School art students Lucy Reitz, Tayler Kalthoff and Brenden Bellinger win awards for their art works in the High School Art Exhibition and Competition, with their works displayed in a prestigious show at the Paramount Center for the Arts.

The City of Sartell gets high praise from its auditor for keeping its efficient budgeting process during 2016. It's the latest of many auditing reports that have praised the city for its good job of balancing its budget while providing services for a growing population.

Sartell is one of the river cities chosen as a site for the annual Governor's Fishing Opener. The governor, his entourage and media are set to visit Sartell, as well as St. Cloud, where a big party is planned at Lake George.

Claude Dingmann Jr., a long-time Sartell-LeSauk firefighter, retires after 36 years of service. In that time, he answered 3,447 emergency calls and, remarkably, missed only 19 response

calls only because he was away from Sartell or for other good reasons.

The city council nixes proposals to allow beekeeping in the city, as well as a request to allow short-term rentals in residents' homes.

Participants have a fine time at the "International Community Festival" at Celebration Lutheran Church. Local people with varying cultural backgrounds and nationalities get together to share knowledge and foods of their native countries. The festival was organized to promote kindness, understanding and the vibrancy of a society made stronger by diverse cultural backgrounds.

May

Children from Pine Meadow Elementary School Kidstop participate in the Earth Day run at St. Cloud State University, joining more than 800 other students from central Minnesota for the event.

The ground is broken for the new Sartell High School site near Pinecone Road N. near Oak Ridge Elementary School. The school, expected to open for school year 2019, will cost about \$90 million.

The *Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader* and 23 local businesses honor Sartell police officers in a double-page newspaper salute for National Police Week (May 14-20).

Emma Zenzen and Jaren Martin are crowned queen and king of the Sartell High School Prom.

The TARGET organization at Sartell High School once again launches its "cool-to-be-chemical-free" campaign. The students create posters and give talks to younger students to promote a chemical- and alcohol-free life. TARGET stands for Teens Achieving Recognizable Goals Through Education and Teamwork.

For the second consecutive year, the Sartell City Council voted 4-1 in late April not to allow beekeeping in the city limits. That decision brings disagreement from many residents, who express their displeasure in May.



photo by Jenny McDermond

Even superheros need candy at the Sartell Summerfest parade on June 10. Henry Jenner, 16 months, and his parents Christina and Kevin Jenner, Sartell, watch the 25th annual parade.

Sartell artist Janice Courtney's painting of cloud formations, called *Luminous Light*, is one of the artworks chosen by the National Weather Service for an exhibition of weather-related art works. It was one of 560 entries in the contest.

Some Sartell High School seniors tackle a difficult debate topic – physician-assisted suicide. The students are part of a college speech class the students are taking via Southwest Minnesota State University under the leadership of Sartell English teacher Lisa Wilson. The audience, when asked which side won the debate, seemed to call it a tie.

Two neighbor women, Laurie Bloom and Ann Popp, finally succeed in getting a "Quiet Zone" designation for the railroad track next to Benton Drive N. by Sartell. With help from others, the women spearheaded the effort back in 2015 after train whistles would often annoy neighbors, including waking many of them up from sleep. Their efforts involved support from the railroad, city councils and township officials, among others.

June

At the annual Memorial Day ceremony in Veterans Park, Mike Mills of Freeport gives a talk about how veterans can have two types of wounds – the visible ones and the invisible ones. Mills, a U.S. Army veteran, was severely injured by an improvised explosive device in Iraq. He suffered burns that left him scarred, as well as mental and emotional anguish. Support from others, including family, helped him deal with the heavy load.

Sartell High School student Karen Radi is named Big Sister of the Year by the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. She has been a "Big Sister" to "Little Sister" Dakota for more than two years.

A benefit by the Sartell Lions for resident Kelly Orndorff is a big success at the Blue Line Sports Bar & Grill. Right after graduat-

YIR • back page



photo by Dennis Dalman

Morgan Crusoe of Sartell (left) is assisted in building her birdhouse by Bev Supan, a member of the St. Stephen Sportsmen's Club. Behind Morgan is her mother, Sara Crusoe.

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Opinion

Our View We must all join fight against sex-trafficking

Sex-trafficking is such a vile, disgusting, vicious crime it is difficult to fathom – difficult to imagine so many “ordinary” folks could possibly do such a crime, and those “ordinary” folks are not only pimps but the “johns” (mainly married men) who pay for sex, often with under-aged girls or boys.

Very often, sex-trafficking and drug-trafficking are inseparably connected, which makes the sickening crime even more insidious.

An extraordinary series of exposé stories by the *St. Cloud Times* last year proved just how extensive the crime is right here in central Minnesota and the St. Cloud area. We can no longer pretend sex-trafficking is a big-city crime; it’s right here, right under our noses. Sex-trafficking has become rampant in the area, and many of the pimps are not hard-bitten thugs from metro areas but “ordinary” men (and some women) from just about every city and small town in the three-county area.

But the fight against it has begun. Law-enforcement departments, attorneys, social agencies and others have been networking for at least 18 months to find ways to combat the crime. But there was a lack of funds.

Thanks to a \$313,000 grant from the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs, a new local task force can be formed. It’s called the Central Minnesota Sex-Trafficking Investigative Task Force.

Participants include police departments, sheriff departments, a sexual-assault center and the Stearns County Attorney’s Office. The task force will now have full-time sex-trafficking investigators in the St. Cloud and Waite Park police departments. There will also be a full-time officer and a part-time detective on the task force. The force will also network with state and national efforts, which is so important because sex-traffickers and their victims are constantly on the move to escape detection.

In addition, the task force will connect with many excellent organizations that are trying to put sex-traffickers out of business, off of the streets, while helping restore their victims to a sense of self-worth, health and new direction. Such organizations include women safe-shelters, churches, legal-aid agencies, Catholic Charities and Terebint Refuge.

Stearns County Attorney Janelle Kendall deserves our thanks and the highest praise for working tirelessly on ways to stop sex-trafficking, along with those who network with her.

We are happy about the task force, the new funding. But there is also a place for all of us in this crucial battle. As is the case with terrorist activity, if “you see something, say something.” Some of the sex-trafficking trysts take place in apartment buildings, hotels, motels, cars in parking lots and in homes of neighborhoods. A sure sign something may be awry is unfamiliar people going into and out of places, sometimes staying for short times, then leaving. That is sometimes also a sign of drug sales going on, and – not to forget – where there are drugs, there is often sex-trafficking and vice versa.

Sex-trafficking is like a cancerous rot on our entire society. We must all learn about it, learn how it cripples its victims emotionally and physically, and learn the ways we can all help to stop it, to arrest and prosecute offenders and to help restore its victims back to confidence and health.

Tax plan contains sugar-coated poisons

When they concocted the tax bill, Republicans were wearing rose-tinted glasses in dimly-lit, locked rooms in Washington, D.C. (aka “The Swamp.”)

Should we be celebrating this “legislative triumph?”

Whoa! Not so fast.

We don’t even know if the deal will improve anything except for more money circulating in the rarified world of the already-rich, the politicians’ “donor class” for which the bill was primarily crafted.

First off, there were good reasons for tax reform such as tax-code simplifications and, yes, even a decrease in corporate rates. But with gaping loopholes left intact, how dare they call it “reform” when such loopholes and shell-game chicanery remain intact for giant corporations that pay little or nothing in taxes already?

They insist the plan is fair for one and all. Here’s their theory: Giving huge tax breaks to corporations, millionaires and billionaires will benefit all Americans because that extra money in the hands of the wealthy will trickle down to the rest of us in the form of new and better jobs and boosted wages. Besides “trickle down,” it’s also known as the “rising-tide-lifts-all-boats” theory. It hasn’t worked before; many a boat has sunk. Will it work this time? Best put on your flotation jackets.

Another starry-eyed presumption is the tax cuts will spur economic growth by 3 to 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product, and that, they claim, will eventually kick off an increase in average-worker salaries of about \$4,000 annually. That one’s called the “counting-chickens-before-they-hatch” theory.

Why haven’t corporations with re-

**Dennis
Dalman**
Editor



cord profits already invested in major job-creation? Will even more money convince them to invest in Main Street rather than just Wall Street? Will some new American-style *noblesse oblige* take hold?

Most companies, with good reason, will not expand until there is an increased demand for goods and services. That is why it would have made good sense to give the lion’s share of the breaks to blue-collar workers, middle-class workers and to small-to-medium businesses that have long created nearly two-thirds of the jobs in the nation.

Most corporations have already said they will likely use their tax-break windfalls for stock-buybacks in order to increase share prices. More money begets more money, and Wall Street – not Main Street – wins again.

But as the order-before-midnight TV commercials shout, “But wait! There’s more! Free! Just pay extra shipping and handling.”

In the fine print of the tax-cut deal are some things we *hoi polloi* should not be celebrating – far from it. Squint hard; you’ll see them:

- The individual mandate for Obama-Care is rescinded, thus causing big premium increases mainly by those in the middle class who make too much money to qualify for federal subsidies.
- It will increase the deficit by at least \$1.4 trillion. That will lead to all kinds of “solutions,” including state and local

governments having to raise taxes and fees to make up for shortfalls in federal aid – everything from education to infrastructure, from health care to worker safety. Those increased costs to the lower-income and middle-class people will more than wipe out any tax breaks they’ll see in their paychecks. According to most analyses by economists, workers will see tax breaks of – at most – anywhere from \$1,500 to \$2,000 annually. It won’t take long to “neutralize” those gains by deficit-induced costs.

• Corporate tax breaks for corporations are permanent; those for individuals will “sunset” in the coming decade.

This package is touted as a big Christmas gift to all Americans. It’s more like sugar-coated poison. After the sugar-rush wears off, the paycheck gains will be eroded. But wait! There’s more! The right-wing ideologues who gave us this “gift” will start using the astronomical deficit it causes as the grand excuse to start slashing Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other social programs. That slash-and-burn intention, along with privatization of public programs, has long been their goal. To do that, they will have to retain control of the House and Senate. And that is why their tax scheme is so sugar-coated – to fool people into thinking what a swell deal it is for the little guys’ and gals’ paychecks, the folks whom they hope will re-elect them in the 2018 election and beyond.

Probably the biggest lie Trump ever told, among so many, is when he crowed this tax-break deal won’t benefit him whatsoever (“Bull-lieve me! Bull-lieve me!”) Yeah, right. Sure, anything you say, Big Santa.

Some Christmas gift. Great big lump of coal is more like it.

Holiday classics usher in new year

I can’t believe it. Once again we are in a new year; 365 days have unfortunately gone by so fast. Now is the time I have to transition to writing 2018 as the date on papers and documents, even when I was just getting used to switching to 2017 from 2016. Christmas is over, to return in another year that might just go as fast as this one.

As I have discussed before, the holiday season is one of my favorite times in large part due to the atmosphere of giving and togetherness it provides. This is accomplished through decorations, snow on the ground, music. But there’s something that also really gets me into the mood of the season, and that’s holiday movies.

There are certain movies saved only for Christmas and New Year’s among my relatives because for our family they bring a more special significance then. It all seems so much more relatable when the weather outside mirrors the television screen, and the characters work to put up the Christmas tree and make the most of the season.

As soon as Thanksgiving blows through, my mother likes to turn the television over to 25 Days of Christmas on the Hallmark channels. Although I find these movies a little sappy, it’s encouraging there are networks that devote their time to provide entertainment with a lot of holiday values and spin on the airways. I’ve seen enough

**Connor
Kockler**
Guest Writer



cheesy romances to guess the plot a mile away, and seen many a Scrooge-like character turned into a Christmas-lover by their caring neighbors, but I think people keep coming back to these themes because they say something about what this time of year is supposed to be about.

A film that usually gets pulled out at the family gatherings is *National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation*. Despite its 1980s release, it maintains a lot of relevancy and odd situations that make for laughs even in our changed times. Finding the perfect Christmas tree, dealing with unexpected family situations and just general shenanigans are a start. The Griswold family reminds us our sometimes-stressful holiday experiences could certainly be getting a lot more out of hand.

Building into that theme is one of my personal favorites, *Home Alone 2*. Though I am also a fan of the first *Home Alone* movie, its sequel catches more of the Christmas spirit and sees Kevin McCallister up to his old antics, not just to torment the idiotic bad guys, but to

protect and help those less fortunate than himself. Without getting too far into the plot, a young kid realizes the true meaning of Christmas, as we all hope to do as well.

Finally, I will end with a favorite of my grandmother’s, and a truly classic tale of the holiday spirit. This, of course, is *White Christmas*. It has everything you could ask for from a great Christmas movie – wonderful music, scenery, romance and one of the most heart-touching tributes I know in a movie. After World War II is over, two soldiers who have made it as successful entertainers find partners and run into their old commanding officer from the conflict. The rest is history, and if you’ve never seen it before, I encourage you to watch it.

So as we start off the new year, let’s all be sure to hold the lessons of the past holiday season with us, start our New Year’s resolutions off right and work toward making the world better one kind act at a time. Whether it’s with our favorite films, songs or holiday activities, there are many things that can remind us of what really is important. This January, we can use the holidays and its values to get a good start on the new year.

Connor Kockler is a Sauk Rapids-Rice High School student. He enjoys writing, politics and news, among other interests.

Sartell-St. Stephen • St. Joseph

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The ideas expressed in the letters to the editor and of the guest columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of the *Newsleaders*.

Letters to the editor may be sent to news@thenewsleaders.com or P.O. Box 324, St. Joseph, MN 56374. Deadline is noon Monday. Please include your full name for publication (and address and phone number for verification only.) Letters must be 350 words or less. We reserve the right to edit for space.

In Business

Country Manor staff surprises 105 residents with unexpected gifts for Christmas

It can be hard to get in the Christmas spirit when you're away from your loved ones during the holidays.

But the staff at Country Manor Nursing Home made sure its residents felt extra special during this holiday season.

At the final Christmas party of 2017, staff surprised 105 nursing-home residents with unexpected gifts for Christmas. This has become an annual tradition at Country Manor Nursing Home. The goal of the event is to ensure no resident is without a present for Christmas. Nursing home staff take great pride in finding the perfect present for their chosen resident. Watching the excitement on the faces of the staff as they hand out gifts is equally as special as watching the reactions they receive. This is truly an ode to the kind of people they are, and the genuine care they have for the people they serve.

Thank you to all the incredible staff members who participated in this year's event.

You are the greatest gift of all!

Throughout the month of December, Country Manor Campus hosts a variety of Christmas celebrations to ignite the holiday spirit throughout campus. Events include the following: sleigh rides, carolers, parades, concerts, live entertainment, visits from Santa and Mrs. Claus, crafts, cookie baking, resident/tenant gatherings, and family-focused parties filled with festive food and holiday traditions.

People

Teddy bear toss nets 100 bears for Toys for Tots



contributed photo

The Sartell boys hockey team held teddy bear toss Dec. 15 during its game with Chaska and collected more than 100 bears for the Toys for Tots Christmas drive. The senior boys in the picture include: (from left to right) Jake Rosenberger, Garrett Freeman, Jon Kirchner, Blake Webster, Dylan Michaud, Luke Spanier and Trevor Dummer.

Community Calendar

Is your event listed? Send your information to: *Newsleader Calendar, P.O. Box 324, St. Joseph, Minn. 56374; fax it to 320-363-4195; or, e-mail it to news@thenewsleaders.com. Most events are listed at no cost. Those events are typically free or of minimal charge for people to attend. Some events, which have paid advertising in the Newsleaders, are also listed in the calendar and may charge more.*

Friday, Jan. 5
Benton County Museum, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbentonhistory.org.

Central Minnesota Green Card Voices exhibit, 4-6 p.m., Whitney Senior Center, 1527 Northway Drive, St Cloud.

Saturday, Jan. 6
Acoustic Jam, 2-4:45 p.m., Mississippi Community Room 106, Great River Regional Library, 1300 W St.

Germain St., St. Cloud.

Paint the Town Red for Our Blue, 7-11 p.m., concert featuring Old Man Jenkins to raise money for training equipment for the Sartell Police Department. Sonia Nordmann, 320-251-8330.

Sunday, Jan. 7
Breakfast for Puerto Rico, sponsored by Knights of Columbus and Sisters of St. Benedict, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Heritage Hall, Church of St. Joseph, 12 W. Minnesota St., St Joseph. All proceeds benefit Colegio San Benito, which is administered by the Sisters of St. Benedict monastery in Puerto Rico, and the hardest-hit area from the hurricane. David, 320-271-7225.

Monday, Jan. 8
Lunch and cards, sponsored by Helping Hands Outreach, noon-3 p.m., Rusty Nail, 4 CR 2 S., St. Stephen. (through February

Geo Bee, 6-8 p.m., Sartell Middle School, 627 Third Ave. N.

Sartell Lions Club, 6:30 p.m., upstairs of Blue Line Sports Bar and Grill, 1101 Second St. S., Sartell. 320-267-2591.

Tuesday, Jan. 9
Sartell Chamber of Commerce, 11:30 a.m., Waters Church, 1227 Pinecone Road. 320-258.6061. info@sartellchamber.com.

St. Stephen Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m. 2 Sixth Ave. SE. St. Stephen. 320-251-0964.

Holistic Moms Network, 7-8:30 p.m., Good Earth Co-op, 2010 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud. 320-252-2489.

National Alliance on Mental Health, 7-8:30 p.m., Calvary Community Church, 1200 Roosevelt Road, St. Cloud. 320-259-7101.

Wednesday, Jan. 10
“Minnesota and the Great War,” presented by Stephen Osman, 9-10

a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 S. 33rd Ave., St Cloud. Steve Penick at 320-253-8424.

St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce, 11:30 a.m., St. Joseph Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E. stjosephchamber.com.

Forum for Executive Women, featuring a presentation by Malissa Adams on “Resiliency: The Key to Overcoming Adversity,” 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Tuscan Center, Midtown Square 3333 W. Division St. #116, St. Cloud. **RSVP by Jan. 5** at FEWStCloud.org, Jennifer, 320-292-3591.

Thursday, Jan. 11
Coffee and Conversation, featuring St. John’s Abbey Arboretum Land Manager and Outdoor University Director John Geissler, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.

Sartell-Sauk Rapids Moms’ Club, 9-10:30 a.m., Celebration Lutheran Church, 1500 Pinecone Road N., Sartell.

“State of Minnesota, Part 1: In Flux,” illustrations by Anne Buckvold, 6 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. artist talk, Great River Regional Library, 253 N. Fifth Ave. Waite Park. Caron, 320-253-9359.

St. Cloud Area Mothers of Multiples, 7 p.m., VFW Granite Post 428, 9 18th Ave. N., St. Cloud.

Friday, Jan. 12
Benton County Museum, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbentonhistory.org.

Saturday, Jan. 13
Central Minnesota Chapter of the Federation of the Blind of Minnesota, 12:30 p.m., American Legion, 17 Second Ave. N., Waite Park.

Sunday, Jan. 14
Non-football Game Day, 1 p.m., Sartell Senior Center, Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.

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Sartell Middle School students study 'Hour of Code'

by Cori Hilsgen

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Just the idea of studying computer coding might be daunting enough to keep people who don't think they know anything about computers from wanting to learn more about it.

At Sartell Middle School, technology specialists Brad Scherer and Amanda Holstrom tried to eliminate some of the fear of coding during the school's recent "The Hour of Code" held in early December.

Scherer said activities included an "Unplugged Challenge," where students wrote directions to program students around a maze to help them understand the sequential reasoning and logical thinking that is so important when coding and an Hour of Code Minecraft Challenge.

Because each grade level's science teachers think it's important to expose students to the experience, all students in fifth- through eighth-grade participated in the event.

"This experience is great for students," Scherer said. "They get an opportunity to see how coding and programming impacts their daily lives and have a lot of fun learning."

He said students could be

heard saying things like "I thought this was going to be really hard, but it was really fun," "I can't believe I was able to do that," "At first I couldn't figure it out but after failing a couple of times, I learned how to code," and more.

"In the Hour of Code you get to build your own things and finish a challenge," said sixth-grader Ben Thompson, also known as Code Master. "You feel like you got something accomplished."

According to Code.org, the Hour of Code began as a one-hour introduction to computer science to help demystify "code" and show most people can learn the basics. It was also meant to broaden participation in the computer-science field.

It has grown to become a worldwide effort, starting with one-hour of coding activities but expanding to many other area efforts.

The Hour of Code takes place yearly during Computer Science Education Week, which is held annually in recognition of the Dec. 9, 1906, birthday of Admiral Grace Murray Hopper, a computer pioneer.

This year, Computer Science Education Week was Dec. 4-10, but an Hour of Code can be hosted year-round.



contributed photo

Jennifer Olson's Sartell Middle School fifth-graders complete the "Hour of Code" Challenges in early December.

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ing from college, Orndorff was diagnosed with a virulent brain tumor that had to be removed. During the long and delicate process, she lost her sight. The benefit, dubbed "Never Lose Sight" was not just a fundraiser but also an awareness and education session for those who attended. Orndorff and her family called the event and the generous kindness of people "truly amazing."

Generous donations from businesses and individuals start

coming in for the Sartell Community Center under construction. Among the gifts are \$100,000 from Sartell resident George Torrey, \$20,000 from BankVista and a book-raising project by the LeSauk Lions Club and the Senior Connection, as well as other contributions.

Despite scorchingly hot weather, the annual Sartell SummerFest attracts thousands of people to Sartell who enjoy the parade, family activities, a street dance, fireworks and other fun things.

Violet Halverson, at age 92, brings home the "gold" from the National Shuffleboard Competi-

tion in Birmingham, Ala. "Oh, I loved it," she said after arriving back home. "But it took me a couple days to recover. I was a bit achy in the joints."

The Sartell-St. Stephen School District Activities Director John Ross, after many years in his position, announces he will step down to take on the role of associate activities and management of the middle school's activities program.

Year in Review Part 2 will be published in the Jan. 12 edition.

(To read any of the above stories in their entirety, visit the-newsleaders.com and search for your favorite stories.)

beer of the month

- 16⁹⁸** Budweiser, Bud Light & Michelob Golden Draft Light 24 Pack 12 Oz. Cans
- 17⁹⁸** Coors Light & Miller Lite 24 Pack 16 Oz. Cans
- 13⁹⁸** Busch Light 24 Pack 12 Oz. Cans Regular Or Light
- 11⁹⁸** Samuel Adams & Angry Orchard 12 Pack Bottles All Available Types
- 8⁹⁸** Surly Furious, Overrated, Bender & Cynic 4 Pack 16 Oz. Cans
- 10⁹⁸** Michelob Ultra, Amberbock, Bud Light Platinum & Bud Light Lime 12 Pack 12 Oz. Bottles Or Cans All Available Types

wine of the month

- 14⁹⁸** Svedka Vodka 1.75 Liter All Available Flavors \$3.98 32 Oz. Zing Zang Bloody Mary Mix
- 9⁹⁸** McAdams Canadian 1.75 Liter
- 10⁹⁸** RonDiaz Rum 1.75 Liter Spiced, White Or Gold Rum All Available Flavors
- 2⁹⁸** Crane Lake 750ml All Available Types
- 11⁹⁸** Predator 750ml All Available Types
- 12⁹⁸** JJ Renfield 8 Yr. Canadian Whisky 750ml
- 24⁹⁸** Gentleman Jack 750ml
- 8⁹⁸** Hess Select 750ml Chardonnay \$12.98 Cabernet
- 6⁹⁸** Carmenet 750ml All Available Types
- 8⁹⁸** St. Brendan's Irish Cream 750ml
- 29⁹⁸** Dewar's White Label Scotch 1.75 Liter
- 12⁹⁸** House Wine 3 Liter All Available Types
- 21⁹⁸** Rutherford Ranch 750ml Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

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