

St. Joseph Newsleader

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Town Crier

St. John's Boys' Choir to perform Masterworks

The St. John's Boys' Choir boys lend their pristine voices to the classical music of master composers enriched by the beautiful acoustics of the Great Hall at St. John's University. Soprano Patricia Kent joins the boys as they explore works from the Renaissance to the 20th century. Hear selections from the Mozart Solemn Vespers, Pergolesi Stabat Mater and a full performance of the Vivaldi Gloria. Performance is at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, March 4 in the Great Hall, SJU. To order tickets and learn more, visit www.sjbchoir.org or call 320-363-2558.

Chamber event Feb. 24 to showcase businesses

Escape the cold at the 13th annual Sartell Community Showcase from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24 at the Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. The family-friendly event features more than 80 vendor booths with children's games, prizes and products for purchase. Explore the new community center with the scavenger hunt. The event is sponsored by PineCone Vision Center and the Sartell Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit sartellchamber.com.

Whitney advisory board seeks applicants

The city of St. Cloud is seeking applicants for the advisory board of Whitney Senior Center at 1527 Northway Drive. Its mission is to provide life-long learning opportunities, recreation, socialization, health and fitness that promotes aging in place to residents ages 55 and older in a nondiscriminatory inclusive manner. Citizens can pick up an application to the St. Cloud Boards and Commissions at Whitney Senior Center or City Hall. It's also available online at www.ci.stcloud.mn.us Applications will be accepted through March 5 and should be turned in to the mayor's office.

Hands Across World seeks child-care volunteers

Hands Across the World is looking for volunteers, 18 and older, who are willing to watch babies and toddlers while their mothers are in class. Their mission is to provide the first learning opportunity to newly arrived immigrants who do not have language or living skills necessary to thrive in our community. In a classroom environment, Hands Across the World helps both children and parents acquire the tools needed to become integrated citizens of central Minnesota. Contact Brianda Cediell, Hands Across the World executive director, at 320-260-1072.

Strong feelings voiced at annexation meeting

by Dave DeMars
news@thenewsleaders.com

Taxes? Regulation? Land rights and zoning? Lifestyle changes? Benefits? Government overreach? These were just a few of the concerns and questions 60-80 St. Joseph Township citizens had for the members of the St. Joseph City Council during the Feb. 15 open meeting dealing with the Orderly Annexation Agreement. But layered underneath the questions and statements was another message and it came through loud and clear. We don't trust government.

This was the second open meeting with questions raised in civil tones compared with the first session marked by a more heated atmosphere.

Reasons for annexation

After welcoming the attendees and explaining that while a few questions from the last open meeting would be answered, there was still much discussion going on and this meeting was primarily to hear more concerns and gather information, Acting Mayor Dale Wick turned the meeting over to City Administrator Judy Weyrens.

Weyrens reviewed the concerns expressed at the first meeting which included the following: Why annex at all? What benefits do residents gain from annexation? What about taxes? and What kind of governance and ordinance regulations will there be?

Weyrens also explained the need for annexation. The 1997 OAA foresaw the need to have a plan so the city and the town-



photo by Dave DeMars

About 75 citizens wait for the start of the OAA meeting dealing with the annexation of a part of St. Joseph Township Feb 15. The crowd filled the meeting room of the city office building and some stood outside the doors.

ship could effectively and efficiently plan for infrastructure extension. The annexation area was divided into three districts each with a different time frame for annexation. The deadline for the final annexation was Dec. 31, 2017.

Weyrens also pointed out the

city boundaries are fragmented with island areas separating parts of the city. Stearns County, which used to administer the zoning, will no longer provide that service. The township has agreed to the city of St. Joseph taking over that function. This

OAA • page 2

Cold fun, warm smiles



photos by Carolyn Bertsch

Isabel Crue, 10, shows her brother Westin, 5, a fishing line dangling into an ice hole Feb. 17. Both St. Joseph kids, hoped to catch a winning fish at the 25th annual St. Joseph Rod and Gun Club ice-fishing tournament on Kraemer Lake.



Blake Roth of St. Joseph takes a break from ice fishing to show off his ice-sliding skills Feb. 17 during the St. Joseph Rod and Gun Club ice-fishing tournament on Kraemer Lake. About 750 ice-fishing enthusiasts turned out for the 25th annual event.

Dickhaus runs for county sheriff

(Editor's note: Two candidates have announced plans to run for Stearns County sheriff. This week Lt. Robert Dickhaus of the Stearns County Sheriff's Office is profiled. Waite Park Police Chief Dave Benrud was featured in the Feb. 9 edition.)

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

In the 28 years of his law-enforcement career, Lt. Robert Dick-

haus, a Melrose resident, has served in so many diverse jobs he is confident he would make a good choice for Stearns County sheriff.

Dickhaus recently announced his candidacy for that position and has

Dickhaus • page 7



Honer retires from fire department after 21 years

by Cori Hilsgen
news@thenewsleaders.com

Assistant Fire Chief Justin Honer recently hung up his fire gear and retired from the St. Joseph Volunteer Fire Department after 21 years of service.

St. Joseph Fire Chief Jeff Taufen said it’s always hard to see someone leave the department, but Honer’s retirement is a little harder for him because they know each other so well.

The two men have been friends since they were children, attending Kennedy Elementary and graduating from Apollo High School together. They even lived together in the same house after graduating from high school.

“He’s been my best friend and was my best man at my wedding,” Taufen said. “It’s tough to see him leave – but understandable.”

Taufen said because they knew each other well, they worked well together.

“Justin knew the job, got things done and moved on,”

Taufen said. “When we worked together, it was our goal every firefighter who left the hall came back to the hall.”

Honer and Taufen both joined the fire department in October 1996. Honer became the assistant chief when Taufen became the chief, doing so for the past nine years.

Before becoming assistant chief, Honer was a captain in the department for two years when Randy Torberg was fire chief and then he was a firefighter for 10 years when Dave Theisen was fire chief.

“He was a great pump operator,” Taufen said.

Honer said one of his best experiences was when he was accepted to the department after he applied.

His first year with the department was when they were still located in the old fire station. They have been at the new fire station for the past 20 years.

Some of Honer’s duties as assistant chief included assisting the chief with all duties,

decision making, training, helping cover events, helping make calls on the scene and covering for the chief when he was gone.

One of the reasons Honer retired is because he no longer lives in the area.

He said after 21 years it was time to retire to spend more time with his family and friends. His family includes his girlfriend, Dawn Haase, and his daughter, Madison.

Because of confidentiality laws, Honer said he can’t discuss many of the experiences he had with the department.

“I always appreciated when a bad call turned into a good call because of being able to save someone’s life and other good outcomes,” he said.

Honer said he would encourage other people to join the fire department. He said through his experience with the department, he gained new friends, knowledge, helped people in the area and learned how to cope with everything from tragic situations to happy



contributed photo
St. Joseph Volunteer Fire Department Assistant Chief Justin Honer (left) accepts a retirement award from Chief Jeff Taufen at the department’s Christmas party at the La Playette Bar. Honer recently retired after 21 years of service with the department.

endings.

“It’s a good experience and you gain another whole family of people,” he said.

Captain Dave Salzer will replace Honer as assistant chief.

“Dave will fit the position well and do a good job,” Taufen said.

He said he and Honer had planned to retire at the same time but he isn’t ready to retire yet and still enjoys being the department’s chief.

Honer continues to own and operate his business, Honer Excavating in St. Joseph, which he has owned for 15 years.

The St. Joseph Fire Department, originally called Hook and Ladder Co. 1, has been providing fire protection services since about 1855. The name was formally changed to the St. Joseph Fire Department in 1892. The department is part of the City of St. Joseph but managed by the St. Joseph Fire

OAA

from front page

should make the entire process of zoning and building permitting more streamlined.

Weyrens said the intent of annexation was to allow residents in the newly annexed areas to continue to utilize their property in the same fashion as before the annexation. The city is seeking to create the Urban Expansion District so the same zoning districts will exist in both city and township. Doing that will allow for an orderly development of property while allowing the city to extend utilities in a cost-effective manner.

There would be few changes in ordinances, Weyrens said. The township already has restrictions such as on open alcohol containers and public urination. There might be some minor changes in siting buildings, but by and large the ordinance changes would be kept to a minimum.

Negotiations with the township as to the exact areas that are proposed for annexation are still ongoing. A smaller area might be annexed rather than

the broad area originally proposed.

Citizen participation

After hearing Weyrens’ presentation, about a dozen or so citizens spoke to the council about concerns.

Kevin Kluesner questioned whether the city had to have all of the details and changes worked out and solutions in place before the annexation could actually be completed, or was the annexation an ongoing event that would be in a state of flux with decisions being handed down piecemeal by the council?

The answer was the details did not have to be completely in place, but at present, there’s time to discuss and plan for the eventual annexation and changes that might be necessitated.

Kluesner followed up with a question on taxation and learned a \$100,000 piece of property would be taxed at about a third less in the township than in the city.

Peter Drew followed Kluesner with additional concerns about the tax rate. He said he had done some checking with the county auditor and the tax increase

looked substantial.

“It looks like our area under the township tax rate – we would pay about \$400,000, and under the city rate we would pay just a little over \$1 million,” Drew said. “It would be about three times what we’re going to end up paying – about a \$600,000 increase.”

There are lots of people in the city and fewer in the township. Drew’s concern was city administrators would tax heavily because there was less representation from the annexed portions of the township.

“We won’t be able to have much input into that kind of stuff when it comes right down to it,” Drew said. “I have a number of concerns about the ongoing inequities.”

Drew was also concerned those left in the township would be hit with a large tax bill because of the fewer number of taxpayers after annexation. Drew’s concerns about taxes would be echoed by others who addressed the council.

Steve Buermann also voiced opposition to the annexation saying the city was acting with little if any input from the property owners. The services which

were alluded to earlier in the meeting would be years in coming. The area is too large for the city to provide the needed services. Buermann favors a plan of small annexations.

“Annexation for the purpose of annexation is not acceptable, nor is annexation to increase tax revenue,” said Buermann, who received enthusiastic applause when he finished. “I would like to recommend the city rethink their overly ambitious takeover of these properties. It appears to be a land grab, tax grab and government overreach.”

Dan Rassier uttered similar complaints suggesting lack of input in the decision-making process. Residents in the township don’t necessarily want or need to be annexed, he said.

“Who would choose to live in a state of stress and anger with other townsfolk?” he asked. “If something is legal or may be legal, does it make it right?”

Rassier also suggested landowners were not given due process and had rights usurped because of this. He referenced actions in Waite Park.

Jennifer Hiltner also spoke for herself and several neighbors. Her concerns centered around

tax rates in her developed neighborhood that is zoned R-1 and R-2. Would they be taxed at the city rate of 61 percent or at the township rural rate of 21 percent, she wondered.

Eric Ostendorf raised a question of whether the annexation was being done in the best way. Shouldn’t landowners and developers be the ones to petition the city for annexation rather than the city simply annexing, he asked. Ostendorf and others referred to the annexation as the city “taking the land.”

“The thing that is becoming kind of apparent – and I don’t think anyone wants to admit it – is you want the control, and you want the tax base,” said Ostendorf. “That is what is driving all of this.”

Other speakers seemed to echo many of the same themes during the meeting. In the end, the council did not respond to any questions or concerns except to say more meetings are being planned and negotiations are ongoing. Nothing has been firmly approved, but at this time, the council is simply exploring options as to how best to approach this issue.

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Blotter

If any readers have tips concerning crimes, they should call the St. Joseph Police Department at 320-363-8250 or Tri-County Crime Stoppers at 320-255-1301 or access its tip site at www.tricounty-crimestoppers.org. Crime Stoppers offers rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for crimes. This information is submitted by the St. Joseph Police Department.

Jan. 13

2:37 a.m. Domestic. 1002 Baker St. E. Officers were dispatched to a fight. The complainant told officers it was a “play fight” between friends until things escalated into pushing, shoving and yelling. When officers arrived, both parties were separated and both men were intoxicated. Neither would talk about

what happened other than say they did not want charges pressed. Parties went to their own apartments. 9:06 a.m. Hit and run. 134 Ninth Ave. SE. An officer received a call about a possible hit and run. The officer found a damaged truck and noted tracks from another vehicle which appeared to be off the road across the yard. Parts from the striking vehicle were found on the ground. The officer spoke with the father of the owner’s truck who stated his son was gone for the weekend. Photos were taken of the truck. While checking the area, the officer spotted a vehicle that appeared to match the striking vehicle parked outside a residence. The officer spoke with the registered owner of the vehicle who said he was out looking for his dog at approximately 3 a.m. when he lost control on the curve and slid into

another truck. The suspect admitted to “panicking” and leaving the scene to go home. 12:31 p.m. Speed. 1350 Minnesota St. W. An officer spotted a vehicle traveling west on Minnesota Street going faster than the posted speed limit of 30 mph. The officer activated his radar and captured a speed of 52 mph. The driver was identified by her driver’s license but could not provide proof of insurance and could not contact her parents who were the owners of the vehicle. The driver knew why she was pulled over. A citation was issued for speeding and the owner was ordered to provide proof of insurance. 10:13 p.m. Hit and run. 1500 Elm St. E. An officer was dispatched to a hit and run in the parking lot of Coborn’s liquor. The officer spoke with the complainant who advised

sometime between 2-11 p.m. that day his car was struck in the parking lot damaging the right read end. The officer also noticed what appeared to be a broken headlight cover on the ground underneath the car. Photos were taken and the broken light cover recovered. The complainant was unsure if the parking lot cameras would have the incident recorded but was going to check with his manager. No suspects at this time.

Jan. 14

5:35 p.m. Suspicious activity. 118 Jasmine Lane. An officer was dispatched to suspicious activity near the above address. A complainant stated she heard two booms and saw some flashing outside and believed it to be coming from across the road. The officer responded and spoke with the suspect who was in his driveway but said he hadn’t

heard anything but was working on a snowmobile inside of his garage and it had been backfiring. The officer informed him of the complaint and then called the complainant to explain. She informed the officer when the suspect is intoxicated he normally shoots off fireworks which she believed him to be doing. The officer stated he would continue to patrol the area.

Jan. 15

9:49 p.m. Hill Street W. and College Avenue S. An officer noticed a vehicle had struck the stop sign at the intersection. Based on the tracks, it appeared the vehicle was traveling south on College Avenue S. and slid into the sign. No other officers had knowledge of the incident and crash was reported. The scene was photographed and city maintenance called.

People

Mary Dana Hinton, the College of St. Benedict president, has been selected to two boards that serve and support colleges and universities across the country. She was elected to the Council of Independent Colleges board of directors at a meeting Jan. 4 in Hollywood, Fla. At a meeting Jan. 24 in Washington, D.C., she was also elected to the Association of American Colleges and Universities board of directors. Hinton was one of 10 college presidents elected to the independent college board, and she will serve a three-year term. Hinton was one of eight persons appointed to AACU board for a two-year term.

Twenty-four St. Joseph students were recently named

to the fall dean’s list at St. Cloud State University. To be eligible for the honor, students must have a grade-point average of 3.75 or higher on a 4.0 scale. They are the following: **McKayla Beard**, elementary education; **Taylor Brinkman**, elementary/K-6 education; **Anna Emerson**, sociology; **Andrea Francis**, psychology; **Shane Ganley**, community psychology; **Crystal Giffen**, community psychology; **Lindsay Helfenstein**, management; **Lynnsey Hoffmann**, general business; **Isaac Holthaus**, nursing; **Brooks Imdieke**, mass communications; **Brandon Johnson**, general business; **Special Jones**, social work; **Hannah Kalla**, elementary/K-6 education; **Summer Knudsen**, elementary/K-6 education; **Tyler Lahr**, electrical engineering;

Kaylee Lodermeier, art education; **William Morgan**, social work; **Shannon Osendorf**, elementary/K-6 education; **JoAnn Otte**, nursing; **Ryan Peterson**, special education; academic and behavioral strategist; **Katherine Thomas**, accounting; **Vanessa Ulrich**, nursing; **Haley Walker**, art; and **Richard Welch**, accounting.

Four St. Joseph students were recently named to the fall dean’s list at Bemidji State University. To be eligible for the dean’s list, students must achieve a 3.5 grade-point average. The students are: **Margaret Donnay**, **Brandon Ertl**, **Peter Nelson** and **Lauren Stock**.

Four St. Joseph students were recently named to the fall dean’s list at The College

of St. Scholastica in Duluth. Students must achieve a 3.75 grade-point average or higher on a 4.0 scale to be eligible for this honor.

They are: **Benjamin Thell**, health-information management; **Tyler Johnson**, finance; **Michelle Killam**, nursing; and **Alexis Weisser**, nursing.

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We, the editors of this 2018 Area's Best Business Review offer this suggestion to the people in our area: So, whether or not you need a big grocery shopping trip, get your tire changed or pick-up a prescription, do what smart shoppers do...make WALMART your one-stop shopping headquarters for the best products, the largest selection and the ultimate in everyday bargains!

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Annual farm show set Feb. 27-March 1



contributed photo

More than 3,500 people attended last year’s annual farm show. This year’s farm show, the largest indoor show in the upper Midwest, will be held Feb. 27-March 1 at the River’s Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud.

by **Cori Hilsген**
news@thenewsleaders.com

Agriculture enthusiasts and others will have a chance to check out innovative ideas and new machinery, visit professional vendors and listen to speakers on farm-related topics at the Central Minnesota Farm Show Feb. 27-March 1 at the River’s Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud.

The farm show has hosted thousands of visitors for 51 years.

“Last year we saw just (more than) 3,500 visitors,” said Sheri Wegner, special-events coordinator.” This year we are looking for 4,000.”

Wegner said something new this year is “Topics on the Hour.” Each vendor will present on their product or services on the Carlson Room stage. Also new are cookies-and-milk tickets during the last two hours of the show each day.

This year’s event includes more than 390 booths and 200 vendors, free coffee and donuts from 9-11 a.m. each day, drawings for prizes, daily seminars and Linder Farm Network broadcasts from the

show. KASM and WVAL radio stations will also be broadcasting live interviews from the showroom floor each day.

This year’s seminars include “Carrying the Load: Is your equipment fit for the road?” from 10:30-11:45 a.m. and 1:30-2:45 p.m. Tuesday. Minnesota State Patrol commercial motor-vehicle officer Dave Busse will discuss the latest rules and regulations on roadside inspections, load securement and transporting hazardous materials.

A panel will also discuss the legal side and the farmer’s point of view on water quality/buffer zones on Feb. 27.

Scott Steffes from Steffes Group, a nationally recognized leader in the auction industry, will discuss “Market Trends on Equipment – Looking Forward” from 10:30-11:45 a.m. and 1:30-2:45 p.m. Wednesday.

AgStar Financial Services senior business analyst Cathy Olson, University of Minnesota extension educator Gary Hachfeld and Stinson Leonard Street attorney Brian Schoenborn will discuss estate planning and “Planning Your Legacy” from 10:30

a.m.-noon and 1:30-3 p.m. Thursday.

Each year the Farm Show committee awards 10 Central Minnesota area high-school students with \$500 scholarships. The farm-show committee is expanding the scholarship program for 2018 and will match up to \$5,000 for donations/sponsorships toward \$1,000 scholarships for high-school and post-secondary students going into an agri-related field of study.

“This is the largest indoor farm show in the upper Midwest,” Wegner said. “It provides an opportunity for the farmers to meet and visit with the area reps to see first-hand the new equipment and technology. We are the place to meet to cultivate friendships.”

Many area businesses including Stearns Electric, Powerhouse Outdoor Equipment, Cy Pfannenstien Music Service, Central Minnesota Credit Union and Minnesota Home Improvement have participated at the event in previous years.

For more information, visit the website, CentralMNFarmShow.com.

Country Manor expansion more than 50-percent occupied

by **Vicki Ikeogu**
news@thenewsleaders.com

Since opening its new campus in St. Joseph in November, Sartell-based Country Manor has been well received in the community.

“It’s so wonderful to be in St. Jo(seph),” said Emily Frericks, Country Manor director of public relations and marketing. “We are at over 50-percent occupancy, which is impressive since we are brand new.”

Country Manor recently expanded into the St. Joseph area with its 157,000-square-foot Woodcrest of Country Manor facility. It’s the facility’s first expansion outside of Sartell.

“To be honest, our Country Manor campus (in Sartell) has had waiting lists for most areas for quite some time,” Frericks said.

“There was a real need for senior

housing and we at Country Manor have had this hope and dream of expanding for a long time.”

Open to the public in November, the development, 1200 Lanigan Way SW., consists of 60 senior apartments and 23 memory-care suites. Twelve patio home lots are also currently available with final construction on a model patio home to be completed in the next few weeks.

St. Joseph City Administrator Judy Weyrens said the development is a welcome sight for area residents.

“For the last number of years our EDA (Economic Development Authority) has been hearing there are just no places for seniors in St. Jo(seph),” Weyrens said. “This facility will be the largest and provide the most variety in types of (senior) housing for our community.”

Frericks said the search for a

new Country Manor facility began in 2014. St. Joseph was one of the early contenders.

“Everyone in St. Joseph was so welcoming,” Frericks said. “They stuck with us every step of the way.”

Groundbreaking for the more than \$15-million facility began in August 2016. Weyrens said the city provided Country Manor with a tax abatement for the project.

Woodcrest of Country Manor mirrors the Sartell Country Manor location.

“We will be offering similar amenities like a general store, a chapel and a wellness center,” Frericks said.

And those amenities are sought after among current Woodcrest of Country Manor residents.

“We are seeing huge crowds at our chapel right now,” Frericks said. “And we are seeing increased attendance at our wellness facility. We are even having to bring over a masseuse from our Sartell campus to St. Jo(seph). There seems to be such an instant connection among the residents.”

Frericks said the Woodcrest facility was constructed to complement the natural wooded area the property sits on. The building has large windows that allow plenty of natural light into the facility. In addition, Woodcrest of Country Manor also has an indoor secured courtyard.

“A lot of our area seniors grew up in rural settings,” Frericks said. “But when their health changes, they still want to stay in that rural



contributed photo

Preparing to cut the ribbon at Woodcrest are (from left to right) St. Joseph Police Chief Joel Klein, Economic Development Authority member Larry Hosch, City Administrator Judy Weyrens, Mayor Rick Schultz, Public Works Director Terry Thene and City Council Member Dale Wick.

environment. I think Woodcrest of Country Manor provides that.”

Weyrens said the location of the new facility in St. Joseph will more than likely draw seniors from outside the city to Woodcrest.

“At one time we had done a market study and found our community really draws from our neighbors to the west (like Avon and Albany),” Weyrens said. “We offer that closeness to St. Cloud without actually being in St. Cloud.”

And as a bonus, Weyrens said staff at Country Manor have been reaching out to Kennedy Elementary School to potentially incorporate intergenerational activities between residents and students.

“We have had so much support from the staff at Kennedy,” Frericks said. “We actually housed our (St.

Joseph) offices out at Kennedy. And a lot of the staff are really supportive of developing an inter-generational program.”

Housing costs for Woodcrest of Country Manor vary on the size of home or apartment and the amount of services needed by tenants.

Apartments range in size from 675- to 1,250-square-feet. There are one- and two-bedroom options available.

Around the clock, on-site nursing care will be available to tenants.

Woodcrest of Country Manor plans to hire 25 people to fill positions such as home care, dietary needs, environmental services, administration and support staff. More information on floor plans and tours can be found at woodcrestofcountrymanor.org.



contributed photo

An interior shot of one of the resident areas of the Woodcrest of Country Manor facility. The new, 157,000-square-foot facility includes 60 senior apartments and 23 memory-care units. Additional patio homes are still being constructed.

Newsleaders’ Dalman wins MNA awards

by Vicki Ikeogu
news@thenewsleaders.com

Ever since he was little, Dennis Dalman had a nose for news.

“I always loved newspapers,” he said. “Even as I kid. I would get the *St. Cloud Times* and be all excited to read it. I loved the smell of the paper and the ink on my fingers. I guess I was a newspaper, book-worm nerd.”

So, for Dalman, it was natural for him to progress from reading about the news to being on the front lines of storytelling.

This year, Dalman’s storytelling work, covering the news for both the *St. Joseph Newsleader* and *Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader*, has earned him recognition among his peers.

At the 151st annual Minnesota Newspaper Association awards banquet held late last month, Dalman received three awards for his work with the *Newsleaders*. He received both first and second place in breaking news coverage for weekly newspapers with a circulation of 2,501 to 5,000 with his coverage of tragic developments in the Jacob Wetterling case and third place in the Herman Roe Editorial Writing award for his column titled “Don’t let knife attack fuel climate of suspicion.”

The entries were judged by members of the Illinois Press Association.

Dalman’s first-place award was for the story “Wetterling asked abductor: ‘What did I do wrong?’”

After Heinrich abducted Jacob, placed him in his car and handcuffed him, Jacob asked his abductor, “What did I do wrong?” Heinrich later revealed that to investigators.

“I watched the press conference and I remember bursting into tears hearing that,” Dalman said. “That was the most heart-breaking thing. Those words (What did I do wrong?) summarized the uncertainty, the agony of the case in those words from an innocent child. Those five words bother me to this day.”

It took Dalman about four days to complete the story.

“It was very, very hard,” he

said. “It was emotionally exhausting for me and I’m just a journalist. I can’t imagine what the family was going through.”

His second-place award was for “Dots always pointed to Heinrich as abductor,” a story about how investigators, in hind-sight, missed many connective dots years ago when Danny Heinrich, Wetterling’s abductor and killer, was a person of interest in the case. The contest judges called Dalman’s story “innovatively bold.”

“I was seething when I wrote that story,” Dalman said.

He said while he poured his emotions, his feelings into that story, he remained true to the facts of the case.

His third-place column, written after the 2016 knife attack at Crossroads Center, was touted by judges as “a brave stance in the face of a nightmare situation. One can imagine this voice is an important one in the community.”

In his editorial, Dalman wrote about the need for all people to lower levels of fear, suspicion, prejudice and hatred that sometimes follow acts of violence by deranged individuals.

To Dalman, this opinion summed up a lot of feelings.

“You’ve got to stand up against (hateful) stuff like that (fear, prejudice, hatred),” he said. “You’ve got to say no, no, no.”

In the past, Dalman has been recognized by the MNA for his human-interest stories, columns, investigative reporting and best explanation of news-

paper operations-and-ethics during his tenure at the *Echo Press* in Alexandria, prior to coming to the *Newsleaders* in 1998. But this was the first year in nearly two decades Dalman chose to submit anything for the contest.

“It’s really gratifying to be recognized by one’s own peers,” Dalman said. “I feel really good about it. It was like the frosting on a cake. But I’m not done yet.”

Dalman, 70, has moved on from the *Newsleaders’* editor desk to retirement. It was a torch he recently passed to former *St. Cloud Times* Consumer Experience and Planning Director Mike Knaak.

But he has no intentions of putting down his pen anytime soon. He will continue as a part-time freelance writer for the *Newsleaders*.


“To me, the point of news reporting is to give a voice to the voiceless, the ones who lack economic power, the ones who are ignored,” he said. “It’s always gratifying to win awards as they are an indication of the good work I’ve done. But you don’t write stories for awards. Because if you do, you’re not doing it right.”

Kids unearth science at Waterfest event



photo by Carolyn Bertsch

Ben Anderson, of St. Joseph, park projects coordinator for the Stearns County Parks Department, shows Pine Meadow Elementary School students Dylan Hansen and Sella Grams, both age 10 and of Sartell, how to split granite using a hammer, plugs and feathers during the Feb. 15 Waterfest event which took place at the College of St. Benedict.



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Opinion

Our View

Stearns sheriff race shaping up on ballot

Stearns County will elect a new sheriff this fall.

The race should be one of the most interesting and most important on the November ballot.

For the first time since 2002, there won't be an incumbent sheriff on the ballot.

When John Sanner retired a year ago after serving for 14 years, the county board appointed Donald Gudmundson to fill out his term. Gudmundson says he doesn't plan to run for election.

So far, two veteran law-enforcement leaders announced they are running. Waite Park Police Chief Dave Bentrud and Stearns County Lt. Robert Dickhaus want to be sheriff. The *Newsleader* profiled Bentrud in the Feb. 16 edition. Dickhaus is featured in today's edition.

Other candidates may still appear. The official filing period opens on May 22.

The sheriff supervises more than 200 professionals with an annual budget of \$22 million. Voters should press the candidates on how they plan to use these resources to protect our communities.

Deputies patrolled more than 2,500 miles of county and township roads and handled more than 41,000 complaints in 2016.

In addition to patrolling and enforcement, the sheriff runs the county jail, which housed 7,600 inmates in 2016, the most recent year with available statistics.

The Stearns County 911 center dispatches for 31 fire/rescue departments, 13 police departments and six ambulance services. During 2016, the 911 center handled approximately 172,000 emergency and non-emergency calls.

Deputies provide security for the courthouse and other county buildings.

For cities such as St. Joseph and Sartell that have their own police departments, the sheriff's office dispatches calls, deputies back up officers and investigators help with crimes against people and property.

Stearns County received more than 12,000 calls from Sartell and more than 4,800 from St. Joseph in 2016. Of the 34 townships in Stearns County, St. Joseph topped the list of calls with more than 2,100, according to the sheriff's office's annual report.

Every day of the year, the sheriff's office touches the lives of hundreds of county residents. Most of those activities take place with little notice or attention.

But the sheriff is the key player when a major crime occurs. Questions still linger from the kidnapping and murder of Jacob Wetterling. The investigation haunted the terms of three sheriffs starting in 1989.

An American Public Media podcast called "In the Dark" asserted that, starting with the original investigation, the Wetterling case had been mishandled. A St. Joseph man who was originally a witness, Dan Rassier, later became a "person of interest" and he sued Sanner. The APM report also reported a poor record of solving crimes.

In this important race, voters should ask what improvements need to be made for solving high-profile crimes as well as the less notable cases. Candidates should be able to explain in detail how they will enforce the law in a sprawling county that stretches for 60 miles west from the St. Cloud metro area through small towns, farms and resorts.

St. Joseph • Sartell-St. Stephen

Newsleaders

Reaching EVERYbody!

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.

Gun debate is about dollars, cents

Thoughts and prayers.

We heard those words again last week after another angry man picked up his legally purchased battlefield weapon and attacked a Florida high school, killing 17.

Thoughts and prayers from political leaders, again. What they really should be saying is "dollars and cents."

Because money, not logic, not sound public policy, not hollow thoughts and prayers, controls the gun safety debate in America.

In the last election cycle, the gun lobby poured \$55 million into campaigns.

Donald Trump benefited from more than \$31 million of gun-lobby money donated to support his campaign and oppose Hillary Clinton.

Florida's junior senator, Marco Rubio, has collected \$3.3 million from the gun lobby in his political career.

The biggest pile of gun lobby money goes to Republicans. The first Democrat on the list of current members of the House and Senate, Rep. Sanford Bishop of Georgia, ranks 79th with \$49,496.

Minnesota's Collin Peterson, a Democrat who represents the Seventh District that includes the western half of Stearns County, ranks 84.

Rep. Tom Emmer, the Republican who represents Minnesota's Sixth District, ranks 258 with \$3,000.

Mike Knaak
Editor



These contributions were compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics from Federal Election Commission candidate reports.

Gun-lobby money buys votes and blocks any action on gun-safety issues. Even for candidates who get little or no money, the threat of well-funded attacks against them keeps them in line.

No wonder thoughts and prayers don't lead to action.

The first major bill passed in 2017 and Trump's first major legislative achievement made it easier for people who were not mentally competent enough to manage their money to buy guns. Emmer voted for that measure.

When Sen. Dianne Feinstein proposed blocking gun sales to persons who are on various terrorist lists, including being banned from boarding airplanes, the Senate voted no.

Following the Las Vegas mass shooting that left 58 people dead, members of congress talked about banning so-called "bump stocks," an after-market device that converts semi-automatic weapons to full au-

tomatics. To date, there's no action on that.

The majority of Americans support gun-safety measures that in no way threaten the Second Amendment. Depending on the specific poll and the question asked, the support ranges from 70 to more than 90 percent.

These measures include: background checks on all sales; banning high-capacity magazines; renewing the assault weapons ban that was law between 1994 and 2004; and improving the quality of the background-check database so people don't fall through the cracks.

There are other ideas open for debate including requiring gun-proficiency tests much like driver's tests and "red-flag" laws that allow law enforcement to intervene during background checks.

None of these ideas come even close to banning or confiscating guns.

Dollars and cents should not be part of this debate.

There's one factor that carries more power than big money and that's politicians' fears they will be voted out of office.

Voters must make it clear to politicians that if you fail to act, if you block reasonable debate on commonsense measures, if you only offer thoughts and prayers, you will pay at the ballot box and you will be voted out of office.

Lieutenant governor debacle spurious, unnecessary

Connor Kockler
Guest Writer



her new job in the nation's capital.

With Smith's position vacant, Republican state Senate President Michelle Fischbach was elevated to the role by the State Constitution. Fischbach and Republicans have argued that she can hold both positions at once. Democrats disagree, and have fought to force her to give up her state Senate seat. If successful, this would then bring the State Senate to a 33-33 tie, pending a special election for Fischbach's seat.

These events came to a head last week Feb. 12 when an initial lawsuit against Fischbach was dismissed by a Ramsey County judge. Although the case was dismissed, the judge left open the possibility for another suit to come up with stronger backing. Later that night, the DFL managed to hold Senate District 54, with successful candidate Karla Bigham bringing the Democrats back to 33 seats in the Senate.

Thus, back to the lieutenant governor we go. Efforts to unseat Fischbach or help her keep both roles will now be of paramount importance. If we end up going to a special election for Fischbach's seat, though, Democrats shouldn't get their hopes up. Senate District 13, in which many readers

of the *Newsleaders* live, is solidly Republican. Fischbach was backed by almost 69 percent of voters back in 2016, and she has said that she would run to regain her seat. Barring a huge Hail Mary for the Democrats, flipping the Senate is a forlorn hope.

So why all the drama? What's the point of trying to force voters back to the polls? The answer, blatant politicking on the part of the DFL. Back in December, state Republican legislative leaders offered to hold a special session to elect a Democratic state Senate President. This person would then succeed to lieutenant governor once Smith was gone, preserving the will of the voters in 2014 when the DFL governor and lieutenant governor ticket was elected.

But, as the governor is the only individual able to formally call the legislature up, Dayton declined. DFL legislators such as their Senate leader Tom Bakk said, with Fischbach out, the Senate would be "up for grabs."

Not only is this entire situation completely unnecessary, it's a barely-disguised power grab by Minnesota Democrats. And, now we are being forced to play their game, rather than dealing with the actual business of governing this state. If Fischbach is forced to resign, we should turn out to vote in the special election and show them that we won't stand for this. And, in November, let's do the same.

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

Dickhaus

from front page

begun campaigning for the Nov. 6 election. Thus far, Waite Park Police Chief Dave Bentrud is also vying for the sheriff job.

Dickhaus has been with the Stearns County Sheriff’s Department for 25 years. He is currently a patrol lieutenant and now serves as administrative assistant for the department’s patrol division. He began his career in 1990 as a police officer with the Richmond Police Department, then later joined the Cold Spring Police Department. One day in 1993, then-sheriff Jim Kostreba called Dickhaus and asked him if he was still interested in working with the Stearns Sheriff’s Department. Dickhaus leaped at the chance and joined.

“It was always what I wanted most to do,” he said during an interview with the *Newsleader*. “That was always my goal.”

His first job was as a correctional officer for the department. In 1995, he was promoted to senior patrol officer. Since then he has held the positions of patrol deputy, patrol sergeant, detective and detective-dep-

uty medical examiner. He became patrol lieutenant in 2012.

In 2008, Dickhaus became communications supervisor in charge of the 911 center and its 24 full-time operators. During that time, he helped with statewide Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Responders system, which required a remodeling of the communications center and training almost every police, fire and EMS user outside the city of St. Cloud on how to use the new radio system.

Currently, as administrative lieutenant, Dickhaus is in charge of special projects and future budget planning for the sheriff’s department.

What Dickhaus said he would like to achieve if elected sheriff is to help come up with solutions to the department’s aging infrastructure, its overcrowded jail, improvement of communications and working relationships between the sheriff’s department and many local agencies and to improve training for all area law-enforcement employees so other departments don’t have to spend time and money duplicating training. As part of that, the department’s investigative unit would be expanded so every theft, burglary and assault would be reviewed by an investigator to determine if follow-ups are needed or arrests made.

Background

Raised in Melrose, Dickhaus graduated from Melrose High School, then attended Willmar Community College to earn a law-enforcement degree. He then graduated from a police skills course in the law-enforcement program in 1990 at Alexandria Area Technical College.

Dickhaus and his wife, Kristine, have three sons: Wesley, who sells insurance in Owatonna; Jacob, a business major at St. Cloud State University; and Eddie, 10. Dickhaus is a member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church of Melrose and also a member of the Melrose Lions Club.

Dickhaus’s hobbies are golfing and flying an airplane. He belongs to a flying club based in Alexandria.

Dickhaus discussed his philosophy on several issues relating to crime prevention and law enforcement.

Community policing

His work as a police officer in Richmond and Cold Spring taught him early on the importance of knowing the people one is expected to protect.

“We’ve got to get to know people, whether it’s a farmer in a field or someone filing a complaint,” he

said. “It’s important to know how to relate to people so you can put them at ease, listen to them, understand what they’re going through. That’s especially important in domestic (disturbances) in order to defuse the situation.”

Law-enforcement work is always most effective when officers and residents get to know and trust one another, Dickhaus noted.

Biggest challenge

Substance abuse (drugs and/or alcohol) are perhaps the biggest challenges in society, Dickhaus said.

“So many problems start with substance abuse,” he said. “Break-downs happen when drugs or liquor are abused, and mental illness can lead to people doing substance abuse. People abusing drugs often steal money and do other crimes.”

That is why Dickhaus favors a strong network among law-enforcement and social and medical agencies that deal with mental illness and substance abuse. He also advocates cross training between law enforcement and those agencies.

High praise

Dickhaus said it was an honor and a pleasure to work under the su-

pervision of three sheriffs to whom he gives high marks: Jim Kostreba, John Sanner and current interim sheriff Don Gudmundson.

“They’re great guys who always got the job done.”

Lack of personnel

Dickhaus said he’s concerned about a lack of interest in law enforcement as a career option. He recalls the times when law-enforcement personnel would be standing in long lines to take tests for just one or two job openings – as many as 200 to 300 men and women. Now, he said, it’s lucky if there are 30 or so candidates for such jobs.

Public help

There are many easy but effective ways for the public to help law enforcement do its job, Dickhaus said. Do not hesitate to call 911, even if the cause seems minor.

“If you see something, like a strange car in the neighborhood, say something,” he said. “Call us.”

Many crimes are prevented or solved by law enforcement putting together a series of tips that, in and of themselves, would seem insignificant, he said.

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@the-newsleaders.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, Feb. 23
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Fish Fry Dinner, 4-7 p.m. St. John’s Parish Center 14241 Fruit Farm Rd, St. Joseph. 320-363-2569.

Saturday, Feb. 24
Craft/Vendor Sale hosted by Epic Events, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., St. Cloud Eagles Club 730-41st Ave. N., St. Cloud.

Sunday, Feb. 25
Joe Town Table, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., St. Joseph Legion, every fourth Sunday of the month. centralmncw@gmail.com.
A Choral Community presented by Youth Choral of Central Minnesta, 7 p.m. Church of St. Boniface 501 Main St., Cold Spring.

Monday, Feb. 26
St. Joseph Food Shelf, open

1-3 p.m., Old City Hall, 25 First Ave. NW, St. Joseph.
St. Joseph Park Board, 6 p.m., St. Joseph City Hall, 75 Callaway St. E. 363-7201. cityof-stjoseph.com.

Tuesday, Feb. 27
National Alliance on Mental Health, 7-8:30 p.m., Calvary Community Church, 1200 Roosevelt Road, St. Cloud. 320-259-7101.

Thursday, March 1
Book Sale, hosted by Friends of the Little Falls Carnegie Library, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., hardcover books \$1, paperbacks 50 cents,

108 Third St. NE, Little Falls, 320-632-6222.
St. Joseph Food Shelf, open 1-3 p.m., Old City Hall, 25 First Ave. NW, St. Joseph.

St. Joseph Planning Commission, 6 p.m., St. Joseph City Hall, 75 Callaway St. E. 320-363-7201. cityofstjoseph.com.
Great River Regional Coin Club, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Miller Auto Marine Sports Plaza, 2930 Second St. S., St. Cloud. 320-241-9229.

Friday, March 2
Benton County Museum, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbenton-

history.org.
St. Joseph Area Historical Society, open 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Old City Hall, 25 First Ave. NW. stjosephhistoricalmn.org.
Book Sale, hosted by Friends of the Little Falls Carnegie Library, noon-6 p.m., hardcover books \$1, paperbacks 50 cents, 108 Third St. NE., Little Falls, 320-632-6222.

Saturday, March 3
Book Sale, hosted by Friends of the Little Falls Carnegie Library, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., \$2 per bag, 108 Third St. NE., Little Falls, 320-632-6222.

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Why people need to live downtown

Note to our readers: This column is part of a series from a blog recently started by a loosely knit independent group of area business people and residents who love and want to promote the energy and enthusiasm of downtown St. Joseph: *The Joe Town Vibe*. To find the column online or to read web-exclusive blogs posted every Tuesday, please visit joetownvibe.com.

by John Stevens
Intern SJU '18

It's important to have community members living in your downtown area no matter the size of the city. Downtowns are only as successful as the amount of people present in them at any given time. If you think about a successful downtown you will always picture one that is busy or at least one that has people present. Downtowns cannot be successful without the presence of people.

Having people live in a downtown area is an important step to getting more people to come downtown. People who live downtown give the downtown a strong base of individuals who will visit the area. The people who live in a downtown are likely to walk around downtown more than those living in a neighborhood a few miles down the road. Especially in a small town, word of mouth is extremely important. In an interconnected small community where everyone knows everyone, news travels by way of neighbors communicating with each other. Downtowns rely on those who have visited to tell others about their experience. Those who live downtown have a key role in spreading the good word, as they visit the area most frequently.

In the same sense, those living in the downtown area have a key role in suggesting changes or rejecting proposed changes they do not like. People who simply visit a downtown do not have nearly the

Thank You

Our family was extremely saddened by the sudden loss of our beloved wife, mother and grandmother; Darlene Bechtold. During the past weeks, we were showered with love and support from our community. Many of you shared in our grief and helped us begin to heal with your kind deeds and words.

Darlene loved this community and we know she was loved by many people as well. She loved children and had a special place in her heart for her day-care families and her "Kennedy Kids." We pray you all find comfort in knowing she is watching over you still.

Her wake and funeral were beautiful and touching; thank you to all who attended. A special thank you is extended to Fr. Jerome, Fr. Nick and the entire Church of St. Joseph.

We are grateful to everyone that gave gifts of food, memorials, kind words, memories and prayers. We cannot even begin to individually thank everyone who played a role in her life or helped us in any way. We hope this message reaches each of you and know you are appreciated and loved. We are fortunate to be part of this caring community. Thank you and God bless each of you.

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF ST. JOSEPH MEETING NOTICE

The St. Joseph City Council will meet specially at 7:30 a.m. Monday, Feb. 26, 2018 in the Government Center. This meeting replaces the regularly scheduled meeting for Feb. 19 which was canceled due to President's Day.

Agenda items will include typical consent-agenda items, discussion of lobby services for bonding projects and an update on annexation matters.

Judy Weyrens
Administrator

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