

Reaching EVERYbody!

See page 2 for our Valentine's Day contest!

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Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader

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Town Crier

Sartell hockey conducts raffle

The Sartell Youth Hockey Association is now conducting a raffle with a grand prize of \$2,699.99; 100 winners will receive St. Cloud Scheels gift cards for any merchandise in the store. There is a 1 in 20 chance of winning. Tickets may be purchased at both Blue Line Bar & Grill locations and the Firing Line Indoor Range and Gun Shop. For more information, visit sartellhockey-affle.com.

Hike Hoppers hosts Park Blast in February

Hike Hoppers is hosting a free month-long outdoor scavenger hunt. Park Blast will be held from dawn to dusk through Feb. 28 at all Stearns County Parks including Kraemer Lake, Mississippi River, Quarry, Miller's Landing, Warner Lake, Rockville, Two Rivers and Spring Hill. Park Blast takes advantage of our local county parks to promote healthy communities. Participants engage in discovering prize codes while hiking through local parks. This event will give away more than \$4,000 in prizes that will appeal to a variety of ages. For more information or to register, visit hikehoppers.org.

Senior Connection hosts German exchange student

The Sartell Senior Connection will host Maria Metzmacher, a high school senior foreign exchange student from Germany, at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13 at the Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. Learn about her experiences as a student at Sartell High School. She'll also tell us about the differences in the education system in Germany as compared to the United States, her favorite activities and what she has missed about home.

Park, Rec to host ABC Kinder Olympix

St. Cloud Park and Rec hosts ABC Kinder Olympix, for children 6 and under and their families, from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 17 at Whitney Recreation Center, 1529 Northway Drive, St. Cloud. Explore letters and numbers while being active with your children. The morning will be filled with fun activities for improved reading skills and healthy lifestyles. Events include: inflatables, arts and crafts, obstacle course, alphabet games, healthy snacks and much more. For more information, visit ci.stcloud.mn.us or find us on Facebook.

Inserts: Hajime Batteries Plus Bulbs

A novel idea



photo by Carolyn Bertsch
Addy Meier, 5, (center) points to an illustration from the book "Love You Forever" while Anna Lang, 4, looks on during a visit Feb. 1 from Gabi Schumann, 10, as part of Sartell School Readiness. Members of the Pine Meadow Elementary Student Council paired with younger students to read several books together. Schumann, Meier and Lang are all of Sartell.

Sartell graduate wins first in art contest

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Award-winning artist Jabreel Abdi of Sartell loves to extend his cultural horizons in directions that lead him to new ideas, new techniques, new styles.

Abdi, a graduate of Sartell High School, recently won first place in an art contest titled "Be HumanKIND: A Way to Honor Community Healing." The contest at St. Cloud Technical & Community College, was one of the college's ways to honor the legacy of the great civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Abdi, a first-year student at SCTCC, is the son of Abdi Abdi and Audra Abdi of Sartell.

For his winning artwork, Abdi created a portrait of King. He used acrylic paint mixed with water and a thinning medium to blend the image layer by

layer, starting with light shades and moving to darker ones.

It's a technique he learned in Sartell High School, thanks to the teaching of art instructor Deb Rollings. He credits Rollings with helping him discover his own artistic style, his own aesthetic strengths.

"She was my painting class teacher," Abdi said. She taught me that every artist has a unique style, and the artist has to discover that style in his heart. I discovered my own style is more stylistic, more abstract."

At SCTCC, Abdi is studying marketing design/graphic design. He is not yet sure of a career direction, but he thinks he might like to work in an urban business culture, perhaps as a graphic designer for an agency.

Abdi also enjoyed making
Art • page 2

SMS students play 'Stock Market Game'

by Cori Hilsgen
news@thenewsleaders.com

Adults aren't the only people interested in what happens with the daily rise and fall of investments in the stock market. Several area students are also learning about the market.

At Sartell Middle School, the students began playing the Stock Market Game from 7:45-8:20 a.m. Tuesday mornings in late January and will continue through May 2.

Lori Dornburg is a teacher of family and consumer science and academic extensions coordinator at Sartell Middle School.

"The Stock Market Game is an online simulation of the global capital markets that en-

gages students in grades four-12 in the world of economics, investing and personal finance and prepares them for financially independent futures," Dornburg said.

More than 600,000 students participate each school year across the United States. The program has reached 17 million students since it began in 1977.

Students at Sartell Middle School have been participating in the Stock Market Game for more than 10 years.

SMS sixth-grader Eli Hanson has participated for two years, joining as a fifth-grader. He decided to join after he heard about it on school announcements because he said it sounded fun. Hanson said

understanding how the stock market works and seeing the stocks perform well is the best part of participating. The hardest thing, he noted, is deciding what to invest in, what to buy and sell and the best time to do that. After two years, he now does more research on what stocks to buy and sell and what will make the most money.

Hanson said he does most of his research on Yahoo Finance. Dave and Buster's has been the best stock purchase during the past two years. Dave and Buster's is a sports-bar-style restaurant which also offers arcade games.

Stock Market Game volunteer Ben Trnka, a professor of accounting and finance at St.

John's University/College of St. Benedict, has volunteered with the program for two years.

Trnka said the program offers students a chance to learn about investments in a fun, engaging environment. It also helps them develop critical-thinking skills by evaluating current events and making judgments about what will happen in the market as a result. The game helps students work together as a team toward a common goal.

In addition, Trnka noted the Stock Market Game helps students gain a fundamental knowledge of money and investing while also helping them practice math, English language arts, economics, social studies and other skills.

Tofteys' artworks enchant viewers

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Entering the home of Jack and Suzanne Toftey in Sartell is a bit like entering an enchanting storybook world that causes visitors to smile and sometimes chuckle and laugh with wonderment.

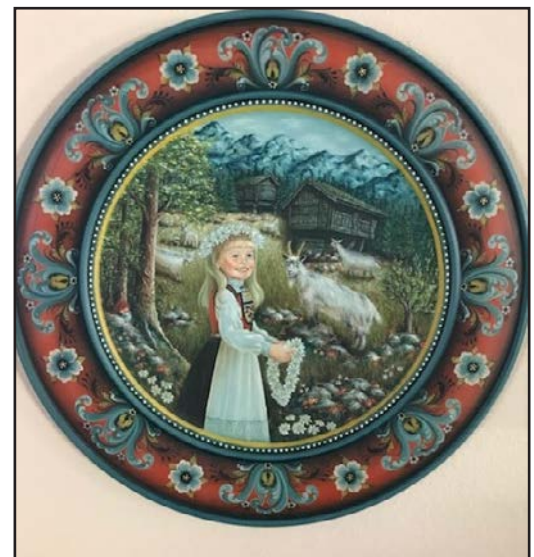
Everywhere on display are whimsical bowls, plates, paintings and wood-carved figures, and each one of them evokes the magical delights of Norwegian folk scenes: children in traditional costumes with baked goodies, goats cavorting, rustic cottage homes nestled beneath mountains, a peasant man

playing an accordion as his dog howls a tune. The man with dog is bound to bring a smile.

And what almost never fails to cause a knowing chuckle is a painting of a Norwegian boy, his nose crinkled from the pungent smell of the bucket of lutefisk he's holding. Most Minnesotans have at least tasted that odiferous traditional Norwegian fish dish, but others - repelled by the smell - wouldn't take a nibble at the end of a 10-foot fork.

In many of the artworks are little Norwegian elves, peeking and peering in on the scenes, giving looks of approval.

Toftey • back page



contributed photo
A Norwegian girl gathers daisies to make wreaths for a celebration. Note the floral rose-maling patterns that "frame" the plate.

Art

from front page

music and songwriting, but he decided to branch out to other arts, including photography, drawing, painting and design.

"I like to extend myself into all the arts," he said. "I want to open my mind to new knowledge."

Abdi, who is part Somali, is also a firm believer that cultural

and racial diversity will create an intriguing new blend that will spawn many new kinds of artworks, outlooks, styles and new ways of seeing and interpreting the world.

For artistic inspiration, Abdi often goes for walks and listens to music.

Abdi's winning portrait of King is also now entered in the Dexter R. Stanton Art and Essay competition at St. Cloud State University.



contributed photo

Jabreel Abdi shows his award-winning portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his first-place honor showing a smaller reproduction of the same portrait.

Match the love song, win Valentine's basket

Search for the five ads with pink hearts and match the number on the ad to the corresponding song title. Write the advertiser's name next to the letter below. Send completed form to the *Newsleaders*, P.O. Box 324, St. Joseph, Minn. 56374 or email advertising@thenewsleaders.com. A winner from each town will be drawn from all correctly completed forms to win a Valentine's gift basket.

Winners will be notified by phone by 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14.

Song titles: A = "All of the Stars" by Ed Sheeran, B = "For Your Eyes Only" by Sheena Easton, C = "Beyond the Sea" by Bobby Darin, D = "You are My Sunshine" by Ray Charles and E = "You Make Me Smile" by Uncle Kracker.

Entry form

Name: _____

Telephone : _____

Town: _____ Age: _____

A = _____

B = _____

C = _____

D = _____

E = _____

In Business

Kelly Skalicky, daughter of Stearns Bank CEO Norm Skalicky, was recently promoted to president of the organization. As a lawyer, Skalicky provided legal counsel to Stearns Bank for more than 20 years. She has served as general counsel for

the last six years. "I am humbled and honored to accept this new role. It's a privilege and, frankly, an enormous amount of fun for me to work with my father on a daily basis, and I relish this new opportunity," Skalicky said in a press release.

People

Boomerang named Retailer of Year



Boomerang Marine & Sports, with locations in Melrose and Alexandria, was named 2017 Retailer of the Year and recognized with the President's Award in Larson Boat Group's annual awards program. "Boomerang's product knowledge, sales process and after-service support is the magic formula that has pushed them to be a market leader," said Rob Parmentier, Larson president and CEO, in a press release. "This has resulted in continued growth and them earning a Retailer of the Year Award year after year. This year, they took first place in selling more Larson Boat Group products than any other dealer in the world." Roger O'Hotto (right) of Sartell and Dick Peifer are Bommerang's co-owners.

People

Eight Sartell students have been named to the fall dean's list at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

They are the following: **Holly Greer, Morgan Gugger, Adam Johnson, Matthew Murphy, Me-**

gan Murphy, Grant Olson, Dawson Rogers and Daniel Ufearo.

Reid Sobania of Sartell has been named to the fall semester dean's list at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul.

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF SARTELL, MINNESOTA NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON INTENTION TO ISSUE GENERAL-OBLIGATION STREET-RECONSTRUCTION-PLAN BONDS AND PROPOSAL TO ADOPT-A-STREET RECONSTRUCTION PLAN THEREFORE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the City Council of the City of Sartell, Minnesota will meet on Feb. 26, 2018 at or shortly after 6 p.m. at the Sartell City Hall, 125 Pinecone Road N., Sartell, Minnesota, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on (a) the intention to issue general-obligation street-reconstruction-plan bonds in an amount not to exceed \$7,000,000 and (b) the proposal to adopt a street reconstruction plan therefor. The proceeds of the bonds will be used to finance the reconstruction of Pinecone Road N. within the City pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 475.58, Subdivision 3b.

All persons interested may appear and be heard at the time and place set forth above.

If a petition requesting a vote on the issuance of the bonds is signed by voters equal to 5 percent of the votes cast in the city in the last municipal general election and is filed with the city within 30 days after the public hearing (i.e., by March 26, 2018), the bonds may only be issued upon obtaining the approval of the majority of the voters voting on the question of issuing the bonds.

Individuals unable to attend the public hearing can make written comment by writing to City Clerk, 125 Pinecone Road N., Sartell, Minn. 56377. Written comments must be received prior to the public hearing.

BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL

/s/ Mary Degiovanni

City Clerk

Publish Feb. 9, 2018

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Newsleader staff members have the responsibility to report news fairly and accurately and are accountable to the public. Readers who feel we've fallen short of these standards are urged to call the *Newsleader* office at 320-363-7741. If matters cannot be resolved locally, readers are encouraged to take complaints to the Minnesota News Council, an independent agency designed to improve relationships between the public and the media and resolve conflicts. The council office may be reached at 612-341-9357.

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Blotter

If any readers have tips concerning crimes, they should call the Sartell Police Department at 251-8186 or Tri-County Crime Stoppers at 255-1301 or access its tip site at www.tricountycrimestoppers.org. Crime Stoppers offers rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for crimes.

Jan. 24

10:30 p.m. Traffic stop. Riverside Avenue S. and Heritage Drive. While on patrol on Riverside Avenue from Minnesota Hwy. 15 an officer observed a vehicle traveling directly in front of him. This vehicle didn't have a functioning license-plate light. The officer stopped the vehicle and identified the driver by his Minnesota ID card. The man explained he had just moved and hadn't had time to get a license. The driver was cited for driving without a valid Minnesota license and released. The vehicle was released

to a valid driver.

Jan. 25

1:48 p.m. Warrant arrest. Hi-Vue Drive. An officer was conducting a followup at a residence on an unrelated call. The officer knocked on the door and a woman answered. The officer explained why she was present at the residence and the woman provided ID. Upon running the ID, the officer learned she had a warrant out for her arrest. This warrant was for falsely identifying herself to a peace officer. The woman said she was unaware she had a warrant but did admit to falsifying her name to another police officer. The warrant was confirmed through dispatch and then the woman was taken into custody without incident.

Jan. 26

11:27 p.m. Traffic stop. Pinecone Road S. and Troop Drive. While on patrol on CR 120 approaching the intersection of Pinecone Road S., an officer observed

a vehicle make lane changes without using a signal. The officer stopped the vehicle for the driving conduct. The driver provided the officer with an instructional permit. Because there was no valid driver in the vehicle, the officer issued the driver a citation for driving without a license. She was verbally warned for the illegal lane changes. A valid driver arrived on scene and took possession of the vehicle.

Jan. 27

7 p.m. Shoplifter. 21 CR 120. Officers were dispatched for a report of a shoplifter at Walmart. Officers located a woman in the Walmart Loss Prevention Office. The woman admitted to stealing a Mountain Dew and a candy bar. Upon running the woman's ID, officers discovered the woman had a misdemeanor warrant out for her arrest. The woman admitted to knowing about the warrant and was taken into custody. She was taken to Stearns County Jail with-

out incident.

Jan. 28

5:25 p.m. Medical. An officer was dispatched to first respond to a report of a 9-year-old boy who had a high temperature and was hyperventilating. Officers arrived on scene and located the patient. He had a temperature of 104 degrees F. and had been diagnosed with influenza A. The officer provided oxygen and received a medical history from the mother. Gold Cross Ambulance arrived on scene and transported the child to St. Cloud Hospital.

Jan. 29

9:49 a.m. Vehicle crash. Heritage Drive and Huntington Drive. An officer was dispatched for a single-vehicle crash involving no injuries. When the officer arrived, a sport-utility vehicle was in the ditch. The officer confirmed with the female driver that she was uninjured and asked what happened. The driver said she was traveling

east on Heritage Road and went off the road because the sun was in her eyes. The woman's vehicle struck a fire hydrant during the accident. Andy's Towing removed the vehicle from the ditch. City maintenance was dispatched to fix the broken hydrant.

Jan. 30

5:10 p.m. Intoxicated person. 21 CR 120. Officers were dispatched for a report of an intoxicated man in the Walmart parking lot who had urinated on himself. Officers arrived and found the man in the backseat of his vehicle. The keys were not in the ignition and the vehicle was cold to the touch. The man showed immediate signs of impairment and was unable to provide officers with the name and number of someone who could pick him up. The man's breath sample indicated he was twice the legal limit. The man was transported to the St. Cloud detox center.

Obituary

Darlene Ann Bechtold

St. Joseph, MN

Jan. 3, 1940-Feb. 5, 2018

Darlene Ann Bechtold, 78, of St. Joseph died Feb. 5 at St. Cloud Hospital as a result of a traumatic stroke suffered on Sunday. Her funeral will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 10 in St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 12 W. Minnesota St., St. Joseph. The Rev. Jerome Tupa, OSB, will officiate. Burial will be in the parish cemetery. Friends may call on Friday between 4-8 p.m.



and on Saturday after 9 a.m. at St. Joseph Heritage Hall in St. Joseph.

Bechtold was very active in her church and school. She loved children, but will always be remembered for her love of her husband and her family.

Bechtold was born Jan. 3, 1940, to Peter and Agnes (Zimmer) Kosel. She married Herbert Bechtold on May 7, 1960, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in St. Joseph. Darlene lived in St. Joseph most of her life where she provided day-care services for 28 years for many children. Grandma Darlene was a foster grandparent at Kennedy School for 12 years. She was a member

of St. Joseph Catholic Church and senior citizens. Darlene was a member of St. Joseph TOPS for 33 years.

Survivors include the following: her husband Herb; children, Brian Bechtold (Kirsten) Sartell; Bruce Bechtold (Pat) St. Joseph; Bradley Bechtold (Jane) Sauk Rapids; daughter-in-law Nicole Bechtold, Holdingford; grandchildren, Brianna (Al Flannigan), Spencer, Tanner (Kia Grindland), Samuel (Carrie), Mary (Blake Bellefeuille), Ted, Kate, Kelly, Amy Gans (John); great-grandchild Cameron; sister, Karen Schloemer, Baxter; and brother, Kevin Kosel, St. Joseph.

She was preceded in death by

her parents, son Brent Bechtold on Aug. 16, 2017, sister and in-laws Kathy Seifert and Al Seifert, and Gerald Schloemer.

Memorials are preferred.

The family would like to thank the employees at "The Club," St. Joseph Rescue Squad, Gold Cross Ambulance and the staff at St. Cloud Hospital for the care given to Darlene. Also, the family appreciates her special friends at the St. Joseph Police Department.

News Tips?
Call the Newsleader at 363-7741



Sartell Swarm
Registration for 2018 Summer Season opens Feb. 12
Girls ages 6-18 fastpitch softball
For more information and to register, go to www.sartellfastpitch.com.
Updates about our program will be shared at the annual parent meeting scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 12 at the SHS Auditorium.
Parents and players are encouraged to attend. Uniform sizes will be available for those who are interested.
Contact Becky Lundgren with registration questions at beckylundgren@sartellfastpitch.com

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The must dos for couples saying 'I do' in 2018

by Vicki Ikeogu
news@thenewsleaders.com

For anyone planning a wedding, there are a lot of decisions – and money – involved in tying the knot.

In a Feb. 2, 2017, report by on-line wedding resource and marketplace website The Knot, the average American couple dropped \$35,329 on their wedding in 2015 with the majority of the cost coming from the venue (about 46 percent) with the engagement ring and reception entertainment a distant second and third.

That is up 8 percent from the 2015 average wedding cost of

\$32,641.

Closer to home, The Knot estimates Minnesota brides and grooms can anticipate spending roughly \$27,000 on their big day. For central Minnesota brides, that cost is slightly less, at \$26,720, according to research company The Wedding Report.

Costs aside – and yes, it is hard to ignore the staggering price tag – 2018 is set to usher in familiar blasts from the past (think 1980s) but with a rustic chic feel.

Local vendors are ready to oblige.

Venues

Location. Location. Location.

Whether the guest list is a few dozen to a few hundred, finding the perfect place to host the reception – and often the ceremony along with it – is critical for couples.

“People are looking for a facility to host the entire day of events,” said Randy Schmitz, owner of St. Jo-

seph’s Rolling Ridge Wedding & Event Center. “They want to show up and not have to leave the property until the day is over.”

A one-stop-shop mentality is what keeps venues such as The Grands at Mulligans in Sartell busy.

“The biggest trend changes we have seen in the last couple of years has been couples moving away from wanting to plan every single detail of their wedding,” said owner Jason Becker. “Venues get one shot to help these couples put on the wedding they deserve, so having a venue with experience means everything.”

And having the flexibility to customize the space to each couple is important.

“People kind of like a little more of a blank slate,” said Jessica Reiter, director of events and catering at the Gorecki Center on the College of St. Benedict campus. “They want to be able to come in and transform the space to make it look the way they want. We do make some recommendations, but they have a vision of what they want and we try to accommodate it.”

Friday weddings have been growing in popularity. But Saturday weddings, at least for the Gorecki Center, remain king.

So that makes booking a location early a must.

“Booking your venue should be your first priority when it comes to planning a wedding,” Reiter said. “Get your venue and ceremony location secured early.”

The Wedding Report’s average venue, food, beverage and reception rentals cost in central Minnesota: \$10,251.

Catering

The “I dos” are done. Let’s eat.

“There will always be three things people remember about weddings,” Becker said. “The ceremony, the food and the dance.”

For caterers such as Byron Bjorklund, owner of St. Cloud’s Custom Catering by Short Stop, the food is what can really bring out the personality of the couple.

“It’s about the whole presentation,” he said.

Custom Catering Event Planner Tracy Zwilling said being plain is just not an option.

“We want to make sure the food is delicious,” she said. “That it’s not standard. We don’t want to serve plain salads and entrees.”

Unique items such as imported sausages, figs, pickles, jellies, chees-

es and crackers have become more common hors d’oeuvres.

“We like to use a lot of edible flowers and unique greens,” Bjorklund said. “Our plates really mimic that fresh-to-table look.”

Bjorklund said most clients opt for a modified buffet – the salad is served family style at the table and guests use a buffet line for their meal.

“We take our inspiration (for catering) from the bride and groom,” he said.

Bjorklund recommends booking the caterer early. Tastings should be scheduled about three to six months in advance of the wedding.

The Knot’s average catering cost per person across the nation: \$71. Central Minnesota numbers were not provided.

Cakes

Wedding cakes: They aren’t gone, but it’s definitely not the main option for brides.

Lynn Schurman, owner of Cold Spring Bakery, said couples mix it up when it comes to desserts.

“More people are looking at mini desserts and cheesecakes,” she said. “We’ve done a ton of weddings with doughnuts and doughnut balls, pies and brownies.”

Cake smashing used to be the only real interaction people – OK, the bride and groom – had with desserts. Today, Schurman said, desserts – both the display and the eating – are taking on a more social flair.

“It used to be you just had the cake sit there until it was plated,” she said. “Now, you have fun things like skewers for doughnuts, a coffee area filled with different flavors to get people up and interacting with



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contributed photo

A sample plate prepared by chefs at The Grands at Mulligans in Sartell.



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photo by Vicki Ikeogu
Paul Middlestaedt, owner of Advent Imaging, talks to prospective clients in front of his display at the St. Cloud Wedding Expo in January.

each other.”

As for the cake, fondant is being overtaken by buttercream frosting, carrot and red velvet are gaining in popularity and fruit fillings are becoming more mainstream.

“Some are still wanting the vintage designs on their cakes, but many more are looking for a sleek, minimalist(ically)-decorated look,” Schurman said. “Typically that involves one big splash of a decorative element like a flower.”

The Knot's average wedding cake cost across the nation: \$582. Central Minnesota numbers were not provided.

Dresses/tuxes

Forget white. Brides in 2018 are wanting some color in their gowns.

Jennifer Morrison, owner of Wedding & Tuxedo Connection in Richmond, said brides are opting for various shades of light gold and champagne for their dresses.

“And we are seeing a lot more intricate details on dresses too,” she said, “detailed embroidery and beadwork – something to capture the uniqueness of the gown.”

Illusion necklines and backs – which involve a sheer panel of

fabric, often detailed with lace and/or beadwork that’s attached to the body of the dress – have been popular choices as well.

“And we are starting to see little pops of the ‘80s,” Morrison said. “We are seeing trains with lace inlays and bows.”

The average cost for a bridal dress at Wedding & Tuxedo Connection runs between \$1,200 and \$1,800.

For bridesmaid dresses, Morrison has found more and more brides shying away from the “matchy-matchy” days of old.

“Brides are wanting to find dresses for their girls that are complementary and flattering,” she said. “So what’s been popular is the girls will have the same color or hue and then find different styles of dresses.”

And with the guys, navy is clearly the favorite color when it comes to menswear.

“But other colors like burgundy, your teals, your wines and your charcoals are also popular,” Morrison said.

Morrison’s advice to brides in the market for a gown is to order early.

“Ordering takes time,” she said. “On average it can take about six

to eight months for a bridal gown and three to four months for bridesmaids’ dresses.”

The Wedding Report's average bridal gown and dress accessories cost is \$1,411 and tuxedo and tuxedo accessories cost in central Minnesota is \$304.

Hair

You can’t get rid of the 1980s that fast.

St. Cloud-based Mantra Salon and Spa’s Wedding Coordinator Katie Hennen said brides are channeling the super high updo’, a flashback to the decade of big hair.

“Brides are looking for a very clean, yet modern take on the ‘80s,” she said.

“We ask that brides start working with a stylist at least six months in advance of their wedding,” Hennen said.”

The Wedding Report's average

bride beauty and spa – which includes hair, make-up, manicure and pedicure – cost in central Minnesota: \$151.

Invites

Glitter. Sparkle. Pockets for added information.

These are the common requests LeRae Rengel, wedding specialist and owner of St. Cloud’s Rengel Printing Co., said she receives when couples come in searching for wedding invitations.

“Shabby chic is what’s in right now,” Rengel said. “Lots of browns, neutrals and lace.”

Rengel said brides are looking for that added bling, but are often get-

ting that sparkle with paper options instead of embellishments.

“Less is really more when it comes to invitations,” she said.

Rengel said brides and grooms are also spending more on envelopes to help their invitations stand out more in the mailbox.

“People get a lot of junk mail, so you want to have it stand out,” she said.

Rengel recommends couples send out their invitations about eight to 12 weeks in advance of the big day, six to eight weeks early if save-the-dates were sent out.

The Wedding Report's average printing cost in central Minnesota: \$1,086.

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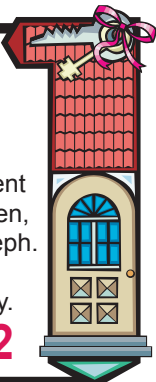
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Opinion

Our View Fall election looms over legislative session

The Minnesota Legislature reconvenes on Feb. 20 for a three-month election-year session.

With a wide-open governor's race and control of the state House of Representatives on the line, the November election will drive the debate.

Kicking off the action, Gov. Mark Dayton proposed a \$1.5-billion bonding bill for more than 218 public-works projects across the state.

Later this month, legislators will be presented with an updated budget and revenue. The last forecast, released in November, showed a deficit of \$188 million for fiscal years 2018-19. Republicans and Democrats pointed out that recent changes to federal tax law (Minnesota bases how much state income tax you pay on your federal tax return) and the recently renewed funding of the Childhood Health Insurance Program will change the estimate expected to be announced as the legislators return to St. Paul.

When the forecast was released in November, DFLers blamed the Republicans for cutting taxes too much and Republicans blamed the Democrats for spending too much. What a surprise.

Republicans are raising a fuss about the troubled rollout of Minnesota's new \$93-million computer system for vehicle titles and registrations, known as MNLARS. It will take \$43 million to fix the program ahead of a summer launch.

Rep. Jeff Howe who represents the St. Joseph area, called the situation an "enormous mess."

"The state workers heading up implementation of MNLARS are seemingly being asked to accomplish something that's outside of their skill set. We would be better off putting this task in the hands of people who have previous experience managing massive IT projects such as this, allowing Minnesota IT to put its focus back on running maintenance and security," Howe wrote in a message to constituents.

The additional money should fix problems with vehicle registrations, a backlog of unprocessed titles and issues with vanity plates.

The governor's public-works plan invests in higher education, fixes state buildings, funds affordable housing and repairs clean-water infrastructure.

The proposal includes \$541 million for University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State campuses. In this area, there's a total of \$3.6 million set aside for St. Cloud State University and St. Cloud Community & Technical College.

Expansion and upgrades at the St. Cloud armory would cost \$4.45 million and repairs at the St. Cloud prison would cost \$16 million.

And there's one more layer to the Capitol chess game – control of the state Senate. The Republicans hold a 34- to 32-seat advantage right now. A Ramsey County District Court judge will decide if Michelle Fischbach can be lieutenant governor and president of the Senate at the same time. And if a DFLer wins a Feb. 12 special election to replace Dan Schoen, a Democrat who resigned after sexual harassment claims, then the Senate would be split 34-33. If the DFL wins the lieutenant governor case in court, the split would be 33-33 pending an election to replace Fischbach.

As you're watching the legislative action in St. Paul this spring, keep an eye on the state House and governor races to really understand what's going on.

Sartell-St. Stephen • St. Joseph

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.

New schools will be inspiring spaces

With the building of two new public high schools in the area, it's going to be an exciting 18 months for students, parents – and taxpayers.

Never mind the beams and bricks rising in the farm fields of Sartell and St. Cloud. Take a look at the "flythroughs" on the school districts' websites to get a real feel for what's going on.

The two schools look like the campuses of Apple or Google with large windows, lots of light and attention to the surrounding landscapes.

The new schools, according to planners, will be open, flexible, dynamic and interactive. Those words also describe today's high-tech, successful businesses.

Leaders in both school districts talk of interconnected classrooms and "learning neighborhoods."

The new schools don't hold long halls of boxy, identical classrooms.

Sartell's \$89.5-million school is the third high school in the district's 50-

**Mike
Knaak**
Editor



year history. The \$104.5-million St. Cloud Tech replaces a school in downtown St. Cloud that dates to 1917.

I graduated from Tech in 1972. Before enforcing fire codes and remodeling, it was a beautiful building of wood trim, high ceilings and grand open stairways. When I visited last summer, what I saw was sad. School leaders had done their best to create a place for imagination and learning, but the cold, institutional feel was still there.

Both new schools are in wide-open country settings.

Here's what the designers of the new St. Cloud Tech, under construction in southwest St. Cloud, say: "As

students and visitors move through the school, the journey evokes a sense of discovery, exposing students to different hands-on and innovative experiences while always being connected to nature and the outdoors."

The most important "building," though, is building classes and programs to foster collaboration and cooperation that live up to the grand spaces.

Students, teachers and administrators are certainly involved now with those tasks.

We need to keep a close eye on how the new schools will be used, not just what they will look like. Let's hold school leaders accountable.

Even if you don't have school-aged children, we all pay taxes, but more importantly, we'll depend on the young adults educated there to be civic and business leaders.

Those students need to live up to the inspiring designs of the builders and architects.

With Super Bowl over, Vikings spirit lives on

It comes around every year, and now it has come and gone again. The Super Bowl, arguably one of the world's largest sporting events, took place last Sunday between two heavyweight competitors, the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles. Like last year, it was a race to the finish, with the outcome hanging on a thread to the very end.

Dealing with the loss of their star quarterback Carson Wentz, the Philadelphia Eagles managed to battle their way through the playoffs to reach this point, including a disappointing win over our own Minnesota Vikings. The Patriots breezed through the playoffs comparatively, dispatching the Tennessee Titans and scraping by the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The stage was set for a strong matchup – the two conference leaders, set for a grudge match for the ultimate prize. So the narrative goes anyway. The game was exciting and close, though in my opinion still stretching to justify the astronomical cost of tickets to be there in person. It was bittersweet for us as Minnesota fans, not only to see the team that beat us in the NFC Championship go on to win the whole thing, especially after what we saw about how our fans in "The City of Brotherly Love" were treated. It just seems ironic the big game went down in our very own

**Connor
Kockler**
Guest Writer



U.S. Bank Stadium.

Not that it deterred us from putting on a great show for the nation in Minneapolis. The host committee did an amazing job, and I was really impressed by how smoothly everything went. The weather even decided to give our visitors a proper sub-zero welcome.

Now all the pomp and circumstance is over, it gives us pause to consider next year. Besides our disappointing game against the Eagles a few weeks ago, the Vikings put on one of their most standout seasons since 2009 with Brett Favre. People were engaged and inspired; "Skol chants" became a regular occurrence.

Not to mention one of the most unforgettable plays of all time, the "Minneapolis Miracle" as it has now been immortalized. That one play I believe captured the essence of what Minnesota Vikings fans have felt for a long time. It always seems like the odds are stacked against us, that the luck and elation is on the other side. This year, we got a taste of what the

ultimate win could feel like.

We should remember, though, our future for the next year is bright. Our great run doesn't have to stop here. Our team still has great players and potential, and next year could be the one where it all comes together. The important thing is we continue to support our team, and cheer them on through it all. That is what I admire so much about our state and our fans. The Vikings do well some years, and do poorly in others, but we're still behind them. We rejoice in victories and agonize in defeats, but we do it together, knowing the experience and the companionship are all that matters.

That's what football and really all other sports are about. Putting aside our worries and putting our collective hopes on a group of athletes working to represent us and carrying the dreams and memories of millions with every play. It's an escape from the mundane and a trip into the surreal and the extraordinary. For now our goal of a Super Bowl win might have been dashed, but I know someday, that team celebrating victoriously on the field will be ours. We just don't know yet when that will be.

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

**GOT AN
OPINION?**

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Toftey

from front page

al, surprise, pleasure or – in some cases – mischievous grins. The Tofteys’ artworks instantly indicate their lifetime togetherness in creating artworks – Suzanne as a painter, Jack as a whittler-carver. Each perfectly complements the other.

Rosemaling

Suzanne is an award-winning master of rosemaling whose art works are cherished by collectors in many countries. Rosemaling, pronounced “rose-mahling,” is a form of decorative Norwegian folk-art painting – usually on wooden objects – that is comprised of stylized flowers, scrollwork and other elements expressed colorfully in flowing, vine-like, swirling curlicues.

Norwegian to the core

Both Jack and Suzanne are Norwegian to the core, direct descendants of Norwegians. She was born in New Ulm and grew up in Fairfax. He was born in Duluth and grew up in Grand Marais. They met while both were students at St. Olaf College where she was studying home economics, and he was majoring in physical education. After marriage, they lived in a number of places, including Osakis and St. Cloud, where Jack taught at South Junior High School and later at Tech High School where he was named activities director. After

Jack retired, they moved to Isle, then back to the St. Cloud-Sartell area to be closer to their children – Jeff, Jenni and Jill. They have eight grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. In college, Jack took many classes to learn Norwegian. Suzanne, too, had always been fascinated and drawn to all things Norwegian, including its colorful folk art. Those fascinations, for both, led to their long-time hobby and profession of creating artworks.

A door

One day in the 1970s, the Tofteys’ front door needed refinishing. A light bulb of an idea lit up in Suzanne’s mind. She had just read an article with photos about rosemaling in a magazine. Wouldn’t it be neat, she wondered, if she could do some rosemaling on the door, a cheerful welcome for visitors?

And so she did. It turned out fine, but she realized she wanted to learn more, to paint better. She tried to teach herself. Later, she heard about classes at Terrace Mill, an arts-and-crafts center near Glenwood that hosts Scandinavian festivals. It’s a place where actual rosemaling artists directly from Norway would teach the art. Suzanne took classes with Inga Bjorg, who didn’t speak a word of English. But it didn’t matter. She and her students communicated very well through their art efforts: color, line, patterns and brush strokes.

Suzanne became so adept at rosemaling she began to enter contests, winning praise and prizes for her works. She had the hon-

or of having some of her creations displayed in the world-famous Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, Iowa, which is a kind of mecca for Norwegian art in America. She continued her learning at Vesterheim.

Suzanne has painted a variety of wooden objects, such as plates, bowls, serving platters, trunks, decorative tiles and, at times, even folk-type Biblical scenes in churches. One of her largest creations was a 52-inch wooden plate featuring an old barn scene with a grandfather, grandmother, lots of children and lots of goats – a swirl of family activity on a Norwegian farm. Many of her artworks were created for commissions by admiring customers.

Business

After Jack retired, the Tofteys heard from admirers of their artworks that they should start a business, which they did, calling it “Suzanne’s Nordic Images.”

They attended many Scandinavian festivals, selling their works, signing autographs and meeting people enthralled by their art.

In Cloquet, Suzanne sold her designs to Berry Bergquist Imports, including her paintings, which were reproduced on ceramic tiles. Eventually, she signed a contract with a man in Norway, who also used her rosemaling designs and paintings.

Earlier, right after retirement, the Tofteys moved to Isle, by Mille Lacs, where they started a mail-order business, but it proved to be extremely hectic and time-consuming – taking orders, packing orders, sending orders from the



contributed photo

A master of the rosemaling painting style, Suzanne Toftey of Sartell paints a wooden bowl.

post office.

“I think Jack was spending more time at the post office than he was at home,” said Suzanne, laughing. “It was so much work – the mail-order business.”

They were able to end it, thanks to the demand for the art through the two companies that buy the works and that send royalty checks.

Genetic predisposition

Suzanne believes her Norwegian heritage and her art skills were tailor-made and fit together like a glove.

Her father loved to cut silhouettes of horses free-hand with scissors from pieces of paper. Her brother is an art teacher and one of her daughters is an art teacher

in Dodge Center, Minnesota. “I would have loved to be an art teacher,” she said.

The Tofteys have enjoyed two trips to Norway. Because they are happy about their Norwegian heritage, both are sticklers for detail in their art.

“All of it’s in my head,” Suzanne said. “All the scenes, all the baked foods in the scenes, the stories, it’s all because of my Norwegian heritage. Everything, even the farm scenes, have to be completely authentic.”

And that partly explains why the Tofteys’ works delight so many people. One glance at them, and you know the work is the genuine article, perfection personified.

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
- 12⁹⁸** Miller High Life 24 Pack 12 Oz. Cans Or Bottles Regular Or Light
- 11⁹⁸** Leinenkugel's Craft Beer 12 Pack 12 Oz. Bottles Or Cans All Available Types
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