

Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader

Friday, March 16, 2018
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Town Crier
For additional criers, visit the-
newsleaders.com and click on Criers.

Birdhouse-building project set March 18
A youth birdhouse-building project is scheduled from 11a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, March, 18, at St. Stephen City Hall, 2 Sixth Ave. SE. The project is sponsored by the St. Stephen Sportsmen's Club and the City of St. Stephen.

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-
raffle.com.

Turkey set hunt for people with a physical disability
A turkey hunt for people with a physical disability will be held between April 18 and May 31 at Rockville and Spring Hill county parks. Applications are now being accepted. Deadline to apply is March 24. Hunters will be selected via random drawing. Each hunter will have an experienced hunting assistant with them in the field. Shotgun only. Applications are available on the Stearns County Parks website or at the Parks office: 1802 CR 137, Waite Park. Applications should be returned to: Ron Welle, 28791-325th Ave., Melrose, Minn. 56352.

Run a food drive
March is FoodShare Month in Minnesota where donations are matched during the month. Area families are using local food shelves more than ever before. Consider leveraging the match by running a food drive within your work place, church or service club and donate to your local food shelf. Catholic Charities Emergency Services 320-229-4560; C.R.O.S.S. Center of Benton County 320-968-7012; The Salvation Army 320-252-4552.

Place of Hope seeks volunteers
Place of Hope is looking for volunteers for a variety of positions. Volunteers are needed on a regular basis for homeless hospitality outreach, nightly community meal, residential living hope program and thrift store. Place of Hope is a multi-faceted outreach to the community and central Minnesota. Contact Konroy Boeckel, Place of Hope at hope@placeofhopeministries.org.

Shobes return from 'exciting' Olympic games

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

It was a proud family moment when Carl Shobe and his grandfather showed up together at the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.
Carl, 12, is a student at Kennedy Community School in St. Joseph. His grandfather on his mother's side is Gene Sandvig, 87, of Minneapolis, who was a competitor as a speed skater for the United States three times in the worldwide Winter Olympics - in 1952, 1956 and 1960.
Carl and his grandfather flew to South Korea in February to see some of the competitions and to be with Carl's parents, Dr. Joel and Susan Shobe, and also because Sandvig was invited to attend by the Korean Olympics Committee.
Dr. Shobe is an orthopedic surgeon. He was invited to South Korea by special invitation from the Olympics Committee.

Soyka announces candidacy for sheriff job

(Three men have announced plans to run for Stearns County sheriff. Waite Park Police Chief Dave Bentrud was profiled in the Feb. 16 edition and Stearns County Lt. Robert Dickhaus was profiled in the Feb. 23 edition. Both stories are available at thenewsleaders.com.)

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com
Sgt. Steve Soyka, a Stearns County Sheriff's Department deputy, has announced his intention to seek the sheriff position in the Nov. 8 election, a decision that forces a primary election Aug. 14.



contributed photo
Dr. Joel and Susan Shobe, who worked at the Winter Olympics in South Korea, stand before the iconic interconnected rings that symbolize the Olympics. Also in the photo is the Shobes' son, Carl and his grandfather Gene Sandvig of Minneapolis. Sandvig, the father of Susan Shobe, competed as a speed skater in three Winter Olympics games (1952, 1956, 1960). He was invited to South Korea by special invitation from the Olympics Committee.

The primary election will determine which two of the three candidates will face off in the Nov. 8 general election.
Soyka announced his candidacy March 3. He's the current team commander for the Stearns-Benton SWAT unit and former commander of the Central Minnesota Violent Offender Task Force. He's also a sergeant serving in the Stearns County Sheriff Patrol Division.
"(As sheriff), I will be much more community-oriented,"



Soyka

Soyka said. "I want to bring the sheriff's office to the public. I want to talk to a lot of people, meet people, have coffee with people."
Born and raised in Stearns County, Soyka graduated from St. Cloud Cathedral High School and from St. Cloud State University where he earned a degree in criminal justice.
He's been a law-enforcement employee for 27 years and served in a wide variety of duties, as well as volunteer work. For five of those years, he worked for the Benton County Sheriff's Department.
"Since I was 15 years old, I've wanted to be the Stearns County

Sheriff," he said. "Now, after 27 years of protecting the people of Minnesota, I'm ready for the next step. I'm running for Stearns County Sheriff."
Soyka is keen on four major goals - improving the safety of children, reducing drug abuse, getting violent criminals off the streets and the fight against sex-trafficking.
That, he said, cannot be accomplished without help from all county residents or without a mutual trust between law enforcement and the public.
Soyka also said public safety is dependent upon good, transparent communication between
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photo by Mike Knaak
The dining area and kitchen will service a hot meal every night. Pathways 4 Youth board members Bill Maney (left) and Tim Wensman said the space will be a place to form relationships.

Center aims to end youth homelessness

by Mike Knaak
editor@thenewsleaders.com

A community problem that advocates say is largely hidden will soon get a highly visible solution.
Pathways 4 Youth, a resource center founded by central Minnesota's Rotary clubs, plans an open house from 4-7 p.m. Tuesday, March 20.
The center, 203 Cooper Ave. N., Suite 206, St. Cloud will

open for clients the week of March 26.
While not a shelter, the center will offer help for homeless youth ages 16-23 to get them on a path to educational and career success.
St. Cloud Rotary Club took on what Pathways board president Tim Wensman called a "signature project."
"What if we could say there are no more homeless youth?"
Youth • page 5

People

Dr. Stacy Hinkemeyer was recently elected to the Minnesota Optometric Association's board of trustees at the association's annual meeting. Hinkemeyer owns PineCone Vision Center, Sartell, where she is the CEO/clinic director.



Hinkemeyer

Hinkemeyer is a long-standing member of the Minnesota Optometric Association and has served as regional society chair for a number of years. At PineCone Vision Center she serves as adjunct faculty to multiple colleges of op-

tometry where students coming from all over the country come to learn and improve their clinical skills. She is an examiner for the American Academy of Optometry Entrance Exam Committee, a senior consultant to the American Council on Optometric Education, a consultant to the Minnesota Department of Education and serves on the Illinois College of Optometry Alumni Council.

Alexander Stidmon, Sartell, has earned a spot on the fall dean's list at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. To qualify for the dean's list, a student must achieve a minimum grade-point average of 3.5 or higher.



contributed photo

Grades 5 and 6 first-place team members include (from left) Elam Byrd, Molly Simmons, Atira Olson, Elliott Hammer and Wyatt Oxtan.

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Grades 7 and 8 Teams: First-place team members include (green ribbons from left) Lance Anderson, Josh Nguyen, Salma Maray, Spencer Lathe and Summbla Anjum; second-place team members include (blue ribbons) Delaney Dinger, Charles Magnuson, Ashlyn Rogosheske, Clayton Fuller and Eva Hesse.

Academic Triathlon Middle School teams win big

Academic Triathlon teams competed March 9 at a regional meet hosted at Sartell Middle School. Two Sartell Middle School teams took first place, earning them spots at the state meet on Saturday, April 14 in Woodbury.

Academic Triathlon teams

participate in a creative problem-solving competition where students compete in three rounds: Face-off – answering questions about academic content, current events and consumer issues; Mind sprints – problem solving, logical reasoning, construction and team-co-

operation problems; and Party in a box – receiving a dilemma and acting out the solution.

The teams are coached by Sartell Middle School Math Interventionists Nicole Schmitt and fifth-grade teacher Jennifer Olson.

Council submits grant app for Watab Park improvements

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Long-planned improvements to Watab Park in Sartell, including its popular wading pool, could be completed by spring 2019, especially if the city receives a parks grant.

The city council at its Feb. 26 meeting authorized the submission of a grant application by city staff for the park improve-

ments. The grants are being given by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The total grant would cover the cost of the project, estimated at \$282,000, but the city would be expected to pay back about half of that, \$141,000. That city share of money could come from half-cent sales-tax revenue. The recipients of the grants will be announced in June.

Park improvements would include new playground equipment, rehab of the existing wading pool, new restrooms by the pool and resurfacing of the tennis courts.

If the grant is received, work could begin this fall. If the grant request fails, the city could decide to do the project anyway, possibly with funds from its interloan program.



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Help Wanted

The City of Sartell is accepting applications for a temporary position of Administrative Clerk. This position is expected to start in May 2018 and run through September 2018.

Starting wage is \$15.50/hour. City application and addendum are required.

Applications and other information available at www.sartellmn.com.

Applications are due by April 5, 2018.

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FoodShare month best time to give

by Dennis Dalman

news@thenewsleaders.com

Sartell does not have a city-based food shelf, but people in need, people who are hungry, can get help at either the Salvation Army or Catholic Charities, both St. Cloud-based.

Sartell residents, churches and businesses have long contributed to both of those food shelves by donating tons and tons of food items on a regular bases, as well as generous money donations.

Other area residents who can receive food from those two food shelves, in addition to Sartell residents, are those who live in St. Cloud, St. Augusta, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park. St. Joseph has its own independent food shelf.

The best time to give is during

the month of March, which is FoodShare Month. Catholic Charities and Salvation Army are both members of the Twin Cities-based Minnesota FoodShare, which is an interfaith collaboration. FoodShare gathers a pool of incentive funds donated by huge companies, such as Target, General Mills and Land O Lakes. Those incentive funds are then distributed to member food shelves throughout the state depending on how much food those local food shelves take in during the month of March. The more food donated, the more incentive funds received from FoodShare.

Pack the Porches

A crucial date is Friday, March 23, dubbed "Pack the Porches Day," because on that day food donations will be accepted from

7 a.m.-1 p.m. at three locations: HealthPartners Central Minnesota Clinic, 2251 Connecticut Ave. (in Sartell's medical campus); St. Cloud Hyundai, 900 Second St. S., Waite Park; and Pioneer Place on Fifth Theatre, 22 Fifth Ave. S., St. Cloud.

"Pack the Porches is a way for people to come together as a community to make a difference, to thank those who stop by to the businesses that will provide coffee to go," said Steve Pareja, executive director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of St. Cloud and a deacon at St. Francis Xavier Church in Sartell. "It's really a great way to come together."

Pareja noted that March is also important because after January and February, food stocks at local food shelves tend to dwindle, so

March is the ideal time to restock the shelves.

"The more food and funds we can secure locally, the more those incentive funds will come back to help hungry people in the St. Cloud area," Pareja said. "When you consider that our buying power allows Catholic Charities to use just \$10 to purchase \$30 worth of groceries, every dollar is significant."

Donations to Catholic Charities

Aside from "Pack the Porches Day," any day in March – in fact, any day year 'round – is a good time to contribute, Pareja noted. At Catholic Charities, nonperishable food items can be dropped off from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday; and from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Wednesdays. The Catholic Charities food shelf is at 157 Roosevelt Road in St. Cloud. Monetary donations can be made online at ccstcloud.org

Donations to Salvation Army

The FoodShare campaign for the Salvation Army actually started in late February and will run through April 8.

There are several ways to help. Nonperishable food items can be dropped off at Salvation Army headquarters from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday at 400 Hwy. 10 S. in St. Cloud (on the frontage road across the highway from Cash Wise East).

Monetary donations can be made online at salvationarmynorth.org. Contributors can type in the St. Cloud ZIP code for the Salvation Army (56304) if they want to be sure their donation will be directed to that particular location. There are 19 Salvation Army food-shelf facilities in Minnesota.

In addition, people can start a food drive in schools, churches, businesses and neighborhoods. It's as easy as setting up a big box in a lobby and encouraging people to bring in food items.

For more information, call the Salvation Army at 320-252-4552.

Volunteers

Without volunteers food shelf services would be virtually impossible, and food shelf volunteers are needed at both the Salvation Army and the Catholic Charities facilities.

Volunteers can work as few or as many hours as they like. To find out more about volunteer options, visit the websites:

- salvationarmynorth.org
- ccstcloud.org

The needs

Trina Dietz, a Sartell resident, notices time and again that people in need defy the often-negative stereotypes that unfairly "stick" to them.

"People who are hungry look an awful lot like me," she said.

Dietz is senior communications director for Catholic Charities Emergency Services. She has been a part of that organization for 10 years.

The Catholic Charities Food Shelf, she said, serves about 2,000 families per month, adding that less than 5 percent of those families need food shelf food every month, and about 30 percent needed food only for one time during 2017. Most food shelf recipients are working people who just cannot make ends meet for a number of reasons – absence of a spouse, family emergencies, illnesses and so forth, Dietz added.

"It's so hard for them to ask for help," she said. "I've become much less judgmental. It's so easy to judge. Solutions are not always simple. Even for those who don't have jobs, it's often difficult. Getting a job for some people is not always as easy as it sounds."

Dietz said working at Catholic Charities has given her a widened perception of the world.

Whenever she is having a bad day, Dietz said she thinks of the people she's met through Catholic Charities, the people having troubles, tragedies, complications in their lives, and she realizes how fortunate she is.

"It puts the whole world in a new perspective, and I am so gratified to help others in need," she said. "It's been a blessing for my children, too – to have a mom doing this kind of work."

One in 10

One in 10 Minnesotans experiences occasional food insecurity, according to statistics supplied by the Salvation Army.

Food insecurity is defined as people having inconsistent access to food because of lack of money or other factors in their lives.

About 14 percent of children in Minnesota are "food-insecure," and about 10 percent of the state's children were living below the poverty line in 2016.

Statistics also reveal food insecurity among senior citizens is increasing.



contributed photo

Arlan Pocklington of Monticello, a Salvation Army volunteer, stocks the food shelf. The food shelf serves families in cities in the greater St. Cloud area, including Sartell.

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Diekmans’ bestir for hamster



photo by Carolyn Bertsch

Members of the Diekman family of Sartell, including (left to right) Hannah, 12; Molly, 4; LeAnn; and Emma, 8, listen to instructions about how to design a hamster character on the cover of a notebook by using a few select materials Feb. 17 at Crafts Direct in Waite Park. Emma attends Oak Ridge Elementary School and is currently reading *The World According to Humphrey*, as part of the One District, One Book program.

Youth

from front page

Wensman said. Part of inspiration for Pathways came from board vice president Bill Maney during a mission trip to Guatemala. He heard a homeless person talk about his experiences.

“I said ‘we got to do something,’” Maney said.

The Rotary members approached the project as a start-up business by first visiting facilities in Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Elk River and Anoka.

The St. Cloud center is a replication of the Hope 4 Youth program in Anoka. As a part of the partnership, Hope 4 Youth provided programming and hired and trained the staff, according to Hope 4 Youth executive director Lisa Jacobson.

“We helped them pick a location and helped them design what each room needs to be,” Jacobson said.

Then they gathered data by asking “Where did you sleep the night of Jan. 26, 2017.”

The research revealed 99 homeless youth ages 16-24 and an estimated 25-30 couch hoppers.

The youth were living in emergency shelters as well as temporary housing. But most were couch hopping – temporarily staying with friends or relatives – or staying in cars, portable toilets, tents and lean-tos.

The group found homeless young people from across central Minnesota including Sartell, St. Joseph, St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Waite Park, Kimball, Foley, Rice and Little Falls.

“Youth are a hidden problem,” Wensman said. “They are in every community. If you see a kid walking around with two backpacks, there is something going on.”

The research also found:

- 200 school-age homeless children in the St. Cloud school district;

- Within 24-48 hours of becoming homeless, youth are approached to take part in sex trafficking;

- St. Cloud has the second most sex-trafficked youth of all Minnesota cities.

- One in four homeless young people end up being homeless adults with a lifelong cost to society of \$613,000.

Wensman said the key to the project’s successful launch has been its partnerships. In addition to St. Cloud Rotary, the Great River Rotary of Sartell and Sauk Rapids, Granite Rotary and Rotaract joined the effort with a total of more than 220 members.

The Rotarians also reached out to Stearns County Social Services, Catholic Charities and Youth for Christ.

Rotary members presented the plan to the community and were greeted with enthusiastic support. The effort raised \$300,000 cash plus in-kind contributions from businesses and individuals. Volunteers spent thousands of hours since December remodeling the 3,600-square-foot space that once housed the Anderson Trucking offices.

“This is an essential investment in the community,” Wensman said.

The result is a center that will offer a wide range of services for youth when it’s open from 2-7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

“We want youth to know they are valued, trusted and we’ll work with them to rebuild their lives,” said board member John Bodette.

Services will include a nightly hot meal that will provide a chance to develop relationships and connect with mentors. Other services include a food pantry, showers, laundry, computers, clothes for job interviews, lockers and mailboxes.

Youth will be served by a full-time program coordinator and part-time volunteer coordinator.

Medical professionals will be

available to help with health problems. Catholic Charities will have one full-time case worker on-site. Field outreach workers from Catholic Charities and Stearns County Social Services will have office space at the center.

The staff will be assisted by five or six volunteers each day.

The center is prepared to serve 25-35 people a day.

Pathways aims to help homeless youth with adult social skills such as how to balance a checkbook and prepare and dress for a job interview.

“Pathways uses our connections to help with education and jobs,” Bodette said. “We want them to get career jobs and help them on the track for training and placement. We’ll use our connections in the business community to get them jobs.”

Wensman expects the center will need about \$135,000 per year to keep going. The fundraising plan includes donations from individuals, businesses and grants, and maybe helping youth develop a business that will bring in some money.

“If we get even one person on the path to education and a career job, the savings in public expenses will more than cover our expenses for the project,” Wensman said.

Pathways offers one-time and long-term volunteer opportunities. For more information go to www.pathways4youthmn.org or contact Katlyn to volunteer at 320-316-1637. To donate, contact Callie at 320-316-1635.

“I look at all the opportunities my family has had for education,” Maney said. “I look at these kids and it’s time to give back so they have the same opportunities for education and career jobs.”

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Our View

Food shelves need your help all year long

Assigning a month to a cause or concern serves to bring attention and focus engagement.

That's the case this month with hunger and food shelves.

The Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign helps stock almost 300 food shelves statewide. In 2017, more than \$8 million and 4.7-million pounds of food were donated.

FoodShare gathers a pool of incentive funds donated by huge companies, such as Target, General Mills and Land O Lakes. Those incentive funds are then distributed to member food shelves throughout the state depending on how much food those local food shelves take in during the month of March. The more food donated, the more incentive funds received from FoodShare.

This year's campaign runs until April 8.

Donations typically fall after Christmas and March is a good time to focus on restocking the shelves.

In central Minnesota, the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities food shelves take part in the March campaign. The St. Joseph Community Food Shelf does not benefit from the campaign but it's still a good time to make a cash or food donation. St. Joseph's food shelf serves 70 to 80 families a month.

Across the state, Minnesotans made more than 3 million visits to food shelves in 2017. The number of visits hasn't changed much in the last five years, but according to Hunger Solutions, the number of seniors visiting food shelves is up more than 27 percent from five years ago. Seniors on fixed incomes are finding it increasingly difficult to afford food. The rise of mobile food shelves makes it easier for seniors with transportation challenges to use the services.

The need for you to contribute is great.

One in 10 Minnesotans does not have enough food for a healthy active life. Almost 14 percent of children have food needs.

Food shelves serving the area include:
Salvation Army, 400 Highway 10 S. in St. Cloud
Catholic Charities, 157 Roosevelt Road in St. Cloud
St. Joseph Community Food Shelf, 25 First Ave. SE.

You can help in many ways.

Cash donations are always welcome. According to Minnesota Food Share, cash donations made to Minnesota FoodShare or directly to your local food shelf make the greatest impact, allowing food shelves to buy according to their communities' needs and stretching your \$1 into more than \$4 worth of food-shelf items.

Nonperishable food items can be left at community collection boxes.

According to Ann Scherer at the St. Joseph food shelf, items constantly needed are pancake mix and pancake syrup, jellies and jams, laundry soap, personal-care items such as shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste and other types of personal-hygiene products.

You can always volunteer your time at the food shelves. It's a great way to meet your neighbors and help your community.

And remember, when March is over, the need continues. Your help is needed every month of the year.

Sartell-St. Stephen • St. Joseph

Newsleaders

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

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

Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader • www.thenewsleaders.com

Friday, March 16, 2018

Opinion

Hockey is the real March Madness

“How’s your bracket coming?”

That question could be heard in every office and sports bar this past week as March Madness, also known as the NCAA Men’s Division 1 Basketball Tournament, kicked in.

After selection Sunday, college basketball fans studied the odds and bracketology predictions to pick the final winner in the 68-team tournament.

But here in the State of Hockey, March Madness should be about pucks and sticks, not dunks and threes.

The Gophers’ last appearance in the national basketball tournament was in 1997. Bill Clinton was president, the Dow closed the year at 7,908, gas cost \$1.22...and you could still shop at Woolworth’s.

Hockey’s doing a little better. Consider the facts in the State of Hockey.

St. Cloud State University’s men’s hockey team has been ranked No. 1 among the country’s 60 Division I hockey programs for most of the season. They captured the Penrose Cup by winning the National Collegiate Hockey Conference. No matter what happens at the NCHC tournament this weekend in St. Paul, the Huskies are headed to the NCAA tournament for the eighth time in 10 years, including one Frozen Four appearance. You can watch the Frozen Four starting April 5 at the Xcel

Mike Knaak

Editor



Energy Center in St. Paul.

Minnesota has five Division I men’s teams – SCSU, Minnesota, Minnesota Duluth, Minnesota State-Mankato and Bemidji. Four were ranked in the Top 20 this season.

Women’s college hockey is doing pretty well too. The University of Minnesota women were national champs in 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016. When the Gophers weren’t winning, the Bulldogs were, bringing the national title home to Duluth in 2008 and 2010.

And then there’s the Wild. The team continues to set records for the number of sellouts. Last season, all 41 regular-season home games were sellouts with 34 contests topping 19,000 in attendance.

The past two weekends, the state girls’ and boys’ hockey tournaments filled the X and Ridder Arena with the boy’s attendance rivaling the Wild crowds.

If you couldn’t attend a game in person last weekend, you could easily burn out the batteries in your remote control flipping from the Wild

Hagerman banishes news from his life

Should Erik Hagerman be envied or pitied?

I, for one, cannot decide.

Hagerman, 53, lives on a pig farm near Athens in southeastern Ohio. He made a bundle in the corporate world and, like a retro hippy, decided to “drop out” of the rat race three years ago. Now he is a kind of latter-day Henry David Thoreau, seeking solace and wisdom in his woodsy niche.

I learned about Hagerman in a wonderful feature story, “The Man Who Knew Too Little,” written by Sam Dolnick in the March 10 *New York Times*.

Hagerman not only dropped out from the rat race, he dropped out from all contact with anything going on in the world. He was so shaken and disgusted by the election of Donald Trump, he decided to become a kind of head-in-sand ostrich. He intended to tune out the news for just a few days, but now it’s been more than a year. He knows nothing about White House chaos or Robert Mueller or Stormy Daniels. He is oblivious to the Me Too movement, mass shootings, hurricanes, fires and other disasters.

Dennis Dalman

Reporter



laughing because I could so relate to Hagerman’s attitude. Since Trump was elected I, too, have felt like banishing at least TV, if not newspapers and magazines. Just the sight and sound of that sneering, pouting, blustering charlatan, that Narcissist-in-Chief, has me lunging for the mute button and more often lately, the off button. On busy days when I keep the TV off, I feel so much better.

And it’s not just Trump. It’s an overload of everything: too many witless commercials, too many catastrophes man-made and otherwise, too many killings, too many scandals, too many noisy arguments from talking heads, too much cruelty to children and animals, too much trivial nonsense, too much of this, too much of that. Too much of everything.

But, alas, the “news junkie” in me keeps going back for more. My morbid curiosity about this floundering world is at least buoyed up by slender threads of hope, but those threads are getting slenderer the longer this president stays in power. This country, this world, in my opinion, would be infinitely better without big bad bully Trump at the helm, with someone like Hillary

to the high school tournament to the Huskies.

And there’s more.

In January, the St. Cloud area hosted Hockey Day Minnesota. The St. Cloud Youth Hockey Association rounded up more than 250 volunteers for the weekend. Organizers estimated more than 20,000 people attended events on Saturday, Jan. 20, including high school and college games on the rink adjacent to Lake George. The next day, about 1,500 youth hockey players competed in rinks on the lake.

Fans of any sports won’t find a more thrilling contest than the Olympic Gold Medal game won by the USA women’s hockey team in an emotional rematch of the 2014 championship. The Americans beat Canada 3-2 in an overtime shootout. Seven team members were Minnesotans.

A few years ago, a *Sports Illustrated* writer referred to the National Hockey League as a “niche sport” without much nationwide appeal. That dismissive comment doesn’t explain sold-out arenas far from the frozen north, including the league’s newest expansion team, the division-leading Las Vegas Gold Knights.

So, sports fans, don’t be distracted by the brackets and betting pools. Keep your eyes on the real March Madness here in the State of Hockey.

Clinton or John Kasich guiding the ship of state. Well, as they say, wish in one hand, dream in the other.

Almost like a choreographer, Hagerman has worked out a soft-shoe strategy for his no-news life. Friends and relatives keep any mention of any news from him. During conversations, they’ve learned to do a verbal tango around what’s in the news. In the morning, Hagerman drives into Athens for coffee and sits at the café, scrupulously avoiding any newspapers that may be hanging around. He admits he sometimes gets bored. Watching the weather all the time, he said, wears a little thin.

But then one day he discovered what he calls “The Lake.” It’s a 45-acre long-abandoned coal-mine property he bought near Athens. With the help of an ecologist friend, he is restoring those ravaged but beautiful woods, living in them, enjoying that lake and that land the way Thoreau famously loved Walden’s Pond. Hagerman will give the land to the public when he dies.

And that is the way Hagerman the newsless man decided to leave his mark on this world – to nurture a patch of nature back to health and give it to the people. Should we envy him? Pity him? Hard to say. But one thing’s for sure: In his extreme way, Hagerman is living his life in a way all of us wish for from time to time – a longing to free our stuffed minds and heavy hearts from – as poet William Wordsworth put it – a “world that is too much with us.”

GOT AN OPINION?

Please include your full name for publication (and address and phone number for verification)

The Newsleaders

P.O. Box 324

St. Joseph, MN 56374

Email: news@thenewsleaders.com

Soyka

from front page

the Stearns County Sheriff’s Of-
fice and all other law-enforce-
ment agencies in central Minne-
sota and beyond. Communica-
tion and collaboration is vital,
he said, not just among law-en-
forcement but other agencies
and with the residents of the
county.

Soyka said law enforcement
work has changed dramatically
in the past 27 years since he first
started his career. The brutal
realities of new kinds of crimes
have caused new focus for sher-
iff and police departments, such
as the dangers of terrorism,
the widespread increase in sex
trafficking and the prevalence
of drug use, including opiod
abuse. Those problems require
constant communication among
law enforcement, other agencies
and contact with the public, he
said.

Soyka received the presti-

gious Stearns County Life-Sav-
ing Medal and was also awarded
the Minnesota Fraternal Order
of Police Grand Lodge Life-Sav-
ing Award.

He’s a longtime member and
current vice president of the Fra-
ternal Order of Police, Granite
Lodge 17. One of his favorite ac-
tivities is as a volunteer for the
Stearns County Sheriff’s Explor-
er Program, which helps teach
youth about law enforcement.

Soyka’s hobbies include golf,
working on old cars, boating
and spending time at his cabin
in the Brainerd area. After living
in St. Cloud for years, Soyka
built a house just south of St.
Stephen last year. He’s a mem-
ber of the St. Stephen Catholic
Church.

Soyka has two step-children
who are his girlfriend Natalie’s
children, Megan and Nolan,
now in their 20s, and he has
one step-grandchild, 2-year-old
Abe, who is Megan’s son.

Soyka’s website is-
votesoykasheriff.com

City permit totals hint at healthy 2018

by **Dennis Dalman**
news@thenewsleaders.com

The total valuation of per-
mits issued in Sartell was
\$1,357,768 for the first month
of 2018, which might be a
harbinger of strong economic
growth for this year.

For January 2017, the to-

125 students take part in walkout

by **Mike Knaak**
editor@thenewsleaders.com

Sartell-St. Stephen High
School students could face
discipline for participating in
the National Student Walkout
on Wednesday, March 14.

About 125 of the high
school’s 1,200 students par-
ticipated in the walkout that
marked the one-month an-
niversary of the killing of 17
students and staff at Marjo-
ry Stoneman Douglas High

tal valuation of permits was
\$933,000. In January 2014 the
total number was \$382,000.

Permits issued include
those for single-family
homes, commercial develop-
ment, multi-family construc-
tion projects, residential re-
modeling projects and those
that cover such things under

the categories of plumbing,
mechanical, fire protection
and zoning.

There was only one per-
mit issued for single-family
construction last month, not
surprising in the dead of win-
ter. That permit carried a val-
uation of a \$260,000 home.

discipline could be very mi-
nor or significant. Students
had a choice and they knew
the consequences. My un-
derstanding of the issue is
students want their voices
to be heard in the debate
about school safety and what
the government should do
about it. Our students are
practicing an act of civil dis-
obedience and are willing to
receive their consequence,”
Schwiebert wrote.

Community Calendar

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

Friday, March 16
Benton County Museum, 10
a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk
Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbentonhis-
tory.org.
St. Cloud Singles Club Dance, 8
p.m.-midnight, American Legion, 17
Second Ave. S., Waite Park. 320-339-
4533. stcloudsingles.net.

Saturday, March 17
St. Patrick’s Day Craft/Vendor
Sale, 10a.m.-2 p.m., St. Cloud Eagles
Club 730-41st Ave. N., St. Cloud.

Kids Used Clothing and Equip-
ment Sale hosted by St. Cloud Area
Mothers of Multiples, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.,
free admission, Discovery Commu-
nity Elementary School, 700 Seventh
St. S., Waite Park,. For more informa-
tion call 320-224-8778 or email amy.
seeba@gamil.com.

Community Meal, 11:30 a.m.-
12:45 p.m., First United Methodist
Church, 1107 Pinecone Road S., Sar-
tell.

Scavenger Hunt, after the Pot O’
Gold 5k at approximately 10-11 a.m.,
Pine Meadow Elementary School,
1029 Fifth St. N., Sartell.

Monday, March 19
Benton County Museum, 10
a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk
Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbentonhis-
tory.org.

Lunch and cards, sponsored by
Helping Hands Outreach, noon-2
p.m., Trobec’s Bar & Grill, 1 Central
Ave. S., St. Stephen.

St. Joseph Rod and Gun Club, 7
p.m., American Legion, 101 W Min-
nesota St., St. Joseph.

Tuesday, March 20
Community Lunch and En-
tertainment, sponsored by Helping
Hands Outreach, noon-2 p.m., St. Ste-
phen Parish Hall, 103 CR 2 S. 320-
746-9960.

Marchfest 2018 festival concert,
featuring area high school students, 5

p.m., Ritsche Auditorium, St. Cloud
State University, 702 First Ave. S.,
St Cloud.

St. Cloud Area Genealogists
meeting, 7 p.m., Stearns History Mu-
seum, 235-33rd Ave. S., St. Cloud.
stearns-museum.org.

Wednesday, March 21
S.A.L.T. (Seniors and Law En-
forcement Together), 9 a.m., Sartell
Police Department, 310 Second St.
S., Sartell.

Thursday, March 22
Coffee and Conversation, a se-
nior discussion group featuring Susie
Wistron who will give AED demon-
strations and CPR practice on training
mannequins, 9 a.m., Sartell Commu-
nity Center, 850-19th St. S.
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 23
Benton County Museum, 10
a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk
Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbentonhis-
tory.org.

Saturday, March 24
Move the Mall Walk for Volun-
teerism, hosted by Catholic Charities,
8-10 a.m., Crossroads Center 4101
Division St. W., St Cloud, 320-229-
4589.

Easter Egg Hunt, hosted by
Grace United Methodist Church, 10
a.m.-noon, 2615 Clearwater Road,
St. Cloud. 320-252-2153 or email
mygracechurch@gmail.com.

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by Marie Olson
contributing writer

Junior Cole Fibranz fin-

Sartell's Cole Fibranz (top) vs. Lafayette Bade of Elk River.



photos by Marie Olson

Sartell wrestler Jackson Penk (top) vs. Mason Enderlein of Eastview.



Sartell's Nick Pelach (left) vs. Pedro Velasquez of Chanhassen.

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