Joseph, MN 56374 Permit No. 21 ECRWSS

St. Joseph Clade 1 **Postal** Patron

Friday, Aug. 24, 2018 Volume 30, Issue 28 Est. 1989

Volunteers sought for Sept. 8 ALS Walk

The ALS Association needs volunteers for the Walk to Defeat ALS scheduled for Sept. 8. Volunteers will help set up the site and route, register participants, give out T-shirts, hand out food, sell merchandise, paint faces and take photographs. Contact Laura, ALS Association volunteer coordinator, at 888-672-0484 or volunteercoordinator@alsomn. org.

Local food shelves seek garden veggies

Donate extra garden produce to your local food shelf. Favorites include carrots, zucchini, beans, beets, kohlrabi, corn, potatoes, cabbage, peppers, onions and asparagus. Any produce that has a longer shelf life is accepted at both Catholic Charities Emergency Services at 320-229-4560 and the Salvation Army at 320-252-4552.

Assist older adults in Faith in Action

The Assumption Community Faith in Action program covers most of Stearns. Volunteers provide services such as driving to appointments, light housekeeping and/or cooking and friendly visiting. Volunteers are needed to assist older adults by performing outdoor chores such as lawn mowing, gardening and window washing. Contact Betty Johnson, volunteer coordinator, at 320-348-2316 or johnson.betty@ assumptionhome.com.

> **INSERTS:** Woodcrest of Country Manor

Stories only on newsleaders.com

- Schultz will run unopposed for another term as mayor
- Portions of Wobegon Trail to close for maintenance
- CSB's Hinton honored with monastery award

Council wrestles with 2019 budget

by Dave DeMars

news@thenewsleaders.com

The St. Joseph City Council tackled the city budget for 2019 at the Aug. 20 meeting. This is the first in a series of budget discussions that will take place over the coming months. The budget does not have to be finalized until December.

The budget discussions were wide and far-ranging and at times seemed to get stuck on small points, but it's a necessary and important tool for the council as it allows for future planning projected out several years.

"We take a five-year approach to planning," City Administrator Judy Weyrens reminded the council.

The goal is to identify what projects the council would like

to undertake and if it's a multiyear project, to allot funding for the project over the years so the project can be completed. Because some projects are funded through bonding, identification of the projects in advance is necessary so bonding money can be secured. Budgeting is especially important when it comes to replacing equipment, maintaining streets, sewer and water projects and other similar projects, Weyrens explained.

The budgeting process also helps in managing the tax requirements so constituents don't get hit with unexpected large increases. The capital budgeting process is broken into seven areas: administrative, Economic Development Administration, police, public works, engineering, enterprise and fire.

Council • page 4

Summer fun heats up in St. Joseph



Friends Raven Bakken, 7, and Aniya Atkins, 6, both of St. Joseph, cruise up and down a stretch of the Lake Wobegon Trail Aug. 17.

Soyka, Bentrud win Stearns sheriff primary

by Mike Knaak

editor@thenewsleaders.com

Steve Soyka and Dave Bentrud will compete for Stearns County sheriff in the Nov. 6 general election.

Voters chose Soyka and Bentrud from a four-candidate field in the Aug 14 primary election.

Soyka finished with 7,346 votes followed by Bentrud with 6,335 votes, Robert Dickhaus with 4,112 votes and Dwight Pfannenstein with 1,115. Although his name remained on the ballot, Pfannenstein withdrew from active campaigning after his appointment as St. Joseph police chief in June.

St. Cloud school district vot-

ers selected six candidates from a nine-candidate field to compete for three four-years terms.

Zachary Dorholt topped all candidates with 5,102 votes. The other five candidates moving on to the general election are Natalie Ringsmuth with 4,596 votes, Larry Hosch with 4,448 votes, Les Green with 4,084 votes, Beth Schlangen with 3,638 votes and Peter Hamerlinck with 2,975 votes.

Candidates Kathleen Steiner, Scott Andreasen and Thomas Kufalk were eliminated.

According to preliminary results from the Minnesota Secretary of State, 24 percent of Stearns County's 86,741 registered voters cast ballots. Statewide,

primary turnout surpassed a 20year high. Democratic Party voters outnumbered Republicans two-to-one.

In the sheriff's race, both candidates have extensive law enforcement backgrounds. Soyka is a Stearns County Sheriff's Office sergeant and Bentrud is Waite Park Police Chief. Stearns County will elect a new sheriff for the first time in 16 years. Donald Gudmundson was appointed sheriff after Sheriff John Sanner resigned.

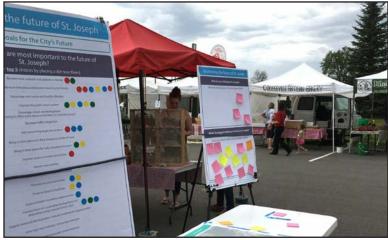
St. Joseph area voters followed the countywide trend with Soyka gathering 399 votes and Bentrud gathering 293 votes in the city of St. Joseph and St. Joseph Township.

In Sartell, Bentrud came out on top with 784 votes compared with Soyka's 702.

Statewide, former two-term governor Tim Pawlenty failed in his bid to return to the governor's office. Hennepin County Commissioner Jeff Johnson, the Republican-endorsed candidate, won with 53 percent of the vote compared with Pawlenty's 44 percent. Johnson will face Democrat Tim Walz in the general election.

In Stearns County, Pawlenty and his lieutenant governor running mate, Michelle Fischbach, edged out Johnson by 26 votes. Fischbach, a longtime Stearns County elected official, resigned as District 13 state senator.

Comprehensive plan up



City of St. Joseph photo

Comprehensive plan research includes pop-surveys at places such as the St. Joseph Farmers' Market.

by Mike Knaak editor@thenewsleaders.com

Commission will discuss and possibly adopt the latest version of the city's comprehensive plan at a 6 p.m. meeting Monday, Aug. 27 at the Government Center.

If the planning commission adopts the plan, it will move on to the City Council for approval.

The plan was on the agenda for the commission's Aug. 13 meeting but

the board lacked a quorum so no action could be taken.

The new plan, if ap-The St. Joseph Planning proved, would replace one from 2008.

> Following a public hearing on June 11, the commission directed the staff and consultant to address issues raised at the hearing.

> In response, the community profile section on history, housing, income and education was updated.

> Clemens Library under the community facilities and utilities section was

Plan• page 9

Community Calendar -

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

Friday, Aug. 24

Brat Sale, sponsored by the St. Joseph Y2K Lions, 9 a.m-5 p.m., St. Joseph Meat Market, 26 First Ave. NW. Profits and donations go to Chad's Wing at Place of Hope

St. Joseph Farmers' Market, 3-6:30 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran Church, under the water tower near the Wobegon Trail Center, C.R. 2.

Saturday, Aug. 25

Go Far Together, run walk and picnic, check-in at 8:30 a.m. Lake George, St. Cloud. Register at St. Cloud school district 320-200-3600 or isd742.ce.eleyo.

Brat Sale, sponsored by the St. Joseph Y2K Lions, 9 a.m-4 p.m., St. Joseph Meat Market, 26 First Ave. NW. Profits and donations go to Chad's Wing at Place of Hope.

Sunday, Aug. 26

Joe Town Table, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., American Legion, 101 W. Minnesota St., St. Joseph

Monday, Aug. 27

St. Joseph Park Board, 6 p.m., St. Joseph Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E. 320-363-7201. cityofstjoseph.com.

St. Joseph Township Board, 8 p.m., St. Joseph Township Hall, 935 College Ave. S

St. Joseph Planning Commission, 6 p.m., 75 Callaway St. E., 320-363-7201. cityofstjoseph.com.

St. Joseph Food Shelf, open 1-3 p.m., Old City Hall, 25 First Ave. NW, St. Joseph.

Tuesday, Aug. 28

Central Minnesota Market, 3-5:30 p.m., VA Hospital, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud. 320-251-2498.

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

Wednesday, Aug. 29

Free immigration services, 9 a.m.-noon, Discovery Community School, 700 Seventh St. S., Waite Park.

Thursday, Aug. 30

St. Joseph Food Shelf, open 1-3 p.m., Old City Hall, 25 First Ave. NW, St. Joseph.

Nordic walking, 9:30 a.m., meet at the granite fountain at Lake George in St. Cloud. Call Linda at 952-475-0891.

Family Farmers' Market, 2-6 p.m., River East parking lot, CentraCare Health Plaza, 1900 CentraCare Circle, St. Cloud. 320-252-2422.

Friday, Aug. 31

Brat Sale, sponsored by the St. Joseph Y2K Lions, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., St. Joseph Meat Market, 26 First Ave. NW. Profits and donations go to St. Joseph food shelf.

St. Joseph Farmers' Market, 3-6:30 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran Church, under the water tower near the Wobegon Trail Center, C.R. 2.

Saturday, Sept. 1

Brat Sale, sponsored by the St. Joseph Y2K Lions, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., St. Joseph Meat Market, 26 First Ave. NW. Profits and donations go to St. Joseph food shelf.

Monday, Sept. 3

Market Monday, 3-6: p.m., parking lot of Coborn's Market Place, 1725 Pinecone Road S., Sartell, marketmonday.org.

Tuesday, Sept. 4

Central Minnesota Market, 3-5:30 p.m., VA Hospital, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud. 320-251-2498.

St. Joseph Lions Club meeting, 7:30 p.m., Millstream Park Pavilion 101 Fifth Ave. NW., St Joseph. Joanne Bechtold, 320-363-4483.

Memory Writers Group, develop topics and turn in stories. 10 a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S, St Cloud.

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

Wednesday, Sept. 5

Free immigration services, 9 a.m.noon, Discovery Community School, 700 Seventh St. S., Waite Park.

St. Cloud school board work session, 6:30 p.m., Quarryview Education Center, 800 Seventh St. S., Waite Park.

Open house, Quarryview Education Center, 4-6 p.m., 800 Seventh St. S., Waite Park. The center is home to the St. Cloud school district's early childhood, community education and adult basic-education programs.

St. Joseph Area Historical Society, 7 p.m., Old City Hall, 25 First Ave NW. stjosephhistoricalmn.org.

Thursday, Sept. 6

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.

St. Joseph Food Shelf, open 1-3 p.m., Old City Hall, 25 First Ave. NW, St. Joseph.

Nordic walking, 9:30 a.m., meet at the granite fountain at Lake George in St. Cloud. Call Linda at 952-475-0891.

Family Farmers' Market, 2-6 p.m., River East parking lot, CentraCare Health Plaza, 1900 CentraCare Circle, St. Cloud. 320-252-2422.

Friday, Sept. 7

St. Joseph Area Historical Society, open 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Old City Hall, 25 First Ave. NW. stjosephhistoricalmn.org.

St. Joseph Farmers' Market, 3-6:30 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran Church, under the water tower near the Wobegon Trail Center, C.R. 2.

Saturday, Sept. 8

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Awareness Walk, 9 a.m.-noon, Building 92, St. Cloud VA Health Care System. 4801 Veterans Drive. St. Cloud.

Lake Wobegon Regional Trail Ride, 8:30 a.m., benefiting Day Services at Catholic Charities St. Cloud Children's Home, trailhead in St. Joseph.

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if you would like your business included. Check out the online Business Directory at thenewsleaders.com which hyperlinks to each business' website.

Richard L. Haeg, 84 tained a Master's in Art Education

Collegeville

Dec. 30, 1933-Aug. 14, 2018

Richard L. Haeg, 84, of Collegeville, died peacefully at home on Tuesday, Aug. 14. His funeral was held Aug. 20 at St. John's Abbey Church in Collegeville. The Revs. Cyril Gorman, OSB, and Roman Paur, OSB, officiated. Burial took place in the St. John the Baptist Parish Cemetery, Collegeville.

Haeg was born on Dec. 30, 1933 in Granite Ledge Township, Benton County, Minnesota to Ted and Letta (Judd) Haeg. He served in the U.S. Army from 1953-1955. Haeg graduated from St. John's University with a degree in art and later ob-

tained a Master's in Art Education from St. Cloud State University. He married Eileen Leidenfrost on Aug. 27, 1960 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Pierz. He

taught at Cathedral High School in St. Cloud for 31 years. He was a member of St. John the Baptist Parish and also an oblate of the Order of St. Benedict.

Haeg was an artist of multiple media who specialized in stained glass. He was a craftsman in woodworking and furniture restoration. He also was an avid gardener and enjoyed reading and playing cards. He was a gentleman farmer and Renaissance man.

Survivors include by his wife of 57 years, Eileen; children, Gregory (Megan McNair) of Collegeville, Daniel of Collegeville, Benedict (Claire) of Sauk Centre, Christopher of Collegeville, Timothy (Kelly) of Collegeville; 11 grandchildren, Graham and Ian Schwartz, Stephanie and Nicholas Haeg, Madeline, Johanna and Thomas Haeg, Cecilia, Carl, Vivian and Francis McNair; and siblings, Howard (Betty) of Columbia Heights, Jerome of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Monica (Richard) Weinmann of Blaine.

He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter, Marietta Schwartz in 2017; brothers, Edward and John Haeg; sisters-in-law, Jane (Edward) and Rose (Jerome).

A heartfelt thank you to CentraCare Hospice for their kind and compassionate care.



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If you have a tip concerning a crime, call the St. Joseph Po*lice Department at 320-363-8250* or Tri-County Crime Stoppers at 320-255-1301 or access its tip site at tricountycrimestoppers. org. Crime Stoppers offers rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for a crime.

July 13

11:24 a.m. Attempted account hack. Elm Street E. An employee of Central Minnesota Credit Union reported an attempted hack of a customer's account. The phone number associated with the attempted hack was located in India, and the bank was in the Bronx, New York. No action was taken because there was no financial loss.

4:30 p.m. Crash. CR 75 and First Avenue NE. Two vehicles collided on CR 75 near the intersection of First Avenue in the westbound lane. One woman was injured. A witness reported a van rear-ended a pickup.

July 15

3:09 a.m. No pay. 20th Avenue NE. A taxi driver reported his five passengers did not pay for their ride and took off running from the Kwik Trip parking lot. Officers checked the area and did not locate the passengers. The fare was \$19.50.

July 17

10:04 a.m. Theft. First Avenue NW. A woman reported a theft after a cleaning crew had been to her apartment. The woman said she was a hoarder. When she returned she noticed two amethyst stones and a toy collectible car missing. She valued the amethyst at \$100 and the

CRAFT-VENDOR SALES

Saturday, Sept. 8 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 9 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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Blotter

car at \$75. The officer contacted the cleaning company and they said no items were taken. The cleaners observed the woman removing items from a trash bin before they left.

7:38 p.m. Stolen bicycle. College Avenue N. A man reported the theft of a vintage bicycle and Nike shoes from a garage. The bike is a dark gray Raleigh Technium with upright handlebars with yellow brake lines valued at \$750. The white plastic training shoes had a web pattern valued at \$120.

July 20

3:07 p.m. Theft. Fourth Avenue SE. The store manager reported a woman took paper cups, empty gift bags and a candle valued at \$50 or less. The manager provided police with a video of the woman.

6:11 p.m. Crash. CR 133 and Elm Street E. Vehicle one was southbound on CR 133. Vehicle two was stopped on Elm Street attempting a turn onto DR 133. The driver of vehicle two said she did not see vehicle one and collided. There were no injuries.

July 24

10:55 p.m. Civil dispute. First Avenue NW. While the officer

Larry Rudolph, Optician

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306 Main St. E

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was trying to mediate a property dispute, one of the people lit up a marijuana pipe. The officer confiscated the pipe and issued a citation.

July 29

3:49 p.m. Crash. CR 2 and Minnesota Street W. Vehicle one was traveling north on CR 2 and towing a camper. Vehicle two was driving west on Minnesota Street and stopped at the stop sign. Vehicle two pulled out and struck the right rear of the camper. The driver of vehicle one said he went into the southbound lane to avoid a collision. There were no injuries

July 30

1:32 p.m. Neighbor dispute. Fourth Avenue SE. A person complained about property line issues, loud music, a dog running loose, burning large piles of brush and cardboard and a vehicle parked along the garage that does not run. The officer attempted to speak with the neighbor but was unable to make contact.

July 31

1:33 a.m. Revoked license. Interstate Highway 94. An officer checked the records of a

vehicle near the park-n-ride lot and found the registered owner's license was revoked. The officer stopped the vehicle on Interstate Hwy. 94. The driver told the officer she thought the issue with her license had been taken care of. There was an outdated address on her license and the officer explained that could be why she did not receive notice. The officer cited her for driving after revocation and drove her to her home in Clearwater.

Aug. 1

3:58 p.m. Crash. Third Avenue SW. and Iverson Street W. The driver of the vehicle said she was southbound on Third Avenue SW. and attempting to turn onto Iverson Street W. when she said she started "feeling funny" while making the turn and hit the gas instead of the brake. She left the road on the right of Iverson and struck a tree. The passenger was transported by Gold Cross Ambulance.

Aug. 2 3:55 p.m. Vandalism. Minnesota Street E. Vandalism was reported at the St. Joseph Veterinary Clinic. Someone had rearranged the letters on the sign board forming an inappropriate

Aug. 3

7:42 a.m. Fraud. Ellie Court. A person reported someone had opened a cell phone account in his name and he was getting billed for usage.

Aug. 5

12:082 a.m. Fight. College Avenue S. When an officer arrived for a report of a fight, the officer saw two men running away and a vehicle leaving the scene. A passerby said the people were involved in the fight. When the officer stopped the vehicle, the officer observed the driver had bloodshot watery eyes, the smell of alcohol and open containers in the vehicle. A passenger was bleeding from the mouth. The driver was tested and arrested on suspicion of driving while intoxicated and transported to Stearns County Jail.





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Lumberjacks | Council rob Joes 5-3

news@thenewsleaders.com

The Foley Lumberjacks managed to string their nine hits together in just the right way as they stole the game with a ninth-innning rally and beat the St. Joseph Joes 5-3 in the Aug. 11 game in St. Joseph.

Baseball legend Yogi Berra must have had such a game as this in mind when he said, "It ain't over till it's over." The Joes led for the entire game until the ninth inning. The Joes picked up a run in the third inning, another in the fifth inning and a third run in the seventh inning to hold the lead going into the eighth.

St. Joseph pitcher Alex Kendall worked eight and a third masterful innings striking out eight batters before being pulled for Craig Hern.

The sputtering Lumberjack offense managed to push a run across in the top of the eighth and the score was 3-1 and it looked like the Joes could chalk up a game in the win column. But then came the disastrous ninth and the Lumberjacks put up four runs making it 5-3 as the Joes took their last cuts at the ball.

The stunned Joes couldn't muster the fire power and the reliever Kyle Kipka and the Lumberjacks held on to claim the 5-3 win.

Apollo students to attend alternate days with fire cleanup

will attend class on alternating days when school opens on Tuesdav. Sept. 4, because cleanup continues after a July 11 fire.

School officials announced Monday, Aug. 13, that health inspectors assessed that parts of the school will not be ready for students.

Students will rotate days in the school. Students who are not in

Apollo High School students the building will engage in online instruction from their classroom teachers, according to the district.

The July 11 classroom fire resulted in significant smoke damage to large portions of the building.

Families with questions can contact Apollo staff at 320-370-8000 or visit at their temporary offices at the District Administrative Offices, 1201 Second St. S., Waite Park.

from front page

Council member Anne Buckvold raised a question in connection to use of the half-cent sales tax in the budgeting process and was informed that because of state restrictions, that money can be used only for specific types of projects. In this case it can only be used for funding needs in connection with the Jacob Wetterling Center and the community center.

Administrative budget

Council member Dale Wick dug into the meat of the the administrative budget, which is sometimes referred to as the general budget, and questioned the costs of new signage. Presently in 2018, \$2,500 has been budgeted with a balance of \$5,300 approved in connection with the sign for a total of \$7,800 applied to signage over two years. Additional funds have been budgeted for years 2020 through 2023.

Council member Bob Loso followed up with a question on the engineering budget asking whether it was possible for engineering to include when a street or project was completed so the council had a more complete picture of how the project performed before making decisions on whether to put additional money into upgrading the project.

Buckvold said she would advocate for funding of the Elm Street extension project, and said she was pleased the underpass under CR 75 was included in the budget. The Elm Street extension is a \$1.3-million project, but it's not high priority at this time. The underpass is a \$3.6-million project started in 2017 and slated to be finished in 2019. The city has gotten some help from the state on this project.

Engineering budget

Attention then turned to Jade Road which the council would revisit several times during the meeting. Public Works Director Terry Thene said the road was in bad shape and what was desired was to patch and perform enough minimal maintenance this year to hold the road together until next year when it would get a major upgrade.

"We just want to get it through the winter season," Thene said.

This approach made no sense to Mayor Rick Schultz who questioned whether it was really necessary to do road work to the tune of \$10,000 when a year later the same road would get a major \$420,000 upgrade in terms of resurfacing and widening.

Wick wondered how property owners will respond to assessments for improvements to the road that would benefit their properties. He suspected the city would wind up paying for it since there are only five property owners on Jade Road.

Jade Road has been the subject of attention going back to 2005, according to City Engineer Randy Sabartz. The problem is the property in that area did not get developed as expected.

In his final remarks on the issue, Wick said Jade Road is not legally part of the city yet since the annexation process hasn't been completed. It belongs to the township, he said. Wick said let the problem remain with the township and the city will deal with the problem next year. The city has set aside \$422,000 for a major upgrade of the street.

EDA, police budgets

Council members then turned their attention to the EDA and police department budgets. It appears a change in the way of acquiring police squad cars will take place. The leasing programs that previously provided the squad cars have undergone changes and price increases and it does not make financial sense to lease any more. So in the future, the department will likely begin to

JOSEPHJAYCEES

FALL FEST EVENTS

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 29



5K/1K RUN WALK COLTS ACADEMY 9AM FEE \$20





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purchase their own squads and maintain them in-house.

Many cities that own their own squad cars run them to 105,000 to 106,000 miles before replacing them, said Chief Dwight Pfannenstein. Most new cars are covered for 100,000 miles on the power train, so the major types of repair are usually covered by the manufacturer.

Public Works budget

Wick opened up the discussion on the public works budget by noting in 2019 there is a 98-percent increase in the budget from \$64,170 to \$127,000. He noted \$60,000 of that increase was because of the public works building expansion, but he wondered if that was a necessary item. For one thing, he wondered if all the equipment was necessary, and whether the replacement of items was always necessary. The council did not have good data as to how much the equipment was being used or how.

"It would be nice to know in the inventory of equipment how many hours it (a piece of equipment) is being used per month, and the dollar in maintenance, instead of just coming and saying, we need more equipment," Wick said.

Wick went on to say it's possible that after looking at the usage factors, and the maintenance factors, it would make more financial sense to lease or rent the equipment rather than to buy and maintain the equipment. That would also cut down on storage costs of equipment.

That kind of data analysis hasn't been done yet and would take a good deal of time, Weyrens explained.

"But right now we are being asked to buy new equipment, but we don't know what that number (usage and maintenance number) is," Wick said. "We don't know the stuff you guys keep track of, the number of maintenance hours."

Wick said he asked for this information during last year's budget discussions and still has not received the information.

"Going forward when you ask for a piece of equipment to be replaced, all that data before it gets to us," Loso said.

Buckvold noted many times justification is simply that a new piece of equipment will be more "efficient."

"I don't know what that means," she said.

Part of the efficiency has to do with not having to move three pieces of equipment to get to the tractor that might be used to do the job, it was explained.

But Wick answered, asking how long does it take to move three pieces of equipment in and out of storage. And if we know that a storm is coming, we can put that equipment in position ahead of time. We should be able to plan for it, he said.

Enterprise budget

In the closing minutes of the meeting, there was discussion of moving the food shelf and historical society to the Kennedy building and what could be done with the old building.

The need for a water-system analysis, the drilling of new wells and the building of a second water tower were also briefly discussed.

Garbage

The final issue of the evening revolved around the spring and fall clean-up efforts in which the city picks up trash of citizens. The program is being abused. Some people are having friends from other areas bring trash into town to be disposed of. Wick confided after the meeting he had heard of one instance where 12 old windows were placed on the curb, yet the house had not had any new windows installed. Each of the council members shared they had heard similar stories.

They also acknowledged policing the abuse would be difficult, but were hopeful citizens would not abuse the service and would report those who do abuse it. Pfannenstein said legally citations could be issued for illegal dumping. The fine for such an offense is \$700.

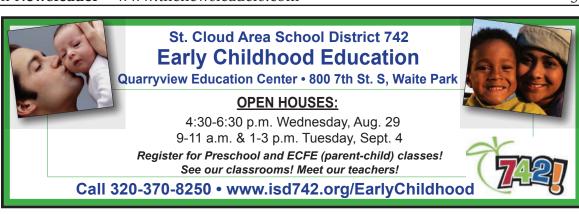
Other actions

Police Officer Brent Fandel was sworn in and will be working for the St. Joseph Police Department.

The council approved a Jaycees request to run meat raffles at La Plalyette.

The council approved a temporary liquor license for St. Joseph Catholic School in connection with an outdoor event known as Rocktoberfest on the school premises for one day, Sept. 29.



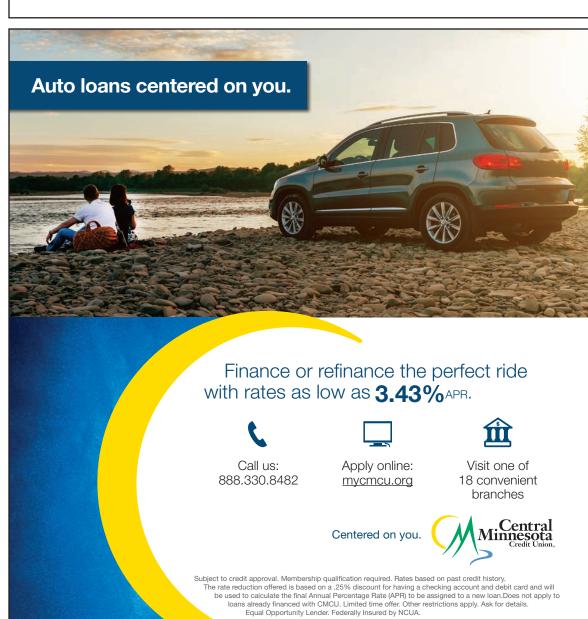




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BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE | GETTING BACK IN GEAR

Making Back to School Fun

arents, rejoice! Summer is over and it's time to send the kids back to school. While you may be dancing a jig, chances are your children may be a little more glum. Here are some ways to cheer them up and make going back to school easier.

ESTABLISH TRADITIONS

Start your own back-to-school traditions like a special first-day breakfast or picture to get the year started on a good foot. You can also break out balloons or other special gifts to get the kids going and ease the jitters on the first day. If you can, spend extra time helping them get ready; maybe with a new hairstyle or a new backpack to make the day fun.

TAKE A HOLIDAY

Pack the weekend before school starts with your child's favorite activities. Hit the park, the beach, go camping, anything to take their mind off the looming start of school and end the summer with a bang. Just make sure you're back home in time for them to start the year with plenty of rest.

GET ON THE GOOD FOOT

It may seem like common sense, but with summer coming to a close and everything that entails, it might be hard to remember. Make sure your kids get plenty of rest and a good, healthy breakfast before they head out of the door on the first day of school. Have them lay their stuff out the night before so there's no last-minute scramble.

STARTING A NEW SCHOOL

If your child's starting a new school for the first time, there are going to be some extra jitters on that first day. But there are some things you can do to take the sting out. If you can, try to tour the school before the first day so she's familiar with the layout, if nothing else. Meet her new teachers and, if possible, make some connections with kids her age that go there.

Remember that while it may seem trivial to our adult problems, the first day of school is a huge event in your child's life. Keep lines of communication open and give them plenty of love during the first couple of weeks. Give them time to process their feelings and encourage them to talk to you about it. Listen to your children and take their feelings seriously, even if their missing favorite pencil pales in comparison to what you deal with every day.

While it may seem trivial to our adult problems, the first day of school is a huge event in your child's life.



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BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE | THE FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE

Tips for Going to College

reshman year is a milestone for parents and students alike. Here are some tips for a successful freshman year.

GET THE RIGHT GEAR

Send your student off with all the supplies the school recommends for the first year, including the right tech. Families planned to spend a total of \$12.8 billion on electronics for their college student during back-to-school 2017, including laptops, tablets, calculators, smartphones and accessories.

Talk to your student and the university's student services office about what electronics they'll need on campus. Then visit the local tech store for good advice on what brands and models to purchase to get the most bang for your buck.

KNOW THE FREE SERVICES AVAILABLE

Many campuses have a variety of free services available to students. Parents, know what they are so you can point your student in that direction. Students, know what they are so you don't have to ask your parents. These may include medical services, counseling, financial advising, career centers and more. This is the last time many of these will be free. Go take advantage of them.



GET YOUR FINANCES IN ORDER

Speaking of financial services, college is expensive. Both students and parents should know what they're paying for and know the terms of any loans taken out. Parents, see that your children know the

basics of banking and budgeting and maybe even some more advanced banking like taking out and paying for loans and credit cards. Choose a bank for your student that also has branches in your town so that you can help out quickly in case of emergencies.

MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH

Everyone knows about the Freshman 15 (or 20), so show your students how to eat and shop for good health. If they don't know how to cook, show them how to prep and make a few meals. Get a check up before they leave town and

help them find a doctor and a pharmacy near or on campus that accepts their insurance. And don't forget mental health. Talk to your child about stress and relieving stress, about available counseling services, and keep lines of communication open.



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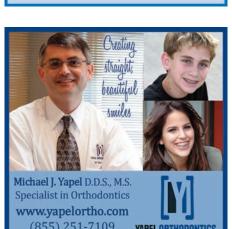
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Children, organizers of VBS recognize volunteers

by Cori Hilsgen

news@thenewsleaders.com

Volunteers are a big part of why the annual Vacation Bible School event has been taking place for about 35 years.

This year, organizers and 84 children from the St. Joseph area, who gathered for a week of Vacation Bible School July 29-Aug. 2 at Resurrection Lutheran Church, wanted to especially thank and recognize the work volunteers do to make the event possible.

Volunteers were recognized with "thank yous" from students at activity stations and small groups throughout the week.

Special treats with a note, which corresponded to this year's event theme, were also distributed. One example was hand sanitizer on the night the Bible story of Naaman being healed from skin sores was told. Additionally, families decorated paper bags and filled them with various items for volunteers.

Organizers Marian Bach and Laura Gorder from the Church of St. Joseph Catholic Church, Rachel Kuebelbeck from Resurrection Lutheran Church, and the Rev. Bruce and Joy Tessen, husband and wife from Gateway Church, coordinated the event with at least 42 volunteers to make it a fun, faith-filled experience for area children.

Most volunteers for this year's event donated more than 15 hours of their time to help students learn about God and faith, as well as additional preparation time before the event.

Gorder said volunteers often fill in by helping where and whenever they can, including one person who played the guitar a few nights and another person who brought in some backdrops after seeing the decorations the first evening of the

She said each of the volunteers plays an essential role in how the week flows and organizers are very grateful for their willingness to step up and do what needs to be done.

Some of the event's volunteers include returning Vacation Bible School participants such as Soren Haaland and Brandon Zimmer who helped lead games this year.

Many volunteers have returned to volunteer for several years (some more than 30 years) with the program. Some of these include Sarah Covelli, Alana Curtis, Susan Curtis, Laura Gorder, Laura Johannes, Rachel Kuebelbeck, Lori Schneider, the Rev. Bruce Tessen, Joy Tessen and Lisa Wallin.

A few volunteers commented on why they volunteer for the event.

"I have been a snack leader," Covelli said. "My favorite part is helping and seeing kids have fun regardless of where they come from. Kids bring me back every year. I think Vacation Bible School is important to the community because it shares God's acceptance of all us im-



contributed phot

Volunteers are recognized for their service and commitment during this year's Vacation Bible School program. Volunteers (in front, left to right) are Marian Bach, Isabell Birk (back to camera), Alana Curtis, Rachel Kuebelbeck and Laura Gorder. The totes were filled with cups labeled "Chaos Coordinators," signed cards and several special treats unique to each person.

perfect people."

"I have been a child participant, a helper, group guide and station leader," Curtis said. "My favorite part is the excitement shared by everyone. It's a community of faith that has such amazing strength to give everyone an amazing time. I can't imagine not coming back. You look forward to seeing everyone and the theme. It becomes an invested addiction. I think Vacation Bible School

being three churches coming together shares with the St. Jo(seph) community a safe and clean place for kids to have a day camp experience. We also choose to give back to the community for our service projects."

"My role in Vacation Bible School has changed over the years from snack helper to information desk to being a group helper," Laura Roske said. "My favorite part of Vacation Bible is seeing how excited the kids are to participate in the songs and activities."

"I have coordinated snacks, been a group leader/helper and coordinated the games," Schneider said. "My favorite part is the fun energy the kids have while learning about and praising God. I come back every year because I have fun and because I know in order for my kids to have these experiences it takes a lot of volunteers. I love St. Joseph's Vacation Bible School is a community Vacation Bible School program, welcoming all kids. There is often a service element which teaches the kids to give back to their community."

"My role originally when we were classroom-based, I taught 5-year-olds, kindergarten (my favorite) and third-grade," Wallin said. "When we transitioned to station-based, I became the

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VBS • back page

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Plan

from front page

added.

The draft changed the priority of exploring extension of St. Cloud Metro Bus service to high.

A section, Community Engagement, Participation and Communication was added to address comments made on community outreach and communication.

The 188-page report is available at https://bit. ly/2MoomVj

The plan notes approximately 700 people interacted with the process to develop the plan - including about 300 people who participated at in-person activities and meetings, as well as about 300 people who participated through the plan's online survey and about 500 visitors who downloaded information about the plan.

The plan concluded St. Joseph's residents value the downtown core, the vibrant arts community, welcoming public space, and education and knowledge resources. Residents want the city to maintain its "small-town" atmosphere.

Between 2017 and 2040, the city is expected to grow by approximately 2,580 people (an increase of almost 40 percent) for a total population of about 9,450 people.

To accommodate the projected population growth, the plan suggests housing will need to be available for differing income levels and needs to offer multi-family and single-family units.

Participants in the outreach sessions ranked in-

creasing housing availability and strengthening the downtown as priorities along with attracting well-paying jobs and offering more transportation and recreational resources.

The report provides a detailed look at a number of statistics that shape the community.

Those statistics include:

- · Median household income in 2015 was \$51,265, which was lower than Stearns County (\$56,336) and Minnesota (\$61,492). The city's median household income decreased from 2010, when it was \$57,548; this could be attributed to a change in college-student population or annexation.
- St. Joseph's poverty level at 29.8 percent was higher than surrounding areas: Sartell 3.7 percent; Waite Park 20.9 percent; Sauk Rapids 21.5 percent; and St. Cloud 23.0 percent.
- 35 percent of the city's 25-and-older population holds a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 26 percent for Stearns County.
- St. Joseph has a higher percentage of households with children than Stearns County, St. Joseph Township and the surrounding cities of Waite Park and St. Cloud.
- The top five employers in St. Joseph are College of St. Benedict/St. John's University Private College (780), Coborns (125), Kennedy Community School (100), Central Minnesota Credit Union (63) and Mc-Donald's (54).
- Approximately 90 percent of working St. Joseph residents are employed outside the city with about 37 percent commuting to St.

News for Refugees

Ogeysiis! Importante para Usted, por favor léalo Please read!

Announcements brought to you by Cultural Bridges of St. Joseph, a volunteer-run organization and committee of Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization. We are dedicated to ease your transition into our community.

Check this space to make announcements that especially apply to our Refugee Neighbors in St. Joseph as well as those whose first language is other than English. Please tell your family and neighbors about this information.

Homework Helpers and English as a Second Language

We also partner with the College of St. Benedict. Student volunteers as well as community volunteers act as tutors to those students K-12 who need assistance and don't have English-speaking help at home or a quiet space to study. Tutors must complete a background review and related screening procedures before offering such assistance.

Homework Helpers will again assist K-12 students with their teachers' homework assignments during the fall 2018 semester. Help sessions will be offered from 4:30-6 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. These sessions will be in the Henrietta Academic Building on the campus of the College of St. Benedict. Go south on College Avenue past the student dormitories on the right and take the first right turn onto the campus. Henrietta Hall is behind the dorms on the right of the parking lot.

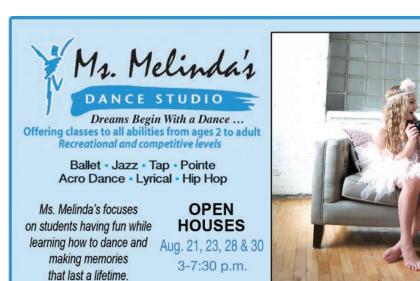
Parents must complete a permission form for students seeking assistance. An enrollment session for parents, their students and tutors will be from 4:30-6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 18 in the Henrietta Academic Building.

And don't forget...

Beginning Sept. 10, morning ESL classes will take place from 9-10:30 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at the Spirituality Center. Go west on Minnesota Street to the Third Street entrance to the College of St. Benedict and turn right at the stop sign then take the first left. The building is across from the large garage.

Evening classes will take place from 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Lower Level of St. Joseph Catholic School (formerly All Saints Academy). This is next to Heritage Hall where you were assessed.

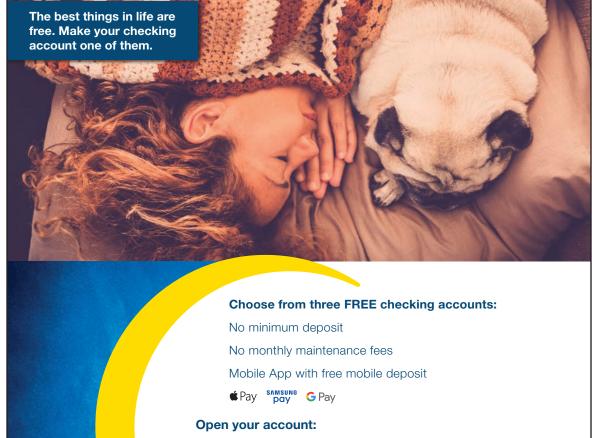
We are excited to work with you and welcome you to our community. If you have any questions, please contact Dianne DeVargas at 320-345-0593. Please share this message with other refugees and immigrants you know who live in St. Joseph.



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Opinion-

Our View Government shouldn't try to censor social media

Misconceptions about free speech and the First Amendment are getting tangled up in the growing controversy over the role of social media companies in public debate.

Don't let confusion about free speech, companies' business decisions and technology lead to government regulation.

Let's start with the First Amendment:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

With minimal exceptions (such as yelling fire in a crowded theater) people can say whatever they want. The government can't dictate speech or what the press reports.

But Facebook and Twitter aren't the government. They are companies. They can set terms of service and decide what appears on their platforms.

But those companies and the technology they rely on have failed. Hate speech, threats, totally baseless opinion and lies masquerading as truth threaten the usefulness of those platforms.

In a simpler technology time, publishers and broadcasters were legally liable for the content they presented. But the law protects social media companies. Newspapers and broadcasters can be sued for libel. Editors and news directors serve as gatekeepers not only for fact-based stories but also to block wacky opinions and hateful, threatening statements.

However, legally, the social media companies can't be sued, just the poster. As a result, companies opened their platforms to mostly unmoderated comments in the idealistic belief that "good" speech would drive out "bad" speech. And from the business standpoint, that policy helped build traffic and revenue.

Social media companies developed software to block comments and posts that violated terms of service and common sense. As we've seen, the technology hasn't kept up with mischief from posters with a variety of motives. It's turning out social media companies are needing to hire thousands of workers to review posts and comments instead of depending on software. It's about time they take some responsibility whether or not the law requires it.

Anybody can stand on a soapbox in the public square and spout whatever goofy ideas they want. The government can't stop it. But when that soapbox (Twitter, Facebook) amplifies those wacky comments millions of times, social media companies need to yank away the soapbox

What we don't need is government getting in the business of regulating who speaks or writes the words. Recent legislation requiring online political ads to carry who paid for them is a good idea. Those rules apply to newspapers and broadcasters. But the government has no business regulating what's said or who says it.

Donald Trump's recent tweets accused social media of unfairly censoring social media. "Censorship is a very dangerous thing. Speaking loudly and clearly for the Trump Administration, we won't let that happen," Trump tweeted.

He's right, censorship is dangerous.

We've got the First Amendment to protect the free press and free speech. We don't need the government deciding what's good speech or bad speech on social media.

First Amendment: Freedom of Speech Tweets

Roseanne Barr was a comedian with a successful sitcom in the '90s. Said sitcom made a comeback last year and was a hit, especially with the more conservative members of the country. Barr was fired from her new hit show (the show was cancelled, then rebooted without her) after a racist joke was tweeted by her.

Alex Jones is an extremely conservative radio/tv host and proprietor of the Info Wars website. His specialty is conspiracy theories such as the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary was a hoax and all the parents you saw were paid actors. Recently, all of his podcasts and videos were removed from the services of Apple, Spotify, Facebook and Youtube for offensive content.

Finally, James Gunn is the liberal director of the first two movies of the extremely successful Marvel movie franchise "Guardians of the Galaxy." He was working on the third installment up until about a month ago when Disney, the owners of Marvel, fired him from the film after decade-old tweets of his resurfaced with offensive jokes.

What do each of these three very disparate people have in common? They've recently had issues with social media impacting their careers.

Patric Lewandowski

Guest Writer



In each case, much has been said by the fans about these three individuals and their First Amendment rights and how they are being censored or punished for what they have said. For the record, the First Amendment does not protect you from the consequences of your speech. In each of these cases, the individual in question is being punished by private companies, not the government. The First Amendment only protects individuals from having the government punish them for what they said (or tweeted). Now, if the president ordered the firing of these people and the companies complied, then we'd have something, but as it stands, private companies can and will hold people responsible.

In the case of Jones, unlike Barr and Gunn, he wasn't fired from a company he worked for but private companies removed his content from their distribution networks. Again, those companies are free to decide what to allow on their networks. If they do not agree with what someone says, they have no legal obligation to host their content.

None of this has anything to do with the First Amendment, especially considering these services are available worldwide. However, it is a good reminder that we are all responsible for what we say and do and must accept the consequences for our actions. Every right we have comes with responsibilities. We have the freedom to say or write or post what we want, but we also must realize that whatever we say others can find and hold against us. There are a lot of job applicants who don't make their social media private wondering how their prospective employer saw that photo of them giving the finger with a joint in their mouth. Again, free to post it, but likewise a private company is free to use that against you. People have found themselves losing jobs for offensive jokes even in mundane fields like accounting.

The First Amendment does not protect you from bad things that happen when you say stupid things. The internet is written in ink and it takes a very long time for that ink to fade.

Imagine Aretha singing with the angels

When I first heard it on the radio one day in 1968, it's as if I were hearing the sky rip wide open.

All my hairs were tingling. Goose-

"You better think, think, think about what you're trying to do to me . . . "

What a voice! I'd never heard anything like it. It was a powerful, rollicking, grounded voice that grabbed my immediate attention and wouldn't let go. It was an earthy voice filled with passion and conviction. A commanding voice with a kind of regal sass to it - a bit slyly taunting, scolding, somewhat mischievous, swooping from bold verbal warnings to its jubilant crescendo of "Freedom, Freedom, Freedom." It was a voice of a strong, confident, no-nonsense woman who knew what she was singing about down to the bottom of her very soul. She sounded like she was laying down the law and no back-talk please.

It was, of course, the voice of Aretha Franklin, who died Aug. 16

Before the day that song struck me like lightning, I had somehow managed to miss Franklin's earlier radio hits. I'd heard her name but did not know her works. "Think" reDennis Dalman

Reporter



mains my favorite of her many great songs, although "Respect," "Chain of Fools" and "Natural Woman" are also top favorites.

Franklin was a powerhouse, a force of nature, a towering vocalist, a wonderful piano player and a key influence for the Civil Rights struggles of the mid- to late-1960s. At the age of 16, before she was widely known, she sang at Martin Luther King Jr. rallies before he became a household name. And later, on such a mournful day in April 1968, she sang an earth-shattering version of "Precious Lord" at King's funeral after he was assassinated in Memphis, the city of Franklin's birth.

She was also a force for social/cultural change, her powerful vocal performances underlining the Women's Movement. Here was a woman who knew deep down what she was saying, what she was singing, and when Franklin sang with her confident, bold, no-nonsense voice, people stood at attention and listened.

Here was a woman you didn't want to mess with, a woman who didn't indulge in sloganeering, and a woman with a voice that evoked "women's liberation" far more powerfully than a crowd of bra-burners.

Franklin's genius – besides the obvious magnificent gift of her voice – was her uncanny ability, like that of Elvis Presley, to blend musical forms: gospel, rhythm-and-blues, jazz, rock 'n' roll. She created a fresh-and-funky sound by synthesizing those musical forms, along with the jubilant congregation shouts heard in her girlhood at the New Bethel Baptist Church where her father C.L. Franklin was pastor.

Another sign of her genius is that every song she sang she made entirely her own, including – most notably – "Natural Woman" written by Carole King and Gerry Goffin; and "Respect' written by Otis Redding. It is almost unthinkable that any other singer would be foolish enough to attempt those songs.

In my imagination, I keep seeing and hearing the immortal Aretha Franklin, Queen of Soul, shakin' up the heavenly joint, leading a choir of other angels with that powerful voice, those soaring emotions and those commanding convictions.



The Newsleaders P.O. Box 324 St. Joseph, MN 56374

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In search of votes, Read meets voters one-on-one

Jim Read has walked many miles since last winter and, at least figuratively, it's mostly been uphill. He's running as a Democrat for a seat in the state House of Representatives in the deeply red District 13A.

He intends to knock on the doors of at least two-thirds of the district's 13,000 households with registered voters by election day. So far, he's visited about 6,000.

Last week, his door-knocking campaign found him in Lynden Township in the district's east

While other candidates hold rallies, send out volunteers armed with brochures, fill their voters' mailboxes with mailings, jangle their phones with robot calls and spam them with email, Read prefers the time-consuming one-on one-approach.

"You're showing you are going to make the effort to meet them and listen to them and hear what their concerns are," Read said.

"I've had many people say you're the first candidate who has been out to talk to me. A lot of people don't feel like they've been listened to."

Read works from a list of registered voters. On this Thursday afternoon with the temperature in the upper 80s, he saunters from house to house.

If someone answers the door, he'll talk with them for five to 10 minutes. As he walks to the next house, he makes notes for a follow-up postcard.

If there's no one home, he leaves a card about his campaign.

During two hours, he visits 24 houses and speaks with 18 potential voters.

Read engages people with a casual, conversational tone honed after decades coaxing opinions from college students in the classroom.

He wants to know what concerns each citizen has.

"I've learned how many are struggling with health-care costs," Read said. Other frequently mentioned issues are education funding, affordable housing and in this portion of the district with limited internet service, people mention how much their kids need fast, reliable internet access to do homework.

Democrat or Republican, many voters ask why both parties can't work together to produce results.

Many of the issues are the same ones Read encountered

Mike Knaak

Editor



when he ran for the Legislature in 1992 with one exception.

"I was unpleasantly surprised at how much anti-Somali sentiment is out there. It's a very vocal minority. They have fears and misconceptions about Somalis and immigrants," he

Read says when he faces the immigration issue, he talks about his own experiences with Somalis and other immigrants as co-workers, friends and neighbors.

District 13A covers most of southern Stearns County. It stretches from Paynesville, northeast to Avon and St. Joseph, then south to Kimball and Lynden Township.

In 2016, the Republican House candidate bested the Democrat by more than 30 percentage points. This year, the incumbent, Jeff Howe, decided to run in the special election for the Senate District 13 seat. Read's opponent is Republican Lisa Demuth.

Lynden Township is Trump

Country with the president winning 67 percent of the votes.

That red wave doesn't deter Read from visiting every house.

Read met one of those Trump voters who was working in his yard. He asked Read if he supported Trump and when he found out Read didn't, he said the conversation was over and added "Get off my grass."

But not all voters who might not totally agree with Read are as abrupt.

He told this story about a recent conversation:

"We talked about gun rights, abortion, we partly agreed, partly disagreed. His major concern is political honesty. He said I passed the test by giving him straight answers. 'If you're elected I'm not going to cry about it,' the man said. He may not vote for me, but he doesn't see me as the enemy. He sees me as somebody who has listened and is at least fair. We've become so politically divided many people have trouble seeing someone as a fellow citizen. I always feel good when there is respect across political lines."

Unlike door-knocking in the city, Lynden Township's homes are spread out. In this slice of the township between Interstate Highway 94 and the Mis-

sissippi River, the homes are surrounded by large lawns that are more like parks, with neatly trimmed grass, flower gardens and playsets.

Behind the house, there's usually a large garage that doubles as a workshop and many places have dogs.

Read hasn't been bitten yet and he laughs when he says dogs are louder than doorbells to let residents know he's at the door.

Some campaigns target a small slice of voters who are their most likely supporters.

"If I just ignore the people who are unlikely to vote for me, how can I represent that district?" Read asks.

"(If I'm elected) I don't only represent the people who voted for me, I have to be accountable to everybody. A piece of mail doesn't have to be accountable to anybody," Read said. "I try to give everyone a chance and don't write them off ahead of

Lynden Township is only 65 miles from St. Paul but it seems like a million miles. Read surely has an uphill walk to get there, but if he does, his constituents will know he's heard their voices...one at a time.

St. Joseph · Sartell-St. Stephen

Newsleaders

Reaching EUERYbody!

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.

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VBS

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crafts-and-science coordinator and I've been doing that ever since. My favorite? Watching the wonder in their eyes as a cola-candy geyser climbs seven feet high, or that smile of accomplishment when they create a beautiful craft with their little hands. What brings me back? The kids, the music, the fun, and the great group of coordinators and volunteers we have. What (do) we bring to the community? It's the opportunity for children to connect with God and learn about the Bible in a fun way and the opportunity to see all the churches in the community working together to accomplish that goal."

"My wife and I coordinated the games our first year," the Rev. Bruce Tessen said. "Joy went on to lead games again with some helpers. We have helped in the planning and organizing of Vacation Bible School as well. The past six years I have been the Bible story teller and have thoroughly enjoyed it. The kids bring me back year after year."

"I participated in Vacation Bible School as a kid when it was over at the (St. Joseph) Lab School," Kuebelbeck said. "I helped as soon as I was able for many, many years. I have been one of the coordinators for nine years. My favorite part is the energy – it can be electric and inspiring. When you are surrounded by 150-200 people who are dancing and singing about God's love, it's impossible not to join in. The St. Joseph Vacation Bible School program is unique because we intentionally work with all the churches and faithful people within the community to create a program that everyone feels welcome. For some kids, this is their 'worship experience' for the year. For others, this is

a chance to come together with friends from a different faith tradition to share the universal love of God in a fun and engaging way. For other kids, it's a chance to be with other kids in faith because their church is very small."

Children, ages 4 years old through sixth grade, learned about faith through this year's theme of "Splash Canyon."

Participants learned about God's Promise to be with them on the "wild ride" of life. Decorations for the event included camp/river rapids themes. Bible stories shared were about Moses as a baby in the river, how God was with the people when they entered the Promised land, how God healed Naaman in the river, how God saved Paul from the storm at sea and how God said yes to Jesus during his Baptism.

Children learned by daily rotating activity-stations during the five days. Activities included Bible stories, music, snacks,



contributed photo

The Rev. Bruce Tessen reads a Bible story to Vacation Bible School participants. The event has been coordinated between area churches for more than 30 years to teach children about faith

games, and crafts-and-science experiments relating to the theme.

Participants also learned about water conservation and protection and made promises

to save or protect water on pieces of paper shaped like water drops. The water drops were arranged on a kayak in the church entrance.



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