

# Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, Nov. 30, 2018  
Volume 23, Issue 35  
Est. 1995

## Town Crier

### Sartell Farmers' Market Dec. 1 at Community Center

Sartell Farmers' Market will be held from 4-7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1 inside Sartell's Community Center, 850 19th St. S. Come enjoy the lights and stop by for great farmers' market items including: meat, eggs, baked goods, canned goods, caramel corn and many more items that make great gifts.

### Winter Wonderland set Saturday, Dec. 8

Winter Wonderland, for children 12 and under and their families, will be held from 1-4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8 at the Lake George Municipal Complex, 1101 Seventh St. S., St. Cloud. Santa and Mrs. Claus have taken time off from their busy schedule to join you and your family for a winter celebration. Create arts and crafts, decorate a cookie, see the reindeer exhibit, enjoy a hayride around the lake and much more; don't forget your camera. The big trucks will roll in again this year for Touch-a-Truck, where children can see, touch and safely explore their favorite big trucks and heavy machinery.

### Funsingers to kick off holiday season Dec. 11

Join the Sartell Senior Connection as it hosts the St. Cloud Area Funsingers for an afternoon of music and merriment to kick off the holiday season at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11 at the Senior space in the Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. This event is free and open to the public.

### GNTC to hold auditions for 'The Spitfire Grill'

Auditions for the Great Northern Theatre Company musical production, "The Spitfire Grill," will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, Dec. 11 and 13 (this is a change from earlier announcements). Dinner theater show dates are Feb. 22, 23, 24 and Feb. 28, March 1, 2 and 3 at the Blue Heron Supper Club in Cold Spring. Audition information is available at [www.gntc1.com](http://www.gntc1.com) or by emailing [publicist@gntc1.com](mailto:publicist@gntc1.com).

### St. John's Boys' Choir to perform Dec. 15

A Ceremony of Carols! will be held at 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15 at St. Mary's Cathedral, downtown St. Cloud. Dr. Rachel Brandwein returns for her fifth performance of Benjamin Britten's Christmas masterpiece with the St. John's Boys' Choir. The boys sing new and familiar carols, combining with the talents of the SJBC Orchestra, the Heavenly Metal Handbells of Salem Lutheran Church and a special Alumni Chorus. To order tickets and learn more, visit [sjbchoir.org](http://sjbchoir.org) or call 320.363.2558.

## Board grapples with life after levy defeat

by Dave DeMars  
[news@thenewsleaders.com](mailto:news@thenewsleaders.com)

After a regular school board meeting Nov. 19, the Sartell-St. Stephen board members met in a working meeting to grapple with several questions related to the recent defeated operations levy: what happens now, where do we go from here and why did the levy fail.

### The immediate future

The next chance to try again to pass an operational levy will be in November 2019, according to Director of Business Services Joe Prom. If it passed, it would not take effect until the fiscal 2020-2021 budget year. That means there will have to be belt-tightening for the foreseeable future. Prom also reminded the board this is a funding year for the state legislature, and how much or little they will appropriate is still a question



photo by Dave DeMars

**Members of the Sartell-St. Stephen school district meet Nov. 19 for a working session to consider what to do now the operational levy has been defeated.**

mark until early June at the earliest. Hopefully, the legislature will be generous, but even that generosity would be later than needed.

Budget adjustments will have to be made sooner than that. The February board meeting is when Prom said he would

### For additional school board stories, see Page 8.

like to talk about some administrative targets and some general numbers without being specific as to what budget areas will be reduced. Specific reductions would be presented later

throughout March and April to the board and stakeholders.

One immediate suggestion was to incentivize some of the senior staff members to retire or leave their position thus giving the district cost savings by hiring younger less-costly employees.

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## Community Center finances 'right on target'

by Dennis Dalman  
[news@thenewsleaders.com](mailto:news@thenewsleaders.com)

The operational revenue-expense balance of the new Sartell Community Center is going "extremely well and right on target," said Sartell Finance Director Heidi Ostlie.

In an interview with the Newsleader, Ostlie said both expenditures and revenues are just about where they are expected to be, based on projections during the planning of the center.

The long-planned center cost about \$11 million, money from the city's share of the regional half-cent sales tax revenue. It opened in October 2017 in south Sartell, and during that first month there were no fees or charges for people to use it.

Revenue at the center comes primarily from rentals and fees from people and groups who use the rooms, the several gyms and the elevated walking track.

For this year, \$102,750 in anticipated revenue was expected in the budget for the center. From the fourth quarter of last year and the first three quarters of this year, revenues from the center totaled \$126,905, Ostlie noted - nicely ahead of budget.

Expenditures for 2018 totaled \$344,200. The cost to the city of running the center for 2018, after revenue is taken into consideration, will likely be about \$230,000 by end of year, Ostlie said. And that is no surprise, she noted, because from the beginning, the center, like other cities' community centers, was not

expected to be a totally self-supporting facility - rather a city-supported recreational amenity budgeted through the Parks and Recreation Department's general fund.

"For the first three quarters of 2018, our expenses are at 74.76 percent of the annual budget, and that is right on track of what was expected," Ostlie said.

At some Sartell City Council meetings, a few members raised concerns about some amenities at the center, such as the suites and party rooms, not attracting enough users who would pay rental fees. However, council members tended to agree that as more people and groups learn of the convenience of using those amenities, use will increase and revenues will be enhanced.

Ostlie agreed the Sartell Community Center is becoming a popular place for residents and out-of-town visitors, especially in the colder months, based on comments she's heard.

Ostlie, who lives in Perham, said community centers, including one in Perham, have been very successful because they bring a "great feeling of community" to the people who frequent them.

"I just went to the community center in Detroit Lakes with my sister-in-law and my niece where we had a birthday party for my niece," she said. "We had a lot of fun. We rented a little room there for the party, and the kids had a good time playing."



contributed photo

**Organizers Chip Schwarzentraub, Bill Corcoran, Leah McGuire and Scott Schmitz prepare a 20-foot tree for the Country Lights Festival in Sartell.**

## 'Country Lights Festival' Dec. 1-31 at Lake Francis

by Cori Hilsgen  
[news@thenewsleaders.com](mailto:news@thenewsleaders.com)

Once again, the lights around Lake Francis will sparkle and glimmer to delight young and old alike during the holiday season.

The second annual Country Lights Festival will begin Saturday, Dec. 1, and continue throughout the rest of the month.

About 75,000-100,000 lights, many more than were used last year, will be on every evening during December except Thursday, Dec. 6, during the Angel

of Hope Candlelight Vigil. (See related story on back page.)

Some new things added this year include two large igloos, eight 20-foot trees, and a 20- by 20-foot Warming Lodge that organizers hope will make everyone feel at home when they step inside to enjoy the warmth and ambiance. Plans also include adding some seating around the bonfires to give visitors a place to enjoy their hot chocolate.

Organizer Leah McGuire said they "look forward to growing the annual event as a giveback to the local community."

**Lights • page 4**

## People

**Fourth-grade students at Oak Ridge Elementary School and Pine Meadow Elementary School** competed in Geography Bees at each school at the end of November.

Oak Ridge students competed Nov. 20. **Luke Rickbeil** was this year's Geography Bee champion. In second place was **Daisy Campbell** and **Isaac Mancini** placed third. The other top six finalists were Will Perius, Miles Simonsen and Barrett LeBlanc.

**Pine Meadow students** competed Nov. 26. Ten finalists prepared to compete since the end of September in an Extensions class designed to familiarize kids with our world. **Weston Denne** was the champion for Pine Meadow with **Henry Johnson** in second place and **Zinnia Listaug-Lunde** in third place.

Luke and Weston will take an online State Qualifying Exam to attempt to qualify for the spring state competition.

**Sartell's Leadership in Educational Excellence Award winners** are **Jen Bettenberg**, Oak Ridge Elementary School; **Kellie Turner**, Pine Meadow Elementary School; **Lori Dornburg**, Sartell Middle School; and **Josh Stewart**, Sartell High School. The banquet was held Oct. 24 at Resource Training & Solutions.

**Sartell Sabres PeeWee A hockey team** won three games Nov. 17-18. They won 13-0 over Litchfield, 5-2 over Little Falls and 9-0 over Hermantown. **Baylor Stebbins** had a hat trick in each of the three games.



contributed photo

**Six Sartell High School band students** were selected as members of the 2018 CLC All-Conference Jazz Band. This group is made up of the top jazz students in the conference. They performed a concert at Apollo High School on Oct. 29. Band members are (from left) Connor Goad, Alexis Miller, Josh Engelkes, Emily Domres, Jack Hackenmueller and Justin Clauson.



contributed photo

**Leadership in Educational Excellence winners and their administrators** (from left) Pine Meadow Elementary School Principal Sara Nelson; Jen Bettenberg, Oak Ridge Elementary School; Sartell Middle School Assistant Principal Zachary Dingmann; Kellie Turner, Pine Meadow Elementary School; Lori Dornburg, Sartell Middle School; High School Principal Brenda Steve; Josh Stewart, Sartell High School; and Sartell High School Assistant Principal Sascha Hansen.



contributed photo

The top three Pine Meadow students are (from left) Henry Johnson, Weston Denne and Zinnia Listaug-Lunde.



contributed photo

**Oak Ridge Geography Bee students** (from left) Daisy Campbell, Luke Rickbeil and Isaac Mancini.

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**Call the Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleaders at 320-363-7741 if you would like to be in the business directory.**

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(formerly Index 53)

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**Call the Newsleader at 363-7741**

*Sartell Come On Down!*  
**IT'S YOUR FREE SATURDAY AT THE**



320-253-8424

235-33rd Ave. S, St. Cloud stearns-museum.org

### Stearns History Museum

Residents with a Sartell zipcode can visit the Museum for free.

**Saturday, December 15**  
**10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

*Just show us a current ID with your Sartell address.*

Sartell-St. Stephen • St. Joseph

# Newsleaders

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PUBLIC NOTICE

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
SARTELL-ST. STEPHEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO 748  
OCT. 15, 2018  
DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER BOARD ROOM

The regular school board meeting of Independent School District 748 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Jason Nies. Members present: Nies; Mary McCabe, vice chair; Pamela Raden, clerk; Jeremy Snoberger, treasurer; and Jeff Schwiebert, superintendent. Members absent: Lesa Kramer, director and Patrick Marushin, director.

tA motion was made by Raden and seconded by Snoberger to APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by McCabe and seconded by Snoberger to APPROVE CONSENT ITEMS A-D AS PRESENTED BELOW. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on Sept. 17, 2018

Checks in the amount of \$2,279,854.66 as presented:

General Fund	1,760,850.23
Food Service Fund	191,064.71
Transportation Fund	32,757.81
Community Service Fund	37,508.35
Capital Expenditure Fund	252,623.04
Debt Service Fund	2,000.00
Summer Rec Agency Fund	3,050.52

Check numbers 173059 - 173386

Receipts in the amount of \$4,162,015.70 as presented:

General Fund	3,385,515.84
Food Service Fund	186,988.48
Community Service Fund	89,067.00
Capital Expenditure Fund	15,131.50
Building Fund	8,628.34
Debt Service Fund	476,684.54

Receipts 45042-45180

Wire transfers in the amount of \$16,631.71 as presented:

General Fund	6,916.98
Food Service Fund	7,823.04
Community Service Fund	1,891.69

Wire transfers 201800024-201800030

Building Fund Checks in the amount of \$3,564,337.62 as presented:

Building Fund	3,564,337.62
---------------	--------------

Check number 600339-600362

- c. Accept the resignation of Leah Saldana, Transportation, bus monitor, 9/28/18.
- d. Accept the following donations:

Pine Meadow PTO Elementary, ISD #748, \$1,742.66, climbing wall; Oak Ridge Elementary PTO, ISD #748, \$3,864, ORE sound systems; St. Cloud Morning and Central Minnesota Noon Optimist Clubs, ISD #748, \$100, youth group.

Student Representative Report:

Student Representative Yash Hindka reported on happenings around the district. Pine Meadow held its annual walk-a-thon and surpassed this year’s fundraising goal. Oak Ridge held its walk-a-thon and unity day with an anti-bullying theme. Both elementary schools have conferences this week. The Middle School held its first family math night, with more than 100 individuals attending. Sixth grade will perform their play on the 26th and 27th of October. The High School theater performed “The Butler Did It” in three performances last week. Football sold pink towels in their Tackle Cancer fundraiser. Both boys and girls soccer teams advanced in their section tournaments and the girls’ swim team took second at the True Team event.

Audit Report:

Nancy Schulzetenberg, from BerganKDV presented the 2017-2018 audit results.

Construction Manager Report on Building Process:

Construction Manager Lee Gruen reported the final Saturday tour of the site has taken place and they received many compliments on maintaining a clean worksite. The overall project schedule has been updated with long-range goals being done. All slabs, pool concrete area and general interior wall framing are done. Casework and mechanical systems are progressing.

The fields have been mowed once and will have a second mowing tomorrow.

Superintendent Report: Jeff Schwiebert, superintendent

Schwiebert reported there will be a school board-candidate forum at the Sartell Community Center on Oct. 29 at 6:30 p.m. hosted by the Sartell Senior Connection. Next Wednesday at the High School the 6:30 p.m. Levy for Learning presentation will be the last one. Pinecone Road is about a week-and-a-half behind, but is progressing. The district is working with the City of Sartell regarding the lights on the path contained in the new site development agreement. The district calendar is being worked on for the 2019-2020 school year and will be presented at the next regular meeting. Discussions will also begin regarding the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school year calendars.

School Board Committee Report:

Schwiebert reported on Director Kramer’s Drug-Free Coalition meeting.

Enrollment Report:

Schwiebert reported on the current 2018-2019 enrollment numbers for each school.

A motion was made by Snoberger and seconded by McCabe to APPROVE #1-28:

New Employees/Changes:

Elizabeth Brylski, DSC/ Early Childhood, child care attendant, \$13.87/hour, RI, S1, 13 sessions, additional hours, 9/10/2018; David Duininck, SMS, junior high speech, \$1,728 (4.5 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), replacing Anne Zidon, 11/1/2018; Chris Euteneuer, Transportation, van driver, \$20.54/hour, 1.25 hours/day, new position, 9/21/2018; Nicole Grant, SHS, assistant junior varsity dance, \$1,604 (8.35 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), 50-percent contract, new position, 10/22/2018; Sydney Grenier, SHS, Mock Trail, \$864 (2.25 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), replacing Adam VandeVrede, 10/17/2018; Greg Henning, SHS, assistant cross country, \$1,949 (9.5 percent), BA, D (\$43,315), revised contract amount, 8/13/2018; Sherri Jaeger, Transportation, van driver, \$20.54/hour, Type III, 1.5 hours/day, additional assignment, 10/4/2018; Kelli Killmer, SHS, One-act Play, \$2,527 (5.35 percent), BA, H (\$47,236), replacing Aimee Miron, 10/22/2018; Jessica Lewis, SMS, Student Council, \$432 (2.25 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), 50-percent contract, replacing Kerry Trnka, 10/1/2018; Judith Loudon, St. Francis Xavier, Title I, \$27.73, BA, A, new position, 10/2/2018;

Sarah Lukken, SHS, media aid, \$16.42/hour, RIV, S1, 4.5 hours/day, replacing Anne Marie Braun, 10/1/2018; Rachel Miller, SMS, Robotics, \$1,287 (3.35 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), new position, 10/1/2018; Raymond Paulson, ORE, temporary cleaner, \$15.27/hour, RI, S1, 3 hours/day, replacing Laura Becker-Pallister, 10/12/2018; David Plante, ORE, lead custodian, \$21.68/hour, RIV, S4, 8 hours/day, replacing Jesse Paggen, 10/1/2018; Greg Roering, SMS, eighth-grade girls basketball, \$2,937 (6.35 percent), BA, G (\$46,256), replacing David Driste, 10/22/2018; Jenna Runge, SHS, assistant junior varsity dance, \$1,604 (8.35 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), 50-percent contract, new position, 10/22/2018; Jacob Sailor, SHS, head boys lacrosse, \$3,742 (9.5 percent), BA, 00 (\$39,394), replacing Nicholas Kirick, 4/1/2019; Nicole Schmitt, SMS, sixth-grade Knowledge Bowl, \$509 (2.25 percent), BA, F (\$45,276), 50-percent contract, replacing April Greeley, 10/1/2018; Michael Schroden, SHS, assistant nordic ski, \$3,649 (9.5 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), new position, 11/12/2018; Joseph Teff, SHS, head nordic ski, \$5,668 (12 percent), BA, H (\$47,236), new position, 11/12/2018; Sarah Theisen, SMS, Student Council, \$432 (2.25 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), 50-percent contract, replacing Kerry Trnka, 10/1/2018; Eric Thompson, SMS, student supervisor, \$13.87/hour, RI, S1, 2.25 hours/day, replacing Tracey Robak, 9/28/2018; Eric Thompson, SMS, 1:1 para, \$16.42/hour, RIV, S1, 1 hour/day, replacing Lisa Gaetz, 9/28/2018; Emily Torvik, SMS, seventh-grade girls basketball, \$2,439 (6.35 percent), BA, 0 (\$38,410), replacing Steve Mackenthun, 10/22/2018.

Leaves of Absence:

Connie Binsfeld, Early Childhood, para, LOA, 10/17/18-11/6/18; Angela Paulson, PME, teacher, LOA, 10/24/18-11/8/18; Karlye Rude, SMS, teacher, LOA, 12/18/18-2/18/19; Jacqlyn Schultz, ORE, speech, LOA, 10/22/18-12/17/18.

All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Raden and seconded by McCabe to ACCEPT AND APPROVE THE AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2018 AS PRESENTED. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Snoberger and seconded by Raden to APPROVE SPANISH CLUB AND THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT TEAM FUNDRAISERS. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by

McCabe and seconded by Snoberger to APPROVE ADOPTION OF POLICY 722 – PUBLIC DATA REQUESTS. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Raden and seconded by Snoberger to APPROVE OFF-CAMPUS AGREEMENT BETWEEN VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY AND ISD 748. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Snoberger and seconded by McCabe to APPROVE OFF-CAMPUS AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST. CLOUD TECHNICAL & COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ISD 748. All in favor. Motion carried.

Schedule Work Session and Committee Meetings:

Board Work Session - Wednesday, Oct. 17 - District Service Center - 7 p.m.

District Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Advisory Committee Meeting - Tuesday, Oct. 23 - District Service Center - 7:30 a.m.

Operations Committee Meeting - Tuesday, Oct. 23 - District Service Center - 6:30 p.m.

Special Board Meeting (Canvassing Returns of Votes) – District Service Center Nov. 9 – 7 a.m.

Future Board Meeting - Monday, Nov. 19 - District Service Center - 6:30 p.m.

Official Review of Policies:

The Board had the first reading of revisions of policies: 425, 501, 502, 504, 505, 509, 510, 511, 513, 515, 516, 520 and 521.

The Board had the official review of policies: 503, 507, 508, 512, 518, 519 and 523.

Committees

Committee assignments for 2018 were reviewed.

The Board took a five minute recess at 7:17 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:22 p.m.

A motion was made by McCabe and seconded by Raden TO CLOSE THE MEETING FOR NEGOTIATIONS STRATEGY PURSUANT TO MN STAT. 13D.03. All in favor. Motion carried. Director of Business Services Joseph Prom and Human Resources Director Krista Durrwachter were invited to join the discussion.

A motion was made by Raden and seconded by Snoberger at 7:45 p.m. TO OPEN THE MEETING. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion to ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:46 p.m. was made by Snoberger and seconded by McCabe. All in favor. Motion carried.

/s/ Pamela Raden, clerk

Publish: Nov. 30, 2018

# Lights

from front page

## Activities include:

- Senior Night 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5
  - S'more Night with the Sartell firefighters Friday, Dec. 7
  - Visit with "Santa" on Saturday, Dec. 8,
  - Hot dogs will be served Friday, Dec. 14
  - Horse-drawn trolley rides will be given Saturday, Dec. 15, around the lighted path, starting at the entrance and dropping off at the new Warming Lodge,
  - Senior Night Thursday, 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 20,
  - Reindeer and Elf night, 5-7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 21.
- An Angel of Hope Vigil will be Thursday, Dec. 6. The lights

are typically off from 6:45-7:30 p.m. during the vigil.

All events are 5-7 p.m. on weekends and include hot chocolate and cookies, music by Spirit 92.9, bonfires and more. The Girl Scouts donated more than 30,000 cookies for the events.

The light displays will be on more than 30 acres at Lake Francis Park. Lights will turn on when the city of Sartell's street lights turn on at dusk and stay on until dawn every day of the week.

The idea for the festival is the brainstorm of Chip Schwarzenraub, agency manager of Country Financial. He had previously attended the Bentleyville Tour of Lights festival in Duluth with his family and thought it would be a great idea to bring the same concept to Sartell.

Schwarzenraub's co-workers

who volunteered to help with the event include Bill Corcoran, financial representative; Leah McGuire, administrative office assistant; and others with the company.

Mcguire said they would like to thank the five title sponsors: Amy Legatt Group (Re/Max Results), Blue Line, Country Financial, Granite Logistics and Minnesota Lighting and Fireplace for believing in their vision and helping them fund the event.

"We want to thank the community and all of our sponsors for their support in our vision," McGuire said. "This year, in addition to adding lights, we are excited to bring more free festivities to the community. We look forward to growing this annual event year after year."

Lake Francis Park is on Pinecone Road within walking dis-

tance to the Sartell Community Center, which is at 850 19th St. S., Sartell.

Parking is available at the Sartell Community Center and surrounding streets if needed. Visitors are requested not to park at the Chateau Waters senior apartment complex, which is located next to the park.

The Angel of Hope night is not part of the festival and the lights will be off during the vigil.

The Country Lights Festival events are free, but donations will be accepted during December or at both Sartell Coborn's locations now through Dec. 31.

The two Senior Nights are new this year and are sponsored by Edgewood in Sartell. They are not held during the weekends because seniors will be driven around the path in vehicles.

Edgewood Sales and Marketing Director Sue Carlson said vans will drive spectators around Lake Francis. The Sartell Community Center will be open both nights and cocoa and cookies will be available.

"This is a great way for our Sartell and surrounding communities' senior population and their families to see the Country Lights Festival without having to walk around the lake," she said.

Visitors are encouraged to dress according to the weather.

Country Lights Festival organizers have created a nonprofit to help bring the community together for this lights festival.

To stay up-to-date on activities and other additional information, follow the Country Lights Festival Facebook Page or visit [countrylightsfestival.org](http://countrylightsfestival.org).

## 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](mailto: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, Nov. 30

**Benton County Museum**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. [mn Benton-history.org](http://mn Benton-history.org).

**Bag-of-Books Sale**, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Great River Regional Library, 1300 St. Germain St., St Cloud. Buy a bag of books for \$4. Sponsored by Friends of the Library.

**Festival of Nativities**, 5-8 p.m. Trinity Lutheran Church, 2163 Mayhew Lake Road NE., Sauk Rapids. Nativities from around the world will be displayed. The free festival features local musicians performing Christmas music, a live historical nativity and a children's area where a Christmas craft can be created.

### Saturday, Dec. 1

**Winter Market**, featuring locally grown and produced agricultural, culinary and hand-crafted products. 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.,

**Bag-of-Books Sale**, 10 a.m.-1

p.m., Great River Regional Library, 1300 St. Germain St, St Cloud. Buy a bag of books for \$4. Sponsored by Friends of the Library.

**Kringlefest**, 1-3 p.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave., S., St. Cloud. Family event with crafts, Santa, treats and food. Admission \$5, free for museum members.

**Homespun Holiday Sale**, 1-4 p.m., Good Shepherd Lutheran Home, 1115 Fourth Ave. N., Sauk Rapids. Arts, crafts and holiday gifts.

**Festival of Nativities**, 2-6 p.m. Trinity Lutheran Church, 2163 Mayhew Lake Road NE., Sauk Rapids. Nativities from around the world will be displayed. The free festival features local musicians performing Christmas music, a live historical nativity and a children's area where a Christmas craft can be created.

### Monday, Dec. 3

**Benton County Museum**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. [mn Benton-history.org](http://mn Benton-history.org).

**Lunch and cards**, sponsored by Helping Hands Outreach, noon-3 p.m., Rusty Nail, 4 CR 2 S., St. Stephen.

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

### Tuesday, Dec. 4

**Memory Writers** group develops topics and turns in stories. 10 a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S, St Cloud.

### Wednesday, Dec. 5

**Advocates for Independence**, 2-4 p.m., Independent Lifestyles, 215 Benton Drive N., Sauk Rapids. 320-529-9000.

**St. Stephen City Council**, 6:30 p.m., St. Stephen City Hall, 2 Sixth Ave SE.

### Thursday, Dec. 6

**Coffee and Conversation**, a senior discussion group, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.

**Sartell-St. Stephen school district listening session**, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Blackberry Ridge Golf Course, 3125 Clubhouse Road. Blackberry Ridge is providing appetizers.

**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, Dec. 7

**Benton County Museum**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. [mn Benton-history.org](http://mn Benton-history.org).

**Post-polio Support Group**, 10:30 a.m., Independent Lifestyles, 215 Benton Drive N., Sauk Rapids. 320-529-9000.

### Saturday, Dec. 8

**Cookie Walk**, 10 a.m. - noon, First United Methodist Church, 1107 Pinecone Road South, Sartell. Buy three to four dozen homemade cookies for \$12. Call 320-251-0804.

**Drop and Shop** free child care, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Grace United Methodist Church, 2615 Clearwater Road, St. Cloud. Child care while you shop. Children 3-10 will hear the Christian Christmas story, songs and crafts. **Register by**

**Dec. 1** at <https://vbspro.events/p/gracestclouddropandshop>.

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

### Sunday, Dec. 9

**Winter Extravaganza**, 9 a.m.-noon, St. Stephen City Hall, 2 Sixth Ave. SE. Sleigh rides, fire department will deliver Santa and Mrs. Claus at 9 a.m., visit with Santa, crafts and snacks.

### Monday, Dec. 10

**Benton County Museum**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. [mn Benton-history.org](http://mn Benton-history.org).

**Lunch and cards**, sponsored by Helping Hands Outreach, noon-3 p.m., Rusty Nail, 4 CR 2 S., St. Stephen.

**Sartell City Council**, 6 p.m., Sartell City Hall, 125 Pinecone Road N.

**Sartell-St. Stephen school district listening session**, 6:30-7:30 p.m., St. Stephen City Hall, 2 Sixth Ave. SE., St. Stephen.

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

### Tuesday, Dec. 11

**Sartell Chamber of Commerce**, 11:30 a.m., Sartell Community Center: 850 19th St. S. 320-258.6061. [info@sartellchamber.com](mailto:info@sartellchamber.com).

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

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

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

### Wednesday, Dec. 12

**Rewriting the Rural Narrative at Breakfast Club**, 9 a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S., St. Cloud. Benjamin Winchester, a rural sociologist from the University of Minnesota Extension, will speak.

**Sartell-St. Stephen school district listening session**, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Liquid Assets, 1091 Second St. S.

### Thursday, Dec. 13

**Coffee and Conversation**, a senior discussion group, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.

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

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

### Friday, Dec. 14

**Benton County Museum**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. [mn Benton-history.org](http://mn Benton-history.org).

### Saturday, Dec. 15

**Winter Market**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran Church fellowship hall.

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

**Historic Salem Church Christmas Program**, 4:30 p.m., 4 miles north of Paynesville on 220th Street. Sleigh rides from 3-4:15 p.m.

### Sunday, Dec. 16

**Breakfast**, 8 a.m.-noon, American Legion, 17 Second Ave. N., Waite Park.



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**PAUL HAMILTON**

# Board

from front page

ees. It would take the form of a severance bonus. The bonus would only be offered this year, and the district would need to know by February if someone were applying for the bonus.

The question of why the levy failed and how to proceed in the next try for levy passage occupied a major portion of the meeting. The last time a levy failed was 2001 under the then Superintendent Kay Worner.

Superintendent Jeff Schwiebert suggested the board embark on a series of listening sessions with members of the community. He suggested several areas in the district where sessions could be scheduled including St. Stephen, Blackberry Ridge, Liquid Assets and the Community Center.

“The idea behind these sessions is for people to come in and they tell us what they are thinking,” Schwiebert said. “We are listening and not telling. We need to start those sooner rather than later. We need to set up a couple right after Thanksgiving.”

Board member Mary McCabe asked whether the vote had been analyzed as to where the most resistance to the levy might have come from.

“We did not have a majority in any of the 11 precincts,” Schwiebert said.

Schwiebert added there seemed to be a stronger negative reaction in the northern part of the district according to the data.

Going back to why the levy failed, Schwiebert said he felt the community had lost some trust in the board.

“We lost some trust in this election,” Schwiebert said. “I personally believe I did, and we need to build that back collectively – not just me, but all of us. We need to help people understand what it is we are doing and why we are doing it.”

Board member Pam Raden echoed the idea that it probably was a good idea to hold the listening sessions.

“I really would like to hear what they have to say – I’m sure there was some confusion,” Ra-

den said.

“And I’d also like to have some listening sessions with the staff because they are important to us.”

McCabe added that in the listening sessions, the board needed to have some of the facts available to them because there were some people who did not remember there had been discussions about coming back for the operational levy. A fair number claimed they hadn’t been told the board would be coming back to ask for money to operate the schools, McCabe said.

“We didn’t tell our story very well,” McCabe said. “You are going to have some pockets of people who didn’t hear it even though it (levy information) was out there, or they didn’t hear it because we didn’t sell it.”

Schwiebert then suggested the board start to put together a committee similar to the community planning committee to help sell the message of the need for increased operational funding to run the schools. We need to educate more people about the levy and this is one of the best ways to do it, Schwiebert said.

“We need to get people on the committee who can go out and sell it (the need for increased funding) to their peers,”

he said. “We need to educate people on how school finance works.”

Schwiebert went on to say it might be a good idea to recruit at least two persons from each precinct who would be willing to educate themselves and then carry the message to neighbors in their precinct. He suggested Prom be enlisted to teach members of the committee about school finance and budgeting.

“This is a way to build trust back with the community,” Schwiebert said, “and the way we build trust back is to show the information. We are not trying to take things away from folks.”

McCabe was not entirely convinced that people didn’t trust what the district was trying to do. From her perspective, it was more a matter of people not understanding what was really needed.

“I think it was more a financial issue,” McCabe said. “It’s like we asked people to give for the bond. And that was a lot of money. And then we’re asking for a lot of money on a levy – and they are like, ‘Why do you need that?’”

Raden added she thought the staff needed to be more a part of the drive. We need to get the staff on board and understanding this, she said.

## — PUBLIC NOTICE —

### CITY OF ST. STEPHEN TRUTH IN TAXATION HEARING

The St. Stephen City Council will review the proposed 2019 Budget at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2018 in the St. Stephen City Hall Council Chamber, 2 Sixth Ave. SE, St. Stephen.

The public is welcome to attend this public hearing.

/s/ Cris Draiss  
City of St. Stephen City Clerk

Dated: Nov. 23, 2018  
Publish: Nov. 30, 2018



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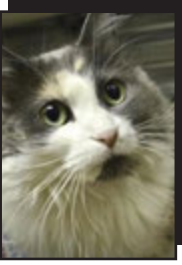
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Thank you for your votes!  
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*all of Stearns County.*

# Opinion

## Our View

### Measures needed to increase turnout, protect the vote

Minnesotans voted in record numbers on Nov. 6, again leading the nation with the highest voter turnout – almost 64 percent. Stearns County’s turnout reached 70 percent compared with the national average turnout of about 50 percent.

That is the highest percentage of voter participation in Minnesota for a midterm election since 2002 and the raw turnout of 2,593,922 was the largest for a midterm election in Minnesota history.

Before the next general election, changes should be made to insure a high voter turnout, not only in Minnesota, but across the nation. These measures should make it as easy as possible for every eligible voter to cast a ballot.

Since 2014, Minnesotans could take advantage of “no-excuse” absentee voting and vote in person at county offices. Stearns County opened three sites for early voting by this method for six weeks before Election Day.

Across the state, about 540,000 people took advantage of this option.

For 2020, the Secretary of State should rename this option and call it what it is – early voting – instead of using the “no-excuse” absentee voting name. The media should continue to inform the public about the early voting option. Voting officials should find more ways to get the word out, including multiple notices in official communications such as property tax bills and vehicle license renewals.

If you voted early this year, make sure you spread the word with friends and family. With six weeks to vote in person or by mail, participation should be 100 percent.

Other steps should be taken as well not only to make it easy to vote, but to protect the voting system.

Because of a legislative deadlock between the state’s Democratic governor and Republican-controlled Legislature, Minnesota wasn’t able to accept \$6 million in federal money to update the state’s election infrastructure. If that money is available in 2019, the Legislature and governor should agree on a bill to get the money. Voting is not a red vs. blue issue.

In Washington, one of Sen. Amy Klobuchar’s legislative priorities — protecting elections from cyberthreats — stalled amid opposition from Republican lawmakers and the White House.

Klobuchar should try again to move the legislation that would ensure the Department of Homeland Security quickly shares information about cybersecurity threats with local elections officials and provides money to states to enact cybersecurity measures and voting-machine upgrades.

Donald Trump and his supporters need to stop the voter fraud nonsense. Trump and his crew continue to claim, without any evidence, that there’s widespread voter fraud. Study after study has found no evidence. Even his own so-called voter fraud commission crashed. Trump’s ridiculous claim of ineligible voters donning disguises to vote multiple times sounds like an Onion headline instead of serious leadership. Trump needs to knock it off before his own re-election. Claiming any election he loses is rigged is the political equivalent of yelling “fire” in a crowded theater.

Democrats who will control the House of Representatives in January have outlined their first legislative efforts.

The key points of their proposal would establish automatic voter registration and reinvigorate the Voting Rights Act, crippled by a Supreme Court decision in 2013. It would take away redistricting power from state legislatures and give it to independent commissions.

Other provisions would overturn the Supreme Court’s Citizens United ruling, which declared political spending is First Amendment free speech, and they would mandate more disclosure of outside money and establish a public financing match for small contributions.

News about election security, foreign influence and attempts to suppress the vote have received lots of attention the past two years.

From local governments to Washington, there are ideas to address these issues that Republicans and Democrats should agree on and act.

A free, fair election for every voter is not a partisan issue.

## How will future generations commune with dead?

My wife spends many hours communing with the dead.

She’s found friends who lived in Civil War-era St. Cloud, then a city of about 2,100, while doing research for St. Cloud State University Archives and Stearns History Museum. These folks have come to life, not by time travel or supernatural powers, but through the pages of the city’s early newspapers.

While researching the history of the neighborhood that would later become the St. Cloud State University campus and downtown St. Cloud, she’s read about the people of that time in the pages of the St. Cloud Visiter, St. Cloud Democrat and St. Cloud Journal. These papers, founded by Jane Grey Swisshelm and then handed down to her nephew, William Bell Mitchell, chronicled St. Cloud’s early days.

The papers, now online at the Minnesota Historical Society, were digitized from microfilm of the printed pages and the files can be word-searched.

With more and more news found only online and print newspapers shrinking, I wonder where and how researchers 160 years from now will learn about today’s characters like the ones from the 1850s, ‘60s and ‘70s?

For example, some neighborhood issues never change. Take the case of Mr. Hayward, who kept “a large number of hogs” in his yard on Percy Street. The May 30, 1872, St. Cloud Journal reports that at the May 27 City Council meeting, Hayward’s neighbor, John Winslade, petitioned the Health Committee. The committee agreed that indeed the hogs were a nuisance and instructed the police chief to tell Hayward to “abate” the nuisance. The story did not mention if a barbecue ensued.

As today, calamities and accidents are duly reported, such as the odd demise of the Rev. Calhoun and the serious injury to his wife.

The couple were riding their surrey across a new bridge over the “great ravine” that joined Lake George to the Mississippi River. Approaching the bridge on what is now Third Avenue South, one of the carriage’s wheels got caught and the pressure on the horse’s collar caused the horse to bolt, dumping the couple 25 feet to the bottom of the ravine. Calhoun died three days later.

We have these stories and thousands more because we can easily search and read preserved printed pages.

But what about today’s digital world? Online news is posted, updated and soon lost in the millions of words shared each day. What will be

Mike  
Knaak  
*Editor*



the source a century or two from now for researchers, historians and genealogists?

Do we want to depend on Google instead of professional archivists and librarians who collect and curate reliable, trusted sources? Will Google even be a thing?

What about your own photos taken on your phone, shared on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram? Will your children and grandchildren be able to connect with their history when there are no more family albums with pages of faded photos?

As a journalist, I think about my own work. For the first 20 years of my professional career, all my photos were made on film, and with proper storage and archiving, the images will live forever. But what about the digital photos from the last 25 years? Those files live on various servers, DVDs and CDs. Will those survive and will today’s digital formats be accessible on the digital equipment of the future? If you think that’s not a problem, try finding gear to play a VHS tape.

My predecessor at the St. Cloud Times, Myron Hall, photographed St. Cloud’s events for 40 years. All his images are safely stored and archived at the Stearns History Museum where they are a daily resource for researchers.

Will today’s digital words and photos be as easy to visit, years from now? If you have a solution, you will be richly rewarded?

## We should keep Thanksgiving special

Now that Thanksgiving has come and gone, the Christmas holiday season is in full swing. However, something I see every year is that Thanksgiving, the traditional American holiday of being grateful and enjoying time with family and friends, is increasingly being absorbed into the Christmas season. Whether you are in favor of this trend or not, I believe it is worth it to preserve Thanksgiving as a special time rather than just for shopping and holiday pomp.

Though the origins of Thanksgiving aren’t quite as simple as the stories would have us believe, Thanksgiving has come to represent a holiday for many Americans to do just that, give thanks and be with those they love and appreciate. In my opinion, the big dinners and turkey and assorted festivities all serve the ultimate goal of bringing people together in a special way. It wouldn’t be the same if the family gathered around an order of pizza would it?

This is always what I have remembered about Thanksgiving from my earliest years. It was the time when I would get to see my whole family all gathered at once. My grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins all assembled at one time before the chaos of Christmas time. It was the time to see and catch up with those people you didn’t get to see that often or at all the rest of the preceding year.

Our family members would, and still do, come over to my grandparents’ house in the morning and stay late into the evening having the traditional meal, playing games, watching movies or just talking. Even with the proliferation of cell phones as I’ve gotten older, their use has been strongly discouraged in favor of the family doing things together and in person.

However, the modern world seems to no longer favor this state of affairs. This year, an early harbinger of the season, Christmas music, appeared on the radio almost a week before Thanksgiving. Black Friday sales that have long been creeping into Thanksgiving Thursday opened at times such as 2 p.m. or earlier on Thanksgiving Day. Now Christmas music is fairly innocent, despite my belief it should be saved until the day after Thanksgiving, but Black Thursday/Friday sales are a bad development.

Though many contend partaking in Black Thursday/Friday sales is a choice, having them on Thursday undermines family dynamics in multiple ways. First, if the best deals start on Thanksgiving Thursday, people who rely on these sales to save money

Connor  
Kockler  
*Guest Writer*



on Christmas gifts then adapt their schedules to prioritize the sales at this time rather than gather with family. Second, for those who have to work the stores during these sales, they have a dilemma of being able to earn additional holiday pay at the expense of giving up Thanksgiving Thursday to spend with their own families.

It almost seems like Thanksgiving is becoming a skipped or half-acknowledged holiday. Even Halloween is under threat. There were many sales of Christmas decor even during mid-October. Though I am a big fan of Christmas and the December holiday season, I firmly believe each holiday has its time and place, which is increasingly not the case in our shopping and advertising cycles.

Thanksgiving should be kept special and separate as a holiday because its message of gratefulness and family is a strong one in these increasingly hectic times. It’s important we don’t lose it in the growing trend of sales and jumping straight into the Christmas season. Though Christmas is an important holiday, I believe it shouldn’t have to eclipse another holiday that is just as important and special.

*Connor Kockler is a student at St. John’s University. He enjoys writing, politics and news, among other interests.*

Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have for the upcoming session at phone: 651.296.2084 or email: Sen.jeff.howe@senate.mn.

Thanks again and good luck.

Letter to the editor

Howe thanks District 13 voters

Jeff Howe, Rockville

I want to thank the residents of District 13 for the support and the privilege of serving as your next Minnesota Senator. I am humbled by the

support I have received and do not take this responsibility lightly.

I want to assure you I will represent all of District 13 and will continue to do my best to represent everyone and work for what is best for our area and the State.

Blotter

*If you have a tip concerning a crime, call the Sartell Police Department at 320-251-8186 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. This information is submitted by the Sartell Police Department.*

**Nov. 14**  
5:40 p.m. Traffic stop. CR 120. An officer witnessed a vehicle with expired registration. When the officer pulled the vehicle over, the individual could not produce proof of insurance. The individual was warned for both infractions and released.

**Nov. 15**  
11:30 p.m. Traffic stop. CR 1. An officer witnessed a vehicle without a license plate and conducted a vehicle stop. When questioned, the driver stated they did not have a license and could not produce vehicle insurance. The driver was found to have a cancelled license. The driver was arrested and transported to Stearns County Jail and the vehicle was towed.

**Nov. 16**  
3 p.m. Damaged property. 11th Avenue E. An officer was called to investigate a damaged lock to a building. Upon investigation, the officer determined the lock was loose but there was no observable damage. Nothing had been taken or damaged inside. The caller believes tenants may have gotten keys stuck in the lock and loosened it.

**Nov. 17**  
7 p.m. Suspicious vehicle. Pinecone Road. Officers received a call from a concerned citizen about a vehicle parked in a parking lot. Officers investigated and contacted the vehicle’s owner. The vehicle belonged to a youth pastor and the vehicle would remain in the parking lot overnight. The officers contacted the concerned citizen and advised the caller of their findings.

**Nov. 18**  
12:55 a.m. Intoxicated person. Second Street S. Officers were called to a business where an individual was intoxicated and was becoming argumentative with staff. When officers arrived, the individual was arguing with the bar staff. Officers

ensured the tab was paid and escorted the individual out of the property. The individual was walked across to the apartment complex where he lived.

**Nov. 19**  
2:10 p.m. Traffic stop. First Street NE. An officer witnessed a vehicle displaying an expired registration. The officer stopped the vehicle and questioned the driver who was unable to produce a driver’s license or proof of insurance. The driver had a revoked driver’s license. The officer issued a citation for the revoked driver’s license and for no proof of insurance. The driver had someone with a valid driver’s license arrive to drive the vehicle away.

**Nov. 20**  
9:30 a.m. Traffic stop. Riverside Avenue S. An officer witnessed a vehicle traveling at a higher rate of speed than the posted speed limit. When stopped the driver stated they were unaware of their speed. The officer issued the citation for the infraction and the driver stated they understood.

**Nov. 21**  
4:15 p.m. Crash. CR 120. An of-

ficer witnessed a vehicle crash. The officer checked for injuries, finding none, the drivers exchanged information.

**Nov. 22**  
2:05 a.m. Suspicious vehicle. Riverside Avenue N. An officer witnessed a suspicious vehicle parked in a closed park. With two individuals inside, one occupant gave the officer a false name. When searched, the officer found drugs on the driver and found the driver had multiple warrants for his arrest. The other occupant was cited for possession and released. The driver was arrested and transported to Stearns County Jail.

**Nov. 23**  
11:45 p.m. Traffic stop. CR 120. An officer witnessed a vehicle displaying white light to the rear. The officer contacted the driver, the driver admitted having a revoked license and no insurance. The officer cited the driver for the infractions and had the vehicle towed.

**Nov. 24**  
3 p.m. Traffic stop. CR 120. An officer witnessed a vehicle with suspended items from the rear-view mirror. The driver admit-

ted to not having a license and no proof of insurance. The driver was cited for the infractions.

**Nov. 25**  
3:45 p.m. Traffic stop. Highway 15. An officer witnessed a vehicle failing to stop at a stop sign. Upon identifying all the occupants of the vehicle, the passenger was found to have a warrant for their arrest. The passenger was arrested and the driver was given a warning.

**Nov. 26**  
11 p.m. Domestic. Amber Avenue S. Officers were dispatched after a concerned citizen called about a possible physical altercation at a residence. Upon arrival, and initial investigation, officer arrested an individual who could be charged with domestic assault.

**Nov. 27**  
Noon. Fraud. An individual reported fraudulent accounts being opened in her name and other attempts to gain access to her finances. Officers spoke with her and are investigating the matter.

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# Angel of Hope Vigil set for Dec. 6

by Cori Hilsen

news@thenewsleaders.com

An Angel of Hope Vigil will be Thursday, Dec. 6, at the Angel of Hope statue by Lake Francis in Sartell.

The event will begin with a small indoor program at 6:30 p.m. at the Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S., and a vigil will take place at the base of the Angel around 7 p.m.

The Angel of Hope night is not part of the Country Lights Festival and the lights are typically off from 6:45-7:30 p.m. during the vigil.

Visitors can attend the vigil in memory of their child, friend, neighbor or family. Light refreshments will be served after the vigil.

What Would Bri Do Inc. donated the angel as a memorial where parents and families who are mourning can find solace. The \$14,500 cost of the angel was covered by the nonprofit's annual fundraiser. The city of Sartell contributed to the cost of the base and provided the land to place the statue.

The Christmas Box Angel of Hope was first introduced by an international best-selling book and television movie, "The Christmas Box," written by Richard Paul Evans.

What Would Bri Do Inc. was formed by Randy and Tami Kruzel after their 18-year-old daughter, BriAnna Rose Kruzel, died unexpectedly due to unknown natural causes in 2013.

BriAnna gave much of her time helping and volunteering for others. In an attempt to honor her legacy of giving back, her parents and two brothers, Josh Kulus and Brandon Kruzel, established the nonprofit with a mission "dedicated to supporting people and organizations in need while being a force for positivity in the world."

The family is currently working to bring a grief lodge to Central Minnesota. After visiting Faith Lodge in Danbury, Wis., and spending four days and three nights with three other couples who also tragically lost their children, Randy



photo by Cori Hilsen

**An Angel of Hope Vigil will be Thursday, Dec. 6, at the Angel of Hope statue by Lake Francis in Sartell.**

and Tami were inspired to help build a similar space for people in need.

Faith Lodge offers a peaceful escape for families who are grieving the loss of a child to refresh their minds and hearts while spending time with others who understand what they are going through.

After their visit to Faith Lodge, Randy and Tami said they found a sense of hope in their grief journey and they have made it their personal mission to bring a similar idea to the area. They hope to build a place for people in the area to find solace and comfort with others who are grieving.

Although it is not required, organizers ask people to register online for the vigil under Angel of Hope Candlelight Vigil on Eventbrite.com.

For additional information about What Would Bri Do, visit the wwbdinc.org website.

## Board gathers middle school ideas

by Dave DeMars

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The Nov. 19 regular Sartell-St. Stephen school board meeting saw the board gathering much information in the form of reports on the remodeling and transformation of the present high school into a middle school to serve grades six through eight.

Two other presentation dealt with the district's World's Best Workforce Plan Summary, and a construction report on the new high school, and consideration of the process and proposed 2019-2020 Sartell-St. Stephen Academic Calendar.

Dan Grothe and Hailey Wrasman of the Cuninghame Group Architect presented a proposal for the remodeling of the old high school and transforming it into a middle school. Needs of middle school students are quite different from that of high school students. Thus, the need for significant remodeling.

According to Grothe, the project is well underway with the final set of plans expected to be completed by January and some of the initial construction bids being let in late March.

Among the proposed changes to the building are a different entrance for students along with an improved security entrance for use of parents and visitors during the daytime

hours. The key here is limiting access of outside visitors to students, and a better system of monitoring who has access to the building during the student work time.

Another feature of the remodel is it will seek to use the natural landscape surrounding the new Sartell Middle School and provide for the use of more natural lighting. The building will feature large class areas as well as small intimate alcoves for small groups of students to work on projects.

According to Wrasman, "general learning is organized into neighborhood teams which offer a range of opportunities for flexible learning and support of academic development."

"The flexible furnishing – the fact the way we are learning in six-eight is very similar to what we are trying to do with the nine-12," Superintendent Jeff Schwiebert said.

### World's Best Workforce

Kay Nelson, assistant superintendent of Learning Services, presented the district plan for meeting the state's Striving for World's Best Workforce requirements. The plan is then submitted to the Education commissioner.

Part of the presentation documented progress made on the plan goals from the 2017-2018 school year. Nelson explained the achievement bar for the

goals is 100 percent and is basically unachievable in most cases. For example, one goal is "All Students Graduate." Failure of any student to graduate for any reason means the goal is not achieved. The desired result is districts in the state track present achievements and then set improvement goals that work toward the overall goal of graduation.

The World's Best Workforce Goal was to have 90 percent of all students graduating on time. Sartell-St. Stephen school district set a goal to increase its four-year graduation rate from 99.2 percent in spring 2017 to 100 percent in spring 2018. In February of 2018, the district reported 96.6 percent of students graduated on time in the spring of 2017.

While falling short of the 2018 goal, the new goal states 100 percent of all Sartell High School seniors will graduate on time increasing the four-year graduation rate from 96.57 percent to 100 percent by spring 2019.

The rest of the report detailed goals for 2019 and the desired improvements the district will strive to make in each of the various categories in the plan.

**For detailed drawings of the proposed Sartell Middle School changes, check out this story at thenewsleaders.com.**

## School board schedules community meetings

The Sartell-St. Stephen school board is hosting a series of community meetings. The board invites school district residents to share their thoughts on the Nov. 6 operational levy vote. The board is looking for feedback in order to make an informed decision on how to move forward in budget planning.

"We want to listen to the community to find out what the district can do as we plan for the future," Superintendent Jeff Schwiebert said.

"Through the entire process, we have encouraged our stakeholders to ask questions and give input," Schwiebert said. "Prior to the levy vote, we hosted four community presentations along with five tours of the new high school. Although attendance was relatively low

at most of the pre-levy events, we were grateful for the opportunity to listen to our constituents and their concerns. I hope people will take the opportunity in December to meet with us to share their thoughts and ask questions."

The meetings are as follows:

- 6:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6, at Blackberry Ridge Golf Course, 3125 Clubhouse Road. Blackberry Ridge is providing appetizers.

- 6:30-7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 10, at St. Stephen City Hall, 2 Sixth Ave. SE., St. Stephen.

- 6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12, at Liquid Assets, 1091 Second St. S.

- 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 18, at Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.

After hearing from stakeholders, the school board will decide district priorities for the budget adjustment process.

Sartell-St. Stephen voters overwhelmingly rejected the operating levy. There were 3,230 yes votes and 4,924 no votes. The levy would have raised \$1.8 million to fund operations that were part of the district's master plan.



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