

# Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, May 17, 2019  
Volume 31, Issue 10  
Est. 1989

## Town Crier

### NEW! Summer Kickoff at Lake George

Start off your summer with St. Cloud Park and Recreation during its Summer Kickoff from 2-5 p.m. Saturday, May 18 at Lake George! Enjoy the park and an afternoon of free family fun while learning about what Park and Recreation has to offer the whole family. Activities for everyone: learn to fish, canoe and paddleboat races around the lake, plant a flower, food trucks, yard games and learn all about bike safety.

### Sartell Farmers' Market begins summer season

The Sartell Farmers' Market is now open for summer season from 3-6 p.m. Mondays at Bernick's Pepsi Ice Arena on Pinecone N. Items available include the following: caramel corn, treats, breads, honey, meat, eggs, canned goods, plants, vegetables in season and many more great items.

### Legion plans events for Memorial Day

American Legion of St. Joseph members will honor veterans with a series of events on Memorial Day, May 27. At 8:45 a.m., Legionnaires, members of the Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion will march to the 9 a.m. service at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 12 W. Minnesota St, St. Joseph. At 11:15 a.m., Legion members and Honor Guard travel to St. John's Abbey cemetery for a ceremony. At 11:55 a.m. when Legion members and Honor Guard visit Yankee Cemetery south of St. Joseph.

### Daily news on thenewsleaders.com

Every weekday, there are exclusive local stories for you to read at thenewsleaders.com. These stories are available only to subscribers to thenewsleaders.com. You can read daily news, see exclusive stories and download digital versions of The Newsleaders for \$5 a month or \$50 a year.

Have a safe, happy  
Memorial Day!



photo by Mike Knaak

### Marathon weather

May 11 was a great day for a 26-mile run. Some 294 people participated in the Lake Wobegon Trail Marathon. Dan Feda, 44, Rochester, finished the course with a time of 2:45:30. The runners started in Holdingford and followed the trail through Albany and Avon before reaching the finish line in St. Joseph.

## Despite cost issues, city council moves forward with affordable housing plan

by Stephanie Dickrell  
news@thenewsleaders.com

Despite concerns over new road and infrastructure costs, the St. Joseph City Council is moving forward with its support for a new affordable housing development on the city's east side.

The council voted 4-1 to support the project at a meeting May 6 with council member Brian Theisen dissenting.

The project includes a 48-unit apartment building on a property southwest of the U.S.

Army Reserve facility on 20th Avenue SE. People with incomes below the area's median income of roughly \$57,000 could be eligible for the one-, two- and three-bedroom units.

Details of the city's monetary support are still being finalized, with another vote expected at the council's May 20 meeting.

The council agreed to defray costs of the project using a tax-increment financing district, which captures any tax value added to a property by its development and returns

it to the developer for a set period.

In this case, the city would agree to provide a little more than \$300,000 over 10 to 15 years. It includes taxes gathered by the city, county and school district.

The council also agreed to be part of a land sale at a reduced price. Stearns County officials have agreed to sell a foreclosed property to the St. Joseph Economic Development Authority for \$25,000, which is much lower than the market value. The EDA would then

sell to Sand Development.

Between the two plans, the project would receive about \$500,000 in local support. All of it is contingent on the success of an application for public funding to support the project, said Megan Carr, a senior business development manager with Sand Development.

That type of support is critical to succeeding in the very competitive application process, she said. Sand Development has to submit an application for the Low-Income

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## Teacher of Year grew up in St. Joseph

by Mike Knaak  
editor@thenewsleaders.com

This year's Minnesota Teacher of the year grew up in St. Joseph.

Jessica Davis, a math teacher at South St. Paul Second School, was selected from a field of nine finalists. A total of 168 teachers were nominated for the 55th annual award announced on May 5 in St. Paul.

Davis is the daughter of Elaine and Roger Frie. She attended Kennedy Elementary School and graduated from Apollo High School in 1997.

She earned her bachelor's degree from Minnesota State University Mankato and her master's degree from Hamline University.

She began her teaching career in 2006 at Harding High School in St. Paul and has taught

at South St. Paul since 2009.

Her motto is Every Student Matters.

"Every student deserves to be empowered by their own voice and elevated to their highest potential," Davis said. "Most important(ly) they deserve educators who want the same."

Davis advises students of color and helps the students see their

Teacher • page 11



contributed photo

Jessica Davis was named Minnesota's Teacher of the Year on May 5 in St. Paul. She grew up in St. Joseph and teaches math in South St. Paul.

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and Balthasar (Catherine Schmitz) Fiedler

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# Housing

## from front page

Housing Tax Credit program by June.

**Who pays for needed infrastructure?**

The proposed property sits at the edge of a housing development and isn't currently served by any roads, sewer or water services. Several council members expressed concern about these added costs, which could be in addition to any monetary support they've already agreed to.

Any infrastructure that directly serves the development could be assessed to the property owners — Sand Development, in this case, said City Administrator Judy Weyrens. But that likely wouldn't cover all project costs, she said. Rough estimates for adding sewer and water service to the property were around \$200,000, without including the price to build new roads.

The council is also concerned about where utilities would be located and which road would serve as a primary access point. The property sits near Dale Street and 20th Avenue SE. Council members said they'd prefer access from 20th Avenue SE, which is planned to be a key road in the city's transportation plans. However, providing service from Dale

Street would be cheaper.

Carr said Sand Development worked some of the possible costs for utilities into its plans, but would have difficulty covering the costs of a road. She said if the company were to be assessed for those fees, the city could choose to waive them as part of their \$500,000 monetary contribution to the project.

No plans were finalized. City staff is expected to bring project estimates back to the council at a later date.

**A need for affordable housing**

Several people spoke in favor of the project at the meeting. That included Karen Burzette, who represents a partnership of CentraCare Health and United Way of Central Minnesota that is working to create more affordable housing for the area.

"At CentraCare, they struggle to fill entry-level jobs," Burzette said, with vacancies in the hundreds.

St. Joseph resident and business owner Susan Meyer also works for CentraCare, in the intensive care unit at St. Cloud Hosptial. She said those staffing shortages affect patients and their families.

"They affect even the ICU in little ways," she said. For instance, the hospital's bistro isn't always fully staffed, meaning there isn't easily ac-

cessible food for patients' families.

Molly Weyrens, with Central Minnesota Catholic Worker, also spoke in support of the project. She is also part of Faith in Housing, a group of area church members working on housing issues.

"Housing should be considered as infrastructure," she said. "The community needs a place that is affordable for everyone."

She said there is a shortage across Central Minnesota and the area is seeing an increase in homelessness. Nearly 1,000 households are on waitlists for housing assistance through the St. Cloud Housing and Redevelopment Authority, she said.

She said the lack of affordable housing was worsening the area's workforce shortage.

"Pro-family and pro-jobs is also pro-affordable housing," she said.

Neil Fortier, the executive director of the Stearns County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, said his organization was seeing similar issues.

"Our waitlist has been closed for years and we don't anticipate opening it for several more years," he said. "The demand is there."

He said it's a prosperity issue.

"Without housing, there isn't economic development," he said. "Houses are where jobs go to sleep at night."



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# WWII vet, Wahlstrom wanted to be part of the action

The American Legion is celebrating its 100th birthday in 2019. In addition to national and statewide activities commemorating this milestone, American Post 328 of St. Joseph is planning a number of festive and patriotic activities for the community.

One of those special events will be profiles of St. Joseph-area veterans published in each Newsleader during 2019. The Newsleader is joining with Post 328 to recognize veterans and Legion members who served during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and other theaters of conflict and Cold War tensions.

by Tom Klecker  
St. Joseph American Legion

Robert “Bob” Wahlstrom, 93, U.S. Army World War II

Robert “Bob” Wahlstrom was born at home in Brainerd. He grew up in what he describes “as a somewhat normal childhood during the depression.”

During his teenage years, Wahlstrom worked in a grocery store. When he was 15 years old he took the train, went to California and worked on the Shasta Dam over the summer clearing brush and pouring concrete. Wahlstrom graduated from Washington High School at age 18 (1943). While yet in high school, he enlisted in the Minnesota State Guard. As a class, he and his buddies signed up on Dec. 8, 1942. Bob was 17 years old.

Waiting to be a part of the

war effort, Wahlstrom and his friends joined the Merchant Marine. He underwent basic training on Catalina Island, which is 23 miles off the coast of southern California. He was assigned to a crew on a lumber/logging ship. It hauled logs from Washington State to southern California.

This period of service was marked with boredom. Wahlstrom remembers how many of the roof tops around the naval base at Bremerton-Bangor, Washington, had antiaircraft guns at the ready position, just in case the Japanese attempted an attack on this coast.

There were actually a few attempts made by Japanese submarines. On June 12, 1942, a Japanese float plane dropped

two incendiary bombs along the Oregon coast in an attempt to start a forest fire.

Wahlstrom wanted to be part of what he called the action. Disappointed with the Merchant Marine, he “just quit” and returned to Brainerd to await his draft notice. His draft notice subsequently arrived on Aug. 6, 1945.

Coincidentally on that same day the first atom bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Wahlstrom was 19 years old.

From Fort Snelling, he was determined physically fit for the army. He was then sent to Sheppard Field, Texas. From there Wahlstrom was ordered to an army training facility in Fresno, California. He became



contributed photo  
**Robert Wahlstrom.**

a telephone lineman (climbing poles, splicing phone lines). Within a short time Wahlstrom

**Vet • page 4**

## People



contributed photo  
**Cathy Snyder (left) and Lisa Hahn stand with some of the donated purses.**

The perspective chapter of the St. Joseph Women of Today collected new and gently used purses on April 17. Personal care items were purchased and placed in the purses that were delivered to Anna Marie’s Center for Family Peace. The group’s next event is at 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 20 at Woodcrest of Country Manor, 1200 Lanigan Way SW, St. Joseph. The Minnesota Women

of Today is a volunteer organization available for women ages 18 and older who wish to make new friends, learn and establish leadership skills, and volunteer in their community. Join them at the next event to learn more about the nonprofit organization and the many opportunities that are provided to meet new people and give back to others in the community.



**Amanda Groethe**

Stearns Electric Association’s communication advertising marketing team, Amanda Groethe, director of communications and marketing, and Whitney Ditlevson, communications and marketing specialist, recently received national recognition.

They were honored at the Spotlight on Excellence Awards sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The two received a Gold Award in the Best Total Communication Program category for their work in building awareness for electric vehicles on their Road Trip: Recharged.

The team also received a Gold Award in the Best Use of Digital Storytelling category for their safety campaign “This Is My Why.”

**Nicole Fish**, daughter of Mary and Jon Fish of St. Joseph, has been named to Cathedral High School’s Top 10 for the 2019 graduating class.



She plans to attend the University of Minnesota Duluth.

**Amber Klein**, daughter of Denise and Brian Klein of St. Joseph, is studying in London during spring semester 2019 through the Center for Global Education at the College of St. Benedict St. John’s University. Klein is a junior communication major at CSB.



**L. Kappes**

**Three St. Joseph students** recently received Catholic United Financial scholar-



**M. Kappes**

ships. The students are **Lauren Kappes, Mykaela Kappes** and **Taylor Nordine**.



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|---|----------------|
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| “Mamma Mia” Chanhassen Dinner Theatre.....                                    | Wed. July 17   |
| Stillwater Lunch Cruise & Trolley.....  | Wed. July 24   |
| MN Twins vs Cleveland; 1:10 game, sec 102.....                                | Sun. August 11 |
| “I am He Said” A celebration of Neil Diamond (Paramount).....                 | Thurs. Aug. 15 |
| MN State Fair.....Join Utopia Tours on our annual trips to the MN State Fair! |                |
| • Thurs., Aug 22; Fri., Aug 23; Mon., Aug 26; Tues., Aug. 27; Thurs., Aug. 29 |                |
| Taylor’s Falls lunch cruise & more.....                                       | Wed. Oct. 2    |
| “A Christmas with Shoji” (Paramount).....                                     | Wed., Nov. 6   |

**See-schedule-- Some load at Whitney & some St. Joe Park & Ride**

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|---|---------------------------------------|
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| Niagara Falls (2 nights) & M Island.....  | July 19-26; 8 days                    |
| Great Parks - B Hills; Jackson, WY; Yellowstone; Medora.....                    | July 30-Aug. 6; 8 days                |
| Summer Medora Tour (2 nights in Medora).....                                    | Aug. 6-8; 3 days                      |
| CN Rockies, Glacier Park & Medora.....  | Aug. 7-14; 8 days; FULL               |
| ALASKA.....   | July 21-Aug. 1 & July 26-Aug. 1; FULL |
| Pacific Coast Tour (fly return-San Francisco).....                              | Sep. 2-14; 13 days                    |
| • Leavenworth; Seattle; Vancouver; Victoria (2 nights); Redwoods; San Francisco |                                       |
| Nova Scotia; Prince Edward Island; Cape Breton Island.....                      | Sep.19-Oct.1; 13 days                 |
| New England Fall Colors Tour.....   | Sep. 26-Oct. 11; 16 days; FULL        |

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# Vet

from page 3

found himself on a troop ship (Marine Cardinal) for 17 days; destination Manila, Philippine Islands. His battalion was stationed there for a brief time. The once beautiful city of Manila was decimated by the Jap-



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anese; “it was bombed out...” Wahlstrom was then flown to Tokyo, Japan. He was stationed there for one-and-a-half years as part of the occupation forces. His living quarters were in a building just across the street from what was once the Emperor’s Imperial Palace (built in 1868). The palace served as General Douglas MacArthur’s headquarters. At one point Wahlstrom traded a carton of cigarettes for a sword which was somehow removed from the palace. “They would not let me take home this prized souvenir,” he said. After some intense negotiation, he was able to trade the sword for a fine Japanese camera.

With Wahlstrom’s military obligations no longer needed, he returned to the states on a troop ship. It took just 11 days to sail home. He fondly recalls the day the ship docked in San Francisco. A train ride to Great Lakes, Illinois, for discharge, another train ride to Minneapolis, where he hitchhiked to Brainerd. Home at last.

Wahlstrom said, “In those days, if you were in uniform, you could hitchhike anyplace.”

Like so many WWII veterans, he went back to school on

the G.I. Bill. He attended Brainerd Community College where he earned an associate degree in sales and marketing.

Wahlstrom worked for the Citizenship Bank in Brainerd. He quit after one year for higher earnings. For a while, he worked as a jobber for O’Brien and Son’s Groceries in Brainerd.

Eventually Wahlstrom found his groove in the lumber yard business. Beginning in 1952 and throughout time, he managed several lumber yards. In 1972, Wahlstrom and his partner bought a lumber yard in Silver Lake. Wahlstrom and his wife, Ellen moved to St. Joseph in 1956. He continued to manage lumber yards until he fully retired in 1989.

Wahlstrom married Ellen in 1952. In June of this year, they will be married 67 years. They have nine children and 16 grandchildren. Throughout the years the family has spent many enjoyable days at the “Wahlstrom Compound” on Kjostad Lake near Orr.

Ellen was a stay-at-home mom. She says as far as she can recall, she seemingly was always pregnant. Later, she went back to school and became an



contributed photo  
**Robert Wahlstrom in Tokyo, 1945.**

educator.

Understandably, Bob doesn’t get around quite as much these days. His interests in hobbies have tapered off.

Since building his home in St. Joseph in 1956, Wahlstrom and his wife Ellen said they continue to believe St. Joseph is a wonderful place to raise a

family.

Although Wahlstrom can’t be as active as he would like, with a broad smile he cautions others “not to get old.” He has been a member of the American Legion for 73 years.

In a pensive, melancholic reflection Wahlstrom says: “It’s been a good life.”

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According to a 2013 article in USA Today, pets who live in the states with the highest rates of spaying and neutering also live the longest. Researchers found that neutered male dogs lived 18 percent longer than unaltered male dogs and spayed female dogs live 23 percent longer than unaltered female dogs.

## REDUCING PET HOMELESSNESS

The number of homeless animals is a result of so many pets not being spayed or neutered. In the U.S., there are an estimated 6 to 8 million homeless animals entering animal shelters every year, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty for Animals.

Further ASPCA research has found that as many as 300,000 homeless animals are euthanized in animal shelters every year in some states. Nationwide, more than 2.7 million healthy, adoptable cats and dogs are euthanized in shelters annually.

## IMPROVING YOUR PET'S HEALTH

Choosing to spay or neuter your pets can decrease their urge to roam, which reduces their chance of fighting with other animals, getting struck by cars and getting into other dangerous situations.

According to the ASPCA, un-spayed female cats and dogs have a far greater chance of developing fatal uterine infections, uterine cancer and other cancers of the reproductive system.

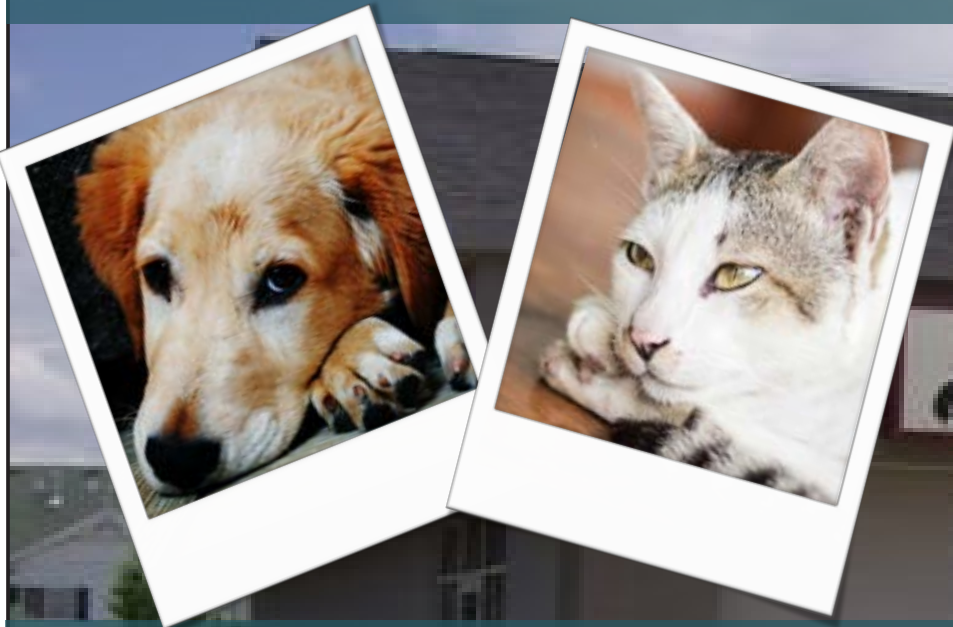
Consider all of the aforementioned facts, as well as any guidance your veterinarian gives you, when making the best decision for you and your pet.



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CRAFT BEER GUIDE | LOCAL

# Bad Habit's new home

St. Joseph's craft brewery quickly outgrew its original location and found a new home just a block away.

Bad Habit Brewing is now welcoming guests in its new home at 25 College Ave. N. in St. Joseph.

The new location, the former St. Joseph City Hall, offers more than twice the space than at the old, smaller location just a few hundred feet away on Minnesota Street.

After it opened in October 2015, Bad Habit rapidly became a favorite, trending go-to place for people who like to relax with beer, cider, soda and food. Many times it was cram-packed.

The new place is a bold modernistic design – lots of huge windows, old-wood floors, a red-white-black color scheme reflecting the business's logo. The outside entrance is a bold red visual echo of the cantilevered look of the front of the world-renowned St. John's Abbey Church in Collegeville. But within the modernistic structure is a rustic, down-home cozy ambience of plank tables and chairs.

Bad Habit will accommodate up to 300 customers, including about 150 on a large wrap-around patio in the warmer months. When the patio is finished sometime this June, Bad Habit will host a grand opening.

Bad Habit Brewery's signature identity is beer brewed right on the premises. It's beer that ranges from classic recipes (such as an English-style pub ale) to over-the-



photo by Mike Knaak

Bad Habit Brewing co-owners Aaron Rieland (left) and Eric Geier take a moment to enjoy a cold brew.

top fun and loopy beer, such as Hip-ster Peanut with Banana. Inspired by Elvis Presley's love of humble foods, the brew contains peanut butter and bananas.

Another beer is Dark Addiction, flavored with cocoa nibs from Ghana. Among the scores of beers brewed since 2015 are Tropic Like It's Hot, a beer comprised of passion fruit, mango and pineap-

ple – not to mention malt and hops, the foundation ingredients of most beers.

There has been and will be a constant experimentation with new-fangled craft beers at Bad

Habit. That's one of the attractions of the business – trying something new and always with a whimsical sense of humor.

In the new Bad Habit, there will be a stage for

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# Police will soon have new tool to catch red-light runners

by Stephanie Dickrell  
news@thenewsleaders.com

Local law enforcement will soon have some help cracking down on drivers who run red lights.

Stearns County received federal funding to install traffic confirmation lights on several county-owned traffic signals, including some in St. Joseph, said Randy Sabart, the city's engineer.

A light is installed on the back of a traffic signal. It turns blue when the light is red. A law enforcement officer watching nearby will be better able to

tell who is running a red light.

It makes it safer to enforce red-light runners, said St. Joseph Police Chief Dwight Pfannenstien. Officers can position their patrol cars on the back side of the traffic signal. It makes it easier and safer for the officer to pursue and pull over someone who has run a red light.

"The whole point ... is to avoid additional traffic hazards," he said.

Drivers won't be able to see the lights from their point at the intersection, he said.

Previously, he said, officers needed to see the red light, and likely would have to cross an

intersection to pursue offenders.

Stearns County is installing the devices on signals on CR 75 and Hwy. 15.

Pfannenstien worked with county officials to decide which signals in St. Joseph should get the new lights. They include intersections at county roads 2, 133 and 134.

The lights are being installed with no cost to the city of St. Joseph, however, the police department would have to allocate officers' time to enforcement, by positioning their patrol cars in view of the lights, Pfannenstien said.

# Knights of Columbus council selects Stangs as Family of Year

The Father Werner Council of the Knights of Columbus have chosen Jeff Stang and his children Noah and Noel as the Family of the Year.

Stang has been a member of the Father Werner Council for four years and a member of the Knights of Columbus for 37 years.

According to the announcement of their selection, "Jeff and his children have worked tirelessly in the church and helping out where they were needed without reservation. They all work at the Fourth of July celebration working with energy and vigor wherever they are needed. Jeff serves the church as a lector and usher and his children are both Mass servers.



contributed photo

Jeff Stang and his children Noah and Noel.

In the community, Stang volunteers at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System helping veterans in wheelchairs get to Sunday Mass.

In the council Jeff has been deputy grand knight and this June he will have served as grand knight for two years.

Then he will move to a trustee position where he will serve for six years. Stang and his children are regular crew members at several of the burger sales that the council conducts each year. They serve others at the Knights of Columbus monthly breakfasts.

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# John Stang named Knight of the Year

A 34-year-member of the Knights of Columbus, John Stang, has been selected Knight of the Year for the Father Werner Council.

According to the announcement of his honor, “he has been the deputy grand knight, the grand knight and a trustee. He tries to make the council better and more appealing to more men of the parish. He works at the monthly breakfasts and burger and brat sales as much as he can always with a positive and cheerful demeanor.”

Stang is a Eucharistic minister, is active in Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life and the Treasure Chest. He picketed in front of Planned Parenthood.

In the community, Stang helps disabled veterans attend Mass.

Stang attended a Catholic



contributed photo

**Susan and John Stang.**

grade school, Crosier Seminary Preparatory School and Junior College. He earned a master’s degree and works as a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the state of Minnesota.

Stang and his wife Susan have a son, Zachery.

## News for Refugees

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

*Announcements brought to you by Cultural Bridges of St. Joseph, a committee of Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization.*

Our English volunteer teachers are key to opening up opportunities to those with little English skills in the St. Cloud area.

On May 13, the St. Cloud school district recognized the contributions of one of our teachers in St. Joseph. Jennifer Oswald, who has been volunteering her time since the Somalis first came to this area, was

recognized as a volunteer with the school district.

During this last school year, Oswald has had to schedule and prepare classes never knowing how many students might show up or if the class would be canceled because of snow. She filled in when other teachers couldn’t make a class and taught all levels from 1 to 5.

Because of Ramadan and the timing of our evening classes, these classes have been discontinued for the school year so mothers can be home tending to their families.

Please share this message with other refugees and immigrants you know who live in St. Joseph.

If you have any questions, please contact Dianne DeVargas or Khadija Salah at 320-345-0593. Please share this message with other refugees and immigrants you know who live in St. Joseph.



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At the heart of it, we remain committed to the community where we live, work, raise our families, worship, volunteer at schools and on the sidelines, support the arts, and patronize local independent businesses. We recognize that you have a choice when it comes to your musculoskeletal healthcare and we will continue to work hard to be your provider of choice. You have counted on us for the last 64 years, and while other orthopedic surgeons may come and go, we will continue to be there for you in the future. **St. Cloud Orthopedics is here to stay.**

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Opinion

Our View

As session deadline nears, budget deal pushes aside policy goals

The end is near.

Legislators are heading toward a deadline of midnight Monday, May 20, to finish their work.

Despite the best intentions at the start of the session to look for early compromises and stick to a deadline to wrap up committee work, the big decisions will happen at the last minute.

Last year, the Republican-controlled Legislature and DFL Gov. Mark Dayton deadlocked over key issues – an outcome that left voters dissatisfied.

This year, the picture is a little more complicated with Democrats controlling the governor’s office and House and Republicans holding a slim majority in the Senate.

Both parties will need to compromise on the state budget or a special session will be needed by June 30 to avoid a shutdown. Gov. Walz and legislative leadership failed to meet their self-imposed May 6 deadline to agree to budget targets.

Walz originally proposed new spending of \$1.9 billion and asked for a 20-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax increase and restoration of the medical provider tax. Earlier this week, Walz offered to cut the gas tax increase to 16 cents.

The Republicans want only \$322 million of new spending, no provider tax and no 20-cent gas tax increase. With a \$1 billion surplus, they say there is no need for higher taxes.

As of Monday, the last time leaders made detailed comments, the two sides were \$1.6 billion apart, according to The Associated Press.

As budget negotiations continue, key policy decisions could become bargaining chips as each party’s policy priorities take a back seat to taxes and spending.

Key issues still in play in addition to the gas tax and the medical provider tax include opioid treatment and election security.

As a House-Senate conference committee works out differences in a gun safety bill, universal background checks and red flag provisions the House approved could still become law as a part of a deal....or not.

A bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks could also be a bargaining chip, but it is strongly opposed by Walz and House Democrats.

Both houses have agreed on expanding the Clean Indoor Act to cover e-cigarettes but a conference committee has yet to decide on raising the age for buying tobacco to 21.

Ending the legislative session without a deadlock and the frustration of last year will require both parties to do more than just say No.

Senate Republicans so far have blocked Walz’s agenda. He should not and will not surrender on every issue.

Republicans need to acknowledge the political reality that Walz clobbered their candidate, Jeff Johnson, who ran on lower taxes and less government. Walz won by campaigning for more spending on roads and schools, gun safety and climate change.

House Republicans lost their majority to the Democrats, who now hold a 16-seat majority, with a platform similar to Johnson’s.

During the election, voters said they wanted results, not deadlock and inaction. Legislators and the governor have until Monday to prove they can deliver.

Passion for sports led women’s quest for equality

The short history of equality for female athletes was showcased recently at Stearns History Museum’s History Maker Gala.

The event honored local women who pioneered equality and athletic opportunity for girls and women.

For today’s female high school and college athletes, it must be hard to imagine a world where their “athletic” opportunities were limited intramural teams, powder-puff football and cheerleading while the boys played other schools in well-equipped gyms and fields.

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 established the legal foundation for equal opportunity but brave action on the court and in the courtroom led to the opportunities that girls and women have today.

At the event, Stearns History honored Peggy Brenden with the Zapp Historian Award. Peggy is a retired judge now, but in 1972 she was a classmate of mine at Tech High School and an extremely talented tennis player. She wanted to play and because there was not a girls’ team, she sued to be allowed to compete on the boys’ team.

As a high school journalist, I wrote about her lawsuit brought by the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union. She won in court and later, on the courts, Peggy joined the team that won second place in the state tournament.

Another high school sports pioneer, Kelly Skalicky of Albany, introduced the night’s main speaker, Lindsay Whalen. I photographed Skalicky, now CEO of Stearns Bank, dozens of times as she led the Albany Huskies to state basketball tournament appearances in 1978, ’79, ’80 and

Mike Knaak

Editor



’81. The 1980 team captured the state championship and Skalicky ended her six-year prep career with 2,704 points.

Whalen is known to Minnesota sports fans for her playing days at the University of Minnesota, on the Olympic team and a 14-year professional career with the Minnesota Lynx. She just completed her first year coaching the Gophers women’s basketball team.

In addition to those honored at the event, other local women who led early advances for female athletics joined the audience.

Carol Howe-Veenstra coached volleyball and served as athletic director at the College of St. Benedict for 30 years. I first met Howe-Veenstra while photographing her successful volleyball teams at Tech in the late 1970s.

As the evening began, my spouse and I found a table in a far corner of the Gorecki Center banquet hall. We did not realize we were sharing a table with two women who also made history.

We joined Carol Agnes and Nancy Bellmont for dinner. Agnes was St. Ben’s first basketball coach when the college’s first team played other colleges in the 1973-74 school year. Agnes also coached volleyball and later became the college’s first athletic director. Bellmont played on that first basketball team.

Mueller Report deserves proper resolution

In April, after almost two years of investigation, Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s report into Russian interference in the 2016 election was released. After the release, further argument has been underway between Republicans and Democrats about whether President Donald Trump was vindicated or implicated by the conclusions, respectively. Wherever the country goes from here, any actions based on the report should be undertaken in a clear decisive manner, so as to finally resolve this issue for the good of the nation.

So what did Mueller’s report entail exactly? In 2017, after increasing reports of Russian involvement in our 2016 elections, former FBI director Robert Mueller was appointed as special counsel by the Justice Department and given a mandate to look into it. Upon the public release of the report, we saw it was split into two main volumes: Russian actions in the election and any links the Trump campaign had with Russians during that time period, and whether Trump committed any obstruction of justice offenses aimed at the investigation.

In the first volume, Mueller reports contacts between multiple Russian individuals and members of Trump’s campaign. However, the report states based on the evidence they have, they could not come to the conclusion the Trump campaign “coordinated or conspired with the Russian government in its election-interference activities.” The second volume discusses several instances where Trump took part in or ordered actions that the special counsel considered as obstructing the investigation. Mueller declined to make a decision on whether these actions could be prosecuted.

This is where the report gets interesting, as the declining to make a recommendation on obstruction of justice charges leaves the issue open to other action from Congress. A reason Mueller may have made the decision not to charge Trump on obstruction of justice is that it is Justice Department policy that a sitting

Connor Kockler

Guest Writer



president should not be indicted. While I do not agree with this, the president should be as accountable to the law as any other citizen, I can see the argument that an indictment would irreparably hurt the president’s authority to govern.

In that sense, Mueller has given Congress and the American people a choice, whether the evidence he has laid out against Trump on obstruction of justice is enough to warrant further investigation, or as some might call for, impeachment proceedings. Whatever Congress chooses to do, it should be done in a public and transparent manner, and work to quickly come to an appropriate conclusion.

If members of Congress choose not to pursue the issue, they should make a proper statement to that effect, and not leave the issue hanging ambiguously. President Trump, like any citizen, is innocent until proven guilty under the law, and if no legal or impeachment proceedings are brought against him because of this, he deserves to have his reputation protected just like other Americans accused of crimes and never charged.

If Congress chooses to investigate, members should make clear what exactly they are looking for and state their beliefs of what should or should not warrant further action like impeachment. When and if Mueller testifies under oath, he should also be asked if the only reason he declined to recommend charges against Trump was the Justice Department’s policy of not indicting a sitting president. That way, the public will know if these actions would have been prosecuted if Trump was a regular citizen, or if there were other factors at play.

Agnes was an early advocate for equal opportunity. She remembers walking out of a summer-school program at the age of 5 when she learned only boys could participate in the birdhouse building activity. Her passion for equal opportunity was honed in the Girls Scouts and at the College (now University) of St. Catherine.

St. Ben’s hired Agnes to be recreation coordinator and teach physical education.

When she started the first basketball team, the players had to navigate pillars and dribbled on a tile floor that covered concrete.

Bellmont played on that first team in her senior year. She grew up in Waterloo, Iowa, and her high school did not offer organized girls’ teams. At the time, many small-town Iowa high schools fielded girls’ basketball teams. Bellmont unsuccessfully lobbied her parents to let her live with her cousins in a town with a team.

“I’m still passionate about being active and being in sports,” she said. “Basketball is the best game in town. My heart belongs to basketball.”

This past Christmas, her husband gave her a basketball...the first basketball she’s owned.

“I started to cry,” she said. Now after a hard workout at the YMCA, she rewards herself by shooting baskets.

Our two daughters, who started playing on grade-school teams, then travel and high school varsity teams, enjoyed the opportunities these women fought for.

“I knew I had a passion,” Agnes said. “I never knew I would be a pivotal player. I was like the first stage of a rocket. I liked to get things off the ground.”

After two years of investigation, the American people deserve a proper resolution to the issue of Russian interference and collusion. Following the facts, Congress should decide promptly and decisively what to do next and communicate it clearly to the public. After so much ambiguous debate over this issue, it’s vital it’s handled in such a way that the facts come out and a definite conclusion is reached. That way this issue is dealt with once and for all, either Trump is vindicated, or charged and removed. America can then move on to dealing with the other issues we face.

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

**Volunteer with Cultural Bridges**

*Juliana Howard, St. Joseph*

My husband and I moved to St. Jo(seph) in August and live at Serenity Place on Seventh, a wonderful assisted-living facility close to Klinefelter Park. I am so pleased to be part of this vibrant community with so much to offer – all within driving distance!

I have been volunteering with the ESL/ELL classes at the Spirituality Center and have found it’s a great way to meet new people and greet our immigrant and refugee population. The program is part of the St. Cloud school district but the teachers are all volunteer. It’s under the umbrella of Cultural Bridges, a local organization which supports other programs to reach out to our new neighbors. I recently attended one of their meetings and came away so grateful for the opportunity to be a small part of this citywide effort.

There are many ways one can volunteer with Cultural Bridges. You may want to be a part of this welcoming effort too. Call Dianne DeVarges at 320-345-0593 for more information.

# Teacher

from front page

potential and connect with professionals of color.

In a letter of recommendation for Davis, a colleague,

Luke V. Olson wrote: “One measure a person can use when judging another is, would you trust your own children with this person? When my son was studying to become a teacher, he needed a mentor teacher, and asked me for advice....

I suggested Jess, because she exemplifies everything I hope my son would become as a teacher.”

Davis is the 55th recipient of the prestigious award, and the first from the South St. Paul district.

An independent selec-

tion committee representing Minnesota leaders in education, business and government chooses the Minnesota Teacher of the Year from individuals who are nominated and who then choose to become a candidate.

Education Minnesota, the

86,000-member statewide educators union, organizes and underwrites the Teacher of the Year program. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers and Adult Basic Education teachers from public or private schools.

## Community Calendar

*Is your event listed?*  
Send your information to: Newsleader Calendar, 1622 11th Ave. SE., St. Cloud, MN 56304., e-mail it to news@the-newsleaders.com. Most events are listed at no cost. Those events are typically free or of minimal charge for people to attend. Some events, which have paid advertising in the Newsleaders, are also listed in the calendar and may charge more.

**Friday, May 17**  
**Pillow cleaning and perennial plant sale,** 7 a.m.-3 p.m., sponsored by St. Joseph Y2K Lions , St. Joseph Fire Hall, 320-363-8825.

**Bruger and Brat Sale,** sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., St. Joseph Meat Market.

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

“**Frozen Jr.,**” 7 p.m., a St. Joseph Catholic School/ All Saints Academy production, 1215 11th Ave. N., St. Cloud.

**Saturday, May 18**  
**St. Joseph Appliance/ Electronics Collection,** 8 a.m.-noon, Government Center, enter off College Avenue S. onto Baker Street E.  
**Old Glory Run,** 9 a.m., St. Joseph Community Center, 124 First Ave. NE.

**Bruger and Brat Sale,** sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., St. Joseph Meat Market.

“**Frozen Jr.,**” 7 p.m., a St. Joseph Catholic School/ All Saints Academy production, 1215 11th Ave. N., St. Cloud.

**Monday, May 20**  
**St. Cloud school district Community Linkages Committee,** 8 a.m., District Administration Office, 1201 Second St. S., Waite Park.

**St. Joseph Food Shelf,** open 1-3 p.m., 124 First Ave. SE, St. Joseph.

**St. Cloud Area Parkinson’s Disease Support Group,** 1-2:30 p.m., Independent Lifestyles, 215 Benton Drive N., Sauk Rapids.

**St. Joseph City Council,** 6 p.m., Government Center,

75 Callaway St. E.  
**St. Joseph Rod and Gun Club,** 7 p.m., American Legion, 101 W Minnesota St., St. Joseph.

**Tuesday, May 21**  
**Memory Writers** group develops topics and turns in stories. 10 a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S, St Cloud.

**St. Joseph Economic Development Authority,** 6 p.m., Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E.

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

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

**Thursday, May 23**  
**St. Joseph Food Shelf,** open 1-3 p.m., 124 First Ave. SE, St. Joseph.

**Friday, May 24**  
**Brat sale,** 9 a.m.-5 p.m., sponsored by Y2K Lions, St. Joseph Meat Market. Pro-

ceeds donated to St. Joseph flower baskets.

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

**Saturday, May 25**  
**Brat sale,** 9 a.m.-4 p.m., sponsored by Y2K Lions, St. Joseph Meat Market. Proceeds donated to St. Joseph flower baskets.

**Sunday, May 26**  
**Joe Town Table,** 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., American Legion, 101 W. Minnesota St., St. Joseph. Every fourth Sunday of the month. centralmncw@gmail.com.

**Monday, May 27**  
**St. Joseph City Council Workshop,** 6 p.m., St. Joseph Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E.

**Tuesday, May 28**  
**National Alliance on Mental Health,** 7-8:30 p.m., Calvary Community Church, 1200 Roosevelt Road, St. Cloud. The group

helps parents raising a child with mental illness learn coping skills and develop problem-solving skills. 320-654-1259.

**Collegeville Township Board,** 7 p.m., Town Hall, 27724 CR 50.

**Thursday, May 30**  
**St. Joseph Food Shelf,** open 1-3 p.m., 124 First Ave. SE, St. Joseph.

**Friday, May 31**  
**Brat sale,** 9 a.m.-5 p.m., sponsored by Y2K Lions, St. Joseph Meat Market. Proceeds donated to Project New Hope.

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

**Saturday, June 1**  
**Collegeville Township Cleanup Day,** 7-11 a.m.

**Brat sale,** 9 a.m.-4 p.m., sponsored by Y2K Lions, St. Joseph Meat Market. Proceeds donated to Project New Hope.

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**Targeted opening date is the end of May**

United Development Solutions would like to thank our valued sub-contractors to the project:

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Bryant Schreifels  
Sauk Rapids  
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ESI (Electrical Solutions Inc)  
Paul Nemeth  
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