

Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, May 17, 2019
Volume 24, Issue 10
Est. 1995

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.

Pinecone, 7th St N closure on Saturday, May 25

Pinecone Road from 2-½ Street N. to 40th Street N. and Seventh Street N. from Riverside Avenue to Pinecone Road will be completely closed to traffic from 8-11 a.m. Saturday, May 25 for the 37th annual Sartell Apple Duathlon. The duathlon is a local, nonprofit race whose proceeds are returned to the community through donations to local service agencies. Teams and individuals are welcome to register to participate. For more information, visit appleduathlon.org. Come out and cheer on the racers!

Bike to School event rescheduled

The Bike to School event that was canceled because of bad weather has been rescheduled for 2:30-5 p.m. Thursday, May 30, at Lions Park. The purpose of the event is to check bicycles for safety and for children (and people of all ages) to have some recreation and social fun. Children should bring their own bicycles for free tune-ups, a free bicycle obstacle course and bike rodeo. There will also be free food, including hot dogs, snacks and beverages. A bike giveaway drawing will give one girl's bike and one boy's bike to the lucky winners. At the event will be a firetruck, a police car and Metrobus vehicles. About a dozen sponsors – local businesses and organizations – contributed to make the event possible.



photo by Mike Knaak

Birthday surprises, well wishes

Mary Lou Westra opens one of her presents, a gold whistle. See story on page 7.

Sartell's loss to be Tennessee's gain

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com



Archambeau

After five years of long-distance dating and then two years of a long-distance marriage, now is the time for Matt and Anita Archambeau to be together – at home in Tennessee.

For nearly 20 years, Anita has been the Sartell City planner/developer and assistant administrator, and she presided over the city's phenomenal growing pains during that time. She had become such a familiar face and so much a part of Sartell developments that many were

stunned when she announced recently she would move to Tennessee.

In an interview with the Newsleader, Archambeau offered details of what led to her decision to leave her Sartell job.

In 2012, Matt and Anita began dating. He was at that time the manager of the Sartell

Verso Paper Mill, but he split his time between Sartell and his Tennessee home because his two children continued to live there. When there was an explosion at the Sartell mill, which caused the death of one worker, it was decided to close the mill for good after its more than 100 years as an economic bedrock for Sartell. After the decision to shut down the mill, Matt, still a Verso employee, assumed mill management positions in both Maine and Michigan. Matt and Anita spent many, many hours flying or other forms of transportation to

see each other. In October 2016, they were married during a trip to Kauai, Hawaii.

"A move to Tennessee allows us to reduce his travel time and allows more family time with his children," Anita said.

Their home is now Matt's original family home in Collierville, Tennessee, which is a suburb of Memphis. Matt has two children – Maddie, 17, a junior at Huston High School in Tennessee; and Nathan, 14, a freshman at that same school.

Anita has two children – Madeline Rasmussen, 20, a ju-

Loss • page 6

Husband, wife veterans gung-ho about Memorial Day

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Married military veterans Chuck and Kitty Haselkamp of Sartell have long been gung-ho about Memorial Day ceremonies, and they wish more people would attend them.

As it has for many years, this year's Memorial Day service in Sartell will take place at Veterans Park on the west bank high above the Mississippi River. The ceremony, which begins at 9 a.m. Monday, May 27, will

feature speakers, live patriotic music, a color guard, laying of a wreath and a gun salute.

Chuck Haselkamp, who is the commander of the American Legion of Sartell, will give a welcoming speech.

"For me," Chuck said, "Memorial Day is a lot about the guys in World War II, and that's because I've known a lot of them. And it's about soldiers in all the other wars, too, of course. They all gave something, and a lot of folks nowadays don't realize all the sac-

rifices they gave. People have a right to protest, but they should remember where that right came from, from the ones who fought to keep our freedoms, including the right to protest. All people should attend Memorial Day ceremonies to remember what many sacrificed for this country."

Kitty agreed.

"It's important as a nation to remember all those who sacrificed their life for our freedom," she said. "And we shouldn't forget the ones back home, the

families who also sacrificed. Many lost their loved ones in wars, and some don't even know what happened to them and so there is no closure for them. The loved ones are lost at war, never found. My father Alphonse – we call him Al – was stationed on the U.S.S. Arizona in the Pacific. Fortunately, he was not on that ship when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and sank the ship and others."

That attack is what led to America's entry into World War

Veterans • page 2

Veterans

from front page

II.

Chuck and Kitty met while both were in the U.S. Navy, stationed at Miramar Naval Station in San Diego. Chuck was a member of the Navy from 1978 until 1998; Kitty joined in 1979 for a four-year service.

Chuck was an aviation structural hydraulic mechanic; Kitty was a yeoman who worked in administration and did paper-work for enlisted officers.

After his retirement from the Navy in 1998, Chuck has worked as a mail carrier for a rural St. Cloud route. Kitty now works at Fulfillment Distribution Center in St. Cloud as a processor and coordinator.

The couple has two grown sons, Bill and Tim; and one granddaughter, Jovie, 5, who is Bill's daughter.

"Back in 1980, at the Miramar station, I had a white 1968 Camaro," Chuck said. "I used to give a ride to and from work to a woman."

One day the woman's roommate asked her, "Who's driving that cool white Camaro?"

Her roommate said, "Oh, him? That's just Haselkamp."

It sounded to Chuck as if the roommate named Kitty, keen on his car, might also have a yen for him. So he summoned the courage to ask her for a movie date. Thrilled, she canceled a date with a Marine to go to the movie, "Final Countdown."

After two years of dating, the



contributed photo

Chuck and Kitty Haselkamp on the day they were married in Florida by a justice of the peace.

couple was married by a justice of the peace in Florida (at Kitty's brother's house) in 1982. Then almost exactly one year later, they were remarried at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Sartell.

Chuck was born and grew up in St. Cloud. Kitty was born in Belleville, Illinois, but was raised in Margate, Florida.

Chuck spent many of his last naval years stationed in Hawaii. As his retirement approached, he told Kitty he'd like to move back to the St. Cloud area because he missed the snow. Kitty wondered, missing snow?! She remembers doing a double-take, wondering if

he was kidding or had temporarily lost his mind.

But move they did – to Sartell, back to the snow.

Long a member of the American Legion of Sartell, Chuck was named its commander last year. Kitty is also a member of the Legion and will carry a flag in the honor guard, as she did last year.

— Correction —

The cost of an individual monthly membership at Sartell Family Medicine was listed incorrectly in a story published May 3. The monthly fee is \$80.

Bye-bye wading pool, hello splash pad

by Dennis Dalman

news@thenewsleaders.com

It's bye-bye wading pool, hello splash pad.

At its May 13 meeting, the Sartell City Council decided on plans for a variety of Watab Park improvements, among them a splash pad instead of the wading pool, which will be removed after so many summers of happy use. Instead, a splash pad will be created at the site in the park.

The original plans for at least two years had been to renovate the wading pool, but a study revealed the renovation cost of the aging pool would be more than twice the original estimate or a total of \$410,000 for a new pool with add-on features. At a previous meeting, the council decided that amount was prohibitively expensive.

At the May 13 council meeting, two presenters updated the Watab Park improvements, which include a new playground, restroom facilities, the

splash pad and resurfacing of the tennis courts. One court will be repurposed into a pickle ball court, one remaining a tennis court and the third for half-court basketball.

The total cost of all the amenities is \$427,000, with about \$140,000 of that coming from a grant from the Department of Natural Resources.

Nate Keller of Sartell's planning department revealed the winning design for the splash pad, based on the results of input from 1,200 Sartell residents. Residents will also be able to vote on which play features they would like on the splash pad – perhaps as many as 16 play features. One feature that is definitely part of the winning design is a zip line.

Nick Nowacki, a pool consultant with Reengineered Inc. also presented information to the council regarding the splash pad. The pad will cost about \$100,000, and construction could begin as early as this coming fall.



contributed design

This is an artist's conception for a splash pad that is the winning choice for Watab Park in Sartell. The majority of 1,200 respondents in an input survey preferred this particular configuration that will include a zip line and up to as many as 16 play features, to be determined with public input.

Descendent's of Martin (Margaretha) Fiedler and Balthasar (Catherine Schmitz) Fiedler

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ADOPT A PET



Who could resist this smile? Not us, and hopefully not you! Pixie is a 2-year-old German Shepherd mix who is looking for her next adventure. She's a Southern gal, coming all the way from sunny Texas to a some-times snowy Minnesota. Pixie shouldn't go to a home with cats due to her prey drive. She seems fussy with some of the dogs she's met at the shelter, but was fine with dogs in the past (a meet-and-greet with any resident dogs would be recommended). Pixie's done well with children, but slow and proper introductions are always recommended. Pixie could use a lot of exercise to help her burn off some energy. For walks, it helps to use an Emily Weiss Walkie which you can find in our Re-Tail Shoppe.



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Schreiner named new deputy police chief

by Dennis Dalman
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The Sartell Police Department now has a new deputy chief, longtime patrol officer Wayne Schreiner.

The deputy chief position is second in command after Police Chief Jim Hughes.

At the May 13 City Council meeting, Hughes introduced Schreiner and current Deputy Chief Dale Struffert, who is going to retire at the end of May. At that time, Schreiner will assume deputy chief duties.

Schreiner has been with the police department for 20 years.

Hughes praised Struffert for his 29 years of service to the police department and to the residents of Sartell. He has been in law enforcement for 34 years, five of them in southeastern Minnesota.

When Struffert joined the Sartell department 29 years ago, there were five police officers compared with the current 21, Hughes noted.

Struffert, Hughes said, was very instrumental in developing the efficiency and safety of the force, including the vital task of installing new equipment into each police vehicle throughout the years. He was “very frugal” in doing so, al-



contributed photo

Sartell Deputy Chief Dale Struffert (right), soon to retire, pins a badge on new Deputy Chief Wayne Schreiner at the May 13 City Council meeting.

ways seeking the best bargains on equipment or donations, thus saving the city thousands of dollars.

Struffert also started the city’s first canine program and served as training officer for the field-training program.

In the mid-1990s, Struffert was promoted to the rank of sergeant. He was named deputy chief in 2004.



contributed photo

Sartell officer Wayne Schreiner, Sartell's new deputy chief, stands beside soon-to-retire Deputy Chief Dale Struffert.

**Kelly Anne Orndorff, 25
Sartell
June 23, 1993-May 10, 2019**

Kelly A. Orndorff died peacefully surrounded by her family on Friday, May 10 at her home in Sartell.

Her funeral will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, May 18 at Celebration Lutheran Church, 1500 Pinecone Road N. in Sartell. The Revs. Elizabeth Streng and Jeff Sackett will officiate, and burial will follow the service. Visitation will be held from 4-8 p.m. Friday, May 17 and one hour prior to the service on Saturday, all at the church. Arrangements have been entrusted to Williams Dingmann Family Funeral Home, Sauk Rapids.

Orndorff was born June 23, 1993 in St. Cloud to Paul and Jane (Thornburg) Orndorff. Growing up in Sartell, Orndorff had a wonderful fun-filled life as a youth and young adult. She spent her entire life in Sartell, graduating high school in 2011. Her greatest joy was being a friend to everyone she met and being with her family and closest friends. She was very social and left an impression of love and sincerity to all. In high school she was well liked and respected, as witnessed to being selected Homecoming Queen, a co-captain of the girl’s swim team and co-managing the boys swim team. She loved participating in choir and serving as a mentor to underclassmen.



Orndorff

Orndorff’s family meant the world to her. She looked up to big brothers, Nick and Brent, and enjoyed much humor with them. She relished time with sister, Andrea, as the two shared countless fun hours with each other. As years have passed, she adored sister-in-law Jenni and brother-in-law Jeff and her little nieces and nephew.

Orndorff’s love for God was strong. She was a member of Celebration Lutheran Church her entire life being baptized in July 1993. She participated in many church activities, youth camps and mission trips across the country. She most recently was a youth teacher, a volunteer and a present member of the church council. Our Lord Jesus Christ was her guiding light and his word was her guiding principal. Her faith-filled spirit was felt by everyone she touched.

In May 2015, Orndorff graduated from the University of Minnesota-Duluth with a degree in public health, education and promotion; a degree that would have fulfilled her desire to assist others to be their best. A highlight of her college years was during the summer of 2013 when Kelly along with her brother Brent, were youth counselors for the YMCA of The Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado, allowing her to guide and mentor youth of all ages. One of her most memorable accomplishments outside of gaining her college degree was climbing Long’s Peak, a very difficult 14,000-foot peak.

Just days after graduating UMD in 2015, she was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor. After numerous surgeries and treatments through the Mayo clinic, she lived cancer-free for more than two years. After Orndorff’s diagnosis and subsequent loss of vision, she was motivated to return to

Duluth in 2018 and attend school at the Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss where she learned Braille, technology and to live independently. She enjoyed her time in Duluth where she met her boyfriend Grant. He was a very special person to her and they enjoyed many walks and hammock time together.

In the last several years, Orndorff had many wonderful trips and experiences. She spent much quality time with her siblings, and with her parents she followed Christian singer Chris Tomlin around the country attending numerous concerts of his.

She loved spending time at the lake home and spent countless hours in the water. She also enjoyed many hours of family time with her sister, brothers and many relatives sitting on the deck.

Orndorff’s loving spirit, positivity, courage, compassion for others, zest for life and glorious faith will be missed by all. She is truly at home now with God.

Survivors include the following: her parents; siblings, Nick (Jenni) Orndorff of Camas, Washington, Andrea (Jeff) Maday of St. Paul, and Brent Orndorff of Elk River; nieces and nephew, Sonja and Corinne Orndorff and Leo and Maya Maday; grandfather, Harvey Orndorff; special friend Grant Lichtsinn; and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Orndorff was preceded in death by her grandparents, Frances Orndorff and Kenneth and Viola Thornburg; and aunt, Claudia Orndorff.

In lieu of plants and flowers, memorials are preferred. The family would prefer to make donations to numerous organizations in memory of Kelly.

Obituary, guestbook and video tribute available online: www.williamsdingmann.com.

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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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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 Fransisco).....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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May 1
4:50 p.m. Trespass. Sundance Road. A citizen reported an individual whom they thought was trespassing on a property. Officers met with the individual and discovered the individual had a warrant for his arrest. The individual was taken into custody and transported to Stearns County Jail.

May 2
8 p.m. Traffic stop. Riverside Avenue S. An officer witnessed a vehicle traveling above the speed limit. The officer stopped the vehicle and the driver of the vehicle could not provide proof of insurance. The officer issued a verbal warning for both infractions.

May 3
8:20 a.m. Traffic stop. 19th Avenue N. An officer witnessed a vehicle traveling above the posted speed limit. The officer stopped the vehicle and the driver did not have their

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Saturday, June 8 • 8 a.m.-noon

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driver's license in possession. The officer issued a citation for the speed and gave a verbal warning for not having the license in possession.

May 4
10:55 p.m. Noise. Brookwood Lane. Officers were dispatched to a residence involving individuals playing music and being loud. Officers asked the individuals to turn down the music and gave a verbal warning about being loud so late at night.

May 5
2 a.m. Loud party. Cypress Circle. Officers were dispatched to a loud party that had minors consuming alcohol. Officers arrived and were allowed entry. Underage individuals were issued citations for minor consumption.

May 6
7:40 a.m. DWI. Heritage Drive. An officer in an unmarked vehicle witnessed a vehicle all over the road. The officer waited until a marked unit arrived and then a stop was conducted. The driver of the vehicle was arrested for DWI and transported to Stearns County Jail.

May 7
1:15 a.m. Stalled vehicle. Hwy. 15. An officer saw a vehicle stalled on the highway. The officer called for a tow at the request of the driver and stayed on scene with lights for safety until the tow arrived.

May 8
7:45 p.m. Collision. Fifth Avenue N. After a vehicle struck a power pole, an officer kept the area safe until utility workers arrived and made repairs.

May 9
11:40 p.m. Intoxicated person. Second Street S. Officers were dispatched to an overly intoxicated person who was becoming aggressive with other people. Officers called for an ambulance. The individual became disruptive while being treated

by ambulance personnel. The individual was taken to the hospital for treatment.

May 10
10:45 p.m. Domestic. Lowell Lane. Officers were dispatched to a verbal domestic that was occurring at a residence. One of the individuals appeared to have injuries and that individual told police they had been punched by their roommate. The officers took the roommate into custody for the assault and transported him to Stearns County Jail.

May 11
6:30 p.m. Assist. River Oaks Lane. Officers assisted Stearns County Sheriff's Office serving an arrest warrant at a residence. The individual with the warrant was at the residence and was taken into custody without incident.

May 12
9:15 p.m. Verbal. Ninth Avenue N. Officers were dispatched to an argument occurring out in front of a residence. Upon arrival the officers spoke with one person. Both parties denied they had been arguing and nothing physical had occurred.

May 13
6:30 a.m. Traffic stop. First Avenue NE. An officer witnessed a vehicle travelling at a higher speed than the posted speed limit. The officer conducted a stop and the driver did not have a license in their possession. The officer issued a citation for the speed and a verbal warning for not having a license in possession.

May 14
9:30 a.m. Suspicious vehicle. Michaels Court. Officers were dispatched to a suspicious vehicle driving through a neighborhood taking pictures of houses. Officers arrived in the neighborhood and could not locate the vehicle. Officers talked with the caller and advised them to call if the vehicle returned.

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Did you now that the cost of spaying or neutering a pet is less than the cost of raising puppies or kittens for a year? The decision to go through with this procedure for your beloved pet is a smart one.

Spaying and neutering pets is the only permanent, fully effective method of birth control for dogs and cats. Research has shown that having your pet spayed or neutered can have many positive effects, including a reduction in the number of homeless pets killed, an improvement in bad behavior and an overall boost to your pet's health. 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

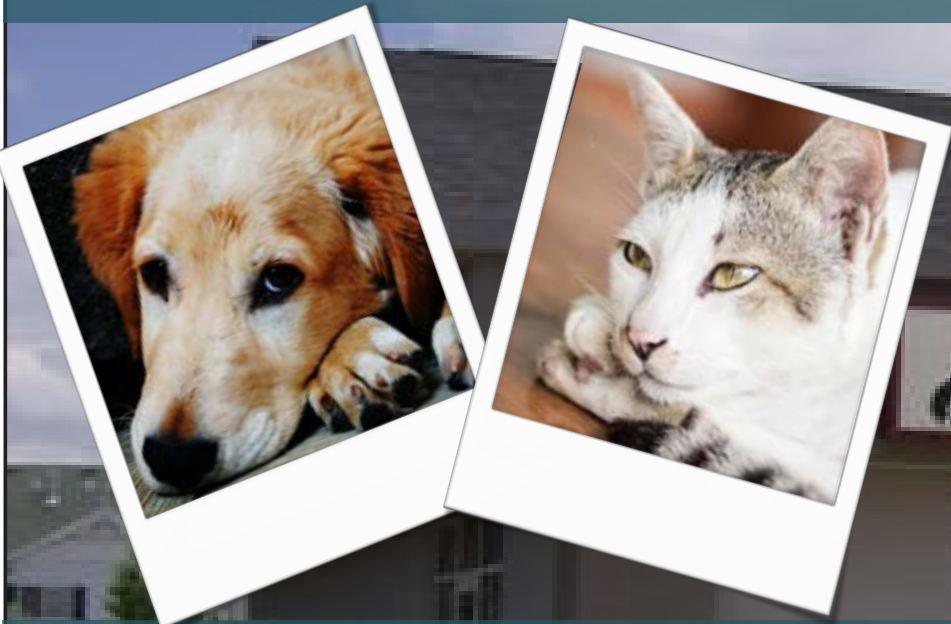
Choosing to spay or neuter your pets can decrease their urge to roam, which reduces their chance of fighting with other animals, getting struck by cars and getting into other dangerous situations. According to the ASPCA, un-spayed female cats and dogs have a far greater chance of developing fatal uterine 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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Loss

from front page

Departing city planner looks back, forward to future success

nior at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she is majoring in journalism/strategic communications with a fine-arts minor; and Emma Rasmussen, 18, a senior at Sartell High School, who will soon attend the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Anita and her children also have two beloved Beagles – Putter and Tipper.

Last year, Anita earned a doctorate in public administration from Hamline University, and since then she has served as an adjunct professor for graduate level administration courses at a couple of universities. She said she will continue her teaching work in Tennessee and will also continue to explore other opportunities in local government.

Born in New Ulm and a graduate of St. Cloud State University, Archambeau earned a master's degree at Minnesota State University Mankato; and then – just last year – her Hamline University doctorate.

During her two decades in Sartell, she was instrumental in all forms of development – industrial, business, residential – as well as helping the city develop its parks, recreational facilities and other amenities. Three stand-out achievements she helped facilitate are the Town Square area of south Sartell, the thriving medical campus and the Epic Center mall.

Statewide, Archambeau made a mark too. In 2013, Gov. Mark Dayton appointed

her to serve as an at-large member of the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission.

“Anita’s leadership has been instrumental to the healthy growth of Sartell from a bedroom community to one with a strong business balance,” said Sartell Mayor Ryan Fitzthum in a statement after he’d learned of her plans to leave. “She will be sorely missed in Sartell.”

Sartell’s city administrator, Mary Degiovanni, expressed the thoughts and feelings of many at Sartell City Hall when she sent the following words to the Newsleader:

“We are sad but happy for Anita personally in her new life in Tennessee. Anita’s importance to the city is she has not just been professionally talented, effective and efficient but that she really loves Sartell. She knows the schools, the families, the businesses, the community. She lives and breathes it. So everything she did reflected that care in both her personal and professional commitment.”

In a press release when she announced she would be leaving Sartell, Archambeau wrote this:

“I have greatly enjoyed and appreciated the opportunities I have had through the years, specially working with wonderful community members, Sartell business owners, builders and developers, commission members, mayors and councils and of course my fantastic co-workers. It has been an honor. I really do love this community, and I will always think of Sartell as my home.”

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

For Anita Archambeau, the best aspect of her 20-year job as planner/developer for Sartell was watching other people enjoying life in the city.

Archambeau said she is pleased she helped people find their dream home within their dream city. She’s proud she helped bring businesses to the city that now employ up to hundreds of people.

She can get emotional when she sees children reading books in the city’s community center or seeing kids riding bikes along the Pinecone Road trails or adults enjoying a round of golf or relaxing at a “happy hour” at one of the city’s restaurants.

“It is just so rewarding when you see people taking in and experiencing all the opportunities that Sartell has to offer as it continues to grow,” she said.

Past challenges

The “most challenging” part of Archambeau’s job?

“Convincing people that roundabouts are fantastic,” she said.

People, she noted, usually “come around” and start to like roundabouts. Some of the most vocal critics did change their minds and would confide in Archambeau that roundabouts

work “pretty well,” and one parent even sent a photo of a child who set up a “roundabout” inside the family garage, using mini-cones.

Another challenge has been hearing from people who are upset about something going on in Sartell when the reason for their upset was based on misinformation or erroneous facts. But thankfully, that is improving, she said, because of such things as land-use signs and other ways to inform the public, such as videos, announcements and explanations on the city’s website and social media.

“A lot of fun new things (as far as good communications) are on the horizon,” she said.

City’s strength

Archambeau said Sartell’s greatest strength can be summarized in one word: People.

“People who live here, work here, invest here, volunteer their time here, visit here,” she said. “No one person can take credit for any one project or great thing that has happened in Sartell.

Everything people currently enjoy in the city was made possible by teamwork from people: great neighborhoods platted and approved, amazing businesses constructed and the creation of amenities such as parks, ballfields and a community center.

“Great communities and the people within them make great things happen,” she said. “The Sartell community is an unbeatable place and is its own greatest strength for that reason.”

City’s future

As with any growing city, Archambeau said, Sartell has to do a balancing act of growth with expectations of current and future residents.

“Sartell has had to balance that for a couple of decades and is pretty good at it!” she said.

Sartell staff and residents have always supported growth when it’s accomplished in a positive way, Archambeau noted. Examples of that are long-term planning, stimulating jobs, economic developing and creating diverse – yet balanced – housing choices. Another positive factor, she added, is identifying future land uses and utility needs for “smart growth.”

Archambeau said she is confident Sartell will continue to attract new residents – businesses, families, single people who will be happy to call it their home.

“Sartell is well equipped to handle future growth,” she said. “I do not doubt that each time I visit Sartell, the number on the population sign will continue to rise and new businesses will continue to be built.”

Chisum moves to rescind Archambeau’s resignation

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

At the May 18 Sartell City Council meeting, Anita Archambeau received an indirect bouquet of praise in the form of a gentle joke from council member Mike Chisum.

Archambeau is the city’s community development director and assistant city administrator. After 20 years on the

job, she will leave at the end of June to live and work in Tennessee.

Under “Other Business,” Chisum noted the council, in its consent agenda, had approved the resignation of Archambeau.

“I’d like to make a motion,” Chisum said. “I would suggest we rescind that vote and not accept her resignation. I think we have the authority under the constitution to do that. That

way, we can keep her here where she belongs.”

Another council member quickly seconded the motion, and Mayor Ryan Fitzthum slammed his gavel as one and all laughed.

After a pause, Archambeau, suppressing a giggle, said in a mock-warning tone: “I think you are exceeding your constitutional authority.”

More laughter erupted.

Vote to name intermediate school

Online voting opened May 13, to pick a name for the Sartell intermediate school.

The ballot is available on the school district’s website.

Starting in fall 2020, the current Sartell Middle School will be home to third- through fifth-graders.

The three names on the bal-

lot are:

- Mississippi Mills Intermediate School.
- Riverview Intermediate School.
- Watab River Intermediate School.

Voting runs until May 25. Results will be revealed in the fall.

Paper ballots are available at each building for people who don’t want to vote online.

A committee of students and staff selected the names from about 75 suggested.



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At 90, Westra gets three big birthday honors

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Not many people get two big birthday parties in one week, but 90-year-old Mary Lou Westra of Sartell did. It’s also a rarity for people to have a city proclaim a special day in honor of them, but it happened to Westra.

All were big happy surprises, but the second party, she said, was not just surprising; it was overwhelming. Her first party, on May 4, was expected. It took place at the St. Cloud Eagles Club with scores of relatives, friends and admirers – fellow bowlers and golfers (Westra has long loved to bowl and golf), school people, church people – and “oodles of birthday cards,” she added.

Westra is a lunchroom monitor at Sartell Middle School.

On May 9, the day after her actual birth date, she was – as she put it – “gabbing like I always do with the gals in the front office in the school.”

Finally, two school staff had to kind of lure her out of the office because birthday celebrants were waiting for her.

As she walked out of the office, she noticed right away the nearby cafeteria was filled with smiling faces of people who’d launched into singing “Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday, dear Mary Lou, happy birthday to you!”

For a few seconds, Westra, who is seldom at a loss for words, was utterly speechless.

“I kept thinking, ‘Is this really happening?!’” Westra recalled later.

The students presented her with oodles of handmade birthday cards.

“I’ve got enough to fill two whole boxes,” she said later. “It will take me a month to go through all those cards, plus the cards from the other party.”

In the cafeteria, everyone enjoyed birthday cookies purchased by the Sartell Middle School Student Council for the party organized by the middle school academics extension coordinator Lori Dornburg. Sartell Mayor Ryan Fitzthum read a proclamation declaring the day “Mary Lou Westra Day” and presented her with a plaque.

“She’s important to student life at the school,” Fitzthum said.

The students presented lunchroom-monitor Westra with a golden whistle, which she obligingly blew. There



photo by Mike Knaak

When Mary Lou Westra walked out of the school office, she was surprised to find a group of Sartell Middle School students singing "Happy Birthday."



photo by Mike Knaak

Mayor Ryan Fitzthum surprises Mary Lou Westra, proclaiming May 9 Mary Lou Westra Day in Sartell.

were other gifts as well. After the hoopla, students gathered around Westra at a photo booth so they could have their photos taken with the celebrity.

“She’s the ‘mom’ of the school,” eighth-grader Emily Crandall said. “She loves to be with us.”

Autumn Blommer, also an eighth-grader, praised Westra.

“Everyone knows Mary Lou,” she said. “She gives off a warm presence. She’s very

involved with the students.”

At the school party were two of Westra’s beloved great-grandchildren – Sartell Middle School fifth-grader Keegan Waldoch and pre-schooler Elsa Waldoch, the children of Brian and Holly Waldoch, who is Westra’s granddaughter. Also present was Monica Mills, Westra’s daughter who works in the Oak Ridge Elementary School’s library.

Long happy life

In her long life, Mary Lou Westra has attended so many weddings, baptisms, birthday parties and – sadly – all too many funerals.

She was born Mary Lou Maile in St. Cloud May 8, 1929. One of the most often-asked questions from students is this: “How many presidents were in your life.”

And the long list of names falls from Westra’s lips.

“Let’s see,” she says, “Starting in 1929, that would be Herbert Hoover. Then Calvin Coolidge, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump.”

“Wow! That’s a lot of presidents,” some wide-eyed students exclaim.

“Oh yes,” she sometimes says. “A lot of presidents, a lot of years.”

After graduating from Cathedral High School, she took a correspondence course in accounting from Northwestern University and when she married a World War II veteran named Mike Bloom she became his accountant.

The couple had seven children. After Bloom died, Mary Lou was in her mid-50s when she married her second husband, George Westra. From a

former marriage, he had six children. When George died of a heart attack in Texas, Mary Lou gravitated back to the St. Cloud area and in 2000 she began working as a sub-paraprofessional in the Sartell-St. Stephen school district. Later, at the middle school principal’s request, she began working as a lunchroom monitor a couple hours a day.

“I have such good friendships with the kids,” she said. “They’re so adorable. I love being with them. It brings so much happiness. You could say at the age of 90 I’m still going to school.”

Westra keeps fit by golfing and bowling. She also loves to walk to and from the “old” Coborn’s store, which is in her neighborhood. As in her work for school children, her love of people is apparent during her Coborn’s visits.

“Oh, I know everybody – just about everybody – at that store,” she said. “I know the clerks, the other store employees and so many of the customers. It’s so much fun to talk with them.”

Besides her conversational skills, Westra is known by many for her keen – but gentle – teasing humor.

One time, Westra, trying to squelch a laugh, said this in mock-serious manner to Sartell-St. Stephen Superintendent Jeff Schwiebert.

“You know, Mr. Schwiebert, I’m your ace in the hole. You and the school district can never be sued for age discrimination. So don’t worry; you’re covered. But remember, you’re covered only as long as you keep me.”

Schwiebert laughed; so did Westra.

One of her favorite memories is when a young school boy said to her. “Goll, you’re almost 90?! My grandma looks older than you, and she’s only 70.”

Another favorite memory is Alexander the Great and The Boy. When she was a sub-paraprofessional, she was in a history class watching a movie about Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.). She had seen the movie many times, and so, a bit bored, she began to drift off for a snooze. After the movie, the class began to discuss the importance of Alexander, and Westra commented about the facts of his life and times.

“How do YOU know?” a boy asked Westra. “You were sleeping through that movie.”

Then scratching his head, befuddled, he asked Westra: “Were you THERE?”

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-top fun and loopy beer, such



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

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 pineapple – not to men-

tion 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

musical performances, a private-event space and – of course – lots of room for the huge stainless-steel brewing/fermenting tanks.

Fourteen beer choices are on the menu.

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People



contributed photo

Four generations of the Heim family celebrated a family reunion on April 28 at the Sartell Community Center. The event was attended by 45 people. Flossie Heim is in the center of the front row with her friend Andy Bechtold. Her husband Clarence Heim passed away.



contributed photo

High School Big Sister Jes Lemke with her Little Sister Adrianna.



contributed photo

Big Sister Hope Hippler with her Little Sister Ali.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota recognized two Sartell volunteers who go above and beyond in their role as a mentor.

The Big Sister of the Year is **Hope Hippler**, a mentor for six years.

The High School Big Sister of the Year is **Jes Lemke**, a mentor for two years. Local mentor candidates represent Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota in the statewide competition. The state selects one outstanding mentor in each category to represent Minnesota in a national competition.

In addition to receiving the local title, Lemke was also selected as 2019 Minnesota State High School Big Sister of the Year.

Tiana Wood of Sartell was named to the fall semester dean's list at the University of Minnesota Morris. To be eligible, students must achieve a grade-point average of 3.666 or higher while taking 12 or more credits.

Six Sartell students were awarded degrees at Minnesota State University Mankato spring graduation on May 11. The students are **Hannah Lakmann**, bachelor's degree, fam-

ily consumer science; **Kristen Manning**, bachelor's degree, registered nurse baccalaureate completion, cum laude; **Breanna Peterson**, bachelor's degree, management; **Nicole Schefers**, bachelor's degrees, gender and women's studies, magna cum laude and psychology, magna cum laude; Tasha Smith, bachelor's degree, biology; and **Katelyn Tragiai**, bachelor's degree, family consumer science.

Patrick Hollermann has joined IntelCONNECT Inc. as project manager. He has worked in technology support and implementation positions since 1992.

As project manager Hollermann will work to ensure the implementation of new technology and that the overall telecom experience exceeds customers' expectations.



Hollerman



Groethe

Home Instead Senior Care has named Barb Hoffman its 2019 North American CareGiver of the Year.

The award is the highest accolade for the organization's more than 65,000 CareGivers throughout North America.

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

Hoffman, of Waite Park, has been a Home Instead CareGiver for eight years.

Waite Park Home Instead Senior Care serves Sartell, St. Stephen and St. Joseph.

Hoffman was recognized for the extraordinary energy, tal-

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."

Joshua Engelkes of Sartell plans to attend the University of Minnesota Morris. Engelkes is the recipient of the Achievement Scholarship, renewable up to four years. Recipients are selected based on their academic accomplishments at the time of application.

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@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, May 17
Benton County Museum, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbentonhistory.org.

Saturday, May 18
Community meal, 11:30 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 1107 Pinecone Road S. Free.

Monday, May 20
Benton County Museum, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbentonhistory.org.

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

Sartell Farmers' Market, 3-6 p.m., Bernick's Arena.

Sartell-St. Stephen school board, 6:30 p.m., Media Center, Sartell High School, 748 Seventh St. N.

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

Tuesday, May 21
Mobile office hours, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Sartell City Hall. A caseworker from Rep. Tom Emmer's office will be available to handles issues with federal

government services.

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

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

Thursday, May 23
Coffee and Conversation, a senior discussion group, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. Speaker: Stearns County Sheriff Steve Soyka.

Friday, May 24
Benton County Museum, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 218 First St. N., Sauk Rapids. 320-253-9614. mnbentonhistory.org.

Monday, May 27
Sartell Farmers' Market, 3-6 p.m., Bernick's Arena.

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.

Thursday, May 30
Coffee and Conversation, a senior discussion group, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. Speaker: John Miley, owner Acupuncture & Natural Health Inc., Age Gracefully with Natural Medicine.

Saturday, June 1
Sartell High School Commencement, 7:30 p.m., Sartell High School main gym, 748 Seventh St. N.



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Proposals are due no later than 2:00 p.m. on Friday, May 31, 2019 to Sartell-St. Stephen ISD 748, District Service Center, 212 Third Avenue North, Sartell, MN 56377 and a copy to National Insurance Services, at 14852 Scenic Heights Rd Suite 210, Eden Prairie, MN 55344, or as specified in the RFP.

Publish: May 3 and 17, 2019



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photo by Mike Knaak

Future teachers

Sartell High School honored seniors in the Future Educators Club at a “signing ceremony” on May 15. McKenna Rohe (left) talked about her plans to attend Bemidji State University. Each student described college plans and talked about who influenced the decision to pursue a teaching career. The event was sponsored by the Club and the Sartell-St. Stephen Education Association. Students received gifts and enjoyed cake with parents and teachers.

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St. Joseph

May 13-19 proclaimed ‘Police Week’

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

The week of May 13-19 has been proclaimed Police Week in Sartell by the city’s mayor, Ryan Fitzthum.

Fitzthum read the proclamation at the May 13 City Council meeting directly after the swearing in

of the new deputy police chief, Wayne Schreiner.

In his proclamation, the mayor noted some grim data. Last year, there were 60,211 recorded assaults against law-enforcement officers, resulting in 17,476 injuries and 200 deaths.

Since 1791, the year of the first recorded police officer’s murder,

there have been 21,000 officers killed in the line of duty.

Currently, there are more than 900,000 law-enforcement officers serving in the nation, including 21 on the Sartell Police Department.

Fitzthum extended his thanks to all of those officers, especially to those serving the residents of Sartell.

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United Methodist’s ‘Garden Sanctuary’ nears completion

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

An ambitious project dubbed Garden Sanctuary is expected to be completed this summer on the grounds of United Methodist Church of the St. Cloud Region, in Sartell at 1107 Pinecone Road S.

The church, which was for years on Fifth Avenue South in St. Cloud, just a few blocks from downtown, was rebuilt in Sartell about five years ago, using some of the former church’s stained-glass windows and other art works.

The Garden Sanctuary is far more than a “garden” or a “sanctuary.” It is, in fact, a multi-use area created on the property just west of the church. Landscape architect Jennifer Germain of Damon Farber Landscape designed the complex, which includes a large patio with a wood-fired bread-baking oven, an outdoor worship and concert space, a large walking labyrinth and a memorial garden where ashes from cremations can be interred.

In September 2018 the ground-breaking took place, and Todd Hodnefield of Heartland Landscaping Inc. was named general project manager.

Last month, the memorial wall surface stone and granite wall cap were installed. Sidewalks and labyrinth cement can now be poured. Other finishing touches are the irrigation system, electrical connection, a bubbling water feature and the church’s historic old bell. There will also be new soils, plants, trees, shrubs



contributed photo

This is an artist's conception of the labyrinth feature of the Serenity Garden, which is now under construction at United Methodist Church in Sartell.

and mulch added.

A children’s play area near the garden sanctuary may also be developed.

The Sanctuary Garden is an outdoor extension of indoor spiritual pursuits. There will be outdoor worship services, receptions, weddings, concerts and meals from the bread oven.

Cremation ashes can be interred in the garden or scattered in the restored prairie grass areas of the garden. So far, 25 people have signed up for that kind of commemoration, including some who will have their names engraved on the garden wall, said Bill Meier, co-chair of the Memorial Garden Committee.

One need not be a member of

United Methodist to have one’s remains’ ashes at Sanctuary Garden. The cost is \$1,000, Meier noted.

“One of the goals in creating this space,” he said, “is to minister to all people, not just our church community.”

“We believe that many people’s loving connection with nature, faith and specifically the prairie will be an appealing option for the final disposition of their cremains,” Meier said.

Co-chair Jill Haak also emphasized the natural beauty of the garden area.

“Knowing that that location is a place of beauty, peace and dignity. as well as a living part of a faith-community’s life, makes

it all the more meaningful,” she said.

Committee member Diana Klisch said the Garden Sanctuary inspires contemplation.

“This setting,” she said, “will now be surrounded by the prairie, where the songs of many

birds, including meadow larks and the call of sandhill cranes can be heard. The contemplative walking of the labyrinth won’t be hindered by the noise and bustle of nearby traffic, as it was before (in the former church on busy Fifth Avenue in St. Cloud).”

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Resource Training & Solutions, District 0923, requests proposals for group insurance coverage for the health plan year beginning Oct. 1, 2019. Sealed proposals will be accepted in paper form until 5 p.m. CST on Wednesday, June 17, 2019 at Resource Training & Solutions, Attn: Julie Toole, 137 23rd St. S., Sartell, Minn. 56377. Copies of the request for proposal and exhibits may be requested from Julie Toole, jtoole@resourcecoop-mn.gov and will be sent electronically at no charge. District reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive informalities. District reserves the right to select the proposal which it determines to be in the best interest of the District.

Publish: May 3 and 17, 2019



photo by Dennis Dalman

This photo, taken May 12, shows the unfinished patio portion of the Serenity Garden at United Methodist Church in Sartell.

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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 ’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 year. Agnes also coached volleyball and later became the college’s first athletic director. Bellmont played on that first basketball team.

Agnes was an early advocate for equal

Mike Knaak
Editor



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.”

that she’d make for a good feature story. And Carolyn was right. As soon as I met Mary Lou standing in front of Coborn’s, she gave off a charismatic aura. She practically radiated kindness, curiosity and good humor – a real joy of living. What a pleasure it was to play verbal tennis with her, trying to keep up with her sharp but gentle wit.

At one point five or six teenagers approached the store. And of course they knew Mary Lou and she knew them; Mary Lou knows everybody. The teens said hello and she asked them a little barrage of questions about how they’ve been doing. A bit bashfully, they answered. It was obvious from their behavior of the deep and abiding respect they held for that remarkable woman, who was then, if I recall correctly, 87 or 88.

When I heard Mary Lou was about to be honored in a surprise birthday party – her 90th – at Sartell Middle School, I leaped at the chance to do the story. I couldn’t be at the event, although Newsleader Editor Mike Knaak was kind enough to take photos at it. Next day, I interviewed Mary Lou, and she was just as much fun as she was two years ago in front of Coborn’s. She was warm, kind, curious, sharp as a tack, intelligent, insightful and, last but not least, oh so funny with her slightly mischievous humor. In a word, Mary Lou is unforgettable.

Mary Lou, I hope you have many, many more birthdays.

Dennis Dalman
Reporter



Happy Belated Birthday, Mary Lou Westra!

Of the many, many thousands of people I’ve interviewed and written about in my four decades of reporting, there are several standouts.

Though there have been so many favorites, three of them often spring to mind. One was singer Tammy Wynette, whom I interviewed sometime in the mid-1980s in her luxury RV between her two shows at Alexandria’s Runestone Arena. Even though she was visibly tired, she was warm, kind, interesting, interested, down-to-earth and down-right funny. The verbal and knock-about jousts between Wynette and great singer George Jones, her then-husband, were often splashed in the supermarket tabloid gossip pages.

At one point during the interview, I asked Wynette:

“Tammy, do you still believe in the message of your famous song, ‘Stand By Your Man’? ”

She smiled slyly and then said in that voice warm as Southern honey.

“Well, Dennis, just look around in here. You don’t see George Jones anywhere, do you?”

Another favorite was Arlyce Kakac, a dairy farm woman who lived alone in Douglas County and whose cows were beginning to die from a relentless drought one terrible summer, 1986. Sitting in her old, quaint farmhouse kitchen, Arlyce was gentle yet tough as

nails as she talked about the withering heat, her many hard-scrabble years in farming, the difficulties in getting farm loans, and the cows and other farmyard animals she loved and loved working with. Seldom have I ever witnessed such enduring strength, courage and persistence despite an avalanche of worries, problems, pain and suffering. Arlyce was the living definition of true grit and all-encompassing human kindness personified.

Come to think of it, Mary Lou Westra has many of the same qualities that dazzled me when I met Wynette and Kakac.

Like those two women, Mary Lou is strikingly intelligent, insightful, keenly interested in and connected to the wider world, humble and a dyed-in-the-wool people lover.

The first time I interviewed Mary Lou was about two years ago in front of the “old” Coborn’s store in Sartell, one of her favorite daily places to visit because she so much loves to talk with people. Carolyn Bertsch, assignment editor at the Newsleader, had given me the story tip because she thought Mary Lou is such a loving sociable people-person

Letters to the editor

Spring, what a joy you bring

Ron Marquette, Sartell

Hope springs anew as the sun splashes its warmth on a cold-infested world.

The sound of melting, rushing water can be heard as it makes its frantic way down a bustling creek.

That cool freshness of the air as it wholly consumes your senses.

The contagious laughter of children playing outside can again be heard through an open window.

The skip in your walk as you take in the newness and the sweetness of the season.

Backyard birds can be heard singing their spring concert of song in unison.

That old oak tree with its barren branches gets new buds – and new life.

A soft warm breeze blows that seems to engulf you totally, as you take it all in.

Beauty unfolds as pansies and daffodils pop from the earth – and a garden awakens from its rest.

A rake, a garden hoe, have new purpose after resting for a season in that barnwood shed

The green greenness of everything as the rolling meadow comes to life.

Winter has loosened its grip and we feel free again.

Oh Spring – what a joy you bring to a winter-weary heart!

I have waited all season for you.

Distracted driving law needs to go all the way

Gary Mayavski, Sartell

This is in response to Connor Klocker's article, "Thumbs up for hands-free law."

I think Minnesota has missed the boat on this law.

If you're going to pass a law pertaining to distracted driving, why not go all the way?

What about people who put on their makeup while driving?

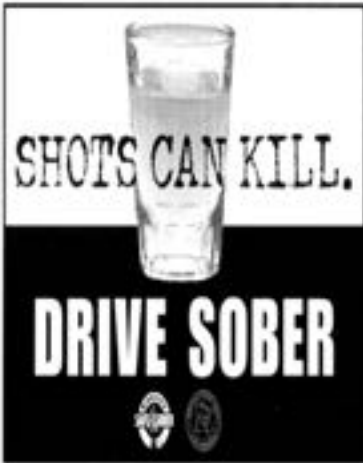
What about people who let their pets sit on their lap in front of them while driving?

What about people who smoke? Isn't that distracting about putting your cigarette butt out in your ashtray, instead of throwing it out the window?

What about drinking a cup of coffee, a pop or a bottle of water?

Last but not least is eating while driving. Yes, I have been guilty of this, but dropping your sandwich or burger or taco or candy bar or doughnut is just as distracting as all of the rest.

If you're going to do it, do it all the way.



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