

Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, May 1, 2020
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Town Crier

Make cards for health care workers, first responders

Show support and thanks to essential workers from the safety of your home by creating a note of thanks and United Way will deliver it. Visit www.unitedwayhelps.org and click on the Covid-19 Resources page to complete the thank-you form.

Help families in crisis

Consider becoming a volunteer for the St. Cloud Area Crisis Nursery, a program of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota. This family-focused service provides free, 24-hour hotline support to parents dealing with personal stress or crisis, such as an illness, housing problems, financial strains or other issues. Contact Connie Orth, St. Cloud Area Crisis Nursery at 320-654-1090 or connie.orth@lssmn.org.

Mask makers needed

Put your time and talents to use making masks for at-risk community members. This link, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html, shows how masks are used and also shows patterns for making masks. Completed masks can be dropped off at Coborn's, 900 Cooper Ave. S, St. Cloud, behind the service counter during store hours and at Whitney Senior Center West Door, 1527 Northway Drive, St. Cloud, in the covered bin marked MASKS. The bin will be available Monday-Friday 8-4:30 p.m.

Attention parents of 2020 graduates

Parents of 2020 grads, please be aware your student should have received an email from the school with a link to an online form to collect bio information to be included in the 2020 Grad Tab publishing in the May 29 edition of the Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader. Deadline to submit these forms is Friday, May 8. Please check in with your student to ensure they turn the information in in a timely manner. Home-schooled students or those attending schools other than Sartell High School are also encouraged to submit their name, parents' names, school they're graduating from and future plans to be included separately in the May 29 edition. Submit information to news@the-newsleaders.com.

Newsleaders seeks GoFundMe donations

During these turbulent times, advertising support has dwindled. The Newsleaders wants to continue providing up-to-the-minute local coverage both on our website and in print. Please help support the Newsleaders by viewing/contributing to our GoFundMe page on Facebook. Thank you to our contributors! Any amount is greatly appreciated.

Graduation ceremony options are top priority

by Mike Knaak
editor@thenewsleaders.com

Sartell-St. Stephen school leaders are making plans now on how to end the school year with distance learning in place and accommodate traditional events jeopardized by stay-at-home orders.

While administrators consider a number of distance learning-related issues, "graduation is by far the biggest one," Superintendent Jeff Schwiebert said.

To come up with a plan on how to replace the traditional ceremony, the district sent surveys to senior students and parents and High School Principal Brenda Steve is meeting with students to come up with a plan, Schwiebert said.

Schwiebert hosted a virtual meeting on Zoom, a video conferencing platform, to hear from parents this week.

Ceremony • page 2



photo by Mike Knaak

Families pick up instructional packets for PreK through fourth-graders Thursday, April 23, at Pine Meadow Elementary School. Schools across Minnesota will continue distance learning through the end of the school year.

Wish granted, Sartell woman heads for the woods

by Mike Knaak
editor@thenewsleaders.com

Madelynn Reitz loves the great outdoors. But she was cooped up inside for months following a bone-marrow transplant and chemo treatment for Chron's disease

Her desire to get back outdoors got a boost from Make A Wish Minnesota and Mies Outland.

The Sartell 18-year-old's wish for an ATV was granted, and April 17, she picked up her new Polaris ATV along with a helmet, gloves and other accessories.

Reitz's parents, Jen and Rich, and friends joined her when she was presented with the new green machine. Her brother Gavin, home from the



photos by Mike Knaak

Madelynn Reitz climbs aboard her new ATV at Mies Outland.

Air Force Academy, donated bone marrow for her transplant and joined the celebration at Mies on Hwy. 10 southeast of St. Cloud.

During treatment, the family stayed with relatives in the Twin Cities so she could be close to the hospital. Just about the time Reitz's isolation period



Madelynn Reitz tries on a new helmet.

ended, Minnesotans were ordered to stay-at-home to limit the Covid-19 spread.

After trying out her new ATV, Reitz said she and her boyfriend would head north for some outdoor time in the woods.

School leaders ask how is distance learning going?

by Mike Knaak
editor@thenewsleaders.com

Three weeks into distance learning, Sartell-St. Stephen school board members and administrators focused on how the effort was going at the April 20 board meeting.

Principals joined the meeting to update board members on what was working and what wasn't working since Gov. Tim Walz ordered schools closed last month to limit the spread

of Covid-19.

Principals reported on survey results sent to high school students and parents at the middle and elementary schools.

While the schools are shut down, kindergarten through second-grade students are receiving packets while older students are using iPads and MacBooks to connect with teachers and complete assignments over the internet using the Schoology platform.

Principals and board mem-

bers stressed the need to communicate often with parents and students, as well as the community in general, about expectations and plans.

Those responding to the surveys generally provided positive comments but the results focused on several areas to improve.

At the high school, Principal Brenda Steve said about half the 509 respondents said they "liked" the distance learning process. But some students

wanted more live interaction. Students check in with teachers each day and more than 90 percent said they had no trouble with internet connections.

Helping students interact with teachers is one area for improvement, Steve said. Twenty-three percent of responding students said they were unsure of how to ask questions and 41 percent reported anxiety asking questions.

"They are not engaging the
Distance • page 2

Obituary

**Gary Vargason, 82
Foley, Minnesota
Oct. 6, 1937-April 19, 2020**

Gary Vargason, 82, of Foley, died April 19 at his home surrounded by his family. A private family visitation took place April 25 at the Foley Funeral Home. Private burial followed at North Star Cemetery, St. Cloud. The Rev. Dr. Timothy Rehwaldt officiated. Service with Dignity provided by the Foley Funeral Home.

Vargason was born Oct. 6, 1937 in Litchfield, Minnesota to George and Lucille (Nesseth) Vargason. He graduated from Litchfield High School and the University of Minnesota with a degree in mortuary science. After working for three years as a funeral director in Virginia, Minnesota he began working as an insurance adjuster which he

did until his retirement in 2010. He married Carol Markfort on May 18, 2013 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Foley. He enjoyed hunting and fishing and spending time at the lake. He was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Foley.

Survivors include his wife and best friend, Carol, Foley; children: Eve (John) Chisholm and Tara (Jon) Mendel, all of Sartell; John, Kentucky; Jordan (Mary), Duluth; and Hallie (Randy) Dufner, Melrose; 13 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren and his faithful dog, Sam. He is also survived by his step-children: Keith (Lori) Landowski, Foley; Tim (Bonnie) Landowski, St. Cloud; Kim Trigg, Foley, eight step-grandchildren, eight step-great-grandchildren; his special friends: Bob Frappier, Carol Miller, Jim and Lynnae Frappier and many other friends; an aunt, Barb Goemer, California; and seven brothers- and sisters-in-law.

He was preceded in death by his parents.



Vargason

Ceremony from front page

When the school board meets May 6, school leaders hope to have a plan to serve the students and parents but also to meet the state's social distancing rules for schools.

Gov. Tim Walz ordered all schools to continue distance learning through the end of the school year and that order included all school-related activities such as prom, awards programs and graduation ceremonies. The Minnesota State High School League also canceled the entire spring season for sports and other activities, including tournaments.

"Our biggest group to worry about are the seniors," Schwiebert said. "They are losing their last year in high school. We need to make sure we can do as much as we can for that group."

A prom in May, he said, doesn't meet social distancing rules now in place. A school-sponsored prom is not in the works, but maybe parents can arrange something later in the summer.

A number of graduation ideas have been floated including moving the event back a month, conducting a virtual ceremony or organizing some sort of drive-thru/drive up event

with each car driving forward when it's that senior's turn.

Under the state's plan for easing coronavirus restrictions, "I don't think we'll be able to put 3,000 people in a gym," Schwiebert said.

At the April 20 school board meeting, board member Pam Raden described the situation as "gut-wrenching. What people want to hear is we're trying to come up with creative ideas."

Classes will not meet Friday, May 1, and Monday, May 4, while staff meets to focus on how to improve distance learning for the final weeks of school.

Discussions will probably focus on how well distance learning is serving special needs and free- and reduced-lunch students, the superintendent said.

"Are we making sure students are getting the same kind of education as if we didn't have distance learning?" Schwiebert said.

When distance learning kicked in a month ago, some students had trouble connecting to the internet but Schwiebert said most of those problems have been resolved. Special education is working well, he said.

"Distance-learning makes me worry about the social and emotional aspect of kids staying isolated," Schwiebert said.

As for the canceling of spring activities, "It's just a loss that all

those kids are feeling and there is no way to make it up," he said. "It's tremendously unfair."

As this school year ends, school leaders are looking ahead to the fall when the last phase of the district's multi-year building reconfiguration plan rolls out.

The current middle school will be renamed Riverview Intermediate School and serve grades three to five. Over the hill on Seventh Street, students in grades six through eight will move into the remodeled former high school. Instead of two elementary schools, Oak Ridge will be home to the district's PreK through kindergarten students and Pine Meadow will serve first- and second-graders.

Minor remodeling planned at Riverview has started now instead of waiting until the end of the school year, giving construction crews more time on that project. Because of the pandemic shutdown at some factories, there's a concern that manufactured products might not arrive as scheduled.

"I'd rather be back in school but if we can't be back in school at least we can make the work easier," Schwiebert said.

New bus routes for kindergarten students are being developed and those should be distributed in June.

Distance from front page

way they would if a teacher was sitting next to them," Steve said.

The majority of students reported spending 30-60 minutes a day per class.

All the principals agreed they expected to make adjustments as distance learning became a routine rather than a novelty.

At the middle school, Principal Laura Arndt said the majority of the 550 responses indicated the amount of work was just about right while an equal number was split between the work was too easy or too hard. Arndt said most student were spending between 25-35 minutes per class per day, about what teachers expected.

At the elementary schools, about half the parents responded to the surveys. At Pine Meadow, Principal Sara Nelson

said 90 percent of parents responded that the schedule is working for their students. Oak Ridge Principal Jason Mielke reported similar positive results and added about 10 percent of parents would like more live sessions. He said teachers are focusing on working with different family situations such as essential workers and parents working at home. Plans call for more virtual meetings.

The student representative at the meeting was Courtney Snoberger and board members asked her to comment on distance learning at the high school. She echoed the survey responses about connecting with teachers but also creating ways for students to interact because they are not together every day.

Board member Lesa Kramer asked Snoberger what she's learned that will be useful in the future. Snoberger said she's learned to "be able to teach myself. This teaches us if we

have a problem I can figure it out by myself. Moving forward I will be better at problem-solving."

Board member Patrick Marushin asked about attendance. Arndt said at the middle school, the number of students who don't check in is about half what it would be on a normal school day. Steve reported similar attendance at the high school. But both principals said while attendance is one metric, they are also concerned about students completing assignments and making progress.

Mielke said there's a "handful" of students struggling with attendance and the "quality of work isn't what we'd usually see."

Business manager Joe Prom said the district continues to serve 1,800-1,900 meals a day from the middle school pickup site. Three buses are delivering meals to families that can't drive to the school.



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Newsleader staff members have the responsibility to report news fairly and accurately and are accountable to the public. Readers who feel we've fallen short of these standards are urged to call the *Newsleader* office at 320-363-7741. If matters cannot be resolved locally, readers are encouraged to take complaints to the Minnesota News Council, an independent agency designed to improve relationships between the public and the media and resolve conflicts. The council office may be reached at 612-341-9357.

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Blotter

If you have a tip concerning a crime, call the Sartell Police Department at 320-251-8186 or Tri-County Crime Stoppers at 320-255-1301, or access its tip site at tricountycrimestoppers.org. Crime Stoppers offers rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for a crime.

March 31
6 p.m. Shoplifting. CR 120. The loss-prevention manager reported a woman left the store with a shopping cart of unpaid merchandise. Officers cited the woman for theft and arrested the woman on a warrant.

April 2
7:30 a.m. Burglary, Seventh Street N. A garage was broken into overnight.

April 3
3:30 a.m. Crash. 19th Street S. A caller reported hearing a crash. Officers determined a vehicle struck a rock head on. A vehicle was spotted leaving the area that officers believed was related to the crash. The driver was cited for DWI.

April 4
11:30 a.m. Speeding. Heritage Drive. A driver was cited for speeding.

April 5
1:30 p.m. DWI citation. Cheval Drive and Bantam Road. Officers responded to an argument outside a vehicle and found a woman had been drinking and admitted to driving. She was given field sobriety tests confirming she was not OK to drive and she was cited for DWI.

April 6
8 p.m. Foot patrol. 500 block of Pinecone Road S. An officer conducted a patrol on foot around a construction area; all appeared normal.

April 7
Noon. Oak Pond Drive and Fieldcrest Court. A man was reported going through the parking lot and looking into and underneath cars. The man was gone when an officer arrived.

April 8
8 a.m. Burglary. 12th Avenue S. A burglary was reported in a parking garage. Management located a door to the parking garage broken open and several vehicles inside gone through.

April 10
8:30 a.m. Crash. Benton Drive and First Street NE. A witness called in to report an erratic driver rear-ended another driver and

appeared to be passed out at the intersection. An officer arrived and conducted field-sobriety tests that concluded driver was unfit to drive. DWI charges pending.

April 11
11 p.m. Argument. Seventh Avenue S. Officers responded to a verbal dispute. The couple were separated and agreed to stay apart for the night.

April 13
2 p.m. Opening packages. Fifth Avenue E. A man was reported opening packages in the lobby that did not belong to him. The man was identified.

3 p.m. Cable line down in the road. CR 1. Officers arrived along with city maintenance. The road was blocked briefly to cut the line and was moved. The cable company was called.

April 14
9:30 am. Assault 100 block Riverside Avenue. A person tried to break through a window. Officers suspected it was someone known to complainants. The minor was charged with assault and minor consumption of alcohol.

April 15
4:30 pm. Traffic stop. 100 block Riverside S. A vehicle was stopped for failure to signal intent and improper display of plate. A verbal warning was given.

April 16
1:15 pm. Disabled vehicle. Near Hwy. 15 and CR 1 intersection. An officer noticed a disabled vehicle alongside the road and provided extra lights for safety while the driver changed a flat tire.

April 17
4:15 pm. Traffic stop. CR 1 near Le Sauk Drive. A driver was stopped and given a warning for failing to yield to an emergency vehicle.

April 18
7 pm. Vehicle complaint. 200 block of Riverside Avenue N. A vehicle with a loud muffler was reported. The officer arrived in the area and was unable to locate it.

April 19
3:30 pm. Suspicious vehicle. 700 block of Roberts Road. A caller reported a vehicle in the parking lot sitting with doors wide open and no one around. Officers made contact with the owner who forgot to close doors.

April 20
12:30 p.m. Arrest. Mississippi River. A man involved in an altercation attempted to avoid of-

ficers by entering the river. The man exited seconds later because of the water temperature and was apprehended by officers. The man was arrested and could be charged with fleeing on foot, 911 interference, obstruction of legal process and a prior warrant.

April 21
3:45 p.m. Lift assist. First Street S. Officers were dispatched to a residence to assist an elderly resident who had fallen and was unable to get back on their feet. No injuries.

April 22
4:30 p.m. Traffic stop. Riverside Avenue S. An officer on patrol noticed a vehicle with tabs that had been expired for more than one year. The driver stated they had recently purchased the vehicle from a friend who is still the registered owner. The driver was cited for no proof of insurance and use of an unregistered motor vehicle.

April 23

3:30 p.m. Welfare check. Tradewind Avenue. An officer performed a welfare check on an individual and talked to the person's spouse. The spouse stated the individual was having a manic episode. The officer noted no signs of neglect or abuse when speaking with occupants of the residence.

April 24
4:04 a.m. Argument. 13th Street N. Neighbors reported an argument. The residence was dark, and the officer noticed no sound. The officer left a voicemail for the complainant stating to call back if the arguing started again.

April 25
11:30 p.m. Agency assist. Perimeter Drive. St. Cloud Police Department requested a Sartell officer contact an individual regarding an assault. Sartell officers confirmed the individual was at the residence and St. Cloud took over.

April 26
8 p.m. Suspicious vehicle. Central Park Boulevard. A person reported four juveniles getting out of a vehicle with bags. After a short period of time the complainant stated there was a blue tarp on the trees and did not know what they were doing. An officer contacted the individuals who were hammocking and were not planning on staying past park close.

April 27
11 p.m. Hazard. Pinecone Road and Heritage Drive. An officer removed a pipe on the roadway.

Liberty Bank donates to police, fire departments

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

The Sartell Police Department and Fire Department received some happy news at the April 27 City Council meeting.

Sartell Mayor Ryan Fitzthum announced Liberty Bank had presented a check for \$6,000 to each department – a total contribution of \$12,000. Fitzthum called the contributions “awesome.”

Headquartered in St. Cloud, Liberty Bank has a branch bank in Sartell, three in St.

School district partners with city for new trails

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

Cost quotes will be submitted for a proposed trail from 27th Avenue N. (by Pine Meadow Elementary School) to the entrance of the new Sartell High School.

Another trail may be built from the high-school entrance to 35th Street N.

That project also includes the construction of a concrete median barrier on 27th Avenue just south of the Pine Meadow school parking lot. The median is expected to facilitate the orderly and safe flow of traffic in and out of the lot, especially during mornings and afternoons when parents are dropping off or picking up children.

The Sartell City Council approved a move to call for cost

quotes for the projects, estimated to cost about \$250,000 altogether.

Sartell owes the school district \$130,000 for lighting the district installed on another internal trail that has already been built. So the current plan calls for the city to pay for the entire cost of the school's share of the Pinecone trail project, and the city would also pay for up to \$30,000 for the concrete median near Pine Meadow. Any balance of costs on the project would be paid by the school district. The city would also pay \$100,000 of the cost of the additional trail – from the high school entrance to 35th Street.

The city staff wants to be certain of the costs plan before further negotiations with the school district.

St. Scholastica expansion will strengthen nursing

A \$1 million expansion of The College of St. Scholastica's presence in Sartell is under way, and it will strengthen the region's nursing workforce, according to a statement from the college.

The construction project will result in a doubling of St. Scholastica's educational space at 137 23rd St. S. in Sartell.

The project will add enhanced technology to existing educational spaces, a new nursing simulation center with multiple acute care and ambulatory care rooms, break-out rooms for student pre-briefing and post-briefing sessions, and a commons room for faculty. A new 36-seat classroom will be used for nursing classes as well as for classes in St. Scholastica's education program and other offerings.

The new space will include nursing skills labs on the first floor and simulation labs on the second floor. The high-tech spaces will be flexible, able to

simulate a home care scenario, a hospital room or clinic.

Construction is expected to be completed by the end of June.

Scout starts shed-replacement project

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

A Sartell Boy Scout, Luke Hintgen, plans to do an Eagle Scout project for the city at its community garden near Oak Ridge Elementary School.

Hintgen told the City Council he would like to replace the old, inadequate storage

shed at the garden with a new one measuring 12 by 16 feet. The current one is 8 by 10. The shed serves as storage for gardening tools and other supplies used by the nearly 100 city-resident gardeners who have their own plots in the garden.

Hintgen, a member of Sartell Troop 211, said he is cur-

rently trying to raise \$3,000 for the shed project. It will require wall framing, siding, roofing and shingling, he noted. He intends to do the project in early May.

The council commended him for his work.

“I think it’s a great project,” said council member Mike Chisum. “Congratulations.”

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Slivnik family celebrates with a birthday parade

by Mike Knaak
editor@thenewsleaders.com

Despite a stay-at-home order, the need to keep socially distant and a strong cold, northwest wind, the Slivnik clan of St. Stephen persisted.

The extended family of Frank Slivnik found a way to safely celebrate his 80th birthday on April 20.

With a family gathering of more than 100 relatives out of the question, Frank’s family organized a socially distant celebration.

“Honk, Frank is 80” signs sprung up in front of Frank’s hill-top house on CR 5 east of St. Stephen. Passing motorists obliged.

Instead of a big party with Frank’s siblings, nine children and more than 100 nieces and nephews, he was surprised by a parade.

While a short parade led by a St. Stephen fire truck and classic

cars from the Pantowners club passed in front of his house, sirens and horns blaring, a longer string of about 30 cars wound around a corn field and through Frank and Annette’s farmyard. Frank waived to the passing well-wishers.

One of the parade organizers, niece Teri Mathews, staged the vehicles about a mile away at the original Slivnik family farm, now owned by Randy and Evelyn Slivnik. Frank and his family grew up on the farm that’s been designated a Century Farm.

Mathews said Frank farmed and worked at the paper mill before retirement. In his younger days, Frank played baseball and sang in the church choir. A cancer survivor, he still raises goats and chickens, Mathews said.

The family usually plans a big reunion at Lions Park in St. Stephen every year.

“They know how to hold a bash,” Mathews said.



photos by Mike Knaak

A line of more than 30 cars approaches through a corn field.



A St. Stephen fire truck and classic cars pass in front of Frank Slivnik’s St. Stephen farm.



Frank Slivnik waves to well-wishers on his 80th birthday as a parade weaves through his farm yard.

Women bask in 'Minnesota Nice' at mahjong games

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

The game of mahjong helped teach Chris Trout, a California transplant, the meaning of “Minnesota Nice.”

Mahjong is a game played with either hard-plastic or ceramic tiles shaped a bit like dominoes. It originated centuries ago in China and then swept the world in waves of popularity. The goal is to match up tiles in certain combinations to score points.

She started playing the game at the Whitney Senior Center in St. Cloud but later joined the group of about 18 mahjong players at the Sartell Senior Center.

“That game was my introduction to Minnesota folks,” said Trout. “At first, the ladies might have been a bit suspicious of me, being that I’m not a local, that I’m from California.”

But it wasn’t long before any possible suspicions vanished, and they welcomed the California newcomer warmly and demonstrated lots of Minnesota Nice at every mahjong session.

Trout moved to Minnesota about a year ago to be with a man she calls “the love of my life,” a man she met online

some years ago – Jay Adams of St. Cloud, a retired Iowa art teacher who also taught at the local Area Learning Center.

One day shortly after she arrived in Minnesota, she became frustrated at a local bank, dissatisfied with a service, and she said some rather caustic words. Jay quickly said, “Dear, don’t be California Nasty. Try to be Minnesota Nice.”

It’s a niceness and social warmth she enjoys every Wednesday during her mahjong games in Sartell.

“It can be very hard to move to a new place to live, especially at my age, 77,” Trout said. “It can become very lonely at times. Jay said I need to become involved in things and suggested I play mahjong. And ever since I did, I still consider it my welcome to Minnesota – to Minnesota Nice.”

The mahjong sessions take place from 9-11:30 every Wednesday at the Sartell Senior Center. Anyone willing to learn the game is welcome to attend. The Sartell sessions grew from about half a dozen women seven years ago to closer to 18 women currently. Each Wednesday, an average of about 12 of them meet to play in small

groups at four or five tables.

Linda Ganshert of Sartell loves the game.

“It’s so challenging, and the ladies are so much fun,” she said. “After my husband, Stephen, died years ago, I needed a way to get out and do something,” said Ganshert, the mother of three grown children. I’ve been playing mahjong for six years.”

Like many Sartell mahjong players, like Chris Trout, Ganshert is a transplant who came originally from Freeport, Illinois. She moved to Sartell 20 years ago when her husband was laid off and then found a job at the Ferche plant in Rice.

“Mahjong is not really a hard game to learn,” she said, adding that she would recommend it to virtually anybody. “I love card games, too, like bridge, 500 and pinochle. And I enjoy reading, crocheting and knitting.”

Mahjong is a good game for senior citizens because its intensity is supposed to keep the mind alert and even ward off cognitive impairment and the onset of other mental difficulties.

There are variations of the game. The one played in Sartell is the Modern American Mah-



photo by Dennis Dalman

Groups of women enjoy games of mahjong at the Sartell Community Center. At the table in the foreground are (left to right) Jane Matthews, Jane Hoffman, Linda Ganshert (all of Sartell) and Bev Dobbelaire of St. Cloud.

jong.

The game, which is a real brain twister, involves lots of skill, strategy, calculations and some elements of chance. The white hard-plastic tiles, typically 144 of them, are marked with Chinese word script, as well as designs such as stylized bamboo, flowers and dots. The tiles, face down on the table, are scrambled up by all the players using their hands. Then, during the course of play, each player

has 13 tiles in front of her, not counting some bonus tiles reserved at the side. The goal is to match up the tiles in certain combinations, which is a lot more difficult than it sounds. A winner will then say loudly, “Mahjong!”

A wide card in front of each player shows the lists of the many combinations of tiles each player aims to put down before the others.

Emergency Care

There may come a time when your pet needs emergency medical care. Becoming prepared before it happens will give you an edge in saving your pet's life.

Your pet is a curious creature. It is likely that it will one day find itself in a situation that requires your immediate attention. Pets face dangers of ingesting substances that may be toxic, traffic accidents and altercations with other animals. Do your part and learn who to call and how to react to different circumstances before they happen.

FIRST AID AT HOME
When an animal is wounded, the first step is to examine the extent of injury. There may be steps you can take to stabilize your pet at home before a ride to the veterinarian. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has laid out guidelines on how to treat your pet at home.

- **External bleeding:** The best way to alleviate external bleeding is to elevate the wound and apply pressure. This should cause the bleeding to slow down.
- **Choking.** If your pet is choking, insert your fingers in its mouth and see if you can

remove the blockage. Be careful when putting your fingers in your pet's mouth, especially when it is distressed by choking.

- **Heimlich Maneuver.** Sometimes the lodged object may be too far in to remove it by hand. If so, perform sharp abdominal thrusts until the object is in reach to dislodge it by hand.

HAVE A PLAN
You and your vet need to have a discussion about emergency situation protocol. Find out if the office offers a 24-hour service. If not, inquire about the hospital they use to refer emergency situations after regular office hours. Keep the emergency hospital's contact information readily available.

Most pet owners know their pets well enough to determine that something is amiss with them. Even if your vet doesn't perform treatment after hours, they should have an experienced person on call to take your phone call. These emergency operators will be able to determine if your pet is in need of immediate attention or if it can wait until reg-

ular office hours.
Of course, there are definite emergencies that require attention without a call. Some may include an experience with trauma such as a traffic incident. Bloody stool, seizures, a swollen abdomen or suspicions your pet has ingested a toxic substance should be considered immediate attention emergencies.



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Families learn life-saving techniques via Zoom

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

The so-called new normal involves students being taught via interactive Internet classes, adults doing their work long distance via computers and cardiopulmonary resuscitation trainers teaching families via Zoom.

And all because of a vicious virus that has infected at least a million Americans

and killed more than 55,000. In Minnesota, the Covid-19 virus caused the deaths of more than 300 people at last count.

People continue to find ingenious ways of coping, of making do and of living by that adage, “Where there’s a will there’s a way.”

That is the attitude of Rich Feneis, a Sartell resident and founder of Advocates for Health, a nonprofit organi-

zation that distributes automated external defibrillators, AED SaveStations, throughout Central Minnesota. A vital component of those stations is an awareness-raising campaign that includes CPR training, which is often crucial for cardiac-arrest victims until the AED devices can shock the heart back to life.

Two of the CPR trainers are Suzie Wistrom and Brianna Inkster, who own and operate the Specialized Health and Safety Co. in St. Cloud.

After a successful trial program, the training sessions are going well, thanks to the Zoom interactive computer application. Here’s how it works. Families sign up for the program, and each family is given a CPR dummy to use for training purposes. Each dummy is carefully swabbed with a disinfectant solution before it is delivered to a family’s house. Then time segments are scheduled, and Inkster and/or Wistrom teach the technique via Zoom. Entire families, including younger children, can learn CPR and how to use the automated external defibrillators. The dummy emits audible clicks when the CPR chest compressions are done properly.

So far, families have signed up in St. Joseph and Cold Spring, and soon the training will be extended to families in Sartell, Richmond and Waite Park. All of those cities have multiple AED SaveStations, thanks to so many involved, such as Feneis, St. Joseph’s Joel Vogel, the CentraCare Foundation, trainers, volunteers and fundraisers.

About 350,000 Americans die every year because of cardiac arrest.

“As I get older and I see friends and family pass away,” Feneis said, “the one thing I want to do is give people the chance to grow old with their spouses, watch



contributed photo
Suzie Wistrom does chest compressions on a “dummy” as part of a training session viewed by families via Zoom.

their kids and grandkids develop into fine human beings and feel how great life is. I can’t think of a better way to do that than by spreading the word about how AEDs save lives. They can turn a survival rate of 8 percent into a (cardiac arrest) survival rate of 75 percent or more.”

The one thing Feneis hears most often when the subject of AEDs comes up is this fear expressed by people: “I could never use that machine on anybody. I’d be afraid that I’d kill the person.”

Feneis is quick to put that fear to rest.

“You can’t kill anybody with an AED,” he tells them. “It’s not possible.”

What’s more, each AED has precise voice prompts that tell the user exactly, step by step, how to do the easy procedure.

Feneis, his organization and many others have worked hard to expand the number

of SaveStations throughout Central Minnesota and beyond. There have been meetings with state legislators and even with the Minnesota State High School League to teach CPR to students as part of the required curriculum for grades seven through 12.

The Covid-19 virus put a stop to a lot of things, Feneis noted, but he and others are finding creative, ingenious ways to keep life moving forward.

“Other businesses like restaurants are adjusting their business model to this new normal,” he said. “And we too are adjusting our business model, using media like Zoom, to educate people and potentially to save more lives.”

Any families interested in participating in the CPR remote-teaching program should contact Feneis at 320-260-4040.

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Slash your Credit Card Debt

Credit card debt is one of the hardest holes to dig out of when you’re focused on cleaning up your personal finances. Relatively low monthly payments can lull you into a space of simply paying the minimum while the high interest rates hurt your cash flow in the future.

But don’t fret. If you have credit card debt, you’re not the only one. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Americans held more than \$800 billion in credit card debt at the end of 2018. Taking control of your credit can be as simple as more carefully monitoring your spending and becoming disciplined in paying more than your minimum payments. Here are some easy ways to pay off your credit card debt faster and enjoy financial freedom sooner.



© ADOBE STOCK

BE STRATEGIC

It can be intimidating to tackle your credit card debt if you focus on the total amount due, especially if you racked up debt across multiple cards. When analyzing your debt to figure out where to start, break up your credit card

debt into smaller chunks. Then work with a financial adviser to decide which ones to tackle first.

HIGHER INTEREST RATES
Your best bet is generally to start paying down the debt with the highest interest rate.

These cards mean you’re paying the most amount of interest relative to the principal balance, making it harder and longer for you to dig out of debt on that particular card. Once you have paid off the credit card with the highest interest rate, move onto the

credit card with the next highest interest rate and so on until you are completely out of credit card debt.

LOOK FOR PROMOTIONS
Credit cards can be handy if you keep them under control and pay them off relative-

ly soon, especially if you’re running a business or trying to reserve more of your cash on hand. Look for cards with 0% financing promotions, just make sure you pay off the debt during the time period allowed or you could get stuck with big-time fees.





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With schools shut down, remodeling projects move ahead

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

Remodeling and renovation projects at Sartell-St. Stephen schools are moving ahead while the district's buildings are shut down, school board members learned at the April 20 board meeting.

At the old high school, where workers are remodeling it for middle school students, clean-

ers are moving through the building as the last work including flooring is being completed.

"We're ahead of where we thought we'd be," Superintendent Jeff Schwiebert said. And "there's no more mauve" in the updated building, he said.

At the current middle school, which will be renamed River-view Intermediate School, work on an addition will begin April 27. Interior work will start when

the school year ends or sooner now that the stay-at-home order will keep schools closed.

Shutdown orders across the nation have not created any delays on either project. The one exception is the company making bleachers for the gymnastics gym remodeling has shut down. Delivery of that equipment could be delayed until late August or September.



contributed photo
Glass doors lead to the media center.



contributed photo
Inside the media center.



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The choir room, along with other music rooms, was remodeled from what was the industrial technology area.



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contributed photo
Newly installed glass skylights in the main hall.

Public notice

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
SARTELL-ST. STEPHEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO 748
MARCH 23, 2020
DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER BOARD ROOM VIA
TELECONFERENCE

The regular school board meeting of Independent School District 748 was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Jeremy Snoberger. Members present: Snoberger. ercv Members present via teleconference: Jason Nies, vice chair; Amanda Byrd, clerk; Patrick Marushin, treasurer; Lesa Kramer, director; Pamela Raden, director and Jeff Schwiebert, superintendent. Members absent: none.

A motion was made by Raden and seconded by Kramer to APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. On a roll-call vote, the following voted in favor: Raden, Byrd, Kramer, Nies, Marushin and Snoberger. The following voted against: none. Motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by Nies and seconded by Marushin to APPROVE CONSENT ITEMS A-C AS PRESENTED BELOW. On a roll-call vote, the following voted in favor: Nies, Raden, Byrd, Marushin, Kramer and Snoberger. The following voted against: none. Motion carried 6-0.

a. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on Feb. 24, 2020

b. Checks in the amount of \$1,713,923.57 as presented:

General Fund	1,399,465.50
Food Service Fund	107,481.88
Transportation Fund	130,906.90
Community Service Fund	41,504.78
Capital Expenditure Fund	96,999.47
Summer Rec Agency Fund	8,795.00
Check numbers 177937 – 178161	

ACHs in the amount of \$7,944.87 as presented:

General Fund	7,369.67
Food Service Fund	309.00
Community Service Fund	66.20
ACH numbers 192000163-192000183	

Receipts in the amount of \$4,209,177.05 as presented:

General Fund	3,586,165.68
Food Service Fund	245,705.12
Community Service Fund	85,745.05
Capital Expenditure Fund	278,243.86
Building Fund	2,636.93
Debt Service Fund	31,852.25
Scholarship Trust	1,100.00
Internal Service Fund	8,190.19
Receipts 47312 - 47471	

Wire transfers in the amount of \$145,851.97 as presented:

General Fund	25,127.37
Food Service Fund	7,998.07
Community Service Fund	1,549.40
Internal Service Fund	111,177.13

Wire transfers 201900633-201900693

Building Fund Checks in the amount of \$2,211,184.35 as presented:

Building Fund	2,211,184.35
Check numbers 600909 to 600936	

c. Accept the resignation of Brooklyn Harren, DSC/Early Childhood, childcare attendant/para, 3/11/20; Esraa Kadh-
hem, SHS, media aid, 3/10/20; Marina Schroeder, SHS, para,
2/20/20; David Thompson, SMS, music teacher, 6/3/20. Ac-
cept the retirement of Patricia Cicharz, SMS, SPED teacher,
end of school year; Richard Cicharz, SMS, theater teacher,
end of school year; Julie Olson, PME, grade 4 teacher, end
of school year; Diane Omann, SMS, administrative assistant,
9/30/20; Marlyce Plante, DSC, food service secretary, 6/30/20;
Gary Rosin, SMS, grade 6 teacher, end of school year.

Superintendent Report: Jeff Schwiebert, superintendent
Schwiebert reported on an update that was given to
certified staff on building class sections and sizes. This in-

cludes 12.37 new classroom and specialists teachers and
4.35 new special education teachers which will result
in slightly smaller class sizes than other years. Student
start and end times for the 2020-2021 school year will
be posted on the website. On the topic of the COVID-19
pandemic, all staff have done a great job preparing for dis-
tance learning. PK-2 packets and grades 3-12 iPads and
MacBooks were sent home last week with the remain-
der going this Thursday and Friday and buses delivering
items later this week. Teachers are using Schoology and
Google Classroom and were asked to touch base personal-
ly with their students during spring break. More than 900
lunches and breakfasts were served Thursday and Friday.
No lunches will be provided by the District over spring
break, but local businesses are providing 250 meals each
day from the Middle School throughout the week. The
District is currently working with Kidstop to provide day-
care for children of emergen-
cy workers, with higher at-
tendance expected next week after spring break concludes.
Little Kids Connection is also open for staff children. Both
programs have plans in place to follow the CDC guidelines
for group gatherings. An up-
date was given on how Min-
nesota is working to provide
Free Appropriate Public Edu-
cation (FAPE) while distance
learning.

School Board Committee
Report:

Director Kramer reported
she spoke with Rep. Tim
O’Driscoll who said to reach
out to him if needed.

A motion was made by
Marushin and seconded by
Nies to APPROVE #1-16:

New Employees/Changes:

Lisa Burg, SHS, para,
\$16.42/hour, RIV, S1, 7
hours/day, replacing Mari-
na Schroeder, 3/16/2020;
Alicia Dammen, SHS, SPED,
\$67,165, BA30, Step Q, re-
placing Paula Roggeman,
8/26/2020; Kacey Dougherty,
Transportation, bus monitor,
\$17.76/hour, 2 hours/day,
corrected hours, 2/12/2020;
Carrie Gapinski, ORE, social
worker, \$61,825, MA, Step
J new position, 8/26/2020;
Sascha Hansen, SHS, prin-
cipal, \$133,000, replacing
Brenda Steve, 7/1/2020;
Mike Holman, SHS, ninth-
grade baseball, \$4,672
(9.5 percent), BA, Step I
(\$49,180), replacing Sean

Minder, 3/9/2020; Kaylee
Johnson, Early Childhood/
DSC, lead childcare atten-
dant, \$16.42/hour, RIII, S2,
8 hours/day, replacing Kadie
Mathews, 1/1/2020; Jerry
Kampa, SMS, seventh-grade
softball, \$1,853 (4.5 per-
cent), BA, Step A (\$41,178),
replacing Aaron Romportl,
3/2/2020; Ed Krafnick, SMS,
LTS para, \$16.42/hour, RIV,
S1, 7 hours/day, new po-
sition, 3/6/2020; Emma
Laudenbach, PME, speech
and language pathologist,
\$52,645, MA, Step A, new
position, 8/26/2020; Amy
Marohl, ORE (.8 FTE), PME
(.2 FTE), speech and lan-
guage pathologist, \$52,645,
MA, Step A, new position,
8/26/2020; Kali Olsen, SHS,
FCS, \$42,002, BA, Step A,
replacing Susan Symnaietz,
8/26/2020; Christina Taufen,
DSC/Early Childhood, LTS
para, \$16.42/hour, RIV, S1,
M – 3 hours/day, T/W/TH –
6 hours/day, new position,
3/3/2020; Kathryn Winzen-
burg, SHS, SHS musical-set
painter, \$927 (2.25 percent),
BA, Step A (\$41,178), re-
placing Luke B. Anderson,
3/3/2020.

Leaves of Absence:

David Gerads, ORE, custo-
dian, LOA, 3/14/20-10/22/20,
Emily Mitzel, ORE, teacher,
LOA, 3/30/20-4/17/20.

On a roll-call vote, the fol-
lowing voted in favor: Kram-
er, Raden, Nies, Marushin,
Byrd and Snoberger. The fol-
lowing voted against: none.
Motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by
Kramer and seconded by Ra-
den to APPROVE ALL MEET-
INGS OF THE SARTELL-ST.
STEPHEN ISD 748 WILL BE
CONDUCTED IN ACCOR-
DANCE WITH MINNESOTA
STATUES 13D.021 – MEET-
INGS BY TELEPHONE OR
OTHER ELECTRONIC MEANS
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE,
DUE TO THE FEDERAL AND
STATE EMERGENCY DECLA-
RATIONS AND GUIDANCE
ABOUT LIMITING PER-
SON-TO-PERSON CONTACT
DUE TO THE COVID-19
(CORONAVIRUS) PANDEM-
IC. On a roll-call vote, the fol-
lowing voted in favor: Kram-
er, Raden, Nies, Marushin,
Byrd and Snoberger. The fol-
lowing voted against: none.
Motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by Nies
and seconded by Marushin
to APPROVE ADOPTION OF
POLICY 535 SERVICE AN-
IMALS. On a roll-call vote,
the following voted in favor:
Byrd, Raden, Nies, Marush-
in, Kramer and Snoberger.
The following voted against:

none. Motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by
Marushin and seconded by
Raden to APPROVE CALL
FOR BIDS RIVERVIEW IN-
TERMEDIATE FURNITURE.
On a roll-call vote, the fol-
lowing voted in favor: Ra-
den, Byrd, Nies, Marushin,
Kramer and Snoberger. The
following voted against:
none. Motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by
Kramer and seconded by Byrd
to APPROVE RESOLUTION
OF REDUCTION IN PRO-
GRAMS AND POSITIONS. On
a roll-call vote, the following
voted in favor: Raden, Byrd,
Kramer, Marushin, Nies and
Snoberger. The following
voted against: none. Motion
carried 6-0.

A motion was made by
Marushin and seconded by
Raden to APPROVE SARTELL
PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION
CONTRACT. On a roll-call
vote, the following voted in
favor: Kramer, Raden, Byrd,
Marushin, Nies and Snoberg-
er. The following voted
against: none. Motion car-
ried 6-0.

Schedule Work Session
and Committee Meetings:

Board Work Session –
Wednesday, April 1 – District
Services Center @ 6:30 p.m.

Future Board Meeting –
Monday, April 20 – St. Ste-
phen City Hall @ 6:30 p.m.

After discussion on the
future board meeting lo-
cation a motion was made
by Snoberger and second-
ed by Nies to MOVE THE
LOCATION OF THE APRIL
20, 2020 REGULAR BOARD
MEETING FROM ST. STE-
PHEN CITY HALL TO THE
DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER
VIA TELECONFERENCE. On
a roll-call vote, the follow-
ing voted in favor: Nies, Ra-
den, Byrd, Marushin, Kramer
and Snoberger. The following
voted against: none. Motion
carried 6-0.

Committee Assignments
were reviewed.

A motion to ADJOURN
THE MEETING AT 7:25 p.m.
was made by Nies and sec-
onded by Marushin. On a
roll-call vote, the following
voted in favor: Kramer, Ra-
den, Nies, Marushin, Byrd
and Snoberger. The following
voted against: none. Motion
carried 6-0.

/s/ Amanda Byrd, clerk
Publish: May 1, 2020

Opinion

Shared emotions, spirit quarantined too

Our View

Threats could sink upper Mississippi

Sometimes we don't notice even the largest problem – even when it's right before our eyes.

The advocacy group, American Rivers, named the upper Mississippi River running through Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa, as the most endangered river in the country.

Climate change is driving more intense rain storms, leading to more frequent and prolonged flooding in the Upper Midwest, according to the group's report.

The solution, in addition to addressing the larger climate-change threat, is better watershed management that gives the river room to flood safely, restoring habitat and involving communities in decisions about land use. The ranking is based on the significance of the river to people and wildlife, the magnitude of the threat and the need for critical decision-making during the next 12 months.

The report finds the current situation puts people, habitat and infrastructure at risk – and communities along the upper Mississippi are dangerously unprepared. These risks are greatly exacerbated by two centuries of shortsighted floodplain development that cut the river off from hundreds of thousands of acres of its floodplain, constricting the upper Mississippi River.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Last year, record-breaking flooding along the Mississippi and its tributaries swallowed towns, farms, roads, bridges, levees and dams, causing more than \$6 billion in damage."

American Rivers' report says "The 2019 flood along the upper Mississippi River broke records, not only in terms of flood levels, but also in duration — homes, farms, roads and businesses were underwater for more than 100 days. The flood came on the heels of three consecutive years of record-breaking rains across the country.

"The magnitude of major flood events in the Mississippi basin has increased by 20 percent over the past 500 years. Much of that increase has been caused by the combination of river engineering and climate change. Throughout the basin, 40 to 90 percent of the land has been developed and almost every river has been dammed, leveed and/or constricted."

Much of the watershed has been developed to enhance agricultural productivity so drainage moves water off the land as quickly as possible.

The river generates \$345 billion annually, provides more than 643 million gallons of water per day for domestic and industrial uses along its 133-county corridor and supports a \$673 million shipping industry.

The economic gains come with a cost.

The upper Mississippi River lands have been heavily developed to support agriculture and people. Loss of the region's natural floodplains and diverse river habitats is a major contributor to the decline of numerous federally protected species. The Mississippi is a globally significant flyway used by hundreds of species of birds and provides unique habitat for fish, mussels, reptiles, amphibians and mammals.

Even with this damage, the Mississippi's natural resources are able to support a vibrant economy. Tourism and outdoor recreation along the river generate roughly \$25 billion annually and support more than 420,000 jobs.

Unfortunately, efforts to develop the watershed study and flood risk management plan are already threatened by lack of public engagement and lack of adequate funding.

American Rivers urges people to support an integrated water management plan that will prioritize natural and nature-based solutions to protect communities from flooding and deliver a wide range of benefits.

This is the 13th year since 1991 the upper Mississippi has been named one of America's Most Endangered Rivers.

It's time to act so next year, our river is off the list.

With friends and family out of work, sick or even dying, writing about something as seemingly trivial as the loss of games and sports appears out of place, if not insensitive.

Now as the grass is turning green and the stay-at-home routine enters its second month, the loss of sports can't be ignored.

Opening golf courses two weeks ago reminded me about what's not open – baseball diamonds, soccer fields and tennis courts.

The missing diversions of sports, so important to many of us as participants and spectators, took another hit last week when the Minnesota State High School League canceled all spring sports including state tournaments.

The same week, the Minnesota Baseball Association indefinitely postponed the amateur baseball season. But the association says, "Once the governor says go, our games can start the next day." No spring training needed for these guys.

As a long-ago high school sports participant and a not-so-long ago parent of high school athletes, I know the loss of the spring season for high school athletes is a huge disappointment.

For seniors, the loss is particularly sad for many of them who know that high school is their last chance to play competitive team sports. The hope for one last shot at competing in a state tournament quickly vanished.

Minnesota's spring high school sports season is always a gamble be-

Who but a nasty grinch would not want the American economy to re-open and thrive like gangbusters?

We all want that to happen. Unfortunately, there's a problem – a highly contagious invisible killer dubbed Covid-19. It's not done killing yet, and only those who indulge in magical thinking believe it's going to vanish anytime soon. I have another phrase for "magical thinking" – "stubborn stupidity."

There are terrible stresses on businesses and employees hurting deeply because of slow-downs, shut-downs, partial closures and stay-at-home isolations. It's no wonder why many are desperate – frantic even – to re-start economic forces. But doing that too soon could bring on a wave of deaths even worse than the devastation in New York. First we have to get reliable data on how many people are infected and how many are unknowingly harboring the virus and infecting others.

Those who recently demonstrated in Minnesota, Michigan and elsewhere ought to be ashamed of themselves. They foolishly castigated governors for the shut-downs, accusing them of purposely damaging the economy and "taking away our freedoms."

Among the demonstrators were those who harbor conspiracy theories as toxic as the virus itself. The main theory goes like this: Months ago, Democrats and the media hyped up an ordinary cold/flu virus as some new vicious bug. It was a hoax; it was a plot to destroy America from with-

Mike Knaak
Editor



cause late snowstorms or cold snaps often scramble the schedule. But most athletes never imagined an entire season gone.

Central Minnesota is a hot bed of town team baseball. Just about every Stearns County town fields a team among the 300 or so teams throughout Minnesota. A summer Sunday afternoon just is not right without a game.

In my long career as a newspaper photographer, I enjoyed photographing the action and antics of amateur players. Throughout the years, I shot generations of the same family playing ball. I couldn't believe I got paid to do such enjoyable work.

My sports photo assignments included two World Series, a Super Bowl and Stanley Cup, but many of my memorable photos are from the state amateur tournament.

Our daughters played school and club sports all through school offering my spouse and me a year-round schedule of soccer, volleyball, basketball and softball. (Until you've watched a junior high softball game, you really can't appreciate the wisdom of the 10-run rule.)

When our daughters went on to college, we again became big-time sports fans with season tickets to Gopher football and Minnesota United soccer

in. These hoaxsters wanted to shut down the economy in order to make Trump look like a bumbling incompetent know-nothing instead of the wisest, most patriotic of all presidents who finally told it like it is and Made America Great Again.

As the nation tumbles to chaos, these rabble-rousers further claim, the crisis will be an excuse to take away God-given American rights, including – God forbid! – the right to own any and all kinds of guns. And soon – horrors! – America will become a dictatorship run by radical-liberal elites who are so evil that abortion might become mandatory and hunting illegal.

In the meantime, back here in the real world, nurses, doctors and medical technicians are fighting a tireless, courageous battle to keep dying people alive. Many of those medical personnel still have to beg for personal protection equipment, and some became infected and died. As someone said, those selfless medical "soldiers" are fighting a war at the front lines, often without weapons. They deserve our deepest respect and our utmost gratitude, risking their own lives and the lives of their loved ones to help

Dennis Dalman
Reporter



and a package of Twins tickets.

Now the Twins and Loons are sidelined. Their schedules still hang on our refrigerator, a daily reminder of what we're missing. Even the Gopher football season is a question mark.

In the past few weeks, I've read about plans to restart the summer sports season. There's speculation that baseball games could be played in empty stadiums with fans only watching on television. Or maybe, "quarantine" all teams in a location with clusters of parks such as Florida or Arizona, realigning the leagues to match available stadiums and playing a shortened, televised season. Instead of home-plate umps, technology would be used to call balls and strikes and maintain social distancing.

The PGA plans to restart its tour June 7 with the Charles Schwab Challenge in Fort Worth Texas. The golfers will play without fans on the course. I'm bored to death watching golf on television and I rarely tune in. Rather than watching golf on TV without a gallery, I'd have more fun sitting on a hill at Blackberry Ridge watching the action. At least I'd be able to catch some sun and fresh air.

What will it take to open up the stadiums to thousands of fans? Will we be sitting three seats apart and wearing masks? What about eating hot dogs and drinking beer?

Don't view those concerns as entirely trivial. For many of us, sports offer the community connection and shared experience we're missing, especially as the grass grows green.

people in such isolation, anguish and pain.

That is why those demonstrators, those scapegoaters, those peddlers of toxic theories should be so ashamed of themselves. Clustered together in streets, they were shouting their fool heads off. They blasted Gov. Tim Walz for his guidelines and hurled insults and threats at Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. "Lock her up!" they jeered. Sound familiar?

One young woman with a smarmy grin on her face held up a placard that proclaimed: "I will NOT comply!" Another sign said, "Hoax! It's just a common cold virus!"

What's so ironic is many of those demonstrators who scoff at social distancing (it's part of the plot, you see), just might have infected one another. If some become gravely ill, will they change their minds, will they adjust their attitudes and will they apologize to those struggling so hard to keep them and all Americans safe? Governors' guidelines have already helped prevent a wildfire spread of this modern plague. Those guidelines must continue, step by step, until the economy can begin safely to revive and to thrive again.

What's happening to the economy is bleak to be sure. But to claim Covid-19 is a hoax and to shout in the midst of a contagion for an immediate re-opening of the economy is not only ill-advised – it is completely irresponsible, not to mention stubbornly stupid, magical thinking.

Mahjong

from page 4

The game is replete with strange names. Simples, for example, are numbered tiles. There are “honor” categories of “winds” and “dragons,” and there are “bam” tiles, short for “bamboo” and “eyes” (two identical tiles). The game also involves the four directions, the four seasons and four flowers (plum, chrysanthemum, orchid, bamboo).

To an observer, it appears to be a mysterious ritual. “Pongs, kongs and chows” are three combinations of tiles. A pong is three identical tiles; a kong is four identical tiles and a chow is a meld of three tiles in a specific numerical sequence. “Stealing” in mahjong is when a player takes a discarded tile from another player.

In California, Chris Trout lived in a mountain town (Idlewild), owned an art gallery and was marketing director for a community center. She now does volunteer mentor work for the Mayo Clinic online, a task she took on after her husband had a brush with cancer and was a Mayo Clinic patient.

For most of her life, Linda Ganshert was a stay-at-home mom.

Both Ganshert, Trout and many other women have found a new, nice, comfy niche – having a ball playing mahjong together at the Sartell Community Center.

This article was written prior to the state quarantine guidelines. As with all social gatherings, this event is on hiatus until further notice due to the Covid-19 social distancing rules.

Governor Walz, thanks for leading

Leona Wieland, Sartell

Dear Governor, thank you for leading and discerning what’s best for Minnesotans.

Don’t go negative as the challenges are coming in. This pandemic calls for a paradigm shift – that all leaders be enlightened to take stock of what’s wrong with our present systems, from healthcare to living wages, renewable energy jobs to immigration reform.

PRO-LIFE needs to PROTECT LIVES, for if we truly respect lives, we’ll do what’s necessary for upgrading what individuals and families go through on a daily basis, that equality, truth and justice be reinstated in our state and country.

Trump is the Moses of our time

Nancy Schramel, Sartell

President Trump is the best president we’ve ever had! Why don’t you like President Trump and happy American people who wear Make America Great Again hats?

He kept his promises, works

day and night for us and doesn’t want to be paid for it.

He puts the American people before himself.

He is a very generous and a great leader.

He is the Moses of our time. He has many friends and many enemies because he is so good. It is not his fault we have the coronavirus. It is worldwide. Because of President Trump he is working with the doctors to help us and more masks are being made and ventilators because of his leadership. He sent out the National Guard to send out the Comfort and Mercy ships etc.

President Trump will win the next election because of his faithfulness to God and the United States of America.

President Trump asks for prayers to end the coronavirus and to pray for him.

God bless our great President Donald Trump.

Stop the liberal rhetoric

Craig R Stowell, Sartell

So once again reading the Sartell Newsleader, enjoying the article about the new arena...

Interesting note about con-

trolling the growth of Sartell and how to increase the medical Dr’s Park area, then bam like being hit in the face with a baseball bat is the opinion of the master of hate Mr Dalman.

I am so sick of seeing you spew the anger you have toward your extreme liberal views, your twisted facts and again more name calling and anger at the president.

I understand you would be happier living in a socialist society but we are not there.

All I ask is to please please please stop with the rhetoric week after week, we get it!! Your life with other people who have different views than you is miserable, but don’t ruin the paper by spewing hate time after time.

Find some peace somewhere.

Coronavirus drives switch to plant meat

Serge Nesbitt, Sartell

Massive slaughterhouse closures are driving U.S. consumers to plant-based meat products, as sick workers pay the price.

Tyson Foods, JBS USA, and Smithfield Foods, the largest meat processors, have closed

Community Calendar

Monday, May 11
Sartell City Council, 6 p.m., City Hall, 125 Pinecone Road N.
Sartell Farmers’ Market, 3-6 p.m., Bernick’s Arena.

Tuesday, May 12
Le Sauk Township Board, 7 p.m., Township Hall, 220

Fourth Ave. S., Sartell.

Saturday, May 16
Community Meal, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 1107 Pinecone Road S., Sartell. Free.

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SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES | DO YOUR PART

Volunteer your Time

If you're in good health, have no pre-existing conditions, and local and state regulations allow, consider volunteering your time to helping local businesses. It depends on your area, but some roles you might fill include child care, delivery driver or health care.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES
Some businesses are counted as essential services and remain open even if others are ordered to shut down. If you're out of work right now, this is a great place to look for a job. You can also volunteer your services. A good place to volunteer would be a place that you love, that is small and is doing something to help others during the pandemic. Arizona Together is an initiative that formed in Arizona to, among other things, pair volunteers with businesses. These volunteers may help in a food warehouse or deliver medications to people who shouldn't leave their homes.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE
Many people can't go to work without a safe place to leave their children. Churches and other organizations are stepping up to fill this gap so



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that people providing essential services, including those on the front line of the pandemic fight, such as doctors and nurses, can continue doing their vital work. The city of Chicago and Sittercity are working to pair experienced child care workers with health care work-

ers who need their services.

TECH HELP
More businesses and consumers are relying on technology more than ever, but most of them lack the experience to set up and run some of the tech they need. If you have the

skills, particularly with video conferencing or streaming, this is a great way to lend a hand. Maybe even remotely, depending on the job.

MANNING SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAILS OR VOICEMAIL
With in-person contact out

of the question, many businesses are dealing with an avalanche of social media messages, emails and voicemails. Lend a hand for a few hours just fielding questions so that your favorite small business owner can get to work doing what they do best.

Ask for

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