

Reaching Everybody!

Newsleaders

Friday, Sept. 4, 2020
Volume 25, Issue 18
Est. 1995

Town Crier

Farmers' Market open Labor Day

The Sartell Farmers' Market will be open from 3-6 p.m. Labor Day Monday at Bernick's Ice Arena. The season is in full swing and you will find great vegetables including corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, winter squash and much more. In addition to the vegetables you will find salsa, caramel corn, fudges, honey and much more. We are open each Monday until mid October.

Lions clean-up slated for Sept. 19

The annual Sartell Lions Spring Clean-Up will be held from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, Sept. 19 at the Riverview Intermediate School parking lot, 627 Third Ave. N. Pick-ups available on Saturday with early scheduled appointment; call Cody at 320-828-6620 for more details. No paints, solvents, oils or chemicals. No gas-operated refrigerators. See ad on page 2.

Meetings moved to Community Center

Because of construction at Sartell City Hall, all Sartell City Council and commission meetings will be moving to the Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S., during September and October.

Kids Fighting Hunger kicks off Sept. 16

Kids Fighting Hunger Food Packaging kicks off with an event at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16, at C4 Welding, 11 Industrial Blvd., Sauk Rapids. Social distancing will be ensured while packaging. Families may pack at one packaging station. Masks must be worn. The warehouse is empty and many partners need food for a variety of reasons including Covid-19. Visit unitedwayhelps.org to register or contact Mary Krippner at 320-223-7991 mkrippner@unitedwayhelps.org or Cathy Wogen, Kids Fighting Hunger, at cathy.wogen@gmail.com.

List your event in our calendar

If your group or organization is active again after being idle because of coronavirus, send us your event information for our calendar. Send information including time, date, place and a short explanation to news@thenewsleaders.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 recent contributors! Any amount is greatly appreciated.

School leaders watch Covid case rate

by Mike Knaak
editor@thenewsleaders.com

With Sartell-St. Stephen schools set to open Sept. 8 using a mix of in-person and hybrid learning, school administrators are closely watching the Covid-19 case numbers in Stearns County.

"The best we can do is encourage our neighbors, particularly this Labor Day weekend, to keep masks on and social distance," Superintendent Jeff Schwiebert told school board members during a working session Sept. 2. "That's the No. 1 thing that will determine where we're going to be in the next couple of weeks."

Schwiebert updated board members for what will happen when students return.

When classes begin Sept. 8, pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade students will attend in person while students in grades six through 12 will follow a hybrid model, alternating

Plan • page 2



photo by Mike Knaak

Principal Zach Dingmann (right) and Assistant Principal Brittney Shoephoerster (far left) greet students and parents as they arrive for open house Sept. 1 at Riverview Intermediate School. In-person classes for the school's 900 grade three through grade five students begin Tuesday, Sept. 8. Students arriving by bus will enter the east doors and students dropped off by car will enter the west doors. The Riverview mural was painted by art teacher Erin Huot.

Police, fire move to space designed for the future

by Mike Knaak
editor@thenewsleaders.com

Sartell police officers and firefighters are finding more space, new technology and a design for the future in their new home on Pinecone Road.

Not all the boxes have been unpacked and a few details need finishing, but both departments are now operating out of the new Public Safety Facility.

In addition to more space – the new police garage is about the same size as the old station and firefighters can now board their trucks without squeezing between the walls and vehicles – a number of new features improve citizens' safety.

Before entering the building, visitors find two parking spaces labeled Safe Exchange Zone Parking. For people handing off a child to satisfy a custody agreement or two people wary of a



photo by Mike Knaak

There is plenty of space for all the fire department's vehicles.

transaction first set up online, the spaces offer a 24-hour-a-day safe place that's well lit and under video surveillance. The zone is the only one in the state.

Just inside the front door, there's a safe room where someone who feels threatened can seek refuge. After entering the

safe room, the person can lock the door and pick up a phone for direct link to dispatch. Police Chief Jim Hughes said at the old station, people escaping a threatening situation would wait in a car in the parking lot until an officer arrived.

While the exterior doors lead-

ing to the safe room are always open, doors leading to the lobby are open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday.

The large lobby separates the police side of the building from the fire department spaces.

A squad room for officers anchors the police space with offices, a muster room, conference rooms and specially designed rooms for investigations and evidence processing around the side. The department's mission statement covers one wall.

The police department includes 21 sworn officers, one community service officer, 2.5 clerical staff and 14 reserves.

To investigate the increasing number of internet and digital crimes, there's a secure room with stand-alone computers to gather video, audio and phone-dump evidence for crimes such as child pornography.

Space • page 5

Ground broken for new arena in Sartell

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

After several years of planning, fine-tuning and fundraising, a groundbreaking ceremony took place Aug. 26 in Sartell for a new sports arena – a private/city partnership project.

As attendees looked on and applauded, a long row of par-

ticipants turned over spadefuls of dirt on the site of the project, just south of the Bernick's Arena in Pinecone Regional Park.

Those who attended were city officials, including Sartell Mayor Ryan Fitzthum; members of the Sartell Youth Recreation Center Association; Jeff Schwiebert, superintendent of the Sartell-St. Stephen schools;

project volunteers; representatives of GLT Architects (designer of the building); Bradbury Stamm Construction (the builder) and Legacy Building Solutions; members of the Sartell Youth Hockey Association; and officials from Scheels Sporting Goods, Regional Diagnostic Radiologists and Bernick's Beverage. The latter three are major

contributors to the project and were granted naming rights. The new arena will be known as Regional Diagnostic Radiologists All-Sports Arena. The name of the site that includes both arenas, outside areas and parking lot will be the Scheels Athletic Complex. The current arena, built in 2003, will retain

Ground • page 4

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Plan

from front page

in-person instruction with distance learning.

When students enter a building, they will pass by a scanner to check if they are running a temperature. Students detected with a high temperature will be checked by a nurse.

Hand sanitizer has been delivered to each classroom and each building has a number of free-standing sanitizer stations.

If the school learns a student has a positive Covid-19 test, public health officials will be notified, and they will decide who needs to be quaran-

ted. If an elementary student tests positive, it's possible an entire class would be asked to quarantine. Health officials, not the school district, would make that decision and contact parents.

Gov. Tim Walz announced on July 30 a formula for school districts to use to determine learning models. The key item in this metric is the number of new county Covid-19 cases in the past 14 days. To open all grades to in-person classes, the rate needs to be nine or fewer cases.

For hybrid learning grades, students will be divided into two groups. One group will meet in school Monday and Tuesday and use distance learning on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The second group will meet in school Wednesday and Thursday and use distance learning on Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

School districts may choose stricter options but not less restrictive plans than determined by case numbers.

Once school starts, every two weeks the administration will decide the model for the next two weeks. Families can expect a communication every other Thursday, beginning Sept. 17, for the anticipated learning model for the following two weeks. If a more ur-

gent need arises, the school district will promptly shift to a more restrictive model.

Families also have the option of participating in a distance-learning format. About 8 percent of parents want full-time distance learning for their students. About 30 students per class opted for all-distance learning, except for 10th-graders, where 55 students signed up.

Schwiebert said school operations could change if a significant number of students, teachers or bus drivers test positive. Finding replacements to keep classes open and buses running could be a challenge. Even though case numbers might not exceed the limit for in-person or hybrid learning, the district may have to move to all-distance learning if too many staff and students end up quarantined.

A decision on how and if winter activities can proceed won't be made by the Minnesota State High School League until late October.

An outline of the learning models can be found in the district's Safe Learning Plan at www.sartell.k12.mn.us/safe-learningplan.

Masks will be required in schools, district buildings and buses for students, staff and visitors.

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Publisher/Owner
Janelle Von Pinnon

Designer
Nina Henne

Editor
Mike Knaak

Assignment Editor
Carolyn Bertsch

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.

1608 11th Ave SE, St. Cloud, MN 56304

mailing address: 1622 11th Ave SE, St. Cloud, MN 56304

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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 tricitycrimestoppers.org. Crime Stoppers offers rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for a crime.

Aug. 18

10 a.m. Escort. Second Street N. An officer escorted a funeral procession to St. Francis Xavier Parish Cemetery.

Aug. 19

10:30 a.m. Alarm. 13th Avenue N. A caller reported an audible burglar alarm going off at their home. An officer found a child in the home opened a window that tripped the alarm.

Aug. 20

1:45 p.m. Juvenile problem. Victory Loop. A resident reported neighborhood children throwing rocks at vehicles. An officer surveyed the area but did not see anything. The officer told the complainant to call

back if they saw anyone throwing rocks.

Aug. 21

3:15 p.m. Collision. Seventh Street. N. An officer was dispatched to a collision. The officer verified no one was injured and assisted those involved with the exchange of their information, took photos and completed a state crash report.

Aug. 22

4 p.m. Agency assist. Hwy. 15 and CR 1. A caller reported a driver blow through several stop lights and signs and also said the vehicle was involved in a hit-and-run. An officer checked the area but did not find anything. The information was forwarded to the state patrol.

Aug. 23

1:30 p.m. Assist person. Fifth Street N. A caller reported a possible water main break in their front yard. The officer contacted city maintenance.

Aug. 24

6:45 p.m. Traffic stop. Benton

Drive and First Street NE. An officer witnessed a vehicle fail to signal, a white light to the rear and mud-flap violations. The officer found the driver did not have a valid license in possession nor did the driver have insurance. The officer located a capped hypodermic needle in the driver side door along with other hypodermic needles and pills. The vehicle was towed, and the driver was cited and released.

Aug. 25

8 a.m. Extra patrol. Third Street N. A caller reported a suspicious vehicle and requested extra patrol in the area.

Aug. 26

4:30 p.m. Driving complaint. Grizzly Lane. A caller reported a vehicle failed to stop for a stop sign and appeared to be speeding. The caller provided a description and an officer talked with the father of the driver

about his son's driving conduct.

Aug. 27

4:15 p.m. Agency assist. Third Street N. An officer checked on a deputy who was not answering status checks. While the officer was in route to the location, the deputy notified dispatch they were OK.

Aug. 28

8 p.m. Suspicious smell. Brianna Drive. An officer checked a residence with a potential natural gas leak. The complainant stated the smell "comes and goes." The officer looked for the source but was cleared prior to finding the issue.

Aug. 29

9:15 p.m. Traffic stop. Division Street and Waite Avenue S. An officer working a Toward Zero Deaths shift stopped a vehicle with no headlights. The officer found the driver did not have insurance. The officer cited the

driver for no proof of insurance and told the driver to fix the headlights. Toward Zero Deaths is a state of Minnesota program with the goal of cutting down on hazardous driving.

Aug. 30

10:40 p.m. Juvenile problem. Sandstone Court. Officers were dispatched to a neighborhood regarding four juveniles ringing doorbells and running away. Juveniles matching the description given by the complainant were found in the area. Officers took them home and discussed the issue with their parents.

Aug. 31

6:50 p.m. Medical. CR 120. An officer and Mayo Ambulance were dispatched to a business regarding a complainant who was suffering severe stomach pain in the parking lot. Mayo ambulance was on scene when the officer arrived and was advised he could clear.



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m MINNESOTA **STAY SAFEMN**



photo by Mike Knaak

A line of participants with shovels breaks ground for the new arena in Sartell. It will be known as the Regional Diagnostic Radiologists All-Sports Arena, after one of its major contributors. From left to right are Jeff Schwiebert, Sartell-St. Stephen School District superintendent; Dr. Brad Hilger of Regional Diagnostic Radiologists; Kevin Murphy of Scheels All Sports; Brian Zimny, president of the Sartell Youth Recreation Center Association; Cory Oberg, president of the Sartell Youth Hockey Association; Jason Bernick of Bernick's Beverage; and Sartell Mayor Ryan Fitzthum.

Ground

from front page

its name of Bernick's Arena. Bernick's Beverage renewed its naming rights.

After the ceremony, Brian Zimny, president of the Sartell Youth Recreation Center Association, gave some comments to

the Sartell Newsleader.

"It's great to reach this point," he said. "A lot of people put in a lot of time, work and discipline to make it a success. Thousands of hours of work, loads of talent and millions of dollars were raised to get to this point."

The new arena, estimated to cost about \$6 million, will be an enclosed facility with a

fabric roof. For four months of the year, a refrigerated ice sheet will be used for hockey play and practice. During eight months of each year, there will be artificial turf inside, making it suitable for a variety of other sports, as well as special events such as trade shows, arts-and-crafts exhibits, concerts and other kinds of events.

Supporters of the project

have long emphasized it would be a recreational and economic boost to Sartell and its residents. Detractors, on the other hand, have criticized the proposal as being too exclusive to one interest group (hockey enthusiasts) and thus city money, such as regional sales-tax revenue, should not be given for the project.

The new arena, like the current one, will receive its operating/maintenance revenue mainly from space rentals – many of them from the school district, as well as rental fees for special events, sports and nonsports.

Proponents, however, noted repeatedly at council meetings

the new arena will be used eight months of the year for a wide variety of other sports and community events – thus, they said, it is not “hockey exclusive.”

So far, the SYRC and the Sartell Youth Hockey Association have raised about \$3 million in donations and long-term pledges for athletic-complex expansion, according to project planners. Another phase of fundraising – a community fundraising drive – will begin this month, as announced at the groundbreaking ceremony. The community-drive organizers hope to raise the rest of what they'll need – about \$500,000.



contributed photo

Summer, swimming, smiles and love. What more could one ask for on a beautiful Sartell day?

Chalk artists share joy with others

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

On the morning of Aug. 31, the day dawned with such beauty that Maureen Putnam of Sartell decided to take time to smell the roses, so to speak.

She gathered together a small group of art enthusiasts to share their talents – and plenty of joy – by creating a huge chalk mural. It was also a way to thumb their noses at all the stresses and worries raised by that nasty villain, COVID-19, and to have

a happy blast doing something fun for the sheer joy of it.

First, the group checked with Sartell City Hall to see if they would be allowed to draw their mural on the parking lot of the Bernick's Arena. Permission was granted.

“We gathered in the parking lot where a wonderful titled slab of concrete awaited our artistic vision,” Putnam said.

They decided to create a Minnesota scene. It was a veritable blooming scene of all things Minnesotan: kids jumping off a dock, loons, deer, bears, fish, flowers, butterflies, trees – all surrounding by a swirling swoon of hearts. It took them almost four hours to create their pastoral masterpiece.

“Even as we were working, we were excited by the questions and smiles from passers-by,” Putnam said. “We chatted and said, ‘It's working. It's helping people to take a moment to pause and smile.’”

The artists included Putnam and daughter Sophie Speckard; Shania Hirdler; Chris Klimpel; Sophie Lathe; Serein Tomlinson and her two little boys, Milo and Bentley; and Jenifer Rindels and daughter Ashlyn.

“It was a fun day of drawing, coloring, eating snacks and visiting that included friends from age 4 to 54,” Putnam noted.

Save the Dates:
Saturday and Sunday
September 19-20, 2020

We're having a Virtual Festival!

Virtual Franny Flyer 5k

Registration and details can be found at www.stfrancissartell.org

Online Silent Auction

This year we are hosting our silent auction online through 32Auctions. We are currently accepting completed baskets or large items that are new or like new for the auction.

The auction will go live Friday, September 11th at 5:00 pm and end at noon Sunday, September 20th.

Contact:

Bonnie Nies
320-252-7838, bonnienies@yahoo.com

Candice Koopmeiners
320-654-1350, candicesews@hotmail.com

Big Ticket Raffle

We hope to do our best this year to make the raffle successful. In order to do that, we need you to pick your tickets up from the gathering space starting the weekend of August 21st.

More information to be communicated through FlockNote Messaging.

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Space

from front page

Evidence handling also benefited from a high-tech upgrade. Showing off the evidence room, Hughes pointed to an old metal storage cabinet, more suited to holding copier paper and other office supplies than crime-scene items. That's all that remains of the equipment from the old station. New evidence lockers provide secure storage and a secure adjoining room is equipped with moving shelves and room to store evidence big and small.

Another new device dries wet or blood-stained evidence, such as clothing, while another unit is used for analyzing narcotics.

Near the garage, there's a booking area with a separate entrance and three holding cells for handling people in custody such as DWI cases. In the old station, suspects would be placed in offices, each watched by an officer. The facility allows Sartell officers to book and release offenders without a trip to the Stearns County Jail in downtown St. Cloud.

Shared spaces such as a break room, large conference room and exercise room connect the police offices with the fire-department quarters.

The main conference room can seat up to 80 people for training and can also be divided into two smaller rooms. It can also be used as the emergency-operations center to direct major events. A

smaller conference room off to the side provides space for commanders to communicate without the noise and distractions of the large room.

The departments also share a fitness room with weights and aerobic exercise equipment.

"Health and wellness is important to us," Hughes said.

For firefighters, there's a training tower with stairways that can be filled with smoke and water. Next to the large truck garage, each firefighter's gear hangs in a locker, ready to go. A room with windows on three sides juts out from the east side of the building so fire commanders can direct responses via radio and computer as well as have a clear view of firefighters and trucks entering and leaving the building.

Firefighters were looking forward to celebrating the new building and the department's 100th anniversary, but Covid-19 put those plans on hold for now.

Sartell residents hoping to tour the building will have to wait a little longer, but Hughes says there's a video in the works that will give citizens a virtual tour.

Even with all these upgrades and improvements, the building is under budget. At the end of July, the project is \$474,046 under the \$13.12 million approved amount, but not all the bills are in yet.

Watch for more Public Safety Facility photos in the Sept. 18 edition.



2020 Sabres Varsity Fall Sports

Girls Soccer

9/08/20	5:30 p.m.	Rocori	Away
9/15/20	5 p.m.	Sauk Rapids-Rice	Home
9/17/20	7 p.m.	St. Cloud Apollo	Away
9/22/20	5 p.m.	St. Cloud Tech	Home
9/24/20	7 p.m.	Willmar	Away
9/29/20	5 p.m.	Bemidji	Home
10/02/20	7 p.m.	Moorhead	Away
10/08/20	.	TBD	TBD

Girls Swimming and Diving

9/15/20	6 p.m.	Sauk Rapids-Rice	Away
9/17/20	6 p.m.	St. Cloud Apollo	Home
9/22/20	6 p.m.	St. Cloud Tech	Away
9/24/20	6 p.m.	Willmar	Home
9/29/20	6 p.m.	Bemidji	Away
10/01/20	6 p.m.	Moorhead	Home
10/06/20	6 p.m.	Brainerd	Home
10/08/20	6 p.m.	Rocori	Home
10/13/20	6 p.m.	TBD	Home

Girls and Boys Cross Country

9/04/20	10 a.m.	Brainerd	Away
9/10/20	4 p.m.	Sauk Rapids-Rice	Away
9/17/20	4 p.m.	Moorhead	Away
9/24/20	4 p.m.	Fergus Falls, Moorhead	Home
10/08/20	4 p.m.	Willmar, Rocori	Away

Boys Soccer

9/08/20	5 p.m.	Rocori	Home
9/15/20	5 p.m.	Sauk Rapids-Rice	Away
9/17/20	5 p.m.	St. Cloud Apollo	Home
9/22/20	7 p.m.	St. Cloud Tech	Away
9/24/20	5 p.m.	Willmar	Home
9/29/20	5 p.m.	Bemidji	Away
	5 p.m.	Moorhead	Home
10/8/20	TBD	TBD	TBD

Girls Tennis

9/08/20	4:30 p.m.	Rocori	Away
9/10/20	4:30 p.m.	Alexandria	Away
9/15/20	4:30 p.m.	Apollo/Sauk Rapids-Rice	Home
9/22/20	4:30 p.m.	St. Cloud Tech	Home
9/24/20	4:30 p.m.	Willmar	Away
9/29/20	4:30 p.m.	Bemidji	Home
	4:30 p.m.	TBD	TBD



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Opinion

Our View Does racial injustice happen here?

Could it happen here? That's the question civic and law enforcement leaders have heard from citizens since George Floyd's killing and the protests that followed.

The question brought new attention to how Central Minnesota's police and sheriff's departments operate so incidents of racial injustice don't happen here.

The Central Minnesota NAACP chapter organized a Zoom discussion on Aug. 1 with top law enforcement officers and about 50 other participants to build relationships between police and community.

Discussion revealed citizens' concerns, but the event was also a chance for law enforcement to share perspectives on policies and programs.

The event was a good start. While in-person meetings are out of the question now, more virtual and later face-to-face engagements should continue. Unfortunately, the Zoom session conflicted with Muslim prayer time so people of that community could not participate.

Chiefs and sheriffs talked about how much community support they've received this summer – at least a small sign some members of the community trust them.

Actions and observations from our area police and sheriffs show they are taking racial injustice seriously.

St. Joseph Chief Dwight Pfannenstien said people want police to be transparent and accountable. That need led his department to add a second sergeant. Would George Floyd be dead if there was a senior supervisor on the scene to provide leadership? His officers will soon be wearing body cameras, which can exonerate officers but also expose bad work.

Sartell Chief Jim Hughes recounted the community policing programs his department offers, including sports and games for young people and another program aimed at older citizens.

When it's time to hire new officers, he'd like to recruit the city's young people to "come back and work with us in the future."

Hiring the right people to uphold the law requires more than looking at a resume, Hughes said. Sometimes deep background checks reveal issues references won't talk about, such as Fourth Amendment violations.

Hughes and other leaders talked about the larger role of police. "People think we are the answer to every situation (such as mental health). We know that is not the case." Waite Park Chief Dave Bentrud added "cities need to come together to help the revolving door of people with mental-health issues."

When there's trouble, police get called first because people don't know who else to call and there aren't resources to deal with what are mental health or social issues, not crimes.

Stearns County Sheriff Steve Soyka outlined a number of his department's community outreach programs including one that helps people who are now in jail but who will soon be out in the community. The program works with social services to prepare prisoners for housing and jobs, so they become good members of society when they are released.

St. Cloud Police Chief Blair Anderson talked about bias and how officers need to deal with a person's behavior and not race or ethnicity. Deadly force should be used only when all other options have been exhausted. "Whenever force is used, it's not going to be pretty, no matter how minimal," Anderson said.

These frank exchanges should continue. When there's a chance for in-person engagement, the entire community needs to take part. The law enforcement leaders showed they welcome the discussion and are ready to act. Other Zoom participants included St. Cloud Mayor Dave Kleis, Sherburne County Sheriff Joel Brott, Wright County Sheriff Sean Deringer and State Patrol Capt. Brad Quart.

Benton County Sheriff Troy Heck zeroed in on the solution. "We need to sit down and listen, break down barriers, instead of yelling at each other."

Even presidential elections are local

We've heard for years that "all politics is local" – a phrase attributed to former Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neill.

This year, we also need to remember that all elections are local. General election day is Nov. 3, the day the entire country votes for a president as well as a long ballot of other federal, state and yes, local officials.

But there's not one national ballot, set of rules or vote count. The final result for president lies in the hands of tens of thousands of state and local election workers – professionals and paid volunteers – who actually carry out the election.

States set the rules such as voting hours and registration requirements and maintain voter rolls while county and city officials pick polling places and ensure each eligible voter can cast a secure secret ballot.

When you hear debate about election security, keep in mind those local individuals and the election judges at thousands of polling places actually make sure there's a free and fair election.

Election judges swear an oath to "perform the duties of election judge according to law and the best of my ability and will diligently endeavor to prevent fraud, deceit and abuse in conducting this election. I will perform my duties in a fair and impartial manner and not attempt to create an advantage for my party or for any candidate."

Judges take that oath seriously so every eligible voter who is entitled to a ballot gets one. Voting and tabulation take place in secret so no one knows how a

**Mike
Knaak**
Editor



person voted.

In Minnesota, there's a paper trail for the entire process. Every ballot needs to be backed up by a receipt the voter signs. On election night, the number of voters and the numbers of ballots must match. A machine scans the ballot and kicks out totals, but behind that count is a paper trail that can be verified. Paper ballots and vote totals are reviewed by city, county and state election officials several times before an election is ultimately certified by the state canvassing board. Voter rolls track who votes where to block people from voting in more than one place or a person pretending to be someone else.

A similar process is followed for absentee or mail-in ballots. Your ballot goes in an unmarked envelope that you seal. Then that's placed in another envelope marked with your registration information that you sign. Both those envelopes go into a third envelope that's mailed or dropped off with election officials.

As the election season heats up, politicians talk about voter suppression – acts that discourage people from exercising their right to vote. Those efforts include raising false claims of voter fraud and threats to intimidate people at the polls. Minnesota's laws are very clear about who is allowed in polling places. Donald Trump stirred up the debate when he

said, "We're going to have sheriffs, and we're going to have law enforcement, and we're going to have, hopefully, U.S. attorneys, and we're going to have everybody, and attorney generals."

That won't happen. Trump has no authority to order sheriffs or anybody else into polling places.

Minnesota does not allow "poll watchers." Challengers are allowed but their actions are narrowly limited. Each party may appoint one challenger and the only action a challenger may take is to contest a voter's eligibility, if they have personal knowledge of that voter's ineligibility. Suspicion is not a basis for making a challenge. The challenger can't confront the voter and the challenge must be made in writing to an election judge. The challenger can't keep lists of who is voting.

An election judge can call a law-enforcement officer to remove a disorderly person.

Trump may have gotten his inspiration from previous Republican Party efforts to intimidate voters. In the 1981 New Jersey gubernatorial race, a Republican Party program that sent off-duty police officers to patrol polling places in heavily Black and Latino neighborhoods triggered accusations of voter intimidation, resulting in a federal agreement that restricted for decades how the national GOP could observe voting.

For more information about how you can vote and what rules must be followed, go to mnvotes.org. You don't have to wait until Nov. 3. Right now, you can request a mail-in ballot and early in-person voting begins in just two weeks on Sept. 18.

Take safety seriously as schools return

I remember very clearly my last few days out at St. John's this past spring before Covid-19 sent us all home. Spring Break had just finished, and midterms and papers loomed large on the schedule. The clubs I'm involved with were planning our end-of-year celebrations, and enjoying our beautiful campus was starting to become more possible with the weather beginning to warm up. But the danger signs of the approaching pandemic became ever clearer on the horizon. Dominoes started to fall, as one university after another looked at the data and made the decision to close and reduce the spread of the disease. CSB/SJU followed suit, and we ended up being sent home not even a week after we returned from break. Now that I am back on campus, I am hopeful we will be able to resume in-person classes successfully. However, this isn't a time to return to a feeling of "normal." Our local area should note that across the country reopening schools in an irresponsible manner can cause even more problems than before, and be vigilant to keep those issues from happening.

Going back home and completing college classes online for the first time, I was unsure what exactly the future might bring. How long would this last? Would we be able to return to campus before May and finish off the school year in person? What would happen for the seniors preparing to have their ceremonies and receive their diplomas? All of these questions were answered in disappointing ways. The rest of the spring semester

**Connor
Kockler**
Guest Writer



ended up being entirely online. Senior graduation ceremonies were canceled, and the Covid-19 pandemic continues to ravage our country, killing more than a thousand Americans per day. I never imagined back in March that this crisis might get this bad.

As my move-in day for Fall 2020 approached, I was both excited and concerned. I was excited to be back on campus, see friends and have classes in a physical room rather than through Zoom. I was concerned because of the trend of new Covid-19 cases staying consistent or even increasing in our country. This is despite the valiant efforts of healthcare workers and others doing their part to keep themselves and loved ones from being infected. Now that I'm here, I see the strong steps taken by the school administration, faculty and students to do their part to make sure this semester stays in person and not online.

We have seen exactly what can go wrong, as evidenced by multiple universities attempting to go back to in-person classes. Notre Dame suspended in-person classes after an outbreak of cases. The University of North Carolina had to take similar measures. Large groups of students congregating without masks

can quickly spread Covid-19, promptly driving up case numbers and putting in-person fall semesters in jeopardy. Far from being theoretical, not taking safety measures for Covid has real consequences. And if students are then sent home, it could create further outbreaks when they're back with relatives.

Colleges are the test run for how well schools can operate safely while under Covid restrictions, as K-12 schools have not yet opened in most of our state. In the next few weeks, we will see whether a global pandemic and college life can co-exist without mass infections. If they can, that is a good sign we might be able to turn a page in the fight against Covid-19. If cases shoot up and preventive measures don't have the desired effect, that should make us take a closer look before opening up schools further.

As much as I want to be able to go to class and have a "normal" college experience again, that experience isn't worth jeopardizing the safety of everyone in our schools, especially those students and staff who may be more vulnerable. And if colleges cannot open successfully, I can't imagine how we can make an argument for sending the youngest members of our communities in K-12 back to school. Reopening schools in person should not take priority over protecting people.

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

Letters to the editor

What's it like to hate me

Kelly Emmanuel, Sartell

When you are a white person you have certain expectations of how your society should behave, and why not? I mean. I am after all a product of said environment and the culture in which I was raised. As a white American I have only ever known a fair and just world. One in which if you work hard enough and put in your dues, you will be rewarded. This is the ideology so many of us grow up believing to be true. This lie that has been told generation after generation fails to inform us in order for us to get ahead, others must stay behind and the fact remains we have been doing so disproportionately since the birth of this nation.

But who wants to look at that. Just like no one wants to lose, if they can win.

If we never have to acknowledge this point, it doesn't bother us. We go on living our whole lives, happy disproportionately delusional, and we raise our kids to be the same. Sounds pretty awful when you read it, but not when you're living it.

No one likes a boat rocker. Getting wet when you're in your Sunday best is crazy. So it's best to just sit down and row.

That's how I see America. Only this time, I'm the one standing up rocking the boat. A boat I helped purchase and put in the water. And though the first-class passengers are sitting there looking at me like I'm crazy for standing up, there is no doubt in my mind they would have no problem throwing me overboard if it meant stopping mutiny and the cruise could continue.

Fourteen years ago I met and fell in love with a man from Nigeria. We married and have three children. Two together and one I had from a previous relationship that he has raised as his own. It has been my life's joy watching this man, who came here with a goal and ambition and who has beat the

odds to achieve what so many call the American Dream.

We are an upper middle-class family. I do not have to work and haven't had to do so for the past six years. We have done everything we can to try to "fit in" to polite society in Sartell. Yet my children and husband are treated like second-rate citizens, and I have been ostracized by most.

Last night at the school board meeting the three women on the board voted "No" to the ONLY idea this district had on dealing with our hostile environment in our schools. I have been following these issues closely and know not only were they ill-prepared but misinformed of the needs of our students. You could clearly see they hadn't even taken 30 minutes out of their day to pull up Equity Alliance of Minnesota's website to see on what they were going to be spending \$80,000. Which, by the way, is their job. If you Google Sartell you will find we get a C- in diversity within our schools. That is something parents look at before moving to a new place, and in an area where CentraCare is king. What type of professionals do you think we have around here? My husband works at the hospital, and people talk.

School board members are stewards to our children and to the constituents of this district. They are voted in to make the best choices for us, not what is comfortable to their white fragility. When one member said she didn't think this is what people wanted, I knew we were in trouble.

This is not new. It's been going on for years and they just don't want to do anything about it because it rocks their own personal boats. All the while telling white kids it's OK to say and do whatever they want to students of color in Sartell. That is racist! This why two weeks ago I filed with the Office of Civil Rights to investigate the hostile environment. I know they weren't going to do anything. They NEVER do. My child last year alone had

four racial issues in school.

So what do people like me do? End up hating our own race? It's kind of hard not to after all of this. All the power they have over my children. It's not like I can wake up tomorrow and stop being a mom or stop being white. But if I had to choose, I'd choose my kids every time. After the ugliness I saw the other night, it's hard to look myself in the face this morning.

Stop attacking Trump

Mark Pelham, Sartell

I'm mystified as to why your opinion page spews one-sided political vitriol every week. In the latest edition, the editorial and both opinion pieces are basically attacks on President Trump. Enough already. Embrace the fact your readership is not as liberal as you are.

I usually skip the page entirely because I've seen so little content that had any local issues in mind and I've yet to see anything remotely objective or balanced. I get it you hate President Trump and can't resist attacking him continually. We're all well aware of this by now, so maybe stopping would be the rational thing to do. What about focusing on local or regional issues? I would be happy to read opinions on current events in the area.

I've read with interest the stories on the proposed hockey rink; maybe an editorial would be in order? Try to function like a small, local paper, not the New York Times. Please save your rants for your own Facebook and Twitter feeds like everyone else.

School lunch adapts to new health rules

by Mike Knaak
editor@thenewsleaders.com

When students return to school next week, they'll find changes in how they eat lunch.

Some students will be eating in their classrooms, there will be fewer menu and a la carte options and transactions will be touchless and cashless.

"We've been working hard on developing a plan to make sure they are able to social distance in the lunchroom," Food Services Director Shelby Tanner said.

Unique plans for each building have been developed. In-person instruction will be in place for students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The Middle School and High School are opening in the hybrid model with in-person attendance on alternating days.

At Oak Ridge Early Learning Center, breakfast will be delivered to students. At lunch time, meals will be picked up and the students will return to their classrooms to eat.

At Pine Meadow Primary School and Riverview Intermediate School students will pick up breakfast and lunch and eat in classrooms.

At the Middle School and High School, breakfasts will be picked up and they will be socially distanced to eat. For lunch, students will pick up trays and be directed to designated areas.

"No matter what the learning scenario, students will have

access to nutritious school meals," Tanner said.

Pickup meals will be available at the high school, Door 23, for students following a distance learning plan. A change from the spring, meals will not be free, except for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, but that could change.

"At this point, this is our plan," Tanner said. "However, we receive updates from the Minnesota Department of Education/Food and Nutrition Services weekly, so if there are any changes to this plan, we will be sure to let families know in a timely manner."

Meals need to be ordered online by noon the previous day so the correct number of meals can be prepared.

Because of health rules, there will be no salad bar and staff will serve each person. Principals adjusted lunch times so students will have time to eat while maintaining social distancing.

Tanner moved up to the director position after serving one year as assistant. She earned a master's degree in nutrition and exercise science from South Dakota State University and she earned her undergraduate degree in dietetics from the University of St. Catherine.



Tanner

Community Calendar

Wednesday, Sept. 9

Blood drive, noon-6 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran Church, 610 CR 2. Call 800-733-2767 or redcross.org, sponsor code St Joseph to register.

Monday, Sept. 14

Blood Drive, 1-6 p.m., American Legion, 17 Second Ave. N., Waite Park.

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

Monday, Sept. 7

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

Tuesday, Sept. 8

Le Sauk Township Board, 7 p.m., 220 Fourth Ave. S. In-person meeting with CDC guidelines and masks required.

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

Saturday, Sept. 19

Sartell Lions Clean-up Fundraiser, 8 a.m.-noon, Riverview Intermediate School, 627 Third Ave. N., Sartell.

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

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FINANCIAL PLANNING | FAMILY

Making Plans: New Parents

Parents with a baby born in 2020 will spend an average of \$234,000 to raise their little bundle of joy.

These latest statistics reported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture don't even include the cost of college, which can quickly rack up tens of thousands per year in tuition costs.

The price tag on raising a child has been on a steady incline – a 24-percent increase since 1960, according to the USDA.

Taking on the increasing costs can be a challenge for many new parents. But with proper planning and realistic expectations, even newbies can come out ahead as their children grow.

HEALTH CARE

The USDA attributes the rise in child-raising to the cost of health care. With parents covering a larger proportion of children's costs with higher co-payments and premiums, expenditures can add up quickly.

When setting a budget and savings plan, make sure to apportion enough to health care costs, as well as unpredictable medical expenses that are sure to come up.

Start a small savings account for funds devoted to medical costs. This will keep you prepared for such occurrences instead of having to dip into your primary savings account for medical payments.

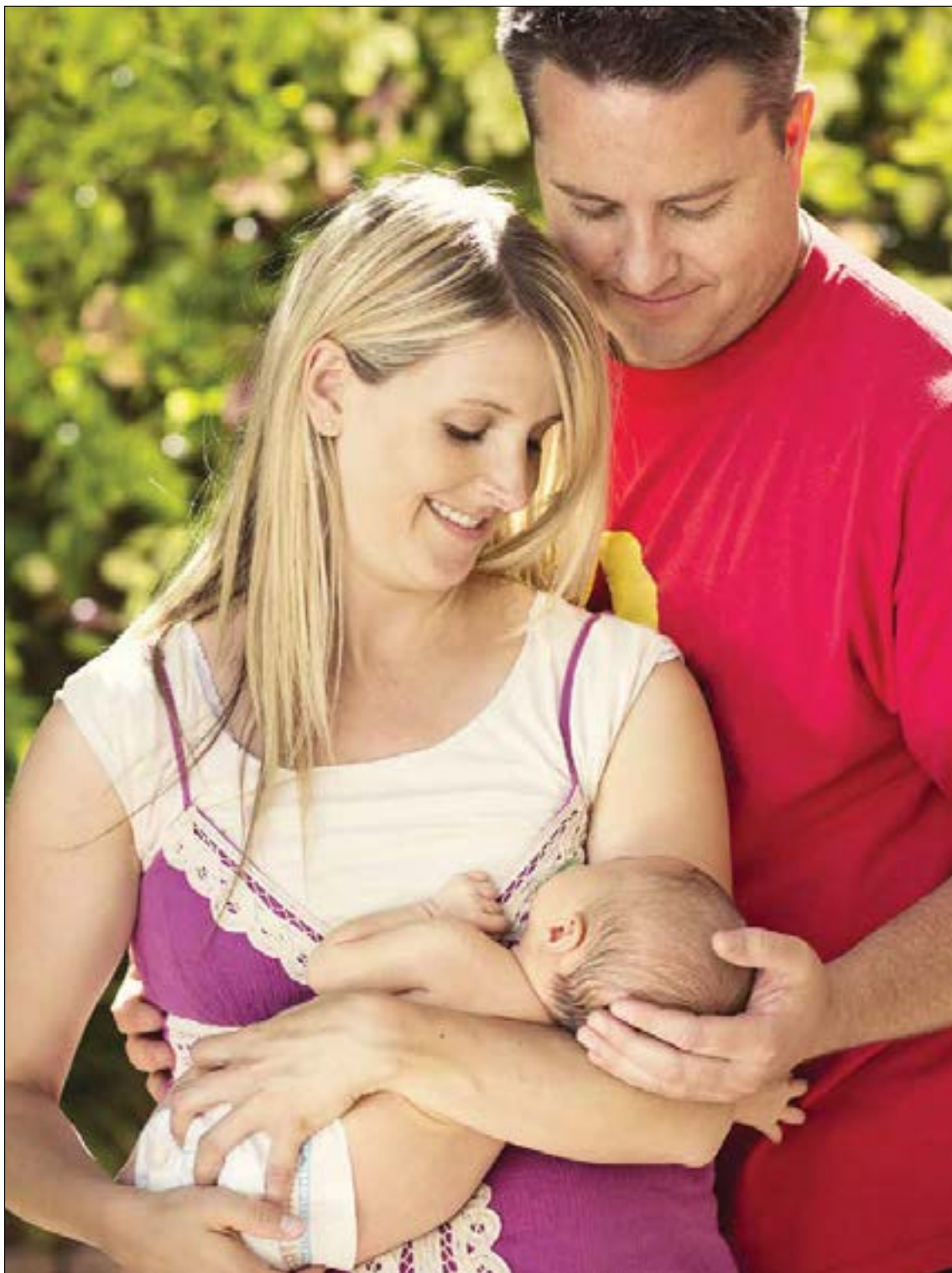
LONG-TERM PLANNING

New parents will find with the birth of their child comes the urge to protect him or her. This natural instinct includes the need to build a solid financial footing to be able to afford all of the necessities.

But lost in the everyday chaos of raising a new child are the long-term financial strategies that can make a huge difference.

If you're a new parent, consider preparing a will, an inventory of assets and debt, and a legal document naming a person to be the guardian should anything happen to you.

These can be uncomfortable topics to discuss, especially in the midst of newfound parenthood, but planning wisely now can pay off in the future.



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