

Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, Oct. 16, 2020
Volume 32, Issue 21
Est. 1989

Town Crier

Property tax penalty waived to Dec. 1

The Stearns County Board of Commissioners voted to waive late penalties for second half property taxes for property owners financially impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Instead of an Oct. 15 deadline, penalties will be waived for payments received by Dec. 1, 2020. This forgiveness will only apply to property owners who have paid their first half 2020 property taxes and would not apply to properties which are escrowed. Auditor-Treasurer Randy Schreifels encourages residents and business owners to pay property taxes on time if able, as these funds are used and depended on by local schools, cities and townships. At this time, property tax payments are being processed online at StearnsCountyMN.gov, by mail, or through drop boxes located at the entrances of the Administration Building in downtown St. Cloud or at the Stearns County Service Center in Waite Park. If questions, please call the Treasurer's Office at 320-656-3870.

Coat drive ends Oct. 22

Too Much Talent is collecting coats, hats and gloves for children that are in need for the cold winter months. Winter gear can be dropped off at 1410 West St. Germain Street, St. Cloud through October 22. Too Much Talent's mission is to help prepare youth and families to be the next generation of leaders by providing education, resources and programming that assures every person reaches their potential. Contact Lenora, Too Much Talent at 320-406-3800 or 2muchtalent2@gmail.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.

INSERTS:
Country Manor
Senior Living
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photos by Carolyn Bertsch

Colors peak in Collegetown

(Above) The Bidinger family of Sartell hikes the Chapel Trail at St. John's University in Collegetown Oct. 10. They are (left to right) Tiffany; Landyn, 6; Gavin, 10; Rory and Keegan, 14. (At right) Patty Fischer of Hot Springs, South Dakota, collects leaves along the Chapel Trail in Collegetown Oct. 10 while walking with her son Clay, of St. Joseph.



City hopes for lower waste-hauler costs

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

The St. Joseph City Council is expressing concerns about increasing costs of waste-hauler service to the city and agreed to call for bids for that citywide service.

Currently, there is one service that contracts with St. Joseph - Republic Services for trash and recycling pick-ups. Its corporate headquarters are in Phoenix, Ariz., although it serves places throughout the United States, including many Minnesota cities.

Three years ago, St. Joseph called for bids for hauling services. Four haulers submitted bids, and the bid from Republic Services was the one accepted by the city, said St. Joseph Mayor Rick Schultz.

But in recent years, the hauling service began to escalate

in price. Schultz said that is largely because the amounts of curb-side items during spring and fall clean-up days has hugely increased. He also noted that Republic Services is feeling pressure because the market for selling picked-up recyclables to China is now virtually non-existent.

One reason the curb-side pick-up has increased in sheer tonnage is because some out-of-towners bring their cast-offs to friends' or acquaintances places in St. Joseph. Schultz said some have been caught doing just that.

For waste hauling (garbage pick-up), the city collects garbage-bill payments from residents and then pays Republic for its services.

The city council agreed to call for bids now because a hauler must be designated by Jan. 1, 2021.

Local educational facility might buy old Kennedy school

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

A child-care educational facility has expressed an interest in possibly purchasing St. Joseph's former Kennedy Elementary School and an adjacent parcel

of land.

The facility has expressed interest in submitting a bid to buy the facility. No details have been finalized yet and so the name of the facility cannot be made public, according to St. Joseph Mayor Rick Schultz.

Ready? Get set. Vote!

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

With Election Day right around the corner, now is the time for prospective voters to get all their ducks in a row so they are ready to cast their ballots by or on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

There are many choices on the ballots, including presidential candidates as well as local, state and county offices and a slate of judges.

The Newsleader did research so we can answer any voting-related questions readers may have.

Am I registered?

The best way to find out for sure is to go to the Minnesota Secretary of State's website at mnvotes.org. Then click on "Register to Vote," and while scrolling down on the right you will see "Check my registration." Click on that. Enter name, birth date, zip code and

home address. Then click on the green "Find Registration" box. Then you will know if you are registered or not. If you are registered, you don't have to do anything other than vote early or vote on Election Day.

The advance registration period ended on Oct. 13. However, do not worry because you can still register to vote at your polling place right on Election Day just before receiving a ballot. But you must bring proof of identity in one or more of the following forms: a Minnesota driver's license or Minnesota I.D. card or last four digits of your Social Security number. To show proof of your current residence, you can present one of the following: any photo I.D.s even if they are expired, plus proof that you live at your current home address such as a household bill (such as utilities bill) with current address

Vote • page 2

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Vote

from front page

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Acceptable are bills showing on an electrical device, such as an iPhone. Students can bring school I.D.s showing current address.

Another way to vote, lacking some of those documents, is to bring along someone (a registered voter) who can vouch for your identity and your current address.

Early voting

It is still possible to vote early (called "absentee voting") in person right up until Nov. 3.

Sartell residents in Stearns County can vote early (called "absentee voting") in person right up until Nov. 3. They can vote at one of two places: the Stearns County Administration Building (by the courthouse) in downtown St. Cloud; and at the Stearns County Service Center in Waite Park.

Sartell residents who are in Benton County (east side of Sartell) can vote early at the Benton County Government Center, 531 Dewey St. in Foley. Voting hours for all three of those places are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday and from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 31. Voting can also be done at those places from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, Oct. 2, the day right before Election Day.

Mail-in ballots

Mail-in ballots are also an option many voters are choosing because of the pandemic crisis. To request a mail-in ballot in Stearns County, call 320-656-3920. For Benton County, call 320-968-5027.

Call in your ballot request as soon as possible as it may take some time to arrive in your mailbox.

People should be sure to fill out the ballots as soon as they receive them and send them back as soon as possible, preferably on the same day they fill them out. Instructions for filling out, sealing and sending the ballot should be followed carefully to ensure it will be counted. The ballot can be sent back in the mail or hand-delivered to the government centers as noted above.

Ballots must be postmarked before or on Nov. 3 and must be received within 10 days after Election Day or they cannot be counted.

Where do I vote?

People who choose to cast their ballots in person at polling places on Nov. 3 will be expected to wear a mask and follow social-distancing guidelines. Election Day voting hours are 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

The polling places for St. Joseph and the immediate area are the following:

City of St. Joseph

Precinct 1: The polling place is Resurrection Lutheran Church for residents who live west of College Avenue/County Road 2.

Precinct 2: The polling place is the St. Joseph Government Center for those living east of College Avenue/County Road 2.

St. Stephen area

All residents within the St. Stephen city limits will vote at St. Stephen City Hall, 2 Sixth Avenue SE.

Those in LeSauk Township will vote at LeSauk Town Hall, 220 Fourth Ave. S. in Sartell.

Brockway Township residents will vote in Brockway Town Hall, 43710 85th Avenue in rural Rice.

More information

For more detailed information and to ask questions, please call the following phone number:

Stearns County: 320-656-3920

Or visit the Minnesota Secretary of State Office website: mnvotes.org. On that site, many questions are answered; specific voting-procedure directions are given and there are sample ballots so voters can ponder their choices ahead of time.

Obituary

**Donald A. Vouk, 77
Dec. 1, 1942-Oct. 2, 2020
St. Joseph**

Donald A. Vouk, age 77, of St. Joseph, died Friday, Oct. 2 at his home. His funeral was held Friday, Oct. 9 at St. Stephen Catholic Church in St. Stephen.

The Revs. Ronald Weyrens and Robert Harren concelebrated. Burial was in the St. Stephen Parish Cemetery.

Vouk was born Dec. 1, 1942 to Roy and Monica (Skaj) Vouk in St. Cloud. He married Donna M. Court on Aug. 3, 1965 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in St. Joseph. He honorably served his country for eight years in the Minnesota National Guard. Vouk proudly farmed his fami-



Vouk

lies' Century Dairy Farm in St. Joseph. He played concertina for the Minnesota Dutchmen for more than 25 years. He was also a member of the Greater Minnesota Two-Cylinder Club and St. Stephen Catholic Church.

Vouk was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather who loved to spend time with his grandchildren and family. He was a man of many abilities and talents. He was an excellent musician and also enjoyed restoring old cars and tractors. He was most proud of his 1964 Chevrolet Impala that he was able to restore. Vouk had a builder's mind and enjoyed welding and creating things. He never seemed to need a set of plans for his creations, just his vision. He will be remembered for his good sense of humor, quick wit and friendly smirk.

Survivors include his loving

wife of 55 years, Donna; children, Robert "Bob" (Shelley), Timothy "Tim," Gary (Kathy) and Brian (Stephanie); grandchildren, Nancy, April, Jane (Will), Neil, Lindsay (Dean), Sydney, Jacob, Katelyn, Matthew, Jessica, Nathan, Jonathan, Mackenzie and Brandon; great-grandchildren, Kyrsten, Kloey, Kamryn, Kai, Nevaeh, Leander, Bristol, Griffin, Arlo and Ace; his beloved dog, Tye; and nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Vouk was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Delphine (Romie) Palmersheim; and nephew, Kenneth Palmersheim.

A special thank you to the staff of CentraCare Hospice, especially to his nurse, Stephanie, for their loving and compassionate care of Donald.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred.

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Published each Friday by Von Meyer Publishing Inc.

Publisher/Owner
Janelle Von Pinnon

Designer
Nina Henne

Editor

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

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ST. JOSEPH NEWSLEADER, 1622 11th Ave SE, St. Cloud, MN 56304.

Blotter

If you have a tip concerning a crime, call the St. Joseph Police Department at 320-363-8250 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.

Sept. 11

6:03 p.m. Furniture outside. Ash St. E. While on routine patrol, an officer observed a couch outside in the side yard an Ash Street E. property. Officer gave renters until 9 p.m. to get it moved inside (was moved before officer cleared the call).

Sept. 12

12:12 p.m. Loud music complaint. Baker Street E. Officers were dispatched to a loud music complaint. Complainant asked to stay anonymous. Upon arriving on scene, officers could not hear loud music. Officer made contact with a renter and his roommate who said they had been cleaning downstairs but were not playing music at the time. Officer advised to keep bass down when playing music.

11:26 p.m. Public urination. Minnesota Street W. While on patrol, officer witnessed male urinating in public; man was identified and cited.

Sept. 14

8:58 a.m. Vandalism. Fourth Avenue SE. Complainant said yard was egged; this is the third time complainant has reported such activity in past four months. No suspects identified. Complainant said they have political signs in their yard and not sure if egging is related to the signs.

Sept. 15

5 p.m. Hit and run/accident. CR 75/CR 2. Both vehicles were slowing for a stoplight when Vehicle 1 was rear-ended by vehicle 2, who then drove away. Driver of vehicle 1 said vehicle has some scratches and a crack on rear bumper; driver was

able to obtain the plate number and description of Vehicle 2, a red pickup with a trailer and a Freeport business name on the vehicle side. Complainant sent photos via text to officer who then located driver of Vehicle 2, who said he didn't know if he had made contact with Vehicle 1 as he thought maybe the trailer had made the noise when he applied the brakes fast. Driver of vehicle 2 said he was going to turn off and stop but the other vehicle sped away. There's no damage on his vehicle. Accident report filed.

Sept. 18

9:39 a.m. Suspicious person. 91st Avenue. Complainant reported someone claiming to be from Xcel Energy was at her residence wanting to come inside and look at the gas meter. Complainant thought it was odd because she said he did not have any identification and his vehicle had no markings or plates she could see. She also said he parked a ways away from the house. He did provide her a card with an Xcel Energy logo on it but she said it looked like it was torn off from somewhere else. Checked the area and cleared.

1:10 p.m. Theft. Ninth Avenue SE. Complainant reported a theft from his yard. Sometime on Sept. 17 between noon and 4:30 p.m., someone stole their Biden/Harris political sign. Estimated worth \$5. No suspects at this time.

1:15 p.m. Furniture outside. Fifth Avenue NW. Complainant said inside furniture was sitting outside a residence. Officers observed a recliner in the backyard that had clearly been there awhile. Officer contacted party and informed him he needed to move the chair and cut the grass. Party said it would be taken care of.

11:53 p.m. Suspicious activity. Minnesota Street E. Officer was dispatched to suspicious activity of a dark-colored Ford Taurus with spoiler and back rims ha-

assing female college students. Officer was flagged down by the caller, who stated nothing took place tonight but caller recognized car from previous events. Nothing further.

Sept. 19

6:56 a.m. Found item. Callaway Street E. Someone found a set of keys on the road in front of his house and turned them into the police. Officer drove around the area pushing the keyless remote to see if it activated any vehicle or alarm. Nothing located. Placed keys, consisting of a remote and two keys, into property.

12:50 p.m. Theft. American Legion, Minnesota Street W. Complainant said letters from their outdoor sign were stolen. The sign reads Freedom isn't free, don't take it for granted. Complainant said the EE from Free and the ED from Granted were stolen. Complainant said those same letters from the same words were stolen two weeks ago. Set of letters runs \$600; \$8 per individual letter. Complainant took all letters down but wanted to file report. No cameras or suspects.

Sept. 20

4:11 a.m. Iverson Street W. An officer was dispatched to a home where a male was continuing to knock and ring the doorbell of a female, who had asked him to leave. The male was at first calm but became agitated when the female refused to talk to him. The male refused to leave the area and did not want a ride. After allowing the male to vent, he agreed to leave if the female told him to. Officer called the female and put her on speaker; she asked the male to leave. The male eventually went onto public property. The female decided to leave so officer stood by until she did. Officer also advised female of an Order for Protection. Female said she believed male was undiagnosed bipolar. When officer left, male was sitting under a streetlight at a nearby intersection. Female called officer and

stated after leaving, male jumped in front of her car and got inside. They drove a ways and then male took female's truck keys and left. Officers made contact with male shortly afterward. Only key male had was two keys to an apartment. Female believes he stashed her keys at the apartment. Female did not press charges, said she just wants male to leave her alone. Officer transported female to her home.

Sept. 21

3:12 p.m. Cell phone violation. CR 75/CR 133. Officer observed suspect stopped at stoplight with cell phone in hand talking. Officer stopped vehicle on CR 75, made contact with driver and advised of reason for the stop. She said her phone was on speakerphone and she was holding it because the bluetooth wasn't working and needed to be on a conference call for work. Officer informed her Minnesota is a hands-free state and she is only allowed to be on the phone for the purpose of making an emergency call. Cited for cell phone use. Driver was very upset and crying and said she would be losing her job.

10:06 p.m. Collision. CR 75/College Avenue. Officer was dispatched to crash. Vehicle 1 was westbound in the left lane on Co. Rd. 75 stopped at a red light at College Avenue N. Vehicle 2 was also westbound on Co. Rd. 75 in the left lane slowing down behind Vehicle 1. Vehicle 2 rear-ended Vehicle 1 causing minor damage to each vehicle. No injuries reported. Accident information was exchanged. No state report as damage is believed to be under \$1,000.

Sept. 22

10:56 p.m. Speeding/seat belt violation. College Avenue S./Callaway Street E. Officer witnessed and radar supported suspect traveling north on College Avenue at 44 mph in a 30-mph zone. Officer also observed driver was not wearing a seatbelt and watched driver buckle up as

he passed officer. Officer stopped vehicle and advised reason for stop. Driver admitted to going too fast when pulling out of St. Ben's campus. He also showed the officer he was wearing his seatbelt but admitted, after officer said he wasn't wearing it originally, that he indeed hadn't buckled up originally but said he usually does. Officer cited suspect for both offenses. Driver was upset and asked why officer did not issue a warning. Officer said he believed driver was going too fast and if he wished to contest the citation to go to court.

1:17 p.m. Cell phone violation. College Avenue S./Minnesota Street. Officer observed female looking at her phone while at the intersection. Officer stopped and identified driver who admitted to reading a text from her mother.

11:05 p.m. Disorderly conduct. Eighth Avenue SE. Officer was dispatched to disorderly female. Upon arrival, officer did not observe anyone around. Male said female had left in a car. Male said she'd been pounding and kicking his door for the past four hours. He stated he was inside the entire time texting a friend on what to do. All of the female's items are in the garage for her to move due to issues. Male said he never went outside and there was no damage to his doors or property. Male wanted female to leave or calm down and pack her belongings and leave. Waite Park officers checked storage units in their city where female might be to talk about incident. No further action requested from male. No crime.

Sept. 23

11:44 a.m. Crash with injuries. CR 75/20th Avenue SE. Officer spoke with individuals involved in a crash with possible injuries. Vehicle 1 was eastbound on CR 75 in the right lane. Driver of vehicle 1 said he had a green light so he proceeded through intersection when driver of Vehicle 2 was westbound on CR 75

Blotter • page 4



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from page 3

and turned left to go southbound on 20th Avenue SE. Driver of Vehicle 2 stated he thought the light was green but was not 100% sure. Front of Vehicle 2 hit front driver's side of Vehicle 1. Minor injuries. All parties declined transport. An officer assisted with triage, took photos and gave parties a ride to a residence in town.

4:29 p.m. Crash. Birch Street W./First Avenue NW. Officer found both vehicles in the middle of the road and unable to be moved due to the vehicles stuck together. Both drivers stated Vehicle 1 was turning left when it suddenly turned right and side swiped Vehicle 2 traveling northbound on First Avenue NW. Officer issued citation to driver of Vehicle 1 for no proof of insurance. Both drivers exchanged information. Neither vehicle was towed. Photos taken of scene.

7:55 p.m. Stranded vehicle. CR 75/Old Hwy. 52. Officer observed a North Memorial ambulance on

the side of CR 75 with its flashers on. Officer activated emergency light and stopped to make sure they were OK. The driver stated they had just hit a deer and another ambulance was on its way to transport the patient, who suffered non-life-threatening injuries. Officer wrote report. Mayo arrived on scene and transported patient. Driver said they would wait for tow, which was 30 minutes out.

Sept. 24

4:20 a.m. Collision. CR 75/College Avenue N. Officer met with both parties involved in a collision, which they moved into the Speedway parking lot. Both parties stated Vehicle 2 rear-ended Vehicle 1 while they were slowing down for the traffic light at the intersection. One party was issued a citation for Driving After Revocation. Driver of Vehicle 2 said her parents wanted her checked out due to a headache before she leaves the scene as she still had a two-hour drive home. Officer waited until ambulance arrived on scene.

Sept. 26

7:44 p.m. ATV complaint. 12th Avenue SE. Complainant called

in to file a complaint about a larger, older, loud side-by-side running around the neighborhood. Complainant said the side-by-side is loud enough to wake up someone sleeping in the house. He said the suspect ATV lives in the neighborhood, and he could direct us there if needed. We discussed extra patrol in the area. Except for extra patrol, no further action required.

Sept. 28

10:46 a.m. Trash can violation. Minnesota Street W. Officer observed trash cans on the curb and trash (beer cans, full garbage bags, junk) all over the yard. Officer filled out a red tag notice and made contact with a tenant at the residence who said they had missed garbage collection two weeks in a row and put the cans out so they would not forget again. Officer informed tenant the cans need to be removed and the trash needs to be cleaned up. Tenant was given a 24-hour notice and told a citation would be issued if not cleaned up. Later officer observed all trash had been cleaned up and trash cans removed from curb.

Sept. 30

5:53 a.m. Road obstruction. College Avenue S. Officer observed some wooden barricades that had tipped over due to wind. Barricades were blocking road. Officer stopped and set them back up.

Oct. 2

6:20 p.m. Found item. Callaway Street E. A citizen turned in a wallet she found on the Wobegon Trail half way between St Joseph and Avon. Officer contacted the wallet owner and made arrangements to meet him. Owner confirmed all contents were still in the wallet.

11:04 p.m. Loud music. Minnesota Street W. Officer was dispatched to a loud music complaint. Upon arrival, officer could hear loud voices coming from inside a house. Officer observed college students exiting; a male slammed the door and said "Get a warrant, b...ch." Officer knocked on the door. A renter identified himself and said he was the only renter. Officer observed male as intoxicated by his slurred speech and lethargic movements. He was also stumbling and swaying while moving/standing. Officer

could smell a strong odor of alcohol from him. He was cited for minor consumption and given a verbal warning for noise. A second officer assisted with the call and confirmed he could smell alcohol from the suspect.

Oct. 3

1:03 a.m. Found item. Minnesota Street W. Officer was flagged by a male who said he found a cell phone behind the processing plant. After handing the officer the phone, it rang and the person calling said it was her friend. Officer met with the friend, who identified the phone, screen picture and passcode correctly. She was given her phone.

7:40 p.m. Fireworks complaint. Cary Court: Officer arrived but did not hear or see any fireworks activity. While doing comments, officer notice a large firework go off in the sky to the northeast of officer's location. Officer then tracked down large party who admitted to launching fireworks. While speaking with the home owner, officer was dispatched to an intoxicated disorderly so gave home owner verbal warning for illegal fireworks.

Some residents to see decrease in proposed property tax

Property taxes are proposed to decrease for some residences in St. Joseph next year in spite of a 2 percent increase in the total levy figure. In 2021, residents will see a 3 percent decrease in the urban tax rate.

The city will levy a total of \$2,957,875 in property taxes in 2021, up about \$65,000, or 2 percent, from 2020. While the tax rate is estimated to drop from 62.55 to 59.16, the taxable market value for city residences is expected to increase 6.5 percent, according to Finance Director Lori Bartlett. That means an urban home with a taxable market value of \$150,000 could see about a \$5 increase if the home's valuation increases 6.5 percent. Otherwise, the estimated effect of the tax rate decrease on an urban home valued at \$150,000 would

be a decrease of \$42.85.

If adopted later this year, the proposed levy would generate \$1,697,795 in revenue for the general fund, nearly \$33,000 more than the current year. The levy will also generate \$98,905 for the city's Economic Development Authority, \$30,000 for parks, and \$78,915 for general equipment.

With the levy, the council also set the city's proposed 2021 budget. The city expects to spend \$4,122,315 in the coming year, including \$875,500 toward the repayment of bonds. The city's total expenses are projected to exceed total revenues (\$4,100,000), which would result in a deficit of \$22,315.

Along with property taxes, one of the city's biggest funding sources is Local Government Aid. This year, the city budget

was also boosted by its share of CARES Act funding, distributed by the state of Minnesota. Local governments receive a direct payment based on the per-capita formula developed by the Legislature during the special session. Cities with more than 200 people will receive \$75.34 per person, which works out to \$551,340 for St. Joseph. The CARES Act requires payments may only be used to cover costs that are necessary expenditures incurred because of the public health emergency, so these funds were not accounted for in the most recent city budget.

The final tax levy won't be adopted until December, but cities must adopt proposed levies by the end of September in order for the county auditor to prepare estimated property tax statements for the com-



ing year. The city will have a truth-in-taxation hearing, where residents can voice concerns or ask questions about

their proposed city property tax bill. It's set for 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 7, at city hall.

Correction

Two errors occurred in the Oct. 2 article entitled "Sculpture is hopeful warning from St. Joseph to the future."

The correct name of the sculptor is Richard Bresnahan.

Also, the story failed to

mention the Bresnahan Kura sculpture is being installed at St. John's University in Collegeville and was collaboratively designed by Bresnahan with advice from the monks of St. John's Abbey.

People

Brenny Transportation was recently named a 2020 "Top Companies for Women to Work For in Transportation" by Redefining the Road magazine, the official magazine of the Women In Trucking Association. The magazine created the award in 2018 to support an element of WIT's mission: to promote the accomplishments of companies that are focused on the employment of women in the trucking industry.

There are several key features that distinguish companies recognized on this list, said Brian Everett, publisher of Redefining the Road, including corporate cultures that foster gender diversity; competitive compensa-



tion and benefits; flexible hours and work requirements; professional development opportunities; and career advancement opportunities.

These companies will be recognized at the upcoming virtu-

al WIT Accelerate! Conference & Expo Nov. 12-13. Brenny has earned this award two years in a row. More than 13,000 votes were cast to identify the companies named to the list.

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You might have heard this phrase before. You've possibly seen it on a T-shirt or on a sticker in a shop window. Or perhaps you are the owner of a bully-breed dog and are an active participant in raising awareness on the destructive nature of breed-specific legislation.

It's important to understand the impact and history of breed-specific legislation and its impact on pet health.

WHAT IS BREED-SPECIFIC LEGISLATION?

Breed-specific legislation is a law that bans or restricts certain types of dogs based on their appearance and perceived threat to a community. This legislation often is created in response to a well-publicized incidence of a dog biting or injuring someone — especially by pit bull-type breeds.

There has been much dispute, however, about the effectiveness of this type of legislation in preventing or reducing attacks by dogs.

POINT OF VIEW #1

This type of legislation is necessary because certain dog breeds are a public safety issue and should be addressed through cities banning the breed, mandatory spaying or neutering, mandatory microchip implants or prohibiting convicted felons from owning them.

POINT OF VIEW #2

Breed-specific legislation does not effectively address the issue it's aiming for, and is harmful to innocent dogs and owners. There should be more comprehensive and specific "dog-bite" legislation — outside of breed — working alongside consumer-education initiatives and legal mandating of responsible pet ownership.

THE EXPERTS

According to a 2000 report released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fatal attacks on humans appear to be a breed-specific problem.

However, breeds often not banned (rather than pit bulls and other bully breeds) bite at higher rates, and since fatal attacks represent a very small portion of dog bite injuries, there are better alternatives to breed-specific legislation to address the issue.



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For Stock, a dream-come-true: Rox to Sox

by Dennis Dalman

news@thenewsleaders.com

From the Rox to the Sox. For many days, Joey Stock lived in an anxious mood, practically glued to his phone and jumping every time it rang.

One day in late summer, his mother, Lori, was helping him pack for a trip to Milwaukee where he planned to start graduate studies and play baseball for the University of Wisconsin's Milwaukee team.

On that summer day, Stock was in the front porch of the family home in Cold Spring. Suddenly, he jumped; the phone was ringing; he answered it. He had to shake his head at first because it took awhile for the news to sink in – the good news he'd been so anxiously waiting for.

Smiling, he went into the house.

"Mom, put everything back in the drawers," he said.

She and Stock's father, Tom, looked at their son with a mixture of surprise and shock.

"I'm not going to Milwaukee," he told them.

And right away it sank in. They grinned and began a flurry of congratulations because they knew suddenly he must have gotten "The Call."

And the call was the news that he'd been accepted as a pitcher for one of the greatest baseball teams of all time – the Boston Red Sox. It is a dream come true for a 23-year-old man who loved baseball from the get-go, as an avid T-Ball player as a kid and later as an ace pitcher for St. John's University and the St. Cloud Rox.

"My parents are so excited and happy for me," he said. And so were his paternal grandparents, long-time "Joey" fans Dick and Joyce Stock of St. Joseph. Also proud were countless fellow baseball players, coaches, friends and others when they heard the big news.

"It was always a dream for me," Stock said. "Baseball was just something in my blood. My uncles played it, both of my dad's brothers and other relatives too."

Stock graduated last spring with a degree in communica-

tions from SJU. He was about to do studies in marketing in Milwaukee until "The Call" changed the direction of his life.

Stock is not yet sure when he'll be in Boston and its world-famous Fenwick Park. First, he and other team members will do some training at Fort Myers, Fla. He is not certain yet – no one is – about how the virus pandemic will affect upcoming baseball games.

It was at the Fort Myers training camp in March of last year when a talent scout for the Red Sox first saw Stock, a St. Cloud Rox player, pitch ball and was wowed by what he saw. At that time, Stock was aware he was possibly being courted by the Sox for a contract. After signing the contract, Stock was assigned to the Gulf Coast League Red Sox.

When Stock moved back home from the SJU campus because of a virus quarantine that is when he first heard the Sox management was seriously considering hiring him.

Stock • page 7



contributed photos

A kid with a dream, Joey Stock played T-Ball almost constantly two decades ago, then later became a superb pitcher for the St. John's University Johnnies as well as the St. Cloud Rox.



This photo was taken right after Joey Stock signed a contract (long distance, via computer) with the Boston Red Sox.

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PAUL HAMILTON

Stock

from page 6

The right-handed pitching Stock was an undrafted free agent in 2020. He ended his SJU baseball career tied for third in school history with 17 home runs, a batting average of .325, a .650 slugging percentage and pitching 64 strikeouts with 63.2 career innings pitched.

Stock also played for three summer seasons for the St. Cloud Rox. As a pitcher, he had strikeouts in 33 innings during those three seasons.

"St. John's was a great opportunity," Stock said. "It helped in my development personally and professionally. I've had the chance to play with some great players - there and with the St. Cloud Rox.

When Stock is not playing ball, he enjoys the great outdoors - snowmobiling, fishing and being with friends and family.

In an interview with the St. Joseph Newsleader, Stock said he is filled with gratitude for so many people who challenged him, encouraged him and inspired him to become better and better: mother Lori and father Tom Stock, who is a former SJU athletic director; Jerry Haugen and Jason Spohn of SJU, who both convinced Stock to play baseball rather than basketball; SJU coaches and fellow players; Rox coach Al Newman; Rox owner Scott Schreiner; and Rox field manager/coach Augie Rodriguez.

Stock is the second SJU student to sign a professional sports contract in recent months. Johnnies offensive lineman Ben Bartch was drafted by the Jacksonville Jaguars. Stock is the first Johnnie to sign an MLB contract since first-baseman Jon Dold (Class of '94) was drafted in 1993 by



Joey Stock winds up to deliver a pitch during a St. Cloud Rox game last summer.

the Cincinnati Reds.

The Boston Red Sox, a member of the American League, was founded in 1901. It has won nine World Series championships, the most recent one in 2018. Among its legendary greats were Ted Williams, Carl-

ton Fisk and Pedro Martinez - to name just three.

"I'm so happy and proud this happened - to be able to play for the Red Sox," Stock said. "It's like every kid's dream to play in the big leagues. And my dream came true."

Howe, Willemsen face off for state senate seat

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

An incumbent and a relative newcomer are competing to be elected to serve the people of Minnesota Senate District 13.

The incumbent is Sen. Jeff Howe (R-Rockville); his challenger is Michael Willemsen (DFL-Sauk Rapids). Senate District 13, covering parts of Stearns and Benton counties, includes the cities of Sartell, St. Joseph, Avon, Cold Spring, Paynesville and Sauk Rapids.

The winner of the race will be determined in the Nov. 3 general election.

The following are profiles of the two candidates:

Howe

Howe was chosen in a special election in 2018, over contend-

er Joe Perske (DFL-Sartell), to serve in his current seat in the state legislature. Former Sen. Michelle Fischbach (R-Paynesville) had been a longtime legislator for that senate district, but two years ago she became the state's lieutenant-governor and so resigned from her senate seat.

Before his 2018 special-election victory, Howe had served in the Minnesota House, representing residents who live in House District 13A.

Raised on a farm near Chokio, Howe is a retired small-business consultant who has a long military career. In 2017, he retired as a lieutenant colonel after serving for many years in the Minnesota National Guard. He was also a major

in the U.S. Navy, worked as an avionics technician aboard the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk and was deployed to Iran during the Iranian American hostage crisis (1979). Years later, he was deployed twice to Iraq and earned two bronze stars.

Howe earned a bachelor's degree in elective studies from St. Cloud State University and served for nearly 30 years as a volunteer firefighter for the Rockville Fire Department. He and his wife, Sheri, have four grown children.

In the Minnesota Senate, Howe serves on the following committees: Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance; State Government Finance and Policy;

Seat • page 8

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Seat

from page 7

Transportation Finance and Policy; Elections; and Taxes. He has authored or co-authored many bills during his time in both the House and Senate, especially legislation regarding transportation, public safety and veterans' issues.

In the Senate, Howe joined other Republicans in unsuccessful efforts to end Gov. Tim Walz's executive emergency powers, maintaining such powers upset the balance among the branches of government. He has also criticized the governor and Democrats for how they dealt with the riots in Minneapolis after the death of George Floyd and criticized the governor for what Howe termed "disrespectful" remarks toward National Guard members.

Howe served on the oversight committee examining the Minneapolis riots and lawlessness in general. He supports what he calls "common-sense" police reforms but strongly opposes any de-funding of police

departments.

Howe, who describes himself as a "pro-life conservative," emphasizes the qualities of personal responsibility, duty, commitment and integrity. He supported pandemic-relief funds for companies and employees, particularly for food-handling industries. He also is trying to strengthen the State Trooper program, which has had trouble recruiting new troopers – mainly, Howe, said because of noncompetitive wages.

He is strongly in favor of the efforts to re-open schools safely with a combination of in-class sessions with safety precautions and distance learning or some hybrid of the two.

Willemsen

In 2016, Willemsen of Sauk Rapids ran against Sen. Michelle Fischbach for Senate District 13 but lost to her by a nearly 2-1 margin.

Willemsen was a site supervisor for a group home. More recently, he began working as an eligibility specialist for Benton County Human Services, helping financially-challenged people apply for and obtain services.



Howe

He describes himself as an optimist with socialist values who has strong faith in the innate intelligence of people.

His campaign slogan is "Keep Minnesota Nice." Among his campaign pledges and legislative goals are the following:

Build an economy that works for all Minnesotans, not just the wealthy few. A level playing field, he said, would provide everyone an opportunity for success.

Invest more in families and schools.

Increase local government aide to help lower property taxes.

Support and strengthen labor unions.

Work for racial equality, equality for LGBTQ people,



Willemsen

women's rights, a woman's reproductive rights and strong family planning.

Making higher education more affordable.

Create jobs by investing in infrastructure and increase broadband access in rural areas.

A renewed focus on ending poverty.

Change what he calls the "inherent inequities" within the criminal-justice system.

Legalize marijuana and expunge the records of those who have been arrested and/or incarcerated due to marijuana-related laws.

Work to create a comprehensive mental-health care system.

Make a single-payer health-care program with universal ac-

cess, affordable for all.

Support small businesses and do not tax them.

End subsidies for industrial agriculture.

Increase the minimum wage to at least \$15 per hour.

Make childcare more affordable.

Pass a statewide tenants' bill of rights.

Advocate to encourage plant-based diets and less or no consumption of meats.

Work to create renewable energy, "green jobs and a progressive strategy to deal with climate change in Minnesota and elsewhere.

"We are the land of 10,000 lakes and we need to provide clean water for future generations," Willemsen said.

Joe Biden for President

Katy Westlund for State Representative

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

Friday, Oct. 16

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

Saturday, Oct. 17

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

Monday, Oct. 19

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

St. Joseph City Council, 6 p.m., Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E.

St. Joseph Rod and Gun Club monthly meeting, 7-8 p.m.,

American Legion, 101 Minnesota St. W.

Tuesday, Oct. 20

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

St. Joseph Economic Development Authority, 5 p.m., Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E.

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

St. Cloud Area Genealogists, 7 p.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S., St. Cloud. stearns-museum.org. Meeting by Zoom. Brendon Duffy, 320-237-3723.

Collegetown Township Board, 8 p.m., Township Hall 27724 CR 50, Cold Spring.

Wednesday, Oct. 21

St. Cloud school board, 6:30. District Administration Office, 1201 S. Second St., Waite Park.

Thursday, Oct. 22

Coffee and Conversation, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. N, Sartell. Call 320-258-7324 to reserve a space. Meet the new Sartell city staff.

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

Saturday, Oct. 24

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

610 CR 2.

Monster Dash, an outdoor family fun run and trick or treating, sponsored by the Sartell Area Chamber of Commerce and Central Minnesota Credit Union, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Lake Francis Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S.

In & Out Crafters, baked goods, vendor sale, food trucks, barbecue trailer, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Freeport Community Center, 307 Seventh St. SE., Freeport. Free admission.

Monday, Oct. 26

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

St. Joseph Township board meeting, 7 p.m. Township meetings are conducted through teleconference.

Thursday, Oct. 29

Coffee and Conversation, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. N, Sartell. Call 320-258-7324 to reserve a space. Sartell-St. Stephen School Board candidates.

Parkinson's Disease Support Group, 10 a.m., Edgewood Living, Sartell, virtual. Bobbi at 320-281-3343.

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

Friday, Oct. 30

St. Joseph Farmers' Market, 3-6 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran Church, 610 CR 2, St. Joseph.

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City to purchase building for public-works storage

by Dennis Dalman

news@thenewsleaders.com

The City of St. Joseph will finally have an extra storage building for its public-works department.

At its Oct. 5 city council meeting, it was announced that there is a buyer's agreement for a building that is adjacent just north of the current public-works facility on property

north of the Coborn's grocery store.

The purchase price is about \$695,000. That may sound like a lot of money, but in previous efforts to buy land and/or an extra public-works facility, the price ranges were well in excess of \$2 million. For years, city council and city staff knew there was an urgently growing

need for an extra facility because as the city grew so did the public-works department and its vast array of equipment: trucks, plows and more.

"We got lucky," said St. Joseph Mayor Rick Schultz in an Oct. 10 interview with the Newsleader. "Other places we checked were just too hugely expensive. We had long been

working to expand and consolidate all the public-works department storage. The current building and the new building being adjacent and in one central location is a big plus," Schultz noted.

Currently, the building to be purchased is being leased to a woodworking business. Schultz said that during refurbishing

work on the building, the city will allow the business to remain there during a transition period.

The city will finalize the purchase by Dec. 31 of this year, Schultz noted. The cost of the building, Schultz said, will be worked into the city's upcoming bonding bill.

Mayor urges caution, safety for Halloween fun

by Dennis Dalman

news@thenewsleaders.com

St. Joseph Mayor Rick Schultz wants all residents – especially parents – to be aware that Halloween activities pose Covid virus risks to children, according to guidelines released by the National Centers for Disease control.

Not advised are trick-or-treat events with large groups, costume parties, haunted houses, hayrides/tractor rides and other large-crowd events. All of those are considered unsafe, high-risk

activities, the CDC announcement warns.

Candy should be wrapped individually or in individual goodie bags, and placed on a table, driveway or porch for trick-or-treaters to pick up themselves.

It is not recommended to use bowls of treats that allow individuals to reach in and grab candy, nor is it recommended that residents give out treats by hand.

"However," Schultz said, "we understand some organi-

zations are already scheduling certain activities for trunk-or-treating. In that spirit, I am stressing diligence, common sense and safety precautions if you choose to participate in Halloween activities. I want everyone to understand it is a choice and does come with risk."

Trunk-or-treat is the name for a Halloween activity in which organizations/families park vehicles in a lot and have candy in the vehicles' trunks for children. It is considered a

safe alternative to trick-or-treating door-to-door along dark streets.

Little ghouls and goblins can collect pre-wrapped treats while in their choice costumes, but they should be sure to maintain safe social distancing, to wear protective face masks and to keep gatherings to 10 or fewer people.

"I suggest trick-or-treating only in smaller family groups, staying in your own neighborhood, and using hand sanitizer often," Schultz said. "And Hal-

loween masks are not considered protective face coverings.

"St. Joseph wants to provide safe opportunities to enjoy activities like Halloween," he added. "The city has had to cancel some events, but we want to assure you there are some fun activities available for children. Just like any other year, some will choose not to participate in Halloween, nor hand out candy. In the past years, no lights on at a residence simply meant no trick-or-treating. Have a safe and happy Halloween!"

Cultural Connections:

Gellers explain importance of Jewish holy days

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Announcements brought to you by Cultural Bridges of St. Joseph, a committee of Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization. We are dedicated to ease your transition into our community.

•••

by Julia Geller and Mark Geller

In Judaism, there are two days that are regarded as the holiest days of the year. This year, they fell at the end of September, in keeping with the Lunar calendar. These holy days are called Rosh Hashana (the new year) and Yom Kippur (the day of repentance).

These holy days call us to

reflect on the past year and encourage us to think about what we want in the year to come. To begin the days of awe, Jews come together to celebrate Rosh Hashana, God's creation of the world. On this day, both the prayer services and the traditional festive meals commemorate God's gift of a new year, a chance for renewal. It is customary to dress in new attire and spend the day with family and friends, but most importantly to blow the Shofar. The Shofar is a ram's horn that is blown as a musical instrument that calls Jews around the world to Rosh Hashana prayer. To add a little flavor, we dip apples in honey to signify a sweet and healthy new year.

In contrast to the excitement and celebratory nature of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur is a somber day of atonement.

It is a time for Jews to reflect on their misdeeds and to pray for forgiveness in order to be inscribed in the book of life. To demonstrate to God how committed Jews are, we fast for 26 hours and spend the day in prayer. Finally, at sundown we gather with family and friends to break the fast and declare the year's holy days to be over.

For our family, as observant Jews in Central Minnesota, the High Holy Days are an opportunity for us to gather with our community, affirm our identity as Jews and strengthen our faith.

From our family to yours, L'shana Tova. Have a happy and healthy New Year.

•••

If you have any questions, contact Juliana Howard at 715-791-8976 or Jamal Elmi at 320-310-2351.



contributed photo

Mark and Julia Geller

Cultural Connections:

In-person English classes are back in St. Joseph

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Mahadsaniidiin. (Thanks)

•••

Cultural Bridges and Central Minnesota Adult Basic

Education (ABE) continue to offer English classes in St. Joseph.

Due to COVID-19, our English language classes were interrupted last spring. Students were able to continue their classes online throughout the summer.

Now, classes are back!

In-person classes began Oct. 5. They will be on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9-11 a.m. The location has changed. Classes will be at Resurrection Lutheran

Church (near the Lake Wobegon Trail building), 610 CR 2, St. Joseph, on the north side of town.

Individuals who are interested in taking classes either in person or online should call ABE to register at 320-370-8220. There is no cost to register or attend class.

Any adults interested in volunteer tutoring for English language classes should contact jane.stevenson@isd742.org or 320-370-8237.

Opinion

Our View Thank you, heroes of the voting process

We hear a lot of praise in these dangerous days (and rightfully so) about all the heroes who keep our troubled world turning.

There are the doctors, nurses, technicians and staffs of clinics and hospitals who work right up front, courageously, in the danger zone of Covid-19 infections. Many of them, when virus infections spike, suffer a terrible emotional toll. Other heroes include those doing “essential” jobs: teachers, police, deputies, mail carriers, medical-emergency workers, retail clerks and so many others who have no choice but to go to work just to pay bills and put food on the table. We salute them all with utmost admiration, thanks and gratitude.

And then there are the other heroes we should also thank – those who keep the very foundation of our democracy, the voting process, in working order. Those heroes are the people who volunteer to ensure when voters come to the polls to vote, those votes are carefully, accurately counted – and accounted for. Those good people of a wide variety of ages know democracy starts right here at home, at the grassroots level, in local voting booths, in which we get to choose who we would like to represent us.

These volunteers go through training to learn exactly how to make the voting process a free and fair procedure. Like doctors, like nurses, these election volunteers (election judges, as they’re known) are not only on the front lines of democracy. They are not only ensuring the integrity of the voting process, but this year they are helping voters stay safe at polling places through sanitation measures, distancing and the wearing of masks.

We hear a lot of bloated nonsense lately about the horrors of voting fraud, of millions and millions of phony ballots submitted to sway an election – especially mail-in ballots. The fact remains that study after study show that voting fraud – of any kind and description – has been virtually non-existent. Such baseless and alarmist claims of voting fraud are most often used to justify voting-suppression efforts or to cast big-time doubt on election results. If these voting-fraud rabble-rousers would spend more time worrying about Russian interference (and then doing something about it), we would all be better served.

Back to the heroes – the election volunteers. We can all rest assured, thanks to their impeccable efforts, that every vote cast will be counted. If and where there may be irregularities, those problems will be discovered, resolved, dealt with in the review process.

Thank you, election heroes! Because of all of you, we citizens can with confidence cast our votes now and on Nov. 3, Election Day, thus keeping our trust and faith in the free and fair voting process – the very foundation of the American Way.

Letters policy

Letters to the editor may be sent to news@thenewsleaders.com or mailed to 1622 11th Ave. S.E., St. Cloud, MN 56304. Deadline is noon Monday. Please include your full name for publication (and address and phone number for verification only.) During election campaigns, letters will be chosen to present a variety of opinions. Letters that do not run in print will appear on our website, www.thenewsleaders.com. Letters must be 350 words or less. We reserve the right to edit for space.

Breaking news: Founding Fathers dead

Patric here at the news desk. I’ve just been handed breaking news: all of the Founding Fathers of our country are dead. James Madison, the last surviving Founding Father, passed away in 1836, a mere 184 years ago.

Oh wait, that’s not actually news. It turns out the Founding Fathers have been dead for generations. Given that, I am baffled by the continual hand-wringing over what they want or what they meant.

As a nation, we seem unable to move past the founding of our country for some reason. There are people who have deified this random group of white men. On and on they’ll go about “the wisdom of our founders,” as if somehow these people weren’t just doing the best they could in the time they had but instead were supernatural beings gifting us all a government from on high.

They didn’t. They were no wiser than us in many ways, but they were trying to build something to outlive them. And, they didn’t even get it right on the first or second tries. In fact, their first attempt, the Articles of Confederation, led to such a weak national congress that its inability to raise money from the states (no taxation power) nearly led to the loss of the Revolutionary War when they continually were unable to pay the soldiers.

The second attempt of the Founding Fathers resulted in the Constitution Convention and the actual U.S. Constitution..... almost. Once the Constitution was drafted (with a stronger Congress and new Executive and Judicial branches), it then faced a perilous battle to be ratified by the states. It would require nine of the original 13 states to ratify it, and New Hampshire was the final state to

Election results should be accepted

As Election Day is drawing ever closer, I’ve noticed an alarming trend of rhetoric emerging about the potential results. Recently, at their respective debates, both President Trump and Vice President Pence refused to definitely state they would accept the results of the November election and commit to a peaceful transition of power. Trump particularly has also made regular statements questioning the legitimacy of absentee voting and making unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud. These sentiments represent a terrible trend for our country and seek to undermine the American people’s confidence in the conduct of our elections. Rather than continuing to promote divisive language such as this, candidates should commit to respect the results of the November elections, once all votes are counted.

Elections in 2020 do look a lot different than in the past. Due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, which has now killed more than 210,000 Americans, many people are choosing to vote by mail or early in person rather than risk infection from crowds on Election Day. Even if you do choose to vote in person on Nov. 3, things will look a lot different, as evidenced by the requirement for masks and social distancing in polling places. These differences have sparked a lot of wrongful talk about the integrity of our elections.

President Trump, among others, has claimed absentee ballots are being sent by foreign countries to rig the vote or that ballots will be sent to wrong addresses

**Patric
Lewandowski**
Guest Writer



make it the law of the land. That means it was not unanimous by a long shot. In fact, Rhode Island was the last of the original 13 to ratify the Constitution and not until 1790, three years after it had been drafted.

Of course, people did not love the Constitution, so right away the Founders had to promise to make changes to it just to get it passed! Massachusetts famously refused to ratify it until 1788 and only once the promises of amendments were made. Those first ten (!) amendments are now called The Bill of Rights.

Why the history lesson? Because I wanted to show it should not matter what we think the Founding Fathers wanted or meant, they gave us the ability to alter our country to meet our needs just as they did in their time. That was the entire point of the Revolution; self-governance. If they wanted to create a system of government people couldn’t change to meet their needs, they wouldn’t have created an amendment system.

It is our moral obligation to continue to amend and change our Constitution. The Founders built something they hoped would live on. To live is to grow and change. It is implied in the very nature of our Constitution to keep our country alive we must amend the Constitution to meet our needs.

I often hear from conservative blowhards that “we are a constitutional republic,

not a democracy.” Baloney. Our founders started with a republic (the Articles of Confederation) and the United States evolved into more of a democracy as we made changes to how Senators are elected, voting rights, and more.

We must continue to perfect our democracy and our Founders gave us the tools to do it. I predict in my lifetime we will see the following amendments to the Constitution:

1.) The dissolution of the Electoral College. This is the natural progression as we move toward a more representative democracy.

2.) Changes in the language of the Second Amendment. These changes will be far more specific about what is and is not allowed for citizens to own in terms of weaponry. I predict hunting rifles and small handguns will be specified as allowed.

3.) Congressional term limits.

4.) Supreme Court regulation and term limits. (I suspect clarification and specificity about the Senate needing to act in a timely fashion on nominees as well as nominations during a presidential election.)

Looking further into the crystal ball, I could see amendments at some point dealing with voting rights, primaries, and specificity of the First Amendment in regards to the liability of hosting companies for internet and social media, and specificity on what separation of church and state means. There could even be codified privacy in an amendment.

It is morally imperative we continue to amend our constitution because if we do not, it is not a living document. If it should not grow and change, then our country will go the way of the Founding Fathers, regardless of their intent or wishes.

**Connor
Kockler**
Guest Writer



or to deceased people. These claims are untrue. Absentee ballots, like when you vote in person, require you to mark your signature, which is checked against the voter registration rolls. Similarly, if ballots are sent to wrong addresses or to a deceased individual in error, those ballots wouldn’t be accepted if submitted by a potential fraudster because they would require the correct signatures. In essence, mail-in voting is as safe and secure as in-person votes. Claims of fraud are also weakened by the fact voting by mail is actually more difficult to use because a legitimate signature may be rejected wrongfully, or voters may make a mistake that could have been corrected had they voted in person.

Our elections in America as a whole are also highly secure. The conservative-aligned Heritage Foundation has compiled a database of 1,298 cases of voter fraud during the past few years across the entire United States. Compare this to the more than 100 million votes cast in both the federal 2018 midterms and the 2016 presidential election alone.

Though any case of voter fraud is a problem, to suggest it is widespread is blatantly deceptive and not supported by the numbers. A recent federal court ruling

in Pennsylvania agreed with this by denying an attempt by the Trump campaign to restrict ballot drop boxes and disqualify certain absentee ballots there, because the campaign could not show proof that voter fraud could result from these measures.

If anything, we should be making it easier for people to vote, not harder. As I wrote in another column recently, if we truly want the leaders of our country and state to reflect our residents, we should be getting every eligible voter to the polls. Restricting drop boxes, absentee ballots and making baseless allegations of fraud only serves to make it harder for people to vote and make people less likely to accept the results if their side loses.

One of the most important tenets of a democracy is that after the people vote and the ballots are counted, the results will be accepted by both the successful and unsuccessful candidates. A peaceful transition of power in this manner between opposing sides is what separates us from violent dictatorships where rulers hold power through force. So on Nov. 3, and in the days following, as absentee and mail-in votes are counted, we should wait patiently for the final results. A winner should only be declared once this process is complete, and once it is complete that winner should be accepted by all. Refusal to accept the results of free and fair elections should have no place in America.

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

Letters to the editor

A great mayor

*Kristopher J Ambuehl,
former city administrator*

As the former St. Joseph city administrator, I find myself in a rare position to be able to endorse a candidate in the St. Joseph mayor's race. I have had the privilege to work with multiple mayors during my career in local government, and I have to say that it was an absolute honor and pleasure to work for St. Joseph Mayor Rick Schultz. He truly has his finger on the pulse of what St. Joseph is. His ability to keep conversations going and keep city-council members engaged in conversation regardless of their views is a rare and much-needed skill in the city. Schultz is fully invested in the well-being and future of the community. I think the City of St. Joseph would be well-served to have Mayor Rick Schultz serve another term.

Puzzled about abortion rights

Jim Kuebelbeck, St. Joseph

I have a question. I am baffled. I am totally puzzled. Perhaps some reader can enlighten me. How can any moral person affiliate themselves with a political party or candidate whose political platform includes (demands) the right of a woman to freely kill her unborn child if she so chooses. I happen to live in an area with two local religious communities. In talking to some members of these communities I have questioned them about their stated support for such a political party which supports

such a radical view about the value of human life. Their weak answer is that I must be a "single issue" person and that there are other important issues to consider. When I then ask what other issues could be more important than taking the life of an innocent unborn baby, they become strangely silent. So I am still puzzled how anyone can arrive at such a mindset. Perhaps some reader can enlighten me. If not, perhaps at the end of my days on earth my Creator will provide the answer.

End the chaos, begin the healing

Jean Abercrombie, St. Joseph

The current occupant of the White House took out a full-page ad in the New York Times demanding the death penalty be brought back for the five young Black men convicted for assault and rape in Central Park in 1989. Later, he repeatedly accused Barack Obama of not having been born in America.

The young men were eventually exonerated. Barack Obama was born in Hawaii and Americans elected him the first Black president of the United States.

Four years ago, candidate Trump asked Black American voters, "What do you have to lose by voting for me?"

Unfortunately, ever since we are seeing what all Americans have to lose.

Trump did finally acknowledge that Barack Obama was, indeed, born in the United States. Later, according to White House sources, he said he would have done better in the polls and

election numbers if he had "continued to stand his ground on the birth-certificate issue." Then, in his first year, he overturned or tried to overturn key Obama policies, including the Affordable Care Act.

But his current, not very subtle use of racism as a dog whistle (a subtly aimed political message usually intended for a particular group) seems to be working, leading to unrest and violence in our American neighborhoods and streets.

This president used a variety of dog whistles to win supporters with his hateful and divisive language. He stirs up the most uncomfortable of our American traits, xenophobia, in manipulating his supporters with an "us against them" almost pep-rally-like racism and endorsement of violence.

At his rallies, he has said he would pay any legal fees for attendees who roughed up protestors; he has encouraged police officers not to be "too nice" when they are putting handcuffed suspects into a squad car.

The last night of the convention, breaking tradition and, perhaps law, he pointed back to the White House and shouted to his crowd, "We're here and THEY'RE not!" US vs THEM could be no plainer.

A statesman (or woman) is someone who is in a position of power but who always puts the good of his country over his own desire for personal gain, be it financial or egotistical. A healthy political debate is good for America, but the present chaos is not. The very worst of us is highlighted and used for political gain.

In Shakespeare's play "Mac-

Beth," Scotland had suffered greatly under the greed and incompetence of MacBeth's rule and the nation's people wonder if they will ever "see wholesome days again?"

But the man whom MacBeth killed so he himself could become king was King Malcolm, a man known to be of "good truth and honor." He was what we would call a true "statesman."

Our nation is wounded and needs healing. It is time to end this madness and elect a true statesman to lead our nation.

Voting is our only weapon

Joan Schramm, St. Joseph

I recently read a book titled "Leadership in Turbulent Times" by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Two sentences drew my attention that I would like to share.

In 1840 Abraham Lincoln, then a member of the Illinois State Legislature, said, "Such men of 'towering' egos, in whom ambition is divorced from the people's best interests, were not men to lead a democracy; they were despots. The great bulwark against a potential dictator is an informed people attached to the government and laws."

How amazing that statement made 180 years ago could be so relevant to this year's election. History has shown us again and again that no president, not even Trump, can break our human spirit. I understand our spirits have been tested during the last four years. Trump's lies, incompetence and arrogance have been hurtful. Effective presidents surround themselves with wise men and women whose advice

is carefully listened to. Trump has neither the ability nor humility to achieve such a goal.

Our spirits are strong, history is on our side and we will not be defeated! Voting is our only weapon. Don't let Trump's partisan tactics keep you from voting. Some people think if their candidate is ahead in the polls they don't need to vote. That's not true! Please vote! If you have any questions or need help, call 1-877-600-VOTE (8683).

Mayor Rick Schultz a good choice

*Joe Perske,
Stearns County Commissioner*

St. Jo(seph) voters should feel confident in casting their vote to re-elect Mayor Rick Schultz. I have been very pleased working cooperatively with Mayor Schultz over the past 10 years. Serving with Rick as a fellow mayor and now as a Stearns County commissioner, I have witnessed his commitment and dedication to work hard for his community and our area. Mayor Schultz understands the issues residents face in their daily lives regarding public safety, city services, recreational opportunities and property taxes.

He also is a visionary leader in regard to community growth, transportation projects, business development and technology. Whether the mayor is working locally, in St. Paul, or with our representation in Washington D.C., he puts residents of St. Joseph first. I look forward to continuing my community service working once again with Mayor Rick Schultz. I encourage you to join me.

Drive-thru an option for dropping off election ballot

With the high number of Stearns County residents voting by absentee ballot in this election, a ballot drop-off drive-thru has been set up outside Stearns County's Service Center. Randy Schreifels, Stearns County Auditor-Treasurer, said approximately 150 people a day are going into the building to turn in absentee ballots for the Nov. 3 General Election and he

hopes the drive-thru will make it more convenient. Residents now have the option to drop off their ballot at the drive-thru. Voters may drop off their own ballot and ballots for up to three voters. Voters who return a ballot for someone else must show an ID with their name and provide a signature.

Drive-thru Ballot Drop-off location:

Stearns County Service Center, 3301 CR 138, Waite Park

Hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday and from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 31

Anyone with questions should contact the Stearns County Auditor-Treasurer's office at 320-656-3920, or email elections@co.stearns.mn.us.

United Way device drive set Oct. 24

United Way is hosting a Device Drive from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24 in the Quinlivan & Hughes parking lot located at 1740 W. St. Germain St., St. Cloud. Bring your old technology and donate it to support people in need of technology. Accepted donations include: laptops, LCD monitors, tablets and cell phones (must be restored to factory settings), networking equipment, servers, printers, keyboards and mice. All donations are securely scrubbed for data and tested. Contact Mary Krippner, director of volunteer engagement, at 320-223-7991 or MKrippner@unitedwayhelps.org.

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.

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PERSONAL FINANCE GUIDE | THE DREAM



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After Financial Security

Americans who have done the work to secure their futures are left with a feeling of accomplishment but may feel empty as there is nothing left to reach for.

Fortunately, there are many rewarding ways to spend a surplus of money. If you are fortunate enough to have

reached your goals and need help spending your money, consider some of these beneficial ideas.

GIVE BACK

The organization Save the Children reports there are many health benefits which come with making charitable contributions. These include improving self esteem and moods.

Find a cause you believe in. Perhaps you have a family member affected by a rare disease, lost a loved one to a medical condition or desire to aid an organization with an awesome mes-

sage. Make sure the charity you are supporting impacts something you care deeply about.

TREAT YOURSELF

Living with financial security doesn't mean you need to live extravagantly. Rather than buying flashy vehicles or gadgets, try to invest in something that benefits your overall life. Consider these interesting ways to treat yourself that you may not have thought of.

- A personal chef to create meals which encourage a healthy diet.
- A housekeeper to keep your home

spotless while you enjoy your daily life.

- An accountant to keep your portfolio in the black and show you ways to grow.

LIVING A REWARDING LIFE

Dedicating so much time and commitment to your financial security allows us to live fruitful lives. It is a goal Americans strive for and can reach with dedication and planning. The possibilities are endless with the right mindset.

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