

Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, Oct. 2, 2020
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Est. 1989

Town Crier

Farmers' Market open until Oct. 12

Sartell Farmers Market is open from 3-6 p.m. Mondays through Oct. 12 in the Bernick's Pepsi Arena parking lot, 1109 First St. S. Come stock up on your winter storage vegetables including potatoes, squash, onions, apples and much more. Also available is great treats including caramel corn, pretzels, fudge, honey, salsa and many canned items.

Candidate forums set for District 13, District #742 School Board

The League of Women Voters, St. Cloud Area, is conducting 2020 candidate forums without in-person audiences. Forums will be recorded and uploaded for later viewing. The public is invited to email questions to lwvstcloud@lwvmn.org for the following races. Questions should be brief and relate to issues these public officials would customarily address.

1. District #742 School Board. Seven candidates are running for four open seats: Omar Abdullahi Podi, Scott Andreason, Al Dahlgren, Shannon Haws, Hani Omar-Jacobson, Andrea Preppernau and Monica Segura-Schwartz. Email questions no later than midnight, Sunday, Oct. 4.

2. Minnesota Legislative District 13. Candidates for Senate District 13 are: Jeff Howe and Michael Willemson. Candidates for House District 13A are Lisa Demuth and Katy Westlund, and candidates for House District 13B are Benjamin Carollo and Tim O'Driscoll. Email questions no later than midnight Monday, Oct. 5.

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.

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.

St. Joseph Mayor Candidates

Editor's note: See inside pages for City Council stories.

Schultz: Pandemic threatens, but people pull together

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Having been the mayor of St. Joseph for 10 years, Rick Schultz wants to keep the job and is vying again, this time versus candidate Anne Buckvold (see related story).

Schultz has been elected four times since 2010, and three of those times he ran unopposed.

He has also served on the city council, planning commission,



Schultz

park board, the economic development association and the (St. Cloud area) planning organization.

"In my 10 years, we've seen a

Schultz • page 2

Buckvold: To get things done, first know the people

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

St. Joseph mayoral candidate and current city-council member Anne Buckvold said that getting to know people, what they care about and what they want is the vital requirement for being a leader and getting things done as mayor.

"I believe I have support be-



Buckvold

cause I listen to people, and they know I'm committed to representing their concerns" she said. "I want to be mayor, people want me to be mayor. It

Buckvold • page 3



photo by Carolyn Bertsch

Shopping in the sunshine

Roughly 40 vendors and crafters selling everything from cosmetics to cleaning supplies assemble on the lawn near the government center Sept. 19 in St. Joseph.

St. Cloud school board election

Editor's note: Seven people have filed for four seats on the St. Cloud school board. Two of those candidates were featured Sept. 4 and two more were profiled in the Sept. 18 edition. The last three are profiled in this edition. All can be viewed at thenewsleaders.com.

Segura-Schwartz: School-community connections vital to shape education

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com



Segura-Schwartz

Incumbent St. Cloud school board member Monica Segura-Schwartz said she believes the school district must continue to make strong, concerted efforts to connect more with the community for the sake

of residents, including students.

"Our school administration is moving forward developing trust and relationships with our community, and I keep doing my best to support that effort."

Segura • page 3

Preppernau: Strong relationships forge excellent education

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com



Preppernau

Andrea Preppernau, St. Cloud school board candidate, said that building strong relationships is the foundation of all of the good work that happens in schools.

Preppernau, 45, a program coordinator

for Princeton public schools, is one of seven candidates – three of them incumbents – competing for four open seats on the school board. She and her husband, Brent, have two children –

Preppernau • page 4

Omar-Jacobson believes her communication skills will help schools

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

St. Cloud school board candidate Hani Omar-Jacobson said she firmly believes her communication



Omar-Jacobson

skills, along with her bilingual and bicultural background, would be beneficial for the students, teachers, staff and parents in the school system.

She is one of seven candidates vying

Omar • page 4

“While recent events have polarized many of us along with the nation, there remains shared characteristics of everyday life in a simple town,” Schultz said. “Our attitudes, values and goals are not defined by social media nor the anger that has beset much of the country, but by the continued efforts to come together despite difficulties.”

Sartell-St. Stephen • St. Joseph

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

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

Phone: (320) 363-7741 • E-mail: news@thenewsleaders.com

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Buckvold

from front page

is that simple. If elected, I'll do my best.”

Buckvold, a social worker at Tech High School and the mother of four pre-teen children, was appointed to the St. Joseph Council in May 2018 to fill a seat that had been held by Matt Killam, who resigned when he moved from the city. Six months later, she was elected to the same seat, winning handily over the other candidates. Previously, in 2016, she had entered the race for State House representative for District 13A, but incumbent Jeff Howe won re-election.

Buckvold has served and still serves on many boards and committees. Among them are St. Joseph Park Board, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, St. Joseph Hiring Committee, Metrobus Advisory Committee, Stearns County Human Resources, developing and training community leaders to advocate for extending Northstar commuter rail to St. Cloud, and a community organizer for ISAIAH, which is a local faith organization for social, ra-

cial and economic justice. During her outreach work, she developed relationships in the local Muslim community.

“If you want to be a strong leader, someone who gets things done, you need to know people, you need to know what they care about, what they want,” she said. “That was my work. It brought me to the state Capitol on countless occasions. I became familiar with the workings (and non workings!) of state government.”

When she first moved to St. Joseph almost 15 year ago, Buckvold worked as volunteer and events coordinator for St. John’s Prep School. She also operated a daycare business for three years, worked as a mental-health counselor at Madison Elementary School for a year and was then hired as a Tech High School counselor.

Born and raised in the Minneapolis area, Buckvold has an undergraduate degree in social pedagogy from a university in Denmark and a master’s degree in social work from the University of Maine. She also spent a year studying in Greenland. For two years, she worked at Concordia Language Village in Bemidji.

Buckvold addressed St. Jo-

seph’s challenges and opportunities. Despite the Covid-19 crisis, the city has adjusted to its many impacts quite well, she said, adding that progress continued through the hardships. She mentioned some of them: some business re-openings, the Flour and Flower Bakery opening, the start of the first Black-owned business (a restaurant named Krewe) that gained positive stories in the New York Times, a shared-bike program between Waite Park and St. Joseph.

“St. Joseph was becoming more of a destination before the pandemic,” she said. “I can’t see why we wouldn’t continue to be. We just have to be thoughtful about how to navigate and continue our growth.”

Other challenges, she said, are the council needing to put back on its priorities list for bonding a pedestrian underpass across CR 75 and the need to work more on security for individuals and families: greater affordability of housing, improved public transportation, job opportunities and strengthened education.

Much societal polarization has been occurring due to the pandemic, Buckvold said she believes.

“My goal is to decrease polarization and get people to focus on what is in their control. Focusing on anything but that just raises tension and anxiety, which is something I don’t think any of us benefits from and especially not now.”

More requests from businesses for CARES funds have been received, she noted.

“We are going to get more through the winter so we need to prepare for that. Again, in my view, the impact of the pandemic is really calling the question on so many levels of how we primarily White and middle class have lived and expect to live.”

A community center will definitely benefit St. Joseph, Buckvold said, adding residents will have to decide what it should look like, what it will provide. Once it’s built, there will be a tax levy for it, she said.

Strangely enough, the pandemic has brought opportunities for stronger social bonds, Buckvold said she believes. For example, she mentioned the relationships between St. Joseph and the two area colleges.

“Historically, it (relationship) has been strained and even tense at times,” she said. “I don’t think

it needs to be. It’s not that I think an opportunity (for better relationships) didn’t exist without a pandemic. It did. But now I think everyone everywhere is rethinking things, evaluating what really matters, what resources we really have that we haven’t used. Institutions (colleges, for example) are doing that too.”

Buckvold said she is amazed by how St. Joseph is such an engaging city: the Joetown Rocks festival, successful for a decade; the Winter Walk; the Small-Shop Crawl, Millstream Arts Festival, Rock for Alzheimer’s; Fourth of July celebration; farmers markets, to name just some.

“The list goes on,” she said. “I just think it’s awesome.”

What does Buckvold care most about in regards to St. Joseph?

“I care about everything because I care about the people,” she said. “Anything that is touching this town, good or bad, what a resident wants more or less of, if they have a good idea, I want to hear about it. It makes the job of serving the people so much easier. I want to be sure there is gravity to any political conversation I am a part of, meaning that it is about real and substantial issues, the things that affect our lives.”

Segura

from front page

fort,” she said. “At the end of the day, those are the relationships that matter in terms of students’ health – emotional, physical and scholastic.”

Segura-Schwarz, 47, is vying for re-election, competing with seven other candidates, including two other incumbents. There are four seats open on the school board for the Nov. 3 general election. Incumbent Jeff Pollreis did not file for re-election.

from St. Cloud State University. It was there she met a St. Cloud man whom she married 12 years ago. More recently, she earned another master’s degree in advocacy and political leadership from Metro State University. She has been a facilitator for the Community Anti-Racism Workshop at SCSU and was appointed by Gov. Mark Dayton and then re-appointed by Gov. Tim Walz to serve on the board of the Minnesota Latino Affairs Council.

Segura-Schwartz gave her responses to the following questions for the St. Joseph Newsleader:

How can you help ensure every child has full access to the best education so no child is left behind?

Segura-Schwartz said she is a strong advocate of setting goals and systems of evaluation at every level, including long- and short-term impacts. Evaluations are key, she added, to adjusting and making changes and finding out where more support is needed and adjusting expenditures to that end. The building of trust between the school administration and the community is essential to ensure all children receive the finest education.

“I am not afraid of tense or difficult conversations and do my best to honestly hear everyone,” she said. “I encourage our board

to reach out to our constituents and work more creatively in getting more community input at our board meetings and other functions.”

How can you help guarantee a zero-tolerance policy against teasing, taunting and bullying is not only emphasized but consistently enforced?

Segura-Schwartz said there are multiple support systems within the schools to address unacceptable behaviors. A 10-page

policy concerning bullying was recently reviewed by the board and is frequently under review.

The issue, she said, is complex and needs widespread discussion.

“I see bullying happening all around us – in the media and with a great number of adult interactions right now,” she said. “We ‘adults’ must understand that children mimic us. They tend to learn what we do more

Segura • page 4



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MINNESOTA



STAY SAFE MN

Segura

from page 3

than what we tell them to do. I am not perfect. I have my faults, but with practice I have learned to notice them and learn from them, at least some of the time. I ask our administration, teachers and community to do the same.”

Some say there is too much emphasis on written tests to measure students’ progress. How do you feel about testing?

Testing is only one way of evaluating, and evaluations are vital if progress is to be made,

Preppernau

from front page

Madeline, a 2020 graduate of Tech High School; and Benjamin, Tech Class of 2022.

Preppernau has a degree in biology from the University of California (Los Angeles) and a master’s degree in public health from San Diego State University. She moved to Minnesota in 2002 and began work in 2003 as a research assistant for the St. Cloud school district. The following year, she became the grant writer/research manager for the district. During that time, she wrote grants that totaled more than \$10 million for the school district. Many of the grants required community partnerships and collaboration among many stakeholders. She began working for the Princeton Public Schools in 2015.

In addition, Preppernau also consults for Partner for Student Success, a community collaboration to improve educational outcomes for students.

Segura-Schwartz said. In recent years, the “Star” system of multi-dimensional evaluation has been put into place to measure academic progress, but that too is partly based on testing, she noted.

She said schools examine data every week to assess students’ progress in terms of discipline, academic achievement, attendance, assignments and so forth.

“I believe we need to figure out how to report that better to our community,” she said. “Unfortunately, the state looks at us for comparison with other districts only in a few dimensions, test scores being one of them.”

“I believe my experience as a public-school employee for the past 17 years provides a good knowledge base for becoming a school-board member,” she said.

How can you help ensure every child has full access to the best education so no child is left behind?

The key, she said, is high-quality relationships. One study she said, shows middle-school students who reported quality relationships with teachers were eight times more likely to stick with challenging tasks, enjoy working hard and realizing it is OK to make mistakes while learning.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is also vital for education, she added. Research shows SEL raises achievement by 11 percentage points and increases pro-social behaviors such as kindness, sharing and empathy. It also reduces stress and depression. The five basic SEL skills are self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

Please address two or three school issues you care most about and what you would like to do to make changes (if any) regarding those issues?

Segura-Schwartz, who is passionate about the arts, said she strongly believes they are lost in the shuffle in schools to the point that in some schools throughout the state they are disappearing from curricula.

“Art education is more than singing or playing an instrument,” she said. “It is learning how to be out of our comfort zone, being exposed to positive criticism of ourselves, encouragement to get creative and build

How can you help guarantee a zero-tolerance policy against teasing, taunting and bullying is not only emphasized but consistently enforced?

“Teasing, taunting and bullying happen in every school even though it is sometimes downplayed or denied by some school officials,” Preppernau said.

Strong relationships (teacher-student and student-student) help reduce bullying behaviors, she said, adding there are always ways to improve and do more. Strategies such as a “Buddy Bench” on playgrounds and empowering students as allies for kindness are really important.

“I am also a proponent of schools using restorative practices to build relationships among the school community to prevent bullying, disagreements, conflicts, missteps, mistakes and wrong-doing before harm happens,” she said. “Involving students and asking for their ideas must be part of preventing bullying, as well.”

Some say there is too much emphasis on written tests to

something no one else did.”

Fewer and fewer children are being exposed to a variety of art education in schools, she said, to the point that when those children become adults, they do not value the enriching importance of arts.

“I have been consistent in showing this interest in art education and bringing it up to the administration, and I will continue to do so,” she said.

Other comments?

The Covid-19 crisis is a huge challenge for schools, Segura-Schwartz noted.

“We really need to work together to figure this out,” she

said. “I am deeply concerned for all of our community and the wide range of opinions that everyone has about the way that school should work next year. This is not a perfect system. However, the system before Covid was not perfect either. I am hoping this time will help us develop stronger ways of personalized education that address each student’s needs specifically.”

She said that can happen only if everyone is working closely together – the schools, the school board, the administration and the community.

Please address two or three school issues you care most about and what you would like to do to make changes (if any) regarding those issues?

Issue One: Expanding opportunities for student voices. “We must always ask ourselves in everything we do as a district/school how students have been part of the process since they are the ones experiencing the school system on a daily basis.”

Issue Two: Implementing a system for assessing the effectiveness of district programs and initiatives. “We must always be analyzing what we are doing and asking if what we are doing is the most effective way to be doing it.”

Issue Three: Strategically allocate resources to support the programs and initiatives that meet the needs of District 742 learners. “The most important part of that statement is ‘meet the needs of District 742 learners (i.e. students, not the adults).’”

Omar

from front page

ing for four seats on the school board in the Nov. 3 election. Those seats are now occupied by Al Dahlgren, Shannon Haws, Jeff Pollreis and Monica Segu-

Newsleaders seeks Go-FundMe donations

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ra-Schwartz. All of those, except for Pollreis, filed for re-election.

Hani and her family fled the war in Somalia, in east Africa, when she was only 8 years old.

Omar-Jacobson, 35, is a public-health nurse for CentraCare, with her job title being community health specialist. She and her husband, Nathan Jacobson, have four children – Gabriel, 12; Leyla, 9; Eli, 7; and Isaac, 2. The two oldest attend North Junior High School; Eli goes to Westwood Elementary School.

Omar-Jacobson has lived in St. Cloud since 2005 when she accepted a position at Whitney Senior Center working with a program to serve local senior citizens called Building Bridges, Opening Doors. She, her husband and other Whitney staff developed the program, which went on to win the St. Cloud Mayor’s High Five Award for excellence in community service.

Later, she enrolled at St. Cloud Technical & Community College to study nursing. Since then, she has earned degrees for licensed practical nursing and registered, as well as an associate’s degree from SCTCC and a bachelor’s degree in nursing from St. Cloud

State University.

While attending school, Omar-Jacobson worked full time for District 742 at Talahi Community School and Apollo High School as a bilingual paraprofessional. She also has experience working as an LPN with the CentraCare Women’s and Children’s Clinic and as an RN at the CentraCare Family Health Clinic.

“In my present role (as CentraCare community health specialist), it is my goal to promote health and wellness in Central Minnesota,” Omar-Jacobson said. “I seek to use my communication and critical-thinking skills to work with the community and other (school) board members to elevate our public-education system.”

The St. Joseph Newsleader asked Omar-Jacobson questions about student diversity, problems of bullying and the ongoing debate about the value of written tests.

Every child, she said, deserves access to quality public education. Her bilingual and bicultural backyard, she added, gives her skills and insights to work with people and to help them find solutions.

“The many perspectives I have as a middle-class working mother, a refugee daughter and a public health nurse will serve me well as I seek to close the achievement gap, bridge communities and serve children,” she said. “I understand what disadvantaged children and their families are going through as that was my own family’s experience.

If children are provided the tools and space they need to learn and thrive, she said, they will achieve their goals and become influential members of the community.

“As a school board member, I will work to bring our community together and strive to create a better, healthier experience for all our children.”

Omar-Jacobson said her goal is to enforce to the fullest extent, with the help of the superintendent, a zero-tolerance policy in regard to bullying.

“As a public health nurse, I know how bullying can be detrimental to a child’s mental health and development,” she said. “I also want to develop bullying-prevention programs that will teach children the effects of bullying and teach healthy

coping skills for those who have been affected by it. Together, we can be proactive in partnering with students to come up with creative ways to stop bullying.”

Assessment tests, Omar-Jacobson said, can be good tools to measure students’ progress because they help district and families identify areas that need improvement. However, she added such tests should never be used to determine a student’s worth and potential for future success. The test results, she explained, can be over-applied because of bias, causing many students to be unfairly excluded from certain classes and programs in which they could otherwise succeed.

Some other issues and programs Omar-Jacobson said she would like to improve and strengthen include student achievement, early-childhood education and college-and-career readiness.

“As a school-board member, the primary way I can work to accomplish those tasks is by working with the superintendent to create measurable goals and creating a culture of accountability for student success.”

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photo by Janelle Von Pinnon

Keeping utilities in check
St. Joseph Public Works has had a busy fall. Among the department’s many duties: flushing water mains and fire hydrants. Flushing removes natural sediment from the system and verifies fire hydrant operations throughout the entire city. Pictured flushing a hydrant is city utility operator Randy Torborg.

Sculpture is hopeful warning from St. Joseph to the future

by Tracy Rittmueller
news@thenewsleaders.com

For the past year St. Joseph-based artist-printer Mary Bruno, her apprentices Madeline Cochran, Scott Scribner, Lucian Eisenschenk and Ben Hamman, and St. John’s University artist-in-residence, potter Joseph Bresnahan, have been collaborating with Sisters of St. Benedict’s monastery and other artisans to create a monumental work of art. On Aug. 11, they hermitically sealed Bresnahan’s large sculpture called “Kura Prophetic Messenger” to preserve its contents for, as Bruno said, “the next hundred million years.”

A “kura” is a Japanese earthen structure for storing valuables. Bresnahan’s Kura is a complex sculpture containing seeds native to Minnesota, stored in decorated clay pots, along with Bruno’s contemporary rendition of an ancient manuscript in an ancient form, “The Rule of Saint Benedict.” The value of these stored items lies in the symbolic message of its contents, which is, according to Bruno’s interpretation of

Bresnahan’s artistic vision, that “God’s divine knowledge and peace [is capable of] saving us from war and destruction . . . [but] we never receive his message because of human imperfection.”

The scroll of “The Rule of Saint Benedict” represents God’s divine knowledge about how humans can live in peace. The Rule is a document that has structured the communal lives of nuns and monks of the Order of St. Benedict (OSB) for almost 1,500 years. Joan Chittister, OSB, in her commentary on the Rule says that it is concerned with “what [life’s] about, what it demands, and how to live it. It has not failed a single generation.”

That we have been given a message that will save us from destruction, but that we never receive the message, is a grim thought. And yet the very existence of the artwork that issues this dire warning is a celebration of hope for human survival. The production of the project and in particular of this contemporary scroll of the Rule demonstrates that people are capable of setting aside

seemingly radical differences and working together to create
Sculpture • page 8

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Obituary

Mary E. Simon, 75
Jan. 3, 1945-Sept. 25, 2020
St. Joseph

Mary Simon, 75, died Sept. 25 at her home in St. Joseph. Private graveside services were held Sept. 30 at North Star Cemetery in St. Cloud.

Mary was born Jan. 3, 1945 in St. Cloud, to John D. and Violet A. (Grimm) Lynch. She married William Simon on Nov. 29, 1975. She worked for her father’s hatchery for a year and then worked at St. Cloud Mental Health Center for two years. She and her husband started Simon Enterprise Inc. in 1986 and owned and operated it together until



Simon

2018. She was also a loving mother to her two sons Brian and Steve. She was a very vivacious person who loved to have fun. She enjoyed being outside and was known as a sun and water worshiper.

Survivors include the following: her husband; Bill of St. Joseph; son, Brian (Jeanine) Simon of Valrico, Florida; two grandchildren, Rayne Bryson and Casandra Simon; sisters, Jacqueline Weber of St. Cloud and Patricia Skelton of Clearwater; and brother John Lynch Jr. of St. Cloud.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son, Steven Fritz; and sisters, Kathleen Farber and Sharon Lynch.

Special thank you to Liz Schwagel at St. Croix Hospice and her caregiver, Jolene Stang, for their special care given to Mary.

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photo by Caleb Thompson

Mary Bruno carves a lino block for “The Rule of Benedict” scroll.

Sculpture

from page 5

something beautiful, meaningful and life-nurturing.

To create the scroll to seal in the kura, Bresnahan chose local artist Bruno. She is an outspoken, free-spirited printer whose website proudly displays humorous, handcrafted cards and prints. For examples, there’s a poop emoji on one card, and some of her prints use the F-word.

Bruno collaborated with two past prioresses of St. Benedict’s Monastery (Katherine Howard and Michaela Hedican) who selected quotes from the “Rule of Benedict” for Bruno to highlight in her text. The monastery’s archivist, Mariterese Woida, OSB, and her staff provided images from the sisters’ 160-plus years in Central Minnesota.

There might have been conflicts. Some people can’t get past their superficial differences, such as word and clothing choices, or political and religious affiliations. These women hardly noticed the things that often break up relationships and families and instead built mutual respect based on their shared values.

“I admire and have always admired the Benedictine nuns,” Bruno said. “They’re badass. They don’t shy away from hard work. They live humbly and try to be good community members. And I can relate to that.”

About Bruno’s and Bresnahan’s “lively interest in the ‘Rule of Saint Benedict,’” Sister Katherine said this: “Their enthusiasm for this project is inspiring in itself . . . There were some good laughs and many moments of nostalgia! We feel grateful for being a part of the rich, multi-faceted, down-to-earth life in central Minnesota. This beautiful, creative memorial is a wonderful tribute honoring the legacy of Benedictine men and women here.”

Sister Michaela expressed gratitude for the collaboration,



photo by Madeline Cochran

Mary Bruno holds “The Rule of Saint Benedict” scroll, recently completed in her shop in St. Joseph.

saying, “It reminded me once again of the precious heritage we hold as Benedictines, how it has formed my life.”

About the process of working with Sister Katherine to present the Rule’s core wisdom to Bruno and Bresnahan, she said, “It was a delight to see how well-woven the Rule is, how Benedict was able to pull together the best of human nature, understanding how it had to be gently attended to, and yet setting it up so people have something to reach for. Our heritage is wonderful.”

Respect for heritage, finding the value in what is old and making it meaningful for the present is important to Bruno, too.

“Letterpress printing is old technology,” she said, “but I put my own modern spin on it, my own take on the imagery, the type and format, but it’s created in the way things have been created for hundreds of years. I’m using old-school vintage technology to make something that’s relevant today.”

“Being a cog in this wheel has given me a sense of purpose that I have not felt in a long while,” Bruno said. “I am grateful, I am honored, I am better at my craft, I am a more comprehensive creator . . . I’m not the most religious person but this was a kind of a religious experience.”

And the title of the work, “Kura Prophetic Messenger,” seems to be asking one of religion’s ongoing questions: Will we get the hopeful message of hope, that we are capable of living and working together in order to make life peaceful before we allow our human foibles to ruin us?

For an appointment to view one of the six hand-painted, hand-gilded copies of the letterpress printed scroll of the “Rule of Benedict,” which is also sealed in Bresnahan’s “Kura Prophetic Messenger” sculpture, contact Mary Bruno, Bruno Press, 154 Fifth Ave. SE., St. Joseph, or call 612-327-2542.

St. Joseph City Council

Goracke vows to revisit assessments if re-elected

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Troy Goracke said if he is re-elected to the St. Joseph City Council in the Nov. 3 election, his top priority is to re-examine the city’s assessment policy to see if there is a different way to implement, a way that would be less expensive for residents.

Elected four years ago to the city council, Goracke is a service-repair technician for Minnesota Computer Systems Inc.

Incumbent Goracke is one of six candidates vying for two four-year terms on the council – the two seats now held by Bob Loso and himself. The other candidates are Loso, Kelly Beniek, Carmie Mick, Paul Orvis and Mike Osterman.

The St. Joseph Newsleader asked the candidates many questions about city-related issues. The following are Goracke’s answers:

Background

Goracke earned a bachelor’s degree with a major in environmental science and a minor degree in education, plus a degree in communications arts and design.

He has extensive experience in service to the City of St. Joseph. He served as a city council member for the past four years and currently, on the city’s planning commission from 2016 to 2018, and on the economic-development association from 2018 to the present.

Issues

Goracke named three top issues he would like to continue working on: the city’s assessment policy, the proposed new community center and the East Park bonding issue, establishing new businesses in the city’s Industrial Park and finalizing/balancing the city budget for 2021.

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Goracke

Council candidate Osterman loves to serve country, community

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Serving his country and his community has always been uppermost in the mind and heart of Mike Osterman, who is a candidate for St. Joseph City Council in the Nov. 3 election.

“I have always had a drive to serve my community and my country,” he said. “Whether it was early in life with groups like the Jaycees, 4H or FFA or enlisting in the U.S. Army Reserve after my 17th birthday. I have also volunteered through St. Croix Hospice in recent years, working mostly for fellow veterans.”

Osterman is one of six candidates vying for two four-year terms on the council – the two seats now held by Bob Loso and Troy Goracke, both of whom filed for re-election. Besides those two incumbents and Osterman, the other candidates are Kelly Beniek, Carmie Mick and Paul Orvis.

The St. Joseph Newsleader asked the candidates

many questions about city-related issues. The following are Osterman’s answers:

Background

Osterman, a wounded combat veteran, is a tractor operator for the St. Cloud Veterans’ Administration Hospital and has an associate’s degree in business. He is also currently a non-traditional University of Minnesota senior studying healthcare management.

His wife is Danielle Osterman, who is also an employee at the St. Cloud Veterans’ Administration Hospital. She works as a registered nurse in the long-term care unit.

Qualifications

Osterman said that growing up on a farm instilled in him the values and morals that are so important to the city of St. Joseph.

“I also have experience in budgeting and quality control, thanks to my years

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Osterman

Loso says longtime service qualifies him for re-election

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Long-time service to St. Joseph as a council member and intense knowledge of the workings, policies and procedures of city government are the qualifications cited by Bob Loso in his bid for re-election to his city-council seat.

Loso is one of six candidates vying for two four-year terms on the council – the two seats now held by Loso and Troy Goracke, both of whom filed for re-election. Besides incumbents Goracke and Loso, the other candidates are Kelly Beniek, Carmie Mick and Mike Osterman. The two winners will be decided in the Nov. 3 election.

The St. Joseph Newsleader asked the candidates many questions about city-related issues. The following are Loso’s answers:

Background

Now retired, Loso worked as an instrumen-

tation technician, a skill he acquired in his vocational education. He has 35 years of experience in city government.

Qualifications

“I have a good understanding of the budget system, the St. Joseph city ordinances and the current issues impacting the city and staff,” he said.

Loso spent a vast amount of time throughout the years to ensure the St. Joseph parks system was developed and maintained.

“I was instrumental in pushing forward with long-term plans so parks could continue to be funded,” he said. “Through my continued focus and support, the city’s infrastructure is in better shape and we are poised for growth.”

Challenge

Financial constraints, Loso said, are a continual challenge for the city.

“We have to continue to

Loso • page 11



Loso

Candidate Orvis has lifetime of public service

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Public service is practically part of the DNA of Paul Orvis, a candidate for a seat on the St. Joseph City Council.

“I have been in some form of public service since I was 18,” he said. “I have 20 years of combined service between the Army Reserve and the Minnesota National Guard until I retired in 2017.”

In addition, his public service includes his employment at the Stearns County Sheriff’s Department for the past 19 years.

Orvis is one of six candidates vying for two four-year terms on the council – the two seats now held by Bob Loso and Troy Goracke, both of whom filed for re-election. Besides those two incumbents and Orvis, the other candidates are Kelly Beniek, Carmie Mick and Mike Osterman.

The St. Joseph Newsleader asked the candidates many questions

about city-related issues. The following are Orvis’s answers:



Orvis

Background

In the military, Orvis earned the rank of staff sergeant. He also earned an Army Commendation Medal, an Army Achievement Medal and other medals and awards, including the Sheriff’s Office Medal of Valor.

Qualifications

Orvis said his longtime public service has given him the ability to see both sides of a story and to help come up with a solution somewhere in the middle.

“I also have the ability to put the mission first,” he said. “And that means that what decision I make will be based on having the city’s and residents’ best interests in mind. I have had the opportunity to work with people from many different backgrounds, and I worked well with those people.”

Orvis • page 11

Mick touts people, business skills in bid for council

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Carmie Mick, a candidate for a St. Joseph City Council seat, said her business background and people skills would help her be an effective council member.

Mick is co-owner of CWMF Corp. in Waite Park, which is an asphalt-plant equipment, parts and service company. It is a second-generation family business.

She is one of six candidates vying for two four-year terms on the council – the two seats now held by Bob Loso and Troy Goracke, both of whom filed for re-election. Besides those two incumbents and Mick, the other candidates are Kelly Beniek, Paul Orvis and Mike Osterman.

The St. Joseph Newsleader asked the candidates many questions about city-related issues. The following are Mick’s answers:

Background

Mick has lived in St. Joseph for 18 years, the last seven of those years in St. Joseph Township. She is a 1997 graduate of St. Cloud

State University, with a bachelor-of-science degree in international business (accounting emphasis).

Mick has served on the CentraCare Foundation’s finance committee from 2013 to 2019 and was also on that foundation’s board from 2014 to 2019. She was honored in 2016 by the St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce for being the co-owner of “Family Owned Business of the Year.”

Qualifications

“My background in owning and running a family-owned business includes everything from finances to people,” Mick said.

Teamwork, she added, is essential to focus on growth, manage growth and deciding when it makes sense to build and strengthen a team of people to reach those goals.

“To be engaged as a city official, it is important to understand those financial and people considerations,” she said. “Those life experiences make me an excellent candidate for this role.”

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Mick

Beniek wants to give back, be voice for city

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Kelly Beniek, candidate for St. Joseph City Council, doesn’t define achievements in terms of trophies and paper certificates; instead, she considers her achievements as deeply personal gratifications involving herself, her children and her family.

She believes her roles as woman, wife, mother and grandmother give her the voice and insights to be a good council member. Beniek, who is retired, is married and the mother of three grown children and two grandchildren. She attended technical college for two years.

“Every decision made for a community comes from different points of view,” she said. “We need to be open to all points of view to make a good decision for all.”

Beniek is one of six candidates vying for two four-year terms on the council – the two seats now held by Troy Goracke and Bob Loso, who have both

filed for re-election. The other candidates, including Beniek, are Carmie Mick, Paul Orvis and Mike Osterman. The winners will be determined in the Nov. 3 election.

The St. Joseph Newsleader asked the candidates about many issues. The following are Beniek’s responses:

City challenges

Striking a proper balance in a rapidly growing St. Joseph, she said.

“I believe we need to have the right ratio of population to growth of business,” Beniek said. “I would approach these challenges as a team . . . You will never make everyone happy, but we can all come to the table to have the right conversations and make the best choices for our community.”

Virus crisis

St. Joseph is doing the best it can, she said.

“The virus crisis is

Beniek • page 11



Beniek

Opinion

Our View

Let’s shatter the stigma

Think about what you did in the last 11 minutes.

In that short amount of time, someone in America died by suicide.

Data released this year from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show the suicide rate has climbed 35 percent since 1999. If that statistic isn’t alarming enough, experts say social limitations and economic pressures brought on by COVID-19 have heightened the risk.

Even before the pandemic, the nation’s suicide rate peaked to historic highs, with rates at the highest level since World War II. It’s still too early to predict the scale of impact, but social isolation is likely to drive up suicides across the world.

Often a result of an untreated mental health condition, suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem – one that often shocks small, close-knit communities such as ours. There were 48,344 suicides in America in 2018, but this data doesn’t account for the number of suicide attempts, not to mention the number of residents impacted by depression who have recurrent thoughts of suicide.

Mental illness doesn’t always end in suicide. Still, one in five people are living with a mental illness such as depression, anxiety, bipolar, personality and eating disorders, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Mental illness is real. And it does happen here – to people of all ages and socioeconomic statuses. We must shatter the stigma still attached to it, dispelling the belief it’s something “made up” or something one can simply “snap out of” or something they can control “if they only tried.” Awareness efforts have improved how mental illness is perceived and acknowledged, yet ignorance and judgement continue to hinder those who are suffering and need help.

Furthermore, the National Alliance on Mental Illness says that, for a group of people who already carry such a heavy burden, stigma is an unacceptable addition to their pain.

Stigma is rooted in shame. Supportive environments are key to removing barriers that prevent many people suffering with mental illness from getting help.

Oct. 4-10 is Mental Illness Awareness Week. This year’s theme is, “What People with Mental Illness Want You to Know,” and, as journalists, we believe it’s an important one. When people who live with mental illness share their stories, it helps us better understand the impact. That impact touches not just people who live with mental illness, but their families as well.

By listening to their stories, “we understand the difficulty people face in obtaining care and treatment in a timely way,” said Sue Abderholden, executive director of the NAMI. “We understand the discrimination people face when their insurance won’t cover the treatment they need, their employer doesn’t understand the accommodations needed, or the school doesn’t understand how to support a young person.”

“When we listen – really listen – we also hear people’s hopes and dreams,” Abderholden said. “We learn the determination and courage it takes to walk this journey. We learn that hope is a verb and recovery is possible. We learn the importance of reaching in and providing support to our loved ones or friends when they are struggling.”

We all can do our part to fight the stigma. Here are a few ways:

Share Stories

Talk openly about mental health. If you’ve struggled with mental illness, consider sharing your story. It reminds people they’re not alone. Shame lives in the darkness. Bringing stories of emotional suffering that others can resonate with into the light weakens that shame.

Support an Organization

There are several organizations on the local, state and national level that exist to fight the stigma and help those who are struggling. Consider supporting their mission or participating in an event that raises awareness and funds for mental illness.

Set an Example

Avoid insulting comments about people and avoid judging others to be “less than” you. Oftentimes, when we do this, we don’t know their story; rather we make assumptions and fail to take into consideration what they’re going through or that their behavior is impacted by mental illness, not a direct reflection of who they are as a person.

Show Compassion

Mental illness is not anyone’s fault. It’s not something they choose to live with. Be compassionate toward people who are suffering emotionally, just as you would if they were suffering with a physical illness. When they realize you truly care and are willing to listen and offer support without judgment, they will begin to open up and take the first step toward treating their mental illness.

Yes, capitalize Blacks. And Whites too

Dennis Dalman
Reporter



For many years, I would wince when writing a sentence such as, for example: “There is a diverse population living in the Twin Cities area, including Latinos, Vietnamese, Somalians, **blacks**, Native Americans and **whites**.”

That sentence is like a smile with two missing teeth. Why shouldn’t whites and blacks be capitalized too, like the others in that list? It didn’t seem right, didn’t make sense.

Just last June, the Associated Press Stylebook announced the word blacks, when referring to African-Americans, should be capitalized: Blacks. The AP Stylebook, used in newsrooms throughout the world, has long been a compendium of usage for newswriting style – for example, how to abbreviate states, when and when not to spell out numbers, and so forth.

One afternoon, the editor and I were talking on the telephone when he happened to mention the AP Stylebook now recommends capitalizing the words black/blacks when referring to people.

“Good!” I said. “It’s about time.” Then he said, “We should probably capitalize the word white too.” “Yes, absolutely,” I said. “Why one if not the other?”

I could just imagine the uproar if we capitalized Blacks but not whites. We’d be accused of reverse racism. It makes eminent sense, at long last, to capitalize both: Whites, Blacks.

In early September, I wrote a column about racial issues in which I capitalized every mention of Blacks

and Whites. It was published in the Sept. 18 Newsleader.

Recently, the news office received an answering-machine message from an anonymous woman who said she was angry about how I capitalized Blacks but not whites in that column. It was, she suggested, a trendy political correctness or a kind of grammatical reverse discrimination.

“What?!” I said to myself, aloud, after hearing her message. I was positive I’d capitalized BOTH of those words.

Immediately, I checked the column stored on my computer. Here is a sentence from that column:

“That psychological divide should not surprise us because there has been a separation (physical, psychological) between Whites and Blacks through centuries of slavery.”

Where did that woman get the notion I hadn’t capitalized whites, too? Does she need a new pair of reading glasses?

Then I checked the printed version of the column in the newspaper. That woman was correct; the Whites had been decapitalized. What happened is that a well-intentioned newspaper proofreader, not knowing the rules had changed, had de-

Voting should always be important

Connor Kockler
Guest Writer



By the time this column is published, our country will be just over a month away from an election that has been talked about for a very long time. Ever since Donald Trump’s win in the Presidential election of 2016, endless talk ensued about whether he would win another term or be defeated at the polls. Voters on both sides have been highly motivated, sharing news stories online, getting friends and family registered to vote and donating money to their favored side. Based on how much we’ve heard about politics in these past four years, I wouldn’t be surprised if voter turnout Nov. 3 ends up being one of the highest percentages in recent memory. Seeing all of this engagement now, I wonder why voting and elections aren’t always a top priority.

I certainly recognize the stakes in this election are very high. Whatever you think of Trump, his policies and attitude have brought out strong reactions from many people of all walks of life in our nation. The Covid-19 pandemic, which still continues to rage, and has now killed more than 200,000 Americans, has shown how necessary steady and fact-based leadership is. And the recent passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an icon for women’s rights and a trailblazer in the legal profession, has illuminated how far we have come as a society and where we

still need to go.

This crazy year has made it obvious that elections and politics are able to affect every aspect of our lives. It’s easy to think actions in Washington and St. Paul do not have a direct impact on us. But as we have seen, especially in the past few months with Covid-19, that myth should be forever shattered. Who we elect to be president, governor, senator, and even mayor, matters. Every individual and political party who runs for office has different ideas for what she/he would do if elected. If we want politicians to work for us and make good policy that benefits our communities, state and country, we have an obligation as citizens to make sure we’re voting in the right people for the job.

It is heartening to me to see this year many more avenues than usual are being employed to get people to the polls. Social media apps and websites have prominent announcements with links for users to register to vote. Radio and television ads from a variety of sources also have stressed the importance of voting. Notably, the NBA has instituted a campaign,

capped those words, making them “whites” instead of “Whites.”

And I agree totally with the woman who called. It’s absurd to capitalize one and not the other.

Language matters, including when referring to races, cultures, nationalities. At one time the word negro was common in speech and print. That word (negro) is Spanish for the color “black,” and thus Spanish explorers used it when referring to the people they encountered on the African continent.

Later, for most publications, it was decided to capitalize it: Negro. In speech, that word was often drawled out as “nigro” and all too often it morphed into racist contempt as the “n” word.

Still later, during the 1960s, “Afro-American” and “blacks” became the way to refer to Negroes. Through the years, there were many other words used to demean people: broads or babes for women, kikes for Jewish people, faggots for gays, Injuns for Native Americans. Even peacenik hippies were guilty of using some demeaning words: for example, chicks for young women.

Some who rant loudest against “political correctness” are those who miss using with impunity the “good old words” from the “good old days.” Some, sad to say, still use the “n” word boldly with an in-your-face defiance of evolving norms.

That hideous, hurtful word especially deserves to bite the dust. Language matters, names matter; mutual respect matters.

led by its players, to promote voting among fans and even to use stadiums as polling places.

These are the kinds of things we should be doing every time an election rolls around. Whether it’s for national or local office, the focus should be on educating people about the election and making it clear that people can vote early in person or absentee, as well, if they choose. In a democracy like the United States, voting is a right, and we should be doing everything possible to make it possible for people to vote. After all, our politicians represent those of us who vote, and so if we want politicians to represent everyone in the country, we need everyone to vote.

So while it is encouraging to see the energy and passion that is in the political process this year, I hope 2020 teaches all of us to keep this going long into the future. Politics shouldn’t be abstract happenings that go on far away. Our government officials make decisions every day that have immense consequences right here at home. The best way to make sure good decisions are made and hold politicians accountable for bad ones is to vote and make our voices heard.

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

Goracke

from page 9

As for assessment policy, Goracke said there must be a better way to make the policy more fair, less expensive for city residents. Parks also demand his attention. “I want to take a look at parks in St. Joseph for possible improvements,” he said. “My top focus would be to get a public bathroom at Klinefelter Park.”

idents’ input.”

City identity

St. Joseph, Goracke said, is a warm and welcoming community with a diverse selection of faith organizations, school systems and supportive small businesses.

“This is where you raise your kids with strong family values and you appreciate that small-town feel. I would recommend getting involved with the Jaycees and the Lions’ Club as they provide opportunities for new and existing residents to meet, network and socialize for a cause.”

Osterman

from page 9

of working for the Remington company,” he said. In 2003 and 2004, Osterman served as a combat engineer in Iraq where he had a highly dangerous job – to react to and to neutralize improvised explosive devices.

“My experiences there fortified my overall love and respect for what is still great about our small towns, like St. Joseph, and further developed my ability to problem-solve in the most unique of situations.”

City challenges

Fiscal responsibility, Osterman said, is St. Joseph’s biggest challenge. Another challenge but a very

good one is the need to “support our Midwestern heritage and similar initiatives, conserving our roots and living as St. Joseph residents see fit.”

Virus crisis

St. Joseph, Osterman said, has handled the pandemic well by following all of the safety mandates.

Community center

In a community center, the city should create space and programs

especially for children.

“Many young people are looking for good choices but will fall short,” he said. “I strongly believe your community’s kids are the best investment, hands’ down.”

Strengths, weaknesses

St. Joseph is still a “big small town, and that, Osterman said, is its strength. Its growing weakness, he added, is the possibility that it could become a “small part

Loso

from page 9

push to find other revenue sources while keeping the budget tight and focusing on living within our means.”

Virus crisis

“We have coped fairly well, considering the uncertainties and nearly constant change,” Loso said.

Community Center

When asked if he is happy

with the community-center plan, Loso answered, simply, “No.”

New amenities

Loso said someday he would like to have an indoor swimming pool and small splash pads in St. Joseph.

Strengths, weaknesses

Loso listed St. Joseph’s strengths as strong focus on families, a good business climate, Christian values and places of worship. For weaknesses, he mentioned poor communications

Orvis

from page 9

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges St. Joseph faces is to bring to town businesses that fit the city yet keep the city’s “small-town feel,” Orvis said.

“Also, with the pandemic going on, it is just as important to keep the small businesses in town thriving. I think the city will have to work together with the potential that people want to come to town and for the ones already here to come up with smart plans to make things work.”

St. Joseph, Orvis added, has handled the pandemic very

well.

Community center

A community center should be located in a central place within the city, Orvis said. “I think that’s important so people can use it, and it should have a variety of things for people to do there, to encompass as many interests of the people as possible. I’m not sure I

Strengths, weaknesses

Orvis listed what he sees as St. Joseph’s strengths: a diverse community, low taxes, a great police department, small-business friendly. Weaknesses, he said, include lack of downtown parking and

Mick

from page 9

Passionate ideas

Mick said her top issues include sustaining and managing growth with both economic and community considerations, all the while making sure St. Joseph remains a safe place to live and raise a family and retire.

a lack of multi-family, crime-free housing.

“I would like to work on adding multi-family, crime-free housing to assist rental owners and managers to evict problem-renters, and I would also like to work on the lack of downtown parking. I would like to see St. Joseph in the top 10 of the list of Minnesota’s safest places to live.”

stop” town for residents.

“Parents want to know their kids are safe to ride their bikes down the block to visit friends,” she said. “Adults want to have access to groceries, restaurants and bars – all locally!

A weakness of St. Joseph, Mick said, is parking.

“It is very difficult to find parking and as more businesses move in, it will be even more of a concern.”

Beniek

from page 9

new for everyone, and as information becomes available, we should work together to adjust accordingly for each situation for the health and safety of the city.”

Community center

“I would love to hear more from the community on their thoughts about adding amenities (to a center or elsewhere in the city),” Beniek said.“I would love to see more family-based involvement and to be

able to get out and meet more neighbors in the community setting. I love events like the Art Crawl. Walking business to business and meeting the owners was very refreshing. It is interesting to see how they impact us and what we do to support them.”

Strengths, weaknesses

Beniek said for 24 years she has experienced in the city the strengths of creativity, focus and flexibility. Transparency and community involvement are areas where St. Joseph could do better, she added. “I believe there is a place

and a voice for everyone to be more involved,” she said.

Other issues

Safety and security are two of her top concerns, Beniek noted. “I also care about the balance of residents along with businesses, One can’t prosper and have success without the other. We have to ensure St. Joseph can accommodate, protect and offer opportunities while keeping safety a priority for everyone.”

Achievements

“If raising three independent children who contribute

to their communities, families and neighbors is an accomplishment, then I have achieved a commendable accomplishment,” she said. “If running a household alongside my husband is an achievement, then the award is ours to hold, and if being able to assist my children with daycare for our grandchildren, then the honor is cherished for generations.”

Other comments

Beniek, an “empty-nester” now, said she decided to run for city council to give back and be a voice for the community. At first, 24 years ago, Beniek

Teach Good Money Habits

Money is a fact of life — one that kids should know about and understand early. According to a KeyBank report, 76 percent of current college students wish they'd had more help to prepare for their financial futures.

This underscores how important a financial education is for your child. Yet seminars, workshops and classes on personal finance are not typically included in primary and secondary education.

This puts the pressure and responsibility on adults outside of schools — parents and other family members — to teach children about the value of a dollar.

Here are just a few ways to educate your kids about money at any age.

Create a savings jar. Have your children add in money they earn or receive as gifts. It is best to use a clear vessel, such as a glass jar, so they can see the money grow. Encourage them to take the coins and bills out every day and count them. They will quickly grasp the diligence it takes to save and the excitement of seeing their savings grow.

Show them the value of a



dollar. When you take your kids to the store and they point out a toy, show them the price tag. Teach them what the numbers mean and how many dollars something costs. Children are incredibly tactile, so take extra cash with you to the store and count out

the money together. If you choose to purchase the item, let your child hand the money to the cashier.

Teach them about opportunity cost. Kids, especially older children, tend to pick up this lesson quickly. Essentially opportunity cost is

about weighing purchasing decisions. Talk your children through the multiple spending options for their money and let them make the final decision.

Teach them about investment cost. Think of the neighborhood lemonade

stand. If your children make \$10 selling lemonade during your yard sale, have them pay you for the cost of the lemons and sugar. You could also charge them a small rental fee for using the front yard. This will help them understand profit.



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