

Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, Nov. 27, 2020
Volume 32, Issue 24
Est. 1989

Town Crier

Market canceled due to Covid-19

Sartell Farmers Market canceled for Dec. 5 due to the current Covid situation. If you need any items from our vendors, please feel free to contact them directly. Contact information available on sartell-farmersmarket.org or Facebook.

Be a Santa to a senior with Home Instead

Home Instead is looking for volunteers to Be a Santa to a Senior. Home Instead is teaming up with Amazon Business to create a contactless gift-giving experience for volunteers and recipients. Visit BeASantatoaSenior.com and enter your zip code to view Wish Lists for local seniors in the area which are available on Amazon Business through Dec. 11. A personalized greeting can be included with the gift which will be shipped directly to the senior. Be a Santa to a Senior trees also can be found at Lunds & Byerly's, 2510 W. Division St., Waite Park, MN 56301.

Give thanks to veterans and service members

United Way of Central Minnesota invites you to help celebrate the upcoming holiday season with those service members near and far. Through November, please take two minutes to write a thank you note, share a story or simply express your gratitude for veterans and service members by leaving a message. These messages will be distributed locally as well as mailed to our deployed troops. Visit <https://www.unitedwayhelps.org/volunteer> to complete your online card today! Contact Mary, United Way of Central Minnesota at mkrippner@unitedwayhelps.org.

Crisis nursery has holiday needs

Lutheran Social Service Crisis Nursery is in need of the following items: Diapers (newborn, size 4-6, various sizes of pull-ups), and children's winter wear sizes 4T-12 years. This includes coats, hats, gloves and boots 0-12 years old. Contact LSS Crisis Nursery to set up a drop-off time at 320-654-1090.

Schools seeking reading tutors

Sartell and St. Joseph schools are in need of reading tutors for the current school year. Reading tutors are in higher demand this school year due to challenges related to distance learning. Three Minnesota Reading Corps tutors are still being sought for Sartell and St. Joseph schools. Anyone interested in serving is encouraged to apply by Dec. 18 at readingandmath.net or by calling 866-859-2825.

COVID spikes block local playoff hopes

by Heidi L. Everett
news@thenewsleaders.com

As COVID cases spiked in Minnesota, Apollo volleyball players are among the many student-athletes who feel blocked by new requirements to slow the spread.

A four-week time-out from all adult and youth athletic events was just one of many new requirements announced Nov. 18 by Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz.

The team was having a good season with two final matches planned the week of Thanksgiving before playoffs started Dec. 1. Those games were can-

celed like many others this season.

"It's disappointing, but I understand why it has to be done," said Sean Roquette, head volleyball coach at Apollo High School.

"This has been a roller coaster ride since August," Roquette said, with the Minnesota State High School League first announcing that fall sports would be delayed until spring and then announcing fall sports would be played in fall.

"We've had many highs and lows," Roquette said, "and just when you think you are out of the woods, the season endsa-

COVID • page 2



contributed photo

Sean Roquette, head volleyball coach of the Apollo Eagles, takes a time out with players during one of the few games that got played this season.

School district financially healthy, fighting for funds

by Heidi L. Everett
news@thenewsleaders.com

The St. Cloud Area School District's independent auditor gave the district positive news at its Nov. 18 Board of Education meeting.

"It's a clean bill of health, if you will," said Nancy Schulzetenberg of BergenKDV.

The report noted that per-pupil funding from the

state would garner the same annual increase that it's been receiving since 2016, 2 percent. The total amount of property taxes the school district has collected has been consistent during the last three years. The school district's largest expense is focused on students, with 64 percent of expenditures on instruction. And finally, fund balances are in a positive position, Schulzetenberg said.

Expenditures per student were above the state average in 2019, largely in part to facilities spending following a fire at Apollo High School in 2018. Consistent special-education expenses that are not covered by the state also amplify expenditures. In 2020, however, expenditures per student are more in line with the state average.

The report also noted District 742 continues to serve

fewer students who live within district boundaries. Since 2016, just more than 800 students have moved within the boundaries of the district for a total of 13,231 potential students. In 2020, the district is serving 9,975 students, which reflects a drop of 79 students from 2019. This drop in students served impacts the budget by reducing per-pupil funding, among other

District • page 5

Suspect charged with 6 felonies after assault

by Heidi L. Everett
news@thenewsleaders.com

A suspect who assaulted a state trooper and spurred a daylong manhunt that locked down St. John's University and Preparatory School campus Nov. 19 faces six felony charges and one misdemeanor.

According to reports from the Minnesota State Patrol, Devan Dajon Wilson, 29, was arrested without incident at around 6:30 p.m. Thursday evening on the campus of St. John's University.

The manhunt for Wilson began just after 7:30 a.m. on I-94.

According to a criminal complaint, a state trooper first encountered Wilson in a vehicle parked on the side of I-94 northwest of Avon around 7 a.m. The trooper said Wilson was sleeping and several bottles of alcohol were in the car.



photo by Heidi L. Everett

Law enforcement from the St. Joseph and St. Cloud Police Departments, Stearns County Sheriff and State Troopers had St. John's University and Prep School campus on lockdown for several hours as they searched for a suspect who fled a traffic stop after assaulting a state trooper.

The trooper states Wilson showed impairment on a field sobriety test, then had a result of 0.147 on a breathalyzer test, according to the

complaint. When the trooper told Wilson he was under arrest for DWI, the complaint states Wilson punched the trooper in the face and fled

the scene in his vehicle.

After Wilson left the scene, officers from multiple agencies began a search of the area. The complaint states Albany's police chief spotted the car at about 8 a.m. in a mobile home park and followed the vehicle onto eastbound I-94. As additional squad cars joined the pursuit, the complaint states Wilson's vehicle reached speeds of 90 miles per hour. Stop sticks were used to puncture the vehicle's tires near the I-94 exit to St. John's University.

According to the complaint, Wilson jumped out of his car and ran into the woods near the university, prompting St. John's to lock down the campus.

Around 11 a.m., authorities were alerted to a burglary in one of the university dorms, where a suspect matching Wilson's description entered a room, threat-

Suspect • page 2



contributed photo

Aaliya Mixteco of St. Joseph said the Apollo Eagles played every day like it was their last day because of the uncertainty with COVID.

COVID

from front page

bruptly.”

“From day one, we’ve been taking it day by day,” he said. “We committed to enjoying every practice, every game, every time we could be in the gym

together.”

Apollo Junior Aaliyah Mixteco of St. Joseph said they were never sure how many games they were going to get.

“We always knew that we didn’t know what would happen next, if tomorrow was going to be our last day,” she said. “So we always played like it was our last day.”

That last day came just two



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contributed photo

On the defense against Sartell Oct 29 are (left to right) Junior Captain Noelle Hackenmueller and Senior Kathryn Blommel.

matches before playoffs.

“Obviously, we are bummed that the season’s over,” Mixteco said. “But we are happy with the outcomes since we had a better season than we’ve had in years.”

The new COVID restrictions were announced as the spread of COVID-19 skyrocketed across the state, and hospitals voiced concern about the ability to treat those who fall ill,

the governor's office reported.

In addition to the volleyball season ending early, girls’ and boys’ basketball seasons have been delayed.

The Apollo Eagles volleyball team understood the seriousness of the situation.

“As coaches, we are so proud of these players,” Roquette said. “They’ve taken COVID seriously. They decided to wear masks in practice and do what they needed to do to keep their teammates safe. Kudos to these players, and the way they’ve handled the uncertainty with such dignity and grace.”

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Sartell-St. Stephen • St. Joseph

Reaching Everybody!

Newsleaders

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Lost cat? Stray cat? Who you gonna call?

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

This time of year, you see in your yard a cat that looks lost, as if it’s looking for something to eat, for a warm place to cuddle up, for a shelter from the storm.

After some thought, you decide maybe to try to capture it to save its life. But then what?

The first thing to do is to call the Tri-County Humane Society and tell them about the cat, said Anna Stratton, customer-service manager for the TCHS.

By sharing information about the cat, TCHS animal experts can help determine if the cat may be a domesticated animal that is lost or one that was abandoned or if the creature may be a feral (wild) cat.

Another good reason to call immediately is the TCHS keeps track of each call and each cat description so if the cat is lost, the owner can be contacted. Many owners who cannot find their cats call the TCHS, so their information is on record, too. What’s more, many lost cats have been equipped with an implanted micro-chip that

can be read electronically at the TCHS, so its owner can be notified if/when the cat has been found.

As a rule, feral cats are leery, suspicious and will not approach people; they’ll run off in fright.

“There are lots of them in this area,” Stratton said.

It is OK to feed feral cats and provide some kind of warm shelter (like a big box lined with blankets), but people should avoid trying to touch or pick up a wild cat. They often carry diseases, including possibly rabies.

Female feral cats, of course, will sometimes have litters of kittens. Those kittens can usually be “saved” (socialized with humans) if rescued within six or so weeks after their births.

As the weather gets colder, the “cat problem” increases, Stratton noted. Put simply, there are just not enough cages to hold all the surrendered cats and kittens. While the humane society does have a successful foster program, there are still not enough resources to handle a big influx of cats or kittens.

If someone does plan to capture a cat in a live-trap cage,

that person should immediately call TCHS and discuss the plan with staff. That way, an appointment can be made and a cage made available.

Animal experts believe it is inhumane to keep a feral cat in a cage for much more than a day or two because the animal becomes extremely stressed in confinement, Stratton noted. For years, feral cats brought to the TCHS often had to be euthanized as they simply could not be domesticated. In more recent years, such cats would be placed on farms to become “barn cats” after being spayed or neutered.

Stratton said other signs of feral cats include the following:

- The critter will approach to eat food left out for them, but they will run off as if terrified if a human approaches them while feeding. (In some cases, however, domesticated but abandoned cats can show that kind of fear, too.)
- Feral cats tend not to meow at all whereas domesticated cats will usually meow around people.

“Feral cats are very resourceful,” Stratton said. “They have an ability to find food and shel-

ter, like other animals such as rabbits and squirrels. But feral cats usually have shorter life spans than domesticated cats.”

Typically, at any given time, there are about 100 cats up for adoption at the TCHS, Stratton said.

Stratton has been with the TCHS for 13 years and considers the staff and customers to be a close-knit community with a “ma-and-pa” family feel, she noted.

“It’s great for our staff morale knowing animals here are as comfortable as they can possibly be,” she said. “It’s always a learning experience, and it’s ever-evolving.”

The new building at its east St. Cloud site is twice the size of the previous facility and is working out so well, said Stratton, with more room for the animals and for the staff.

Stratton emphasized once again her advice about animal-surrender procedures:

“Call us immediately and we can set up a plan,” she said.

The number for TCHS is 320-252-0896.

To learn more about animals, adoption and volunteer opportunities or to donate, visit



contributed photo

Up for adoption, “Pretty Girl” is one of many cats at the Tri-County Humane Society that needs a forever home. Pretty Girl is a spayed female domestic shorthair/mix who is about 2.5 years old.

the TCHS site at tricityhumanesociety.org.

TCHS also has a pressing need for more foster-home volunteers for injured or sick animals, pregnant animals, orphaned animals, socialization times and to care for animals where there are overflow surrenders during peak periods.

Information about what it takes to be a foster “parent” is on the TCHS website.

In 2019, the TCHS fostered out 1,161 animals, placed for adoption 3,668 animals, spayed/neutered 2,214 animals and performed surgery on 2,350.

Catholic Community Schools move to distance learning

by **Heidi L. Everett**
news@thenewsleaders.com

St. Joseph Catholic School and St. Francis Xavier Catholic School in Sartell, along with their sister schools in the Catholic Community Schools system, will begin distance learning Nov. 30 with the hopes for a possible return to in-person

learning Jan. 19.

"We know people will be gathering over the holidays, although hopefully to a lesser degree," said Scott Warzecha, president of CCS. "For this reason, our projected return date has been calculated to get us through the New Year weekend with an additional 14 days following it to ensure that we

are giving our students the best possible outcome for returning safely to in-person learning."

COVID-19 case growth in the St. Cloud metro area is among the highest in the nation.

Catholic Community Schools is a consolidated school system

in the St. Cloud metro area that includes: St. Joseph Catholic School (St. Joseph), St. Francis Xavier Catholic School (Sartell), All Saints Academy (St. Cloud), Cathedral Middle and High School (St. Cloud), Holy Cross School (Pearl Lake/ Marty), St.

Elizabeth Ann Seton School (St. Cloud), St. Katharine Drexel School (St. Cloud), St. Mary Help of Christians School (St. Augusta) and St. Wendelin's Catholic School (Luxemburg/ St. Augusta).

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.



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Governor says 4-week dial back to control COVID spread

by Heidi L. Everett
news@thenewsleaders.com

Gov. Tim Walz announced a four-week dial back to control the spread of COVID-19 Nov. 18.

This new guidance, which took effect Friday, Nov. 20, pauses all adult and youth sporting events, in-person social gatherings, dining, sports and fitness centers. Retail, salons, places of worship and other activities may continue to operate under current restrictions.

The new restrictions come as the spread of COVID-19 skyrockets across the state and hospitals voice concern about the ability to treat those who fall ill.

As of Nov. 19, St. Joseph had 734 confirmed or probable cases of COVID. Sartell had 1,333 cases, and St. Stephen had 60 cases, according to the Minnesota Department of Health dashboard by zip code.

Until Friday, Dec. 18, in-person social gatherings with individuals outside your household are prohibited; bars and restaurants are dialed back to take-out and delivery service only; gyms, fitness studios, entertainment venues, event spaces and similar establishments will need to close; and adult and youth sports are paused. Retail businesses, salons and places of worship may continue to operate with proper precautions in place. Childcare remains open. Schools will continue to operate under the Safe Learning Plan, which shifts between in-person, distance and hybrid learning depending on the local conditions of the virus. All other current restrictions also remain in effect.

The pandemic has reached a concerning and dangerous phase throughout much of the Midwest this November. It took 29 weeks to reach 100,000 infections in Minnesota, and just six weeks after that to reach

Confirmed, Probable COVID Cases, Nov. 19	
Collegeville	140
Rice	401
Saint Joseph	734
St. Stephen	60
Sartell	1,333
Sauk Rapids	1,106
Waite Park	720

200,000. Less than three weeks after reaching 200,000 infections, Minnesota will reach 300,000 infections.

“To all Minnesotans who are struggling to get by, I know this pandemic is devastating,” Walz said. “This pandemic is not fair. We need federal support to help keep our businesses afloat, our workers paid and our families with food on the table. I will continue to fight with every fiber of my being for that support that you need and deserve.”

People



Sarah Gainey and her two daughters

Sarah Gainey has been named non-formal Environmental Educator of the Year by Minnesota Association for Environmental Education. Gainey is the assistant director and education coordinator of preK-12 education & volunteers at St. John’s Outdoor University. Not only has Sarah worked to provide education to school-aged students, she has also mentored more than a dozen Environmental Education Fellows in addition to numerous college students and education volunteers. Due to the recent pandemic, Gainey had to transition last spring from in-person field trips to creating curriculum that students could complete from their homes, like “Nature Near Me,” a program aimed to support schools by providing environmental education resources that create opportunities for students to engage with nature.



Food shelf

Gainey has previously served on the board of MAEE, Minnesota Naturalists’ Association, and North American Association for Environmental Education. She also coordinates a science teacher’s network that offers networking events with professional development for teachers.

On behalf of St. John’s Prep students in grades six through 12, faculty and staff, SJP Campus Ministry Director Br. Lucian Lopez delivered 20 boxes and bags of food and \$1,805 in cash and checks to the St. Joseph Community Food Shelf. Families brought in non-perishable food items including canned vegetables, bottles of juice, boxes of stuffing, dry biscuit mixes, cans of broth and cream of mushroom soup, and bags of potatoes. Other items included breakfast cereal, boxes of macaroni and cheese, containers of cookies and other kid-friendly favorites. This year the St. John’s Prep food drive will serve 27 families in the St.



St. John’s Prep Campus Ministry Director Br. Lucian Lopez delivered enough food from this year’s food drive to feed 27 families as well as a check for \$1,800 to the St. Joseph Community Shelf.

Joseph community. The money was used to purchase turkeys, pies, buns and other perishable items.

Free COVID-19 app: exposure notification

by Heidi L. Everett
news@thenewsleaders.com

A free phone app is the latest tool announced by the Governor’s Office to help slow the spread of COVID in Minnesota. In the press briefing, Tarek Tames, Minnesota’s chief information officer, shared details about the app called COVIDaware MN. COVIDaware MN runs on smartphones and notifies people who have downloaded the app and opted into its services if they have been near someone who tests positive for COVID-19.

The app also allows users to opt into sharing if they have had a positive COVID-19 test, so other users can be notified. Data privacy was a hallmark of this apps development.

How it works

COVIDaware MN is a free app developed by Apple and Google that uses notification technology and Bluetooth. Once downloaded from the iPhone App Store or the Android Google Play Store, users opt-in to the notification system. The app will generate an anonymous, random key for users’ phones. To help ensure these random keys can’t be used to identify a user’s location, the keys change every 10 to 20 minutes.

A user’s phone and the phones near it work anonymously in the background, using Bluetooth technology to exchange these privacy-protected keys. For example, if a user is shopping in a store and spends several minutes near another individual who has the app working on a phone, the phones exchange the keys. This is a passive process that begins once a user chooses to opt-in. It functions without the app open, and it won't drain a phone battery. The app then checks for positive COVID-19 cases every day. Again, these anonymous positive cases are only shared if a user of the app opts-in to allow that information to be shared. On a daily basis, a user’s phone downloads a list of all the anonymous keys associated with positive COVID-19 cases and checks them against the list of random keys a phone

has encountered in the previous 14 days. If there’s a match, the app will notify users if they may have been exposed to the coronavirus. In addition, the app will provide further instructions from the Minnesota Department of Health about what is needed to be done to keep people around users safe.

How would the app know of a positive COVID test result?

If a user tests positive for COVID-19, they may choose to notify other COVIDaware MN app users. To trigger such notifications, a user must enter a test verification code generated by public health services and only used to enter a positive diagnosis in the COVIDaware MN app, if the user chooses to do so.

Once a test verification code is entered into the COVIDaware MN app, a risk calculation is made using the time, duration and Bluetooth proximity indicator collected by the COVIDaware MN app for each contact event between COVIDaware MN app users. COVIDaware MN app users who are calculated to have been in close contact with the user who tested positive will receive an exposure notification. Personal information is never collected, stored or shared with the State of Minnesota, Apple or Google.

What the app doesn’t do

Installing and using COVIDaware MN is voluntary and anonymous. The State of Minnesota never collects any personally identifiable information from the app nor is personal information shared with others. As noted on the app website, COVIDaware MN:

- Never tracks locations.
- Never sends information to the Minnesota Department of Health without direct permission.
- Never requires personal information such as a name or address.
- Never sends information to Apple or Google.
- Never accesses other information on a phone.

To learn more about the app, visit covidawaremn.com

District

from front page

things. Al Dahlgren, chair of the board’s finance and audit committee, commended district leadership for its fiscal responsibility. “Increased fund balance,” he said, “shows incredible discipline on the part of our administrative team in controlling expenses.”

The fight for funds

Despite the fiscal discipline acknowledged, the St. Cloud district currently operates with a \$12-million special-education deficit and an additional \$2-million English language learning deficit, both of which are currently fully funded by money rerouted from the district’s general education fund. The use of general education funds to provide state-mandated services and special-education services creates an ongoing funding shortfall for general education. Because of this, Dahlgren introduced a resolution to support Superintendent Willie Jett

and his administration to engage with St. Cloud Educational Rights Advocacy Council, a local organization that is suing the State of Minnesota in an effort to settle funding shortfalls in order to improve educational opportunities to all students in District 742.

The SCERAC suit argues the state constitution notes its number-one obligation is to create a uniform system of public schools, Dahlgren said. The suit cites a previous court ruling that suggests each school is funded in a way that they can provide an education that meets all state standards for all students. This funding would vary from district to district based on demographics rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. The St. Cloud Area School District is a “high-needs district,” Dahlgren said. Within the school system boundaries, the community has poverty, new-to-country language learners and greater special needs. “The district is severely underfunded,” he said. SCERAC is led by Jerry VonKorff, a former long-time school board member and local attorney. The suit was original-

ly filed in February 2019. Stearns County District Court Judge Kris Davick-Halfen granted the state's motion to dismiss the lawsuit in September 2019. But recently, on Nov. 9, the Minnesota Court of Appeals reversed the lower court’s decision, noting SCERAC had the right to sue the state. The next likely step in the process is to either enter negotiations with the state for full funding or to have the state appeal this decision to the Minnesota Supreme Court. The resolution introduced and passed Nov. 18 gives permission for district leadership to engage with SCERAC during the suit. “Let’s have the state use our district as a test to see what it takes to educate all students to state standards,” Dahlgren said. Board Member Monica Segura-Schwartz also weighed in. “We have been really good at paying attention to students and bettering our strategies to meet the needs of every student,” she said. “But we don’t fund at the same level of other countries. We need to invest in all students for our communities and our state.”



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Requirements:

- High school graduate or equivalent. College education preferred.
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Opinion

Make the time to make a difference

Heidi L. Everett
Editor



A good friend once said my husband and I have unrealistic expectations of what can be accomplished in a lifetime. We took that as a compliment. The reality is, we rarely sit idle.

As an adult, I've always worked full-time outside the home while raising three kids and – up until recently – caring for a hobby farm. And, I've always volunteered in a variety of capacities in my kids' schools and extracurriculars, with professional organizations, on local boards, and as part of the democratic process. My earliest memories of volunteering are from teaching Sunday school and working in the hospital as a Candy Striper when I was in high school.

Volunteering is just something I make time for, regardless of how busy I've been. Am I tired? Sometimes. But this busyness energizes me. More importantly, being a volunteer is an unparalleled opportunity to meet new people, to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the world that surrounds us and to influence positive change.

While covering the most recent local elections, I was struck by the fact nobody put their name on the ballot for mayor of St. Stephen (and kudos to Lisa Marvin for stepping up and rallying as a write-in candidate!). In some local races, incumbents who have spent decades on local councils were re-elected. Both of these situations suggest we are short on new folks making the time to be involved.

Now, I'm not suggesting everyone should run for office, although I have and cherish that experience of knocking on doors and meeting thousands of people. Our schools, places of worship, communities and governments have many volunteer opportunities.

If you can't make a lot of time now, start small. When I was president of the PTA at Kennedy Community School, I was so grateful to the parents who volunteered to run Family BINGO Night. This happened once a year in February – usually what seemed like the coldest night of the year – and more than 300 students and their families would show up for a night of fun. We also had parents who volunteered two hours a year at our annual fundraiser. Were there parents who made more time? Absolutely. The point is, every volunteer made a difference.

If you are willing to make more time, identify and pursue what's out there.

Right now, for instance, Stearns County is looking for residents to serve on a Stearns County board, committee or task force and is recruiting for appointments to be filled in January 2021. Openings exist on the Great River Regional Library Board, Stearns County HRA, Extension Committee, Human Services Advisory Committee and others.

The Board of Commissioners will also appoint individuals to serve on the Board of Adjustment, Feedlot Review Committee, Planning Commission, Park Commission and the Community Corrections Advisory Board. You can view openings and apply online by Dec. 1 at the Stearns County website. I encourage you to check these out.

To be honest, if I didn't make time to be involved, I'd likely spend far too much time sitting on the couch, eating nachos and binge-watching Netflix in my jammies. (And honestly, I do that from time to time).

The busiest people I know are often the ones who make time to do more. What about you?

Make the time to make a difference.

Our view: Celebrate one another

The election is over. The yard signs and banners are down. The ideological angst should begin to dissipate.

It's time to stop seeing each other as Democrats or Republicans and calling each other liberal or conservative, as if these are inherently bad. It's time to re-'friend' or re-'follow' our family members, acquaintances and colleagues on social media and share the extraordinary moments of everyday life at a safe distance. Let's resume being neighborly.

For our part, we invite you to celebrate each other with a new online feature:

Up-to-So-Good Citizen Spotlight

Our inbox often gets emails from people who want to simply recognize somebody else for doing good. Recently, for example, we heard from Traci Schellinger of Sartell who wrote about Cheryl Braun, the receptionist at Welch Dental:

I genuinely get excited to call my dentist because I get to talk to Cheryl. Cheryl puts forth genuine concern in any issues a patient is having, apologizes for rescheduling needs out of her control and empathizes with people as she works through her job daily. She keeps track of me as an individual and inquires about how things are going, remembering details from previous visits. Cheryl goes above and

beyond to seek answers and provide patients with anything they need, exceeding all customer service that I've ever experienced. Quite honestly – when I call the dental office, I feel like I'm calling my mom. This is the level of investment Cheryl has in me having a good experience. She cares, she listens and she offers helpful advice. She seems to love her job and as a result – her patients feel that. Thank you, Cheryl. For someone who hates the dentist (no offense Dr. Welch), you really make those twice a year cleanings pleasant!!! Keep up the amazing work and thank you for making Sartell a great place to be!!

Our own Carolyn Bertsch, assignment editor from Sartell, shared this:

I'd like to recognize Amy Walker, of St. Joseph, who stopped to help at a car accident she witnessed in St. Cloud Nov. 21. That Saturday my 80-year-old father was taking my younger sister for a drive when his minivan was struck by another driver. The driver, from Anoka, had attempted a left turn but instead crashed directly into my Dad's driver-side door. The door was mangled requiring my Dad to climb through a passenger door to exit. Amy saw the accident and was quick to stop and lend a hand. My Dad does not carry a cell phone, but Amy offered to call the police using hers and wait

with him on a cold 34-degree day. "I didn't have anywhere I needed to be right away, and I had a feeling that it was important for me to stop. I am glad I could be there for support and help him feel a bit better after a stressful situation." Both drivers left the incident without major bodily harm, and although my Dad's spirits were cast down by the damage sustained to his beloved minivan, they were again raised up by the kindness of a stranger during unfortunate circumstances. Thank you, Amy!

Have you experienced someone doing a random act of kindness? Do you know someone who is a tireless volunteer? Is there an employee who is exceptionally helpful, courteous and exceeds expectations? We'd love to know about it and share it on our website and Facebook page.

In 200 words or less, let us know who this person is, if they live or work in Sartell, St. Joseph or St. Stephen, and why they should be recognized. Include a photo. (Get their permission, too. Some people aren't comfortable with the attention, and we want to respect that.)

As we close out 2020 – a year marked by pandemic and political unrest – let's be in a place of celebration and appreciation.

Send submissions to editor@thenewsleaders.com.

This weekend, shop small businesses

Connor Kockler
Guest Writer



worker you meet should work for a small business.

I call small businesses part of our local "family" because they really do so much for us. When you look around and see local sports teams, parks and community projects, small businesses step up to the plate, contributing money and time to support them. Spending local really does help support the entire local area, not just supporting local jobs but almost everything else in the area as well. It also builds local pride, seeing all of the amazing things that are made possible through the support of generous local businesses and their employees.

So what can we do to support small businesses? To start, we need to be intentional. With the latest regulations, supporting small businesses becomes harder because we can't just eat in person at the local restaurant. It's tempting to order online from large chains or online stores but if you do some quick research or phone calls, you can find local businesses that are moving their operations to take-out or even limited delivery. Once you know those options are there, it's easy to keep patronizing

like you usually would and spread the word to people you know. Small businesses are still open and getting creative in light of these troubled times. We just need to make the effort to reach out to them and help others to do so as well.

You can also support small businesses by buying gift cards and other products for the holidays. We all have our favorite local store or restaurant, so why not make it part of the holiday shopping list? This is especially easy because there is already a day on the calendar for doing so, Small Business Saturday, which is Nov. 28. It's a day every year to support and appreciate small businesses, which is even more important now.

So while we enjoy Thanksgiving, we should be sure to thank and support our local small businesses. After all, they do so much for us, and this is a critical time, especially with everything that they have been dealing with. Though it may be some extra effort to search online, make a phone call or walk into the store to figure out what they are doing differently because of Covid-19, this effort is worth it to support local business. Let's keep our local "family" strong, and make it through this crisis together.

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

Have an opinion? Share it: news@thenewsleaders.com

Cultural Connections:

An inside look at our Somali neighbors

by Melisa Dick
guest columnist

Read this for an insider's look into the lives and culture of our Somali neighbors and their challenges.

Hudda Ibrahim is the author of "From Somalia to Snow: How Central Minnesota became Home to Somalis." She is also a faculty member at St. Cloud Technical and Community College and president of Filsan Consulting LLC, a company founded on the principles of cultural integration.

I have briefly summarized some of the information from this book but encourage you to read it.

History

After many years of conflict in Somalia, heavy military operations were launched, eventually resulting in the expulsion of President Siad Barre, leader of Somalia, in 1991.

Atrocities were committed against civilians, which served as a catalyst for many to flee the country to save their lives. Twenty-five thou-

sand people died; 1.5 million fled the country to Kenya and Ethiopia, thinking they would eventually return to Somalia. Some fled on foot, walking 40 miles to safety. Some were packed on small boats, which capsized and caused many to drown.

Some were in refugee camps for more than 20 years. Because hostilities continued in Somalia, many refugees sought safety in the United States, Canada, Sweden and Norway.

Coming to America...Why Minnesota? Why St. Cloud?

After a long screening process, at times taking up to 10 years, refugees were able to come to the United States. Their path to citizenship includes, among other requirements, passing a test on the English language and U.S. history and government.

In the 1990s, refugees had no choice regarding their place of resettlement.

It has been observed that Somali refugees often exhibit ingenuity and hard work.

Their American dream includes safety, education and equality for all.

Minnesota welcomed Somali immigrants and offered employment, housing, low-cost legal services, English-language classes and outreach services. Once immigrants established themselves in a community, other relatives joined them.

The St. Cloud area has provided job opportunities, education, affordable housing and a safe environment.

Of Note:

The following are important terms to know and understand:

People from Somalia are referred to as Somalis, not Somalians.

Jihad, which means “holy war,” refers to the spiritual struggle within oneself against sin.

Hijab means “cover” or “curtain;” it can also mean modesty and privacy. Muslim women choose to wear it; they do not feel coerced. Many wear it as a part of their identity.



In “From Somalia to Snow,” Hudda Ibrahim unpacks the immigration narrative of Somali Americans and explains why nearly 20 percent have chosen to settle in Minnesota.

Sharia, Islamic law, means “a path or way to be followed.” The Somali community does not want to lose its religious identity; neither does it want to impose it on anyone.

...

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

CERTIFICATE
OF ASSUMED NAME
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Pursuant to Chapter 333, Minnesota Statutes, the undersigned, who is or will be conducting or transacting a commercial business in the State of Minnesota under an assumed name, hereby certifies:

1. The assumed name under which the business is or will be conducted is: Rubyhole.

2. The stated address of the principal place of business is or will be: 2314 Heritage Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56301.

3. The name and street address of all persons conducting business under the above assumed name including any corporations that may be conducting this business: Matthew Steven Fuchs, 2314 Heritage Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56301.

4. I certify I am authorized to sign this certificate. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

Dated: Nov. 14, 2020

Filed: Nov. 14, 2020

/s/ Matthew Steven Fuchs

Publish: Nov. 27 & Dec. 11, 2020

Community Calendar

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

Contact organizations directly for virtual meeting links/locations and other possible changes due to COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

Tuesday, Dec. 1
Memory Writers group develops topics and turns in stories, 10 a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S, St Cloud.

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

Wednesday, Dec. 2
Advocates for Independence, 2-4 p.m., Independent Lifestyles, 215 Benton Drive N., Sauk Rapids. 320-529-9000.

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

Monday, Dec. 7
St. Joseph City Council, 6 p.m., Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E.

Tuesday, Dec. 8
Holistic Moms Network, 7-8:30 p.m., Good Earth Co-op, 2010 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud. 320-252-2489.

National Alliance on Mental Health, 7-8:30 p.m., Calvary Community Church, 1200 Roosevelt Road, St. Cloud. The group helps parents raising a child with mental illness learn coping skills and develop problem-solving skills. 320-654-1259.

Wednesday, Dec. 9
Breakfast Club, 9-10 a.m., Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S. Free for members, nominal fee for nonmembers. 320-253-8424.

St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce, 11:30 a.m., St. Joseph

Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E. stjosephchamber.com.

St Joseph Y2K Lions Club, 6:30 p.m., St. Joseph Community Fire Hall, 323 Fourth Ave NE. Kay Lemke 320-363-8663.

Thursday, Dec. 10
Kids Can Blood Drive, noon to 6 p.m., Resurrection Lutheran Church, St. Joseph, MN. Please contact Tamara to schedule a time. 320-282-8266. Each donation saves three lives.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
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FINANCE GUIDE | STATISTICS

American Finances: By the Numbers

According to a 2018 Financial Capability Study from FINRA Investor Education Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to financial education and empowerment, only 31% of Americans are very satisfied with their money situations.

Here are some additional statistics from the FINRA study to help shed light on the average American family and their earning and spending habits.

- One in 5 Americans experienced an income drop in the last year, and half can comfortably meet their monthly obligations.

- Asked if they could come up with \$2,000 in emergency savings in a month, 43% of Americans were certain they could, while another 22% said they probably could.

- Only 58% of Americans have a retirement account; half worry they may run out of money

while retired.

- Even though Americans can make ends meet, the percentage spending less than their income has stayed nearly unchanged over the decade. Almost half haven't set aside money to cover expenses for three months.

- 37% of Americans surveyed say they have too much debt.

Here are a few more statistics from various sources underscoring the need for stronger personal finance education for American citizens.

- Twenty percent of Americans don't save any of their annual income at all (CNBC), with the average American saving less

than 5% of his or her disposable income (Los Angeles Times).

- More than 40% of Americans have less than \$10,000 saved for when they retire (GoBanking Rates).

- 56% of millennials don't have any money saved in a retirement account (PurePoint Financial).

- Only 24% of millennials demonstrate basic financial literacy, according to a study from the National Endowment for Financial Education.

- A recent report found that half of American households live paycheck to paycheck (MarketWatch).

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