

Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

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Est. 1989

Town Crier

Habitat seeks help with snow removal

Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity needs volunteers to shovel snow on properties that Habitat owns but there is not a homeowner on the property yet. Locations are in the St. Cloud area. Volunteers are asked to adopt a property and shovel as needed throughout the winter. The time is flexible, but the shoveling needs to be done in a timely manner after a snowfall. For more information, please contact Jess at 320-248-8256 or jdahl@cmhfh.org.

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Share your health, give blood

The American Red Cross needs eligible and healthy blood donors. Patients are counting on lifesaving blood throughout this coronavirus pandemic. If you're healthy and well, please schedule an appointment to give in the days ahead. You are strongly urged to make an appointment to provide lifesaving blood products to patients. Visit www.redcrossblood.org to make your appointment today. Please don't feel discouraged if there isn't an immediate appointment available, patients still need you!

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.

QR codes spread holiday cheer around town

by Heidi L. Everett
editor@thenewsleaders.com

St. Joseph Catholic School is spreading Christmas cheer through QR codes around town this year.

Students made and laminated 75 festive posters to hang around St. Joseph. Each poster includes a unique QR code. If residents hover over the QR code with a smart phone camera, it takes them to a link where they can hear students singing a Christmas carol, playing music, reciting poetry or sharing a holiday wish.

"Every year the school celebrates the season with a Christmas program. Unfortunately, we were unable to this year due to COVID-19," said Joanne Schneider, first grade teacher. "We were able to spread a 'socially distant' Christmas message and include distance learners in the community celebration even if they couldn't physically be there." They were also able to include preschoolers in the project who were still attending in person.

Students recorded their holiday songs and greetings using the app Seesaw, which they were already using in classes, a Chrome-

book or an iPad.

Songs include perennial favorites like "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "Go Tell It On the Mountain" and "We Wish You A Merry Christmas." Some were newly recorded solos by students, like Julia Loehlein, 10, playing "Silent Night" on the piano or Leah Bechtold, 10, playing "Carol of the Bells" on the piano. Other songs were from the school's holiday programs of the past.

Students also recorded messages. Mason Dockendorf, 6, shared, "My Christmas wish is for no one to be alone on Christmas day."

Schneider created the project by combining a few ideas shared in several virtual professional teacher groups.

"I was so excited about the trees in town. We wanted to keep the strong community feeling going," she said.

The QR codes are working.

"A few evenings ago, I received a text from some alumnae of the school," Schneider said. Livi, Anna and Emma Kremer texted her a photo as they walked around town and listened to excerpts from past Christmas programs. They wrote, "We had fun going for a walk down memory lane tonight."



contributed photo
Grant Ramthun, 5, and Lucy Quarve, 4, record their holiday greeting at St. Joseph Catholic School. The greeting can be accessed through QR codes on holiday posters around town.

Mayor Schultz looks forward to real face time

by Heidi L. Everett
editor@thenewsleaders.com

With most of St. Joseph city business happening online and curbside the last year, Mayor Rick Schultz looks forward to real face time to reboot economic activity and community engagement.

Schultz said he is looking forward to when they can hold the all-day city staff meeting face to face, so all who work for the city can share priorities, which projects need to be funded and any concerns. The annual meeting involves all city employees, including

volunteers and those who serve on boards and committees.

"That meeting to me is more important than any meeting I do," Schultz said. "We introduce each other and get new perspectives on what each board is doing."

Schultz said they are going to wait until the latest set of COVID-19 restrictions are up before scheduling it.



Schultz

"This year will be really special," he said. "We have to talk about how we come out of this. How do we draw people back into bars and restaurants?"

The vision will be a little bit different, he said.

The City of St. Joseph does have plans to finish street improvements, put trees back in and complete beautification work, but that money was already allocated.

Community center planning

Conversations about building a community center will

resume.

At the Dec. 7 City Council meeting, a buyer was approved for the purchase of the former Kennedy school building at First Avenue SE. The sale of the building will close in January or February, Schultz said.

With the sale of that building, community center planning will shift from a conversation about renovating an old building to new construction on an 8-acre parcel behind the former Kennedy building.

"We have to start from scratch," Schultz said.

Mayor • page 2

2020 Year in Review

Compassion, resilience, hope outshine COVID-19

Jan. 10 edition

How to develop roads and utilities in southeast St. Joseph will be the subject of a study approved by the St. Joseph City Council at its Jan. 6 meeting. The council approved spending about \$27,000 to study street and utility needs in an area between the eastern extension of Dale Street and a future extension of 20th Avenue SE, south of the U.S. Army Reserve Center.

From street level, the newest addition to downtown St. Joseph isn't visible. But a climb to the top of Millstream Shops & Lofts reveals the roof filled with a new installation of solar panels.

Jan. 24 edition

The first automatic external defibrillator (AED) SaveStation for the Pleasant Acres Initiative was installed Dec. 23 on the garage at the home of Kameron and Barb (Lowell) Peck. Their home is a red house at the intersection of CR 2 and Crestview Drive.

Feb. 7 edition

Kennedy Community School Student Council members and Ambassadors have been busy filling their leadership roles to help fill area needs around St. Joseph. Activities include a food drive for the St. Joseph Community Food Shelf, collecting Toys for

Tots items, a Hat and Mitten Drive and packing more than 1,260 Colt Action Packs (weekend food bags) for students in need.

Feb. 21 edition

College of St. Benedict President Mary Dana Hinton will step down at the end of the academic year to become president of Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia, on Aug. 1. Hinton started at St. Ben's in July 2014.

March 6 edition

The owner of the Press Bar and Parlor was charged March 2 with two counts of first-degree arson in

the fire that destroyed the downtown St. Cloud bar. Authorities arrested Andrew Charles Welsh, 40, of St. Joseph on Feb. 29 after investigators determined the fire was deliberately set. The building was insured for \$1.3 million.

March 20 edition

The St. Joseph City Council meeting scheduled March 16 was canceled. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the city of St. Joseph will restrict access to City Hall and other government facilities effective immediately.

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in public spaces.**



**Get tested if you
have any symptoms.**



**Answer if your health
department calls.**

m MINNESOTA

STAY SAFE MN

Mayor

from front page

Previous discussions have mentioned a community pool and multi-purpose space for senior activities, among other things.

The community center planning group will be reconvened, and new members will be invited to join the group to offer different perspectives, Schultz said.

If St. Joseph residents have comments and feedback they'd like to share now, they can email the City Administrator Therese Haffner.

Relocating food shelf, historical society

With the sale of the former Kennedy building, the St. Joseph Food Shelf and St. Joseph Historical Society both will need a new home.

"When all of us council members voted to approve the sale of the building, we knew we would have to relocate these services by the end of

January," Schultz said.

This isn't new news but a new reality.

"We notified them about our intent to sell several months ago and what that might mean," Schultz said. "When we went through the final papers, we let them know it was a done deal."

The city has been providing free space and utilities and will work with these organizations to find a new home.

"While these are not city services, they are important," Schultz said.

Schultz said the city has reached out to the monastery and College of St. Benedict as well as looked for a possible extension of space usage with the new building owners as some of the options.

"Timing is everything when it comes to opportunities for selling and business growth that they are caught up in," Schultz said. "It'll all work out, but once we sell the building, it's up to the new owners what stays."

Attracting business to industrial park

The Mayor also wants to refocus efforts on attracting new business to the industrial park, which has undergone

infrastructure upgrades with money from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

The mayor noted 35-percent of St. Joseph parcels are tax-exempt schools and places of worship.

"A push to get more industrial growth ultimately helps residents and their tax burden," he said. "We're going to market that really well."

Schultz said downtown St. Joseph is experiencing some interest from developers in refurbishing old buildings too.

"We want to keep downtown a walkable city and welcoming," he said.

Coming out of COVID-19

But the priority is coming out of COVID-19.

"We got a picture of some of the businesses that are struggling," he said. "If there's a package yet from the state Legislature, then we've got to get some of that grant money for those businesses."

Despite ongoing COVID restrictions, Schultz is optimistic about the future.

"I feel really good about our position," he said. "Time will tell how we come out of it."

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YIR

from front page

April 3 edition

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Tim Walz announced March 15 that schools will close March 18-27 to develop and implement distance learning plans beginning March 30.

St. Cloud’s two public high schools improved their four-year graduation rates in 2019, but there’s still a significant gap between white students and black students. At Apollo High School, the overall graduation rate was 79.4 percent, compared with 77.4 percent a year earlier. At Tech High School, the overall graduation rate was 81.4 percent compared with 79.9 percent a year earlier. The gap between white students and black students at Apollo was 26 percentage points, with the white student rate at 90.4 percent and the black student rate at 64.1 percent.

April 17 edition

The long-running Open Mic night at the Local Blend moved online during the coronavirus stay-at-home order that’s aimed at stopping large gatherings. Instead of stepping up to the St. Joseph coffee house stage, performers share their music via Zoom and Facebook Live streaming video.

St. Joseph City Council members conducted the April 6 meeting via teleconference.

The College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University will soon be led by one president under a plan set up by the governing bodies of both institutions.

May 1 edition

The warm and dry weather coupled with a traditional college spring party time over the April 18-19 weekend posed a challenge for St. Joseph police attempting to enforce the state’s social distancing and stay-at-home orders.

May 15 edition

St. Joseph is known far and wide for its annual July 3 and 4 Joetown Rocks Parish Festival and annual parade sponsored by the St. Joseph Lions. Unfortunately, these will not take place this year because of the pandemic.

The city of St. Joseph is in sound financial shape, City Council members learned during a presentation of its 2019 audit at the May 4 meeting. The tax rate went down last year while tax capacity went up.

Plans for a 48-unit affordable housing apartment complex can move forward after the St. Joseph City Council approved the plan at its May 4 meeting. The development is planned for tax-forfeited property at the former Delwin Ballroom location on 20th Avenue SE.

May 29 edition

Gov. Tim Walz announced the state’s restaurants and bars could offer outdoor dining options with

safety rules and regulations, including no more than 50 customers at one time and with a strict provision for social distancing at the outdoor tables, meaning each must be 6 feet away from another.

June 12 edition

People who enjoy an occasional alcoholic drink usually have a preference for what they like to drink. If you prefer Crown Royal Whiskey, you might be interested in a quilt the Church of St. Joseph quilters pieced, quilted and hand-stitched for the parish’s annual Fourth of July festival. The church festival has been canceled, but an online quilt auction will be conducted the weekend of July 4.

June 26 edition

The St. Joseph City Council approved updating its video equipment so council members and the public can have remote access to meetings.

July 10 edition

St. Joseph’s city budget will be boosted by CARES Act funding distributed by the state of Minnesota for coronavirus-relief efforts. Local governments will receive a direct payment based on the per-capita formula. Cities with more than 200 people will receive \$75.34 per person, which works out to \$551,340 for St. Joseph.

July 24 edition

Soon there will be another police officer patrolling the streets of St. Joseph. Thanks to a federal COPS grant approved by the City Council at its July 20 meeting, Chief Dwight Pfannenstien will be hiring an additional officer.

Aug. 7 edition

St. Cloud school district schools will begin the year in a hybrid learning model. Based on grade level, students will be assigned to attend on Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday.

Aug. 21 edition

A proposal to take bids for the sale of city property will be the subject of a public hearing before the St. Joseph City Council at one of its September meetings. The council has been considering selling the St. Joseph Community Center building (formerly Kennedy Elementary School).

Sept. 4 edition

A proposal to improve the look of downtown St. Joseph moved ahead when the City Council approved the final plan and bidding for the streetscape project. The improvements include repairs to the existing streetscape on the south side of Minnesota Street from Chapel Lane to First Avenue NE. The work includes replacing pavers, tree planters, benches and garbage receptacles and reconstruction of existing pedestrian ramps to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

Sept. 18 edition

Construction of a water main extension near 20th Avenue SE will go ahead after the St. Joseph City Council approved on a split vote the project’s assessments and low bid Sept. 8.

Therese Haffner is St. Joseph’s new city administrator after the City Council approved her appointment at its Sept. 8 meeting. She replaces Kris Ambuehl who resigned to take a position in the private sector. Haffner has served as the city’s Community Development director for more than four years and she served as interim city administrator while a search for Ambuehl’s replacement was underway. Prior to working in St. Joseph, she worked in Becker and Sartell.

Oct. 30 edition

On Oct. 13 and 14, the state Legislature, both House and Senate, approved the biggest bonding bill in state history, a whopping \$1.9-billion package. The bill includes \$4 million for a long-proposed community center in St. Joseph.

Nov. 27 edition

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

St. Cloud School District Board of Education approved a resolution allowing Superintendent Willie Jett and his administration to engage with St. Cloud Educational Rights Advocacy Council, a local organization suing the State of Minnesota in an effort to settle funding shortfalls in order to improve educational opportunities to all students in District 742.

Dec. 11 edition

Members of St. Cloud school district’s dyslexia team updated the Board of Education on its five-year plan to help students meet state reading standards. A Minnesota statute 120B.12 requires students to have reading proficiency no later than the end of third grade and outlines steps districts must take to help students reach the standards. Currently, the district screens all students in kindergarten through 10th grade three times per year using the STAR reading assessment system. In fall 2020, the majority of students in elementary, middle, junior and high school who took the test did not make the minimum score needed to reach the standard.

A more comprehensive version of the Year in Review may be read on our website at thenewsleaders.com.

YEAR IN

Review

2020

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St. Cloud schools plan classroom return in January

by Heidi L. Everett
editor@thenewsleaders.com

St. Cloud Area School District will return students enrolled in preschool, elementary and alternative programs to hybrid learning on Tuesday, Jan. 19, following the Monday holiday.

"Our staff has been doing an amazing job ensuring students are learning and growing throughout this distance learning period, and we are excited to resume more in-person instruction soon," said

Anna Wilhite, principal at Kennedy Community School.

At this time, the schedule is:

- Students in pre-school will attend school in-person two days a week following the same A/B rotation previously assigned.
- Students in grades K-2 will attend school in-person Monday-Thursday and learn from home on Fridays.
- Students in grades 3-5 will attend school in-person two days a week following the same A/B rotation previously assigned

and learn from home on Fridays.

- Students enrolled in special education alternative programs (e.g., REC, Riverwoods) will attend school in-person Monday-Thursday and learn from home on Fridays.

"We are excited to be welcoming our K-5 students back and providing in-person education again to our youngest learners," Wilhite said.

Delaying the return to hybrid learning until Jan. 19 provides the best opportunity to predictably staff schools following the holiday break, the District noted in a press release. The Minnesota Department of Education and

Minnesota Department of Health recommend districts allow for an incubation period after winter break since many students and staff may be required to quarantine following holiday gatherings and exposures.

The plan is to begin the transition of all pre-K-5 students to full in-person learning at the start of the third trimester on March 8, Wilhite said. At that time, Kennedy also will welcome back its students in grades six through eight.

Based on current data, students throughout the district in grades 6-12 will remain in distance learning until spring break. Secondary schools must use the original parameters outlined by the Min-

nesota Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Health. These parameters include analysis of county health data, local health data, impact on school community and operational challenges.

Middle school and high school Activities will resume Jan. 4, 2021 following the Governor's announcement and Minnesota State High School League's recommendation.

Social distancing and health and safety protocols will be in effect and followed.

All students begin instruction again in the distance learning model on Jan. 4.

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Newsleaders bound for posterity

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Ten years of the Newsleaders newspapers have been bound between hard covers for posterity and are now being indexed at the Stearns History Museum in St. Cloud.

That's about 1,000 newspapers – about 500 issues of the St. Joseph Newsleader and 500 of the Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader.

In addition, the museum archival collection contains microfilm versions of the first two decades of the Newsleaders, stemming back to 1989. That

was the year the weekly St. Joseph Newsleader was founded by owner-publisher Janelle Von Pinnon. In 1995, she debuted the Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleader. Throughout the last three decades, Von Pinnon also produced at one time or another Newsleader newspapers for Sauk Rapids-Rice and for Waite Park.

"We downsized to a smaller office and were happy to donate past issues, so readers may access historical information as needed" Von Pinnon said. "The bound newspapers will allow future generations to explore and reference the past 30 years

of recorded significant happenings in the communities of St. Joseph and Sartell-St. Stephen."

Last summer, Von Pinnon asked the Stearns History Museum if its staff would like to have copies of the papers that had been stored at the news office. Steve Penick, archivist for the museum, said he would be happy to have them. Shortly afterward, Penick had a bindery bound each year's-worth of papers between hard covers.

For several months, museum employee Heather Hall has spent part of her weekends meticulously indexing all of the

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People



St. Joseph Y2K Lions present Brenny Transportation the Award for Service in the Community. Pictured (from left to right) are the following: Kelly Klegstad, Brenny; Ray Sjogren, Y2K; Stacey St. Pierre, Karl Penner, Bonnie Supan, Scott Simon, Todd Brenny and Joyce Brenny, all of Brenny; Becky Stanear, Ginger Meier and Joyce Oldeen, all of Y2K; and Sarah Wischnefski, Brenny.

St. Joseph Y2K Lions presented to **Brenny Transportation** the "Award for Service in the Community." The award recognizes Brenny as a business that gives back to St. Joseph and cares about its neighbors.

Traci Haugen, clerical, and **Theresa Kotsmith**, behavior resource specialist, of Kennedy

Community School were recognized at the Nov. 18 Educational Support Staff Awards by Resource Training & Solutions. Schools and districts across Resource's Central Minnesota region nominate award recipients based on suggested criteria that includes knowledge of work responsibilities, demonstration of safety, cultivation of respect, acting as a positive role model,

displaying genuine concern for others, and making a difference in the lives of students, staff and the community.

Noel Teigen of St. Joseph was named to the fall dean's list at the University of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Teigen is majoring in nursing. To qualify, students must earn a 3.5 or greater grade-point average.

Snapshots of 2020



While 2020 headlines tell of all we lost due to COVID-19, these snapshots tell all that we gained. Celebration and connection. Compassion. Resilience. Hope. We truly are in this together.

1. & 2. Michelle Karkandee, 6, of Thailand, (left) tries ice-fishing Feb. 15 with Lexi Kiley, 16, of Sartell, at the St. Joseph Rod and Gun Club Fishing Tournament on Kraemer Lake. (Right) Cody Anderson, 9, of St. Joseph, grabs a bite from concessions.

3. Kristen Gall (right) helps Margaret Annas at Woodcrest of Country Manor visit with a granddaughter and great-granddaughter via FaceTime.

4. Mary Bruno, of St. Joseph, prepares to read for her online "Quarantine Storytime" in March.

5. For Roger Zimmer, 84, it's not the Fourth of July without a parade. When the St. Joseph parade was canceled, Zimmer's family organized one past his home

in St. Joseph. "Candidate" Evan Acheson tosses out candy while Shelly Acheson plays the Statue of Liberty.

6. Sisters Amaara and Morgan Wiese post messages near a trail by their home to encourage joy.

7. Kennedy Community School staff share "Miss You" messages in April with students.

8. Families gather behind St. Joseph Government Center Aug. 6 for movie night.

YEAR IN Review 2020

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Opinion

Guest column

Dying with COVID in an ICU

by Daniel Whitlock

I'm considered old even though I don't feel it, and I have a chronic illness as well. These criteria put me at a high risk of dying if I am infected with the COVID-19 virus.

I am also a retired physician and medical administrator, so perhaps I have too much knowledge about medical care, or maybe I'm just a realist who understands the current situation in which our hospital, physicians, nurses and staff find themselves during this pandemic! As I have listened to the news and heard the reality of increasing COVID cases and decreasing availability of hospital beds and resources, I have started to think about the possibility of my own demise. I have decided it's time to take as much control as possible about how I want my days to end if my family and I should find myself in that situation.

Should I become infected with the COVID-19 virus I will most likely be admitted to the ICU. Here I will encounter the most sophisticated technical care available anywhere in the country; ventilators, multiple IV's, infusions, medications, synthetic antibodies, procedures and protocols that caregivers are using to save patients from this heinous disease.

Caring for patients in a pandemic is overwhelming when doctors and nurses experience the trauma of knowing they cannot slow down. Their feelings must remain muffled in order to serve the next patient requiring their attention. The emotional toll they feel when overwhelmed by tight resources, too few staff and very sick patients who often die leads to burnout and can rapidly cascade to PTSD, guilt and chronic anxiety. I know this is true because I have walked in their shoes. This is the reality our hospital staff face, heroically and selflessly, each day. Our caregivers are a scarce resource – a resource we must not squander. Therefore, if the unwanted possibility occurs I would become one of their patients, is it possible for me to relieve a fraction of their emotional burden?

Part of the answer can be found in an "advance directive" or "living will," which I have had for many years. This document lays out the types of care I want, or don't want, at the end of my life. But recently, I have realized this pandemic has put a new spin on my health-care directive. I have begun to discuss with my wife my wariness of the unknown. As death comes to us all, so I want to make sure my health-care directive identifies what is important to me. An advanced directive is not a document to set my choices in stone. Most of all it sets the stage for respectful and non-confrontational discussions between my family and hospital staff regarding my final care.

Therefore, as I review my advance directive relative to COVID-19, I know a couple of things: first, I do want a ventilator, provided the caregiving team thinks it in my best interest. I trust my family will engage them in this dialogue. And secondly, I do not want "heroic" care that may result in a very difficult rehabilitation or taking precious resources from a patient who may have a much better prognosis. My family and caregivers should know many of their choices may be ambiguous ones and be assured I concur, in advance, with their difficult choices. I am going to ask my family and caregivers trust each other explicitly – no arguing, no blaming, no histrionics!

I encourage all of us to face the facts of this pandemic and its possible consequences; death is one of them. Talk to your partner and family about the stark reality; a reality that should not be faced without adequate forethought and planning.

Daniel J. Whitlock, MD, MBA, retired from St. Cloud Hospital CentraCare after 16 years as its vice president for medical affairs.

Our view

Wishing you health, happiness, peace

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, and many other celebrations of faith, culture and blessings.

December truly is a month of holidays.

On Dec. 8, Buddhists celebrated Bodhi Day which commemorates Buddha's attainment of understanding. Celebrations of Bodhi Day are quiet. Celebrants meditate, study the teachings of Buddha, chant and hold services. Some may decorate a Bodhi tree, string up colorful lights to represent the paths to enlightenment or celebrate with a traditional meal of rice and milk.

Hanukkah began at sundown Dec. 10. The festival is observed for eight nights and days and may begin at any time in late November to late December. Typically, a me-

norah is used during this celebration to note the days with lighted candles. The holiday commemorates Jewish victory that ended a three-year period of religious persecution and restored Jewish independence.

Fiesta de Guadalupe Feast, Dec. 12, honored Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico's patron saint. The day commemorates the appearance of the Virgin Mary to a Mexican peasant named Juan Diego in 1531. Candles, food and song are part of this celebration.

The shortest day of the year, Dec. 21, is also one of the oldest celebrations in the world. Yule is a Pagan holiday celebrating the Winter Solstice. It begins at sundown and ends on Jan. 1. The holiday itself revolves around thanking gods and goddesses for blessings and the

change of seasons.

Of course there is Christmas Dec. 25, which celebrates the birth of Jesus.

Kwanzaa closes the month from Dec. 26 through Jan. 1. This annual celebration of African-American culture and tribute to African festivals of harvest has been practiced since the mid-1960s. It celebrates seven different principles of building community, including unity, self-determination, collective work, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. Families might decorate, light a candle each day and reflect on each principle, enjoy a feast, exchange gifts, reflect and play drums and other music.

However you celebrate this festive time of year, we wish you and your family health, happiness and peace.

During troubled times, there's still hope for New Year

As December continues on, the holiday season is upon us, and the prospect of finally leaving 2020 behind draws ever closer. This has been a rough and completely unpredictable year. If someone had told me at this time last year what was all in store, I would not have believed them. A global pandemic that has killed more than 300,000 Americans, an election that has stretched our societal divides to a breaking point and an economic crisis that has inflicted pain on so many businesses and workers. It is tough to see if anything went right this year. While I am most certainly looking forward to the promise of better times ahead, I think there are some events this year that can give us some hope.

COVID-19 has certainly been a catastrophe like no other, affecting every part of our daily lives. But I know that I have been lucky. There have been far too many people who have died, lost a loved one or had serious complications because of this virus.

Through all of this, our health-care workers show their inspiring dedication and service. As so many people have needed their help, healthcare workers have risen to the challenge, at much personal sacrifice and risk to themselves as well. It is truly inspiring to see the level of drive to assist others that they bring every day, and their work gives me hope that eventually we can overcome this disease.

Connor Kockler

Guest Writer



The election is another topic from which it seems there is no good path ahead. It is sad to see fellow Americans so bitterly divided about the direction of the country and bickering about whose voices should be included in making decisions that will affect us all. While this situation is terrible, an anecdote I have from election day gives me some solace that things might improve.

While serving as an election judge, I was amazed by the level of turnout. Hundreds of people came to the polling site I worked to cast their ballots, and hundreds more had already voted absentee. Applying that throughout all of the precincts in the state brought Minnesota close to setting a new voter turnout record and the highest in the nation. One thing that really impressed me was the number of newly registered voters. It wasn't just young people voting for the first time, either. I registered senior citizens and middle-aged people as well.

For those newly registered who were not just turning 18, this might have been the first time in a long while that they decided to vote, or maybe they had never exercised their right to vote before. It was such an amazing feeling to

be part of people's acts of registering to vote, and it's made me more optimistic that people really care for and are engaged in our democracy. If we can keep up this kind of turnout and interest in politics, maybe we will be able to get more accomplished.

In these troubled times, we should also be mindful of all of our local businesses and workers. Through guidelines and lockdowns people are working every day to keep their businesses going and provide for family and the community. Now more than ever is a time to recognize those in need of assistance and to give them a helping hand. Recently, the CSB/SJU community turned out big to support Sliced on College Avenue, the pizza place in St. Joseph, when that restaurant put out an appeal on social media.

So while 2020 has been a year that has tested and frayed so many of us, we should remember there is some cause for optimism, that people are working hard to improve the situation and to assist their neighbors in the community. While we enjoy the holiday season and look forward to 2021, this past year showed us that in troubled times, there is always hope that can be found. And that's what the holidays are all about.

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

Newsleaders

from page 4

papers for ease of access. For example, if a museum visitor is doing research and wants to find, say, a particular obituary or some past newsworthy event, they can consult an alphabetized master index to find the specific issue and information they are seeking.

Penick said all of the bound issues will be indexed in about a year.

The Newsleaders are a welcome addition to the museum, Penick said, along with collections of other area newspapers.

“I’m so glad the Stearns History Museum showed such a genuine interest in preserving the newspapers,” Von Pinnon said. “They are a great testimonial to the resilient spirit of each of our cities.”

In addition, past issues were donated to the St. Joseph and Sartell historical societies.

Week after week, year after year throughout three decades, the Newsleaders were made possible by the support and confidence of readers and advertisers, Von Pinnon noted.

“And we hope to continue providing quality news coverage for years to come,” she said.



contributed photo
Steve Penick, archivist at Stearns History Museum, peruses bound copies of St. Joseph Newsleader. Ten years of St. Joseph and Sartell-St. Stephen Newsleaders were acquired by the museum. hard-bound and are now being indexed. The bound editions, year by year, can be seen on the filing cabinet in front of Penick.

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. Check with each organization for COVID-19 related adjustments.

Sunday, Dec. 27
Joe Town Table, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., American Legion, 101 W. Minnesota St., St. Joseph. centralmncw@gmail.com.

Monday, Dec. 28
St. Joseph Food Shelf, open 1-3 p.m., 124 First Ave. SE, St. Joseph.
St. Joseph Township Board, 7 p.m., Township Hall, 935 College Ave. S., St. Joseph.

Tuesday, Dec. 29
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.

Thursday, Dec. 31
St. Joseph Food Shelf, open 1-3 p.m., 124 First Ave. SE, St. Joseph.

Monday, Jan. 4
St. Joseph City Council, 6 p.m., Government Center, 75 Callaway St. E.
St. Joseph Food Shelf, open 1-3 p.m., 124 First Ave. SE, St. Joseph.
St. Cloud school board reorganization meeting, 5 p.m.,

District Administration Office, 1201 Second St. S., Waite Park.

Tuesday, Jan. 5
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, Jan. 6
Advocates for Independence, 2-4 p.m., Independent Lifestyles, 215 Benton Drive N., Sauk Rapids. 320-529-9000.

Thursday, Jan. 7
St. Joseph Food Shelf, open 1-3 p.m., 124 First Ave. SE, St. Joseph.

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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: Simply Savvy Financing.

2. The stated address of the principal place of business is or will be: 56 33rd Ave. S. #306, 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: Savvy Maverick LLC, 1622 11th Ave. S.E., St. Cloud, MN 56304.

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.

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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: Elite Massage & Wellness.

2. The stated address of the principal place of business is or will be: 703 First Ave. S.W, St. Joseph, MN 56374.

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: Brandon Kruze, 703 First Ave. SW, St. Joseph, MN 56374.

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.

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Dated: Dec. 16, 2020

/s/ Janelle Schneekloth

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Filed: Dec. 15, 2020

Dated: Dec. 15, 2020

/s/ Brandon Kruse

Publish: Dec. 25, 2020 & Jan. 8, 2021

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Create an Emergency Fund

The unexpected COVID-19 pandemic left millions of Americans without their jobs and income they rely on to make ends meet. Kaiser Health News reports that as of May 2020, more than 39 million Americans had filed for unemployment benefits.



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The sudden shutdown of businesses large and small can teach us the importance of having an emergency fund to help get through tough times. America’s Debt Help Organization recommends that people have enough savings to cover at least three months of expenses. An emergency fund that can last up to six months is preferable, as it can protect you and reduce your need to rely on high-interest credit cards or loans.

SLOW GROWTH
Building an emergency fund can

seem like an uphill battle if you find it challenging to add to a savings account after your monthly commitments. Consider these tips that can cause significant growth over time.

- Get a part-time job during your free time. Commit to using the additional funds solely for saving.
- Cut expenses that cause a strain to your budget. Consider avoiding eating out or buying a daily coffee.
- As you spend cash throughout the day, promise to add all the change into a jar. Once the container is full, deposit the accumulated coins into a

savings account. These simple guidelines will help you gain traction in an emergency fund plan while providing satisfaction as your nest egg grows.

FACE YOUR DEBT
You can find more room in your budget for savings by cutting down high-interest debts and high monthly payments. Analyze your financial responsibilities on paper by jotting down the due dates, costs and interest. Talk to your lenders about more feasible commitments or consider

lumping credit-card debts and loans into one manageable payment. You may find a better interest rate that will save you a significant amount of money that can be included in your emergency fund.

OPEN A SEPARATE ACCOUNT
It’s essential to keep emergency funds separate from an easily accessible checking account. Try to monitor your primary account and transfer any surpluses to savings to prepare for an unexpected expense or other financial situation.



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