

Reaching Everybody! Newsleaders

Friday, May 13, 2022
Volume 27, Issue 10
Est. 1995

Town Crier

Amadeus symphony performs tonight

The Amadeus Chamber Symphony will perform its spring concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 13 in Atonement Lutheran Church, 1144 29th Ave. N., St. Cloud. Free admission; donations welcome. atheimer@csbsju.edu.

Farmers' Market open Mondays

The Sartell Farmers' Market is now open weekly from 3-6 p.m. Mondays alongside Pinecone Road in the parking lot at Bernick's Arena, 1109 First St. S., Sartell. Come find many great items including the following: eggs, chicken, beef, caramel corn, coffee, honey, soaps, plants, canned goods and vegetables in season.

Back the Badge Car Show set May 21 at Crossroads

The "Back the Badge" Car Show will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 21 at Crossroads Center Mall, 4101 W. Division St., St. Cloud. All proceeds will benefit the Law Enforcement Labor Services Benevolent Fund, which provides support and financial aid for families of Minnesota's public safety professionals who are seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. The event is free for spectators, and a \$20 entry fee for each vehicle in the car show. All vehicle makes, models and years are welcome. Prizes and food trucks are available. LELS is Minnesota's largest public safety labor union and represents police, fire, 911 dispatchers, corrections officers and public safety support staff personnel throughout Minnesota. There are 6,700+ members, 260+ public safety agencies. For more information, visit [LELS Benevolent Fund](http://LELSBenevolentFund.org).

All-night grad party seeks donations

Planning for the 2022 All Night Senior Graduation Party is underway. This is an all-night, safe and chemical free lock-in celebration for the graduating senior class, which takes place following the graduation ceremony on June 4. In addition to a full night of entertainment, food and games, this party is highlighted by an exciting hypnotist. Each senior will leave with a door prize purchased through funds donated by area businesses, parents and friends of the Sartell-St Stephen school district. In addition, each will be entered in raffle drawings for larger prizes, including a car donated by Miller Auto Center. The group is seeking monetary donations from area businesses to make this event possible. Make checks payable to Sartell Graduation Party. Mail checks to: Sartell Graduation Party, P.O. Box 227, Sartell, MN 56377. SHS Seniors can still sign up for the event by visiting <https://sartellgradparty.wixsite.com/2022/registration>.

Lions clubs' plans accelerate for regional inclusive playground

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

Plans have accelerated to make a long-anticipated dream come true – a regional inclusive playground in Sartell Lions Regional Community Park, located right across from city hall.

An inclusive playground is one at which children who are physically challenged, including those in wheelchairs, can interact socially and play together on its rubbery non-slip surface.

The park will be designated as "regional," which means anyone from any area can enjoy it.

On the playground will be 12 main pieces of playtime equipment designed by local parents whose children would benefit from such a playtime opportunity. One feature will be a wheelchair-accessible merry-go-round.

The estimated cost of constructing the playground is \$400,000, and three Lions clubs are partnering to raise funds for the project. Those clubs are the Sartell Lions, the LeSauk

Lions and the St. Stephen Lions. They have also applied for an International Lions grant of \$100,000.

The City of Sartell and the

Sartell-St. Stephen School District are also partners in the playground project, along with many partners – all of whom, with the Lions, will provide

input in designing the amenity.

Lions clubs throughout the world have for many decades taken on projects to help chal-

Playground • page 2



photo by Carolyn Bertsch

A sign of spring

An oriole in Sartell grips the edge of an orange May 10 as he pokes his beak into the juicy pulp.

Apple Duathlon to close streets May 21

contributed article

On Saturday, May 21, the Sartell Apple Duathlon will take place at Sartell Riverview Intermediate School (old Middle School). The event is a 3.1-mile run, a 20-mile bike ride and another 3.1-mile run. The race starts at 8:30 a.m.

The athletes will run and bike west on Seventh Street N. from Sartell Riverview Intermediate School. The bikers will continue north on Pinecone Road and eventually south on Riverside Avenue S.

• **Seventh Street North will be closed from approximately 8-11 a.m.** At approximately 9:45 a.m., after the bikers are out on the course, the only part of Seventh Street North remaining closed is from Riverside Avenue to Fifth Avenue North.

• **Pinecone Road from 12th Street N. to 40th Street N. will be closed at approximately 8 a.m.** Pinecone Road will be reopened in stages and fully reopened at approximately 10:45 a.m.

• **Riverside Avenue N from**

7th Street N. to 12th Street N. will be closed at approximately 7 a.m. and reopened around 11 a.m. Traffic driving on this stretch of Riverside Avenue N. is to go north. Southbound traffic will be stopped at Seventh Street N. and asked to turn around and head north.

The Sartell Police work with Active Central Minnesota, the

local nonprofit race management company, to keep this a safe event for the athletes and provide the least inconvenience possible to Sartell residents. For the safety of all concerned, please be aware of the Apple Duathlon taking place.

ACM appreciates your patience and cooperation during this event. There are athletes

from all around the country who consistently have positive remarks about the Sartell community. ACM appreciates your continued support of the Sartell Apple Duathlon. Please come out and cheer on the athletes!

Any concerns or questions can be addressed to Larry Stracke at 320-230-8637.

2021 audit shows financial health for Sartell

by Dennis Dalman
news@thenewsleaders.com

The City of Sartell received a generally excellent financial audit report for the year 2021 at the May 9 city-council meeting.

An overview of the extensive audit by the financial firm of BerganKDV was presented by an employee of that company.

The following are highlights of her presentation:

Sartell has the lowest tax rate of the five area cities, a ranking it has maintained for many years.

Total city revenues for 2021

were \$8,116,776 with that money coming from property taxes, fees, charges for permits, the regional half-cent sales tax, grants and contributions and \$331,003 of local state aid.

The general-fund expenditures for 2021 were \$7,883,370, which was \$744,833 more than in 2020. The biggest expense was for Public Safety (police, fire), which increased by 18 percent in 2021 due to adding more employees and wages and benefits.

Parks and Recreation also increased due to expenses for utilities, cleaning, repairs and

maintenance.

Public Works decreased by \$84,910 because of a decrease in the need for buying salt and a decrease in seal-coating and repairs paid for from the general fund.

The city maintains a healthy fund balance of \$4,540,865, something that its city policy requires.

The audit does recommend the city introduce an "adequate segregation of accounting duties," meaning that more than one person should handle financial data.

Audit • page 9

Stearns County redraws commissioner district boundaries

Playground

by Mike Knaak
news@thenewsleaders.com

The last piece in the redistricting puzzle is now in place as the Stearns County board approved a new commissioner district map and decided terms for the five districts.

All political district lines are redrawn every 10 years following the census, balancing representation to reflect population changes. A state commission sets congressional and legislative maps in February.

After narrowing the options to four maps, commissioners unanimously approved a map for two urban districts, two rural districts and what commissioners called a “swing” or suburban district, the Second District, which includes St. Joseph and Sartell.

The newly redrawn Second District now adds Brockway Township and the city of St. Stephen while Waite Park moves

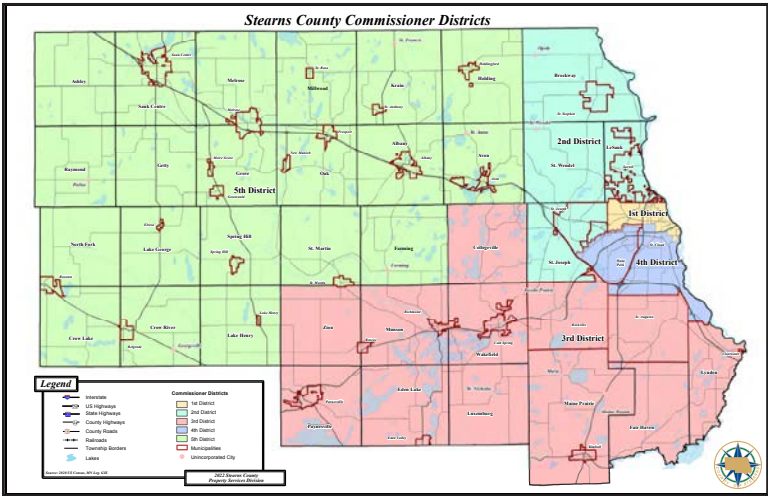
to the Fourth District, which also includes the south side of St. Cloud.

As the board debated the maps at its April 12 meeting, current Second District Commissioner Joe Perske pointed out many people who live in Brockway Township work in the St. Cloud area and children attend the Sartell-St. Stephen school district. Brockway had been part of the old Third District that ran from Holdingford in the north to Richmond and Eden Valley in the south.

The Second District includes the fastest-growing portion of Stearns County. The county added about 9,000 residents in the last 10 years to bring county population to just less than 160,000 people.

Law requires political districts vary by less than 10 percent. The new Stearns districts vary within 5 percent.

Commissioners will be elected



contributed photo

Redistricting map of Stearns County. To view an enlarged map visit thenewsleaders.com.

in all five districts in the 2022 election, but to maintain staggered terms in future elections, commissioners needed to pick two districts with only two-year terms instead of four-year terms. Board chair Steve Notch asked if any of his colleagues would volunteer for the two-year terms. There were no takers and there was some discussion of post-

poning the term-length decision. Notch then proposed drawing terms out of a hat. As a result, the commissioners elected in the Second and the Fifth districts will serve two-year terms while the other three seats will be for four years.

Benton County made no changes to its commissioner dis-

Boundaries • page 9

from front page

lenged people, especially those who are sight-impaired or blind. The clubs fund and promote leader dogs and eyeglass recycling, as well as a wide variety of civic projects such as scholarships, clean-ups, Adopt a Highway, buckthorn removal, Christmas tree collections and countless ways to help people in need.

There are 18 members of the Sartell Lions, about 50 in the LeSauk club and close to 40 in The St. Stephen one.

Sartell Lions Club president/secretary Stu Giffen explained why he and many others are enthusiastic about the playground project.


The Sartell Lions, spearheaded by member Mike DeLuca, created Sartell Lions Community Park in 2004 on wooded acreage, putting in trails wide enough for wheelchairs, trail handrails and other amenities, including a playground. The playground is popular, but unfortunately it was not designed for special-needs children.

The nearest inclusive playground is 60 miles from Sartell, Giffen said, adding there are an estimated 200 children living in Sartell who have special needs.

“The playground would be in a perfect location near schools, a walking-biking path, the Scheels Event Center, businesses and homes,” Giffen said. “This will be an awesome addition to the entire region. The three Lions clubs are working hard to fund it through individuals, corporations and fellow Lions clubs. It’s a great opportunity for the Sartell area residents to improve our community for all kids.”

Jill Murphy, supervisor of the school district’s special-education program, is thrilled about the proposed playground. She wrote the following endorsement of the project.

Playground • page 8



The mission of Tri-CAP is to enhance and expand opportunities for the economic and social well-being of our residents and our communities.

Workforce Development Manager Wanted

Tri-CAP is looking for a passionate, energetic, committed individual to join us! This person will supervise staff and will oversee Tri-CAP's Workforce Development and Self-Sufficiency Programs, as well as well as outreach services for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and others.

Primary responsibilities of this full-time, exempt position based in Waite Park will include:

- *Development and implement workforce development-specific policies and procedures.
- *Oversee development of curriculum for workforce development programs, employment plans, life-skills classes, case management, volunteer training, etc.
- *Assist in program budget development and monitoring.
- *Build relationships with area human service agencies to stay abreast of activities, trends and collaborative efforts.
- *Supervision of staff, internship and volunteer assignments in the department, performance evaluation, corrective action as necessary, etc.
- *Ensure holistic case management services are provided to clients.
- *Represent Tri-CAP on community-based committees with agency partners.
- *Facilitate community presentations about Tri-CAP and specific program services as requested.
- *Assist in program planning, goal setting, evaluation plans, measuring outcomes, reporting program activities to funders as necessary.

Starting salary: \$50,773-\$57,117 annually, includes comprehensive benefits package and training!


Qualifications:

- *Minimum of a bachelor's degree in social work/human services or related field and two years of experience or a combination of five (5) years' experience and/or education.
- *Two years supervisory experience.
- *Knowledge of case management best practices.
- *Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite, client data software.
- *Strong communication and presentation skills.
- *Strong organizational skills and ability to prioritize.
- *Ability to build relationships with community partners and volunteers. Identify barriers that impact low-income individuals.
- *Experience with career planning, workforce development programs, preferred.
- *Hybrid work arrangement involving both telecommuting and in-office environments.
- *Ability to travel in four-county service area.

To apply:

Apply online via our website: www.tricap.org or call our office to request an application or email hr@tricap.org. Deadline for applications is Friday, May 27, 2022.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

**CITY OF ST. STEPHEN
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING
SUMMARY PUBLICATION
OF ORDINANCE
NO. 05042022:
RIGHT-OF-WAY REGULATION**

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2022, the City Council for the City of St. Stephen adopted Ordinance No. 05042022: Right of Way Regulation.

WHEREAS, the City of St. Stephen desires to publish the Ordinance No. 05042022 by Summary Publication;

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

1. The City Council has reviewed the proposed Summary Publication drafted by the City Attorney and finds the summary of the Ordinance clearly informs the public of the intent and effect of the Ordinance.
2. The City of St. Stephen directs the City Clerk to publish the Ordinance by Summary Publication.

Adopted this 4th day of May, 2022, by a vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

CITY OF ST. STEPHEN

/s/ Lisa Marvin, Mayor

/s/ Julie Jacobs, City Clerk

Publish: May 13, 2022

Day set for paper-mill remembrance

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

Ten years after the catastrophic explosion and fire at the Verso Paper Mill in Sartell, it will soon be a day for public reminiscence.

From 1-4 p.m. Saturday, June 11, there will be a “Verso Paper Corporation Mill Remembrance” at the Sartell Community Center. The event is a joint presentation by the Sartell Historical Society and the Sartell Senior Connection. Former paper-mill employees and the general public are welcome to attend the free day of remembrance. It will take place right after the Grand Parade of the annual Sartell SummerFest that day.

Activities will include a video presentation about the paper mill, a panel discussion with former mill employees, a model-train display by Sartell resident Ron Euteneuer, a sale of books written by local authors and a display of artifacts from the collections of the Sartell Historical Society and the Benton County Historical Society. Refreshments will be served.

On a sunny morning on May 28, 2012, a Memorial Day ceremony in Sartell’s Veterans Park took place just across the river from the paper mill. Shortly after the ceremony, the people dispersed from the park. The sky began to cloud over when a loud explosion was heard throughout

If you have a tip concerning a crime, call the Sartell Police Department at 320-251-8186 or Tri-County Crime Stoppers at 320-255-1301, or access its tip site at tricountycrimestoppers.org. Crime Stoppers offers rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for a crime.

- April 26**
- 3:49 p.m. Missing cookies. 23rd Avenue N. A man reported a neighbor stole his Girl Scout cookies order at the end of March. When he ordered online, he accidentally put his neighbor’s address down. The neighbor denied getting the cookies. He wondered if the neighbor could be charged with theft. The officer informed the man that because since he made the order and confirmed the information but still had placed the wrong address, it would be a civil matter.
- April 27**
- 11:07 p.m. Suspicious vehicle. 12th Street N. An officer noticed a vehicle parked at Northside Park after hours. The officer saw it was a vehicle that had been spotted earlier driving with no taillights. The driver told the officer she was picking up signs from a canceled event. When the officer mentioned the no lights, it was found the vehicle was not in “auto” mode for the lights. After switching to auto mode, the lights came on.

the city. Within minutes sirens could be heard screaming as fire-fighting crews from throughout the area arrived at the paper-mill site.

An overheated air compressor had exploded, causing a rapidly spreading fire. In an effort to extinguish the first flames, an employee, Jon Maus of Albany, was killed when the compressor blew up. Four other employees were injured.

That day, May 28, was the most traumatic day in Sartell’s history. The paper mill, which first opened in 1905, flourished for 107 years under various ownership names: Watab Pulp and Paper, St. Regis, Champion International, Verso. The plant was the largest employer in the city, with almost 500 employees in its peak-production years producing 850 tons of high-quality coated paper every 24 hours. The mill was also a bedrock contributor to Sartell’s tax base.

The fire at the mill was a massive, very difficult fire to fight; it took mutual-aid fire departments days to extinguish flames and hot spots completely.

It was later determined the tragedy began when an employee had discovered a leaking water valve, causing the paper-making machine to be shut down for repairs. The air compressor, which should have shut down, kept running and due to lack of water to cool it, it became

- Blotter**
- April 28**
- 5:30 p.m. Suspicious activity. Second Street N. A man reported a woman drilling out a lock at a residence. The woman told the officer she lived there and lost her keys. The woman called the property owner to confirm her story.
- April 29**
- 12:40 p.m. Burning. Fourth Avenue N. An officer checked on smoke coming from behind the complainant’s residence. A Community Service Officer was in the area and located the source in the back yard of another residence. He could see a blackened mound of leaves and branches smoking. The CSO contacted the family and there was a language barrier. The CSO took the homeowner to the backyard and was able to explain the family couldn’t burn yard waste in the yard but could instead use a fire pit in the front yard. The homeowner was given a warning and put the fire out while the CSO was there.
- April 30**
- 12:54 p.m. Burglary. Seventh Street N. A person reported a Trek bicycle was missing from a locked storage unit inside a shared garage. The complainant told the officer other tenants were moving out and had a lot of personal items in the garage, so he had been parking outside. When he parked in the garage, he noticed the closet had been broken into and his bike and air pump were missing.

- The bicycle’s serial number was entered as stolen and the officer took photos of the closet and the garage.
- May 1**
- 10:54 a.m. Tampering with a motor vehicle. Pheasant Drive. A caller reported a vehicle that may have been unlocked was entered during the night. The caller said the glove box had been gone through and things moved around but nothing was missing. Her son’s vehicle was also in the driveway but locked. She thought an entry was attempted because a blue LED light was on inside the car. Numerous vehicles had been entered in the area overnight and the officers believe it was the same person or persons.

- May 2**
- 6:22 a.m. Traffic stop. Seventh Street N. An officer noticed a vehicle speeding. The officer activated radar and received a reading of 50 mph in a 30-mph zone. The officer stopped the vehicle and the driver stated he did not know he was driving that fast. The officer issued a speeding ticket.

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Free admission for under 18 to Stone Poneys games

All under 18-year-olds receive free admission to any Stone Poneys baseball game throughout the 2022 season.

GARAGE SALE

May 13 & 14
7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
618 Corrine Creek
Sartell, MN 56377
Household items, brand-name clothing (Lululemon etc.), shoes, furniture & more
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Housing Rehab Specialist Wanted
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Primary Responsibilities

- Perform energy audits and quality control inspections for Weatherization (WX) Program.
- Perform Housing Rehabilitation inspections for housing programs according to program guidelines.
- Complete WX data entry in WX software and create required work orders.
- Create a scope of work for rehabilitation projects using Developer Pro Software.
- Communicate and coordinate with contractors to schedule and have work completed.
- Conduct client education and referral activities as it pertains to program and agency guidelines and requirements.

Starting wage: \$21.83/hour, with training and excellent benefits

Qualifications

- High school equivalency and 5 years related experience OR combination of five years post-secondary education and related work experience in construction trades.
- Extensive knowledge and background in residential construction and energy conservation.
- Experience estimating home repairs, scope of work write-ups and housing inspections.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.

To Apply
Please apply online at www.tricap.org, or email: hr@tricap.org or call our office 320-251-1612 to request an application. Position is open until filled.

The mission of Tri-CAP is to enhance and expand opportunities for the economic and social well-being of our residents and our communities.

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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.

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Most events are listed at no cost. Those events are typically free or of minimal charge for people to attend. Some events, which have paid advertising in the Newsleaders, are also listed in the calendar and may charge more.

Friday, May 13

Amadeus Chamber Symphony Spring Concert, 7:30 p.m., Atonement Lutheran Church, 1144 29th Ave N., St. Cloud. Free admission, donations welcome.

Saturday, May 14

Vendor Craft Bake Sale, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Eagles Club, 703 41st Ave. N., St. Cloud. First 50 receive a swag bag to win prizes. Lily's Wings & Things will be available from 11 a.m.-1

p.m. providing food options.

Album Release Preview: "Neon Lightning" by Pamela McNeill, 7:30 p.m., Paramount Center for the Arts, 913 W St. Germain St., St. Cloud. Visit paramountarts.org.

Monday, May 16

Sartell-St. Stephen School Board, 6:30 p.m., District Service Center, 212 Third Ave. N., Sartell.

Tuesday, May 17

Memory Writers group develops topics and turns in stories, 10 a.m.-noon, Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. S, St Cloud. Contact Jan Sorell for more info at jsorell97@gmail.com. Free for museum members and nominal fee for non-members. [\[museum.org/\]\(http://museum.org/\)](http://stearnshistory-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Thursday, May 19

Coffee and Conversation, a senior discussion group, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. Topic: News and Brew with a Side of Cake – Coffee Cake.

American Legion of Sartell, open to all veterans young and old, 6 p.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S, Sartell.

Plant Sale, presented by St. Cloud Flower and Garden Club, 4-7 p.m., Whitney Senior Center, 1529 Northway Drive, St. Cloud.

Saturday, May 21

Back the Badge Car Show, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Crossroads Center Mall, 4101 W. Division St., St. Cloud. All proceeds bene-

fit the LELS Benevolent Fund, which provides support and financial aid for families of Minnesota's public safety professions who are seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

Community Meal, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., drive-by and pick-up style, First United Methodist Church, 1107 Pinecone Road S., Sartell.

Monday, May 23

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

Thursday, May 26

Coffee and Conversation, a senior discussion group, 9 a.m., Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S. Topic: Lori Eich, Anna Marie's Alliance.

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GENERAL NOTICE TO CONTROL OR ERADICATE NOXIOUS WEEDS

Notice is hereby given this 15th day of May, 2022, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.83, Subdivision 1 (2009), that all persons in Stearns County, Minnesota, shall control or eradicate all noxious weeds on land they occupy or are required to maintain. Control or eradication may be accomplished by any lawful method, but the method(s) applied may need to be repeated in order to prevent the spread of viable noxious weed seeds and other propagating parts to other lands. Failure to comply with the general notice may mean that an individual notice, Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.83, Subdivision 2 (2009), will be issued. An individual notice may be appealed within three working days of receipt to the appeal committee in the county where the land is located. Failure to comply with an individual notice will mean the inspector having jurisdiction may either hire the work done or seek a misdemeanor charge against the person(s) who failed to comply. If the work is hired by the county inspector, the cost can be placed as a tax upon the land and collected as other real estate taxes are collected. You may obtain a list of the plants that are designated as noxious weeds and the members of the appeal committee from your County Agricultural Inspector or County. You can also obtain this information from your Local Weed Inspectors. Local Weed Inspectors include the township supervisors, city mayors or their appointed assistants. More information regarding the statewide/county listed noxious weeds, the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law and a list of County Agricultural Inspectors can be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Web Site by visiting: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/noxious-invasive-weed-program>. Additionally, Stearns County is listing Rough Potato/ Metaplexis japonica as a county listed prohibited weed in 2021.

Bob Dunning
Stearns County Agricultural Inspector
P.O. Box 246, St. Cloud, MN 56301 Phone 320-656-6578

Roland "Rollie" Weiss, 97 Sartell

Dec. 31, 1924-May 8, 2022

Rollie Weiss, 97, of Sartell died May 8 at his home in Sartell. His funeral will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, June 4 at Williams Ding-



Weiss

mann Family Funeral Home, 324 Second Ave. S., in Sauk Rapids. The chaplain James Neppl will officiate and burial will be in the Clear Lake Cemetery. Visitation will be one

hour prior to the services on June 4 at the funeral home in Sauk Rapids.

Weis was born Dec. 31, 1924 in Clear Lake to Phillip and Hazel (Boyer) Weis. He honorably served our country in the U.S. Navy during WWII. Rollie married Janette Almer on April 22, 1945 at Peace United Church of Christ in St. Cloud and they were married for 71 years. He worked as a teacher of printing at the St. Cloud Reformatory for 15 years and also was a funeral assistant at Dingmann Funeral Home in Sauk Rapids. Weis was a lifetime member of American Legion Post #277 of Sartell, VFW Post #428 of St. Cloud, and St. Cloud Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie #622. He enjoyed woodworking, framing, hunting,

fishing, golfing and traveling with his wife. Weis was strong-willed, generous and had a great sense of humor.

Survivors include the following: his daughter Sue Primus of Sartell; son-in-law Jan Freier of Minnetonka; grandchildren: Melissa (Mark), Sean (Megan) and Mikah (Jessica); and great-grandchildren: Kyle, Dylan, Marin, Kyra, Allie and Nick.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Janette on May 28, 2016; daughter, Sandi Weis Freier; grandson, Sean Thomas Primus; brother, Phillip Weis; and half-brothers, Jack and Robert Nichol.

Obituary and guest book available online: www.williamsdingmann.com.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters honors Duo of the Year

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

More than three years ago Alex and Brittney Schoephoerster considered the idea of joining the local Big Brothers Big Sister program so they could befriend and mentor a “Little” boy or girl.

It took them a long time to finally sign up for the program, and then three years ago they were assigned a Little named Christian, who like many prospective Littles had been waiting a long time on a waiting list. At their first meeting, Christian was very shy and hardly talked, but it didn’t take long before he and his Bigs were talking, listening, laughing, learning, having lots of fun and forging tight bonds.

“Making any commitment in life can be daunting, and we did not move as quickly as we should have in making the decision to become Bigs,” Alex said. “But, in hindsight, we realized that every day we delayed, our Little sat on the waiting list, just waiting for someone to be a positive influence in his life, waiting for us.”

The Schoephoerstes were recently doubly honored as the Big Duo of the Year for 2022 by both the state and local Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. Alex is an attorney for the Moss & Barnet law firm, based in St. Cloud; he is also president of the board for the Central Minnesota Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Brittney is the assistant principal at Riverview Intermediate School in Sartell. The couple has two young sons and, of course, their Little.

“We are honored and grateful to receive the state and local award of Big Duo of the Year,” Alex said. “But more importantly, through BBBS we have been able to build a relationship and friendship with our Little (Christian) that

extends beyond the program. Our Little is now a member of our family.”

Like many prospective Littles, Christian had to wait for more than a year to become a bona-fide Little. When the Schoephoerstes asked him what it was like to be on a waiting list for that long, Christian told them it was totally worth it.

“The impact you can make by just being there for a Little is immense and will change his or her life forever,” Alex said. “Keep in mind each day you wait and think about becoming a Big without acting is another day that a Little is waiting for you.”

BBBS is a mentoring program that matches Bigs with Littles who then do activities together and have lots of fun. The healthy, positive bonds that are created do wonders in the confidence and life skills of the Littles, besides enhancing quality-of-life issues of the Bigs.

Many of the Bigs are not adults but rather students in high school, forming healthy, positive friendships with their Littles.

In 2021, Central Minnesota BBBS matched Bigs with 415 Littles, including Bigs and Littles from all cities in the St. Cloud area.

Johnson, who was recently named Sauk Rapids Citizen of the Year has long worked to help children succeed in life. She is a founding member of the Sauk Rapids-Rice Education Foundation, a volunteer for the youth group at Salem Lutheran Church and president of the St. Cloud Rotary Club.

“Our service area is mainly within a 30-mile radius of St. Cloud, but we are now looking for communities that are underserved,” said Johnson, who has been with BBBS for 12 years.

The local BBBS was founded

Duo • page 9



contributed photo
Alex and Brittney Schoephoerster were recently honored as the Big Brothers Big Sisters Duo of the Year at both the state and local levels. On the right is their “Little,” whose name is Christian.



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"We have Memorial Day coming up at the end of this month on which we celebrate the memory of those brave soldiers who were struck down on the field of battle in their prime. Whether it was on foreign shores or in our own land, these deaths are to be viewed as heroic and a mark of valor and bravery.

However, we have another group of men and women who have made no less of a sacrifice for our country: the police officers who have fallen in the line of duty. These are the men and women who defend us daily on our streets and towns. They stand up for the law, that system of the Social Contract that makes ours a civil society.

On this day, May 15, we set aside to honor those officers who so bravely and skillfully served their cities and friends and family. They have made the ultimate sacrifice in their line of duty. They have exhibited the valor that is so valued to a democratic society."

~ Gerald Boerner



Kari Bonfield, 16 years
Police Officer



Jordan Miller, 4 years
Police Officer



Jeff Miller, 4 years
Reserve Officer



Let's hear it for all our police officers

They help our kids when they're lost. They're on call at all hours of the night to mediate the worst domestic disturbances. They do all the legwork that drives a successful conviction when the law has been broken. During National Police Week (NPW) this May 9-15, let's shout a big Woot! Woot! to our local police officers who carry the badge and swear to keep us safe.

NPW is celebrated across the country in many different ways. Our local police departments hold special events for families and kids, such as National Night Out and many other gatherings throughout the year.

The goal is always to raise awareness about the important role these men and women play in keeping our streets as safe as possible every day of the year.

It's not easy to be a crime-fighter and police officer. On a daily basis, officers witness the heart-wrenching destitution and violence experienced by the homeless, the mentally ill and the substance-addicted. They console the parents of missing children and investigate criminal acts. They see the tough side of life that wears people down and that many lucky people in our cities and towns never really have to deal with. But worst of all, they battle negative public perception in the very streets they patrol.

During National Police Week, wave and give a friendly smile to a police officer. And remember they are our front-line buffers between safety and chaos.



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Playground

from page 2

“We strongly believe that an inclusive playground at Lions Community Park will not only attract our local families but become a regional draw for a population of children who typically cannot access playgrounds in their neighborhoods.

The community city of Woodbury has seen this happen upon creating ‘Madison’s Place.’ It is an incredible statement of a community’s values to provide inclusive environments for its children.
“An accessible playground in Sartell will support the inclusion of many: from children who use wheelchairs, walkers or other mobility aids; children with balance issues and

gross-motor delays; and students with autism or other sensory-processing needs. Beyond children, this accessibility will also impact parents with disabilities who may not be able to physically support their children as they learn to play on a non-accessible playground.”
Sartell Schools Superintendent Jeff Ridlehoover also expressed support for the playground.

“Our district is thrilled to have been invited to partner in the design and promotional phases of the project. This project is amazing, and we will continue to support it with both words and time,” Ridlehoover wrote.

Fundraisers

A major fundraiser kick-off for the playground will take place from 2-5 p.m. Sunday, May 22 at the Blue Line Sports Bar & Grill in Sartell. Members of all three Lions clubs involved will be there to greet those who attend. There will be 50/50 raffles, a Master Grilling raffle (barbeque equipment) and several speakers.

Sartell resident and intrepid volunteer Dennis Molitor has agreed to lead a project to construct a “Recognition Display” near the inclusive playground. It will contain a storyboard, as well as names of major donors who helped make the playground a reality. Anyone donating more than \$1,000 will be recognized on the display. Donor levels are Gold (\$1,000), Platinum (\$5,000) and Diamond (\$10,000).

Other upcoming fun fundraisers include the following:
Wednesday, May 18 starting

at 5 p.m. A Bike Rodeo will take place at the Sartell Community Center, featuring a hot-dog meal and a display will show artists’ drawings of the proposed inclusive playground. Members of all three Lions clubs will attend the Bike Rodeo.

Monday, July 25: A Golf for the Playground event at Blackberry Ridge Golf Course in Sartell. It will be an 18-hole format with dinner and awards to follow the golfing.

Every Tuesday in June and July (except for July 5): During the Tuesday Swing into Summer activities at the Sartell Community Center, there will be displays of the playground plans, cook-outs led by Lions members and opportunities to contribute funds.

People who would like to donate can send a check made out to The Waters Church, 1227 Pinecone Road N., Sartell, MN 56377. On the memo line of the check, write “Inclusive Playground.” The Waters Church has agreed to be the fiscal agent for the donations.

Checks can also be sent to the Sartell Lions, P.O. Box 7, Sartell, Minnesota; or sent or brought to Liberty Bank, 198 Pinecone Road N., Sartell, MN 56377.

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Equity committee’s work nears completion

by **Mike Knaak**
news@thenewsleaders.com

The monthslong effort to address equity issues in the Sartell-St. Stephen school district is nearing completion. The Education Equity and Student Experience Committee’s last meeting will be April 29, Superintendent Jeff Ridlehoover told the school board at its April 18 meeting.

The committee was formed and first met last September after the

district cut ties with the consultants who conducted a controversial equity audit a year ago.

At the April 26 meeting the committee will review recommended actions and a final draft will be posted on the district’s website in early May, Ridlehoover said.

The committee addressed about a dozen topics including harassment and bullying, culture and climate, social media and student support services.

Ridlehoover said the committee worked for months “to provide a student experience that is both equitable and enjoyable.” The goal, he said is to create action steps so students “experience school in a positive manner.”

Throughout the process, speakers during the board’s open forum time continued to criticize how committee members were chosen and claimed the group met in secret.

Notes and plans from the meetings are posted on the district’s website at isd748.org/EducationalEquity.

Graduation rates

According to the latest Department of Education statistics, the district’s four-year graduation rate is 97.5 percent, one of the highest in the state. The state average is about 83 percent.

“While this sounds good, it’s actually even higher. Six of the students who don’t officially graduate in four years are receiving special services so they’ve already met their graduation requirements,” Ridlehoover said. “They are staying with us to continue their education and transition programs. So our graduation rate is almost 100 percent.”

Duo

from page 5

from front page

ed June 26, 1999, but in its first years it was just BB (Big Brothers). Ed Schnettler and Ed Reichert were its key founders. Later, they expanded the program to welcome girls as well as boys.

There are currently more than 100 prospective Littles on the waiting list, Johnson noted. Some have been on the list for three years. Johnson is hoping more prospective Bigs will decide to become members of the program.

“The Bigs get so much out of it,” Johnson said. “It’s life-changing for Littles and for Bigs. We are now readjusting after the pandemic, but we never gave up during that time. It took everybody working together to work with kids. And now we will continue to bring joy into the lives of participants, helping someone else and helping oneself.”

BBBS is a very flexible program. For example, Bigs can mentor at schools, including at St. Cloud State University. Kids and parents can mentor Littles as a group. The BBBS Advisory Board members will coach and help Bigs all along the way.



Johnson

“We have fantastic people leading us and advising us,” Johnson said. “It’s a very strong team.”

Inclusivity is the key to how the program functions. All are welcome, and each participant is highly valued – both Littles and Bigs, Johnson noted. According to the BBBS website, the program recognizes, affirms and celebrates diverse backgrounds, lives and the experiences of the stakeholders, including youth, families, board members, donors, volunteers and staff. The BBBS inclusivity policy includes a diverse group of volunteers, including age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status and ability. And the youth and adults in the program represent a diverse array of all of

the above.

Quite often, Bigs have told Johnson how the BBBS fun social activities help Bigs feel young, almost as if they are reliving a second childhood.

“The program is practically an excuse to go for an ice-cream treat, to go to a park and do together lots of local fun activities,” she said. “I would urge people to take that step (of joining BBBS), and that will bring joy to the Littles on the waiting list and to the Bigs (who join).”

BBBS has a staff team of 13 people, a 21-person advisory council to the board, which has 20 members.

The BBBS Accountability Statement states, “We partner with parents/guardian, volunteers and others in the community and hold ourselves accountable for each child in our program, achieving higher aspirations, greater confidence and better relationships; avoidance of risky behaviors; and educational success.

For more information about BBBS, how to join and/or how to donate, visit its website at bigdefenders.org or call 320-253-1616.

On that website, people can also watch a video of the Schoephoerstes and Christian, as well as videos of the other Big and Little local award winners for 2022.

Boundaries Audit

from page 2

tricts because the population fell within the 10 percent threshold that would require redistricting. As a result, the east side of Sartell will still be part of the Third District along with the north side of Sauk Rapids. The Third District is currently represented by Steve Heinen, whose term expires in 2023.

Filing for the county commissioner races, as well as other federal, state and local races with potential primaries, opens May 17 and closes May 31. Filing for offices without primaries runs from Aug. 2 through Aug. 16. Minnesota’s primary election is Aug. 9 and the general election is Nov. 8.

Calling the lack of adequate segregation a “significant deficiency,” the report goes on to state it could possibly affect the city’s ability to initiate, record, process and report financial data consistent with the assertions of management in the financial statements.

The report does not assert any wrongdoing but does state that the lack of financial-data segregation could possibly pose risks. The report also states Sartell city staff will review options for further segregation in the handling of financial data and assign duties consistent with a strengthened segregation after the review is completed.



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Opinion

Our View

Small businesses make big impact

National Small Business Week was May 1-7 and was created to celebrate the top entrepreneurs in every state with awards or recognition. Looking back on last week, it is important to recognize, appreciate and understand how small local businesses help their communities and economy. According to National Today, there are 31 million small businesses in the United States and more than 450,000 of them are in Minnesota.

The opportunities these businesses provide for local entrepreneurs is vast. They allow them to have a job that can be more creative and self fulfilling than a job with a larger company might be. A small business can be anything from a handy-man service to a boutique to a family clinic, so there is a lot of freedom in what someone may decide they want to do.

Local businesses also can create jobs in your neighborhood and when you choose to spend your money at a local cafe rather than Starbucks, that money stays within the local economy rather than going to a corporate company whose headquarters might not even be in your state.

Additionally, larger companies don't benefit from your money as much as a local company would. When you spend money at a small business most of it goes back to the business itself and some could even be put toward other businesses in the neighborhood.

It's important to also note the struggles small businesses may go through. The choice to start a small business is not an easy one and can be hard for the first couple years and more than 50 percent fail during this time, according to National Today.

Because of the pandemic, small businesses had to close their doors if they weren't considered an essential business and many weren't sure when they could open back up again. There were even 31 percent of these businesses that closed down for good.

Since then there has still been an adjustment to different procedures to make sure their customers and community members feel safe shopping in their stores, sitting in their dining areas and interacting with their employees. It is, now more than ever, important to support and show appreciation toward them.

So even though National Small Business Week was last week, as a community we can continue to show support by choosing to shop with them rather than always choosing bigger national companies. When you shop locally you're putting your money right back into your own community and making it even better than it was before.

Letters policy

Letters to the editor may be sent to news@thenewsleaders.com or mailed to 1622 11th Ave. S.E., St. Cloud, MN 56304. Deadline is noon Monday. Please include your full name for publication (and address and phone number for verification only.) Letters must be 350 words or less. We reserve the right to edit for space or to not publish.

Transitioning to the ‘real world’

Erin McIndoo
Editor



The last couple weeks have taken some getting used to. It seemed in a very small amount of time I went from just working part time at a retail store to all of a sudden having a job doing exactly what I learned about in college.

I graduated from Upper Iowa University in December 2021. There were times where it was incredibly stressful and I just wanted to quit which was mostly thanks to Covid and the strain it put on the lack of face-to-face contact when it came to classes. I have never been good at successfully taking online classes. There's just something about in-person classes that I have always preferred, so when school went completely online in the spring of 2020, I found myself struggling harder than I ever had.

At the time my job that I kept at home during the summer and holidays was very demanding because it was considered an essential business. I was supposed to be taking three classes online with teachers who had never taught online before.

I ended up dropping two of them, which set me back by a semester.

When I found out my friends were all going to graduate on time and I wasn't, I felt like a failure. However, it worked out for the better. I ended up learning even more and got to take an art class as my last college credit. I got to write and work with my university and learned so much more about the alumni and their own successes.

After finally moving out of my dorm and saying goodbye to all my friends, I really didn't know what I was going to do next. I knew I always loved writing and editing but it didn't seem there were a lot of options around St. Cloud at the time.

I scrolled through job postings everyday it seemed and created all

kinds of accounts on job apps. It seemed like every place that was hiring wasn't in my field or required me to have more experience. After about a month of looking, I decided to take a break from filling out applications and just try to relax and enjoy not being in school anymore.

That only lasted a couple weeks before my mom told me about a posting for an editor and I jumped right on it and now here we are. Because of how much journalistic writing I did in college for the first week it kind of felt like I was still just working on a project for class, but to have one of my articles be published felt amazing. I had so much support from my family and friends who were all excited I had found something I truly enjoy.

College is tough and the first few steps afterward can seem even harder or discouraging, but I realized everything will work out in your favor when you're ready for it. I can't wait to write even more and meet more people in the community and hear their stories.

Contagious virus can cause dangerous delusions

Dennis Dalman
Reporter



Is it any wonder that many police officers, teachers, medical workers and flight attendants are experiencing burn-out? Why are some people surprised that full-force recruitment efforts have become necessary by police departments, schools and hospitals?

We shouldn't have to wonder why. It's largely because of a widespread pandemic of disinformation, bloated lies and lunatic conspiracy theories that cause some people to go bonkers.

When the Covid virus reared its ugly head two years ago, another type of dangerous virus began to infect all too many people in this country. Symptoms of the infection include wrong-headed belligerence and a rampant gullibility that causes its victims to believe anything at all – the crazier the better. Yes, folks, John Kennedy Jr. (supposedly killed in a plane crash years ago) really is alive and well, ready to show up in Dallas and become Donald Trump's running mate in 2024. And of course Satanic-cult Democrats and movie stars are sex-trafficking children and drinking babies' blood.

"Defund the Police" is one of the dumbest slogans of all time. Crime is increasing. Next time someone tries to break into your home and assault you, who you gonna call? Ghostbusters?

Yes, there are some "rogue cops" and some police acting with deadly haste in crises. The operative word is "some." The outcry to defund the police is just plain crazy. The vast majority of police officers and sheriff's deputies are outstanding public servants who risk their lives

day and night to protect the public. Blaming all for the actions of a few is utterly ridiculous. Spouting "Defund the Police" is tantamount to saying they are all bad and thus defund them. The slogan should be "Defend the Police," not "Defund the Police."

Throughout this nation, teachers, school administrators and school-board members are often under verbal attacks by groups of parents. Among the unfounded charges are the following: that Critical Race Theory is being taught to make White children squirm with guilt about the brutalities perpetrated against Blacks throughout history; that children are being "groomed" by teachers in regards to topics of sex and LGBTQ sexual identities; that many books should be banned because they allegedly promote "subversive" diversity.

Many of those charges come directly from ultra-right-wing conservative "think tanks" that rile up gullible adherents. Some of those "think" groups have long wanted to eradicate (de-fund) public education. Some parents have shouted or screamed at school-board members, demanding resignations, accusing boards of pushing socialist-communist agendas. Never mind that Critical Race Theory is not taught in grades K-12, that students are not being groomed by

sex-crazed teachers, that certain books are not brainwashing children. Never mind. Those loud folks believe that saying so, shouting so makes it so. It's déjà vu, just like Sen. Joe McCarthy's communist witch hunts of the 1950s all over again.

For two years, some doctors, nurses and other medical personnel have been the targets of harsh criticism and in some cases even verbal nastiness and/or physical assaults from people spewing disinformation about masks, vaccines and medical protocols. Medical employees worked long shifts in jam-packed care units, tending to the dying, grieving the deaths, going home utterly exhausted physically, mentally, emotionally. That horrific stress was and is bad enough. It is made worse by the disinformation know-it-alls, such as those with Covid virus demanding treatments proven not to work. Some dunderheads accused doctors of inflating death rates from Covid by reporting that as the cause of death to victims of car accidents or heart attacks.

Police, teachers and medical personnel are among the front-line workers who have been in danger of contracting the Covid virus. Their front line has sometimes become a battle line when those good people have to endure hostilities hurled at them by those who have been infected by a different virus, one that can cause dangerous delusions.

Will there be a future cure for that insidious virus? Will those who should get the cure take it? Alas, probably not.

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

Local business moves, offering something unique

by **Leanne Loy**
news@thenewsleaders.com

Chakra Sound Garden is not new to the Sartell area, but its location is, and so is the unique and rare healing device that was just installed this month.

Opened in June of 2019, Chakra Sound Garden has been serving the residents of Sartell and the surrounding areas with a different, holistic approach to healing.

For the past three years it has offered wellness classes such as yoga and sound healing, essential oils, crystals and top- of-line supplements. This small business has been growing and will soon be in its new place at 5 Riverside Ave. S., right next to Marnanteli’s Pizza. The goal is to be up and running sometime in mid-May provided all renovations to the building go smoothly. And once it re-opens, stop in and check out what they have

in store, including some of the newest technology in healing.

Chakra Sound Garden is now the home of one of two Harmonic Eggs in all of Minnesota.

What’s a Harmonic Egg? It’s a device that takes light, color and sound therapy to a whole new level using frequencies for a different kind of healing.

Taken from the Harmonic Egg website, the device was invented by an engineer from Colorado. The unique shape uses a combination of size ratios and materials to enhance resonance. Professional musicians were enlisted to create some proprietary music specifically designed to utilize the acoustics of the egg.

Inside the egg is a seat that reclines to your comfort level. Lights and music are chosen specifically for you based off your healing needs. Sound and light healing has been around for a long time, but this new technology takes those meth-

ods and improves them using the unique shape of the egg.

Talk about new technology, at the time of this publication there were only 88 eggs available in the United States and Chakra Sound Garden has number 70.

As for what the experience is like for individuals inside the egg, co-owner Jean Struzyk said it’s hard to describe.

“It encompasses so much” she said, “and it’s so individualized that everyone experiences it in a different way, whatever their intention is for the session.”

In fact, even with it’s several varieties of sound and color, two people could have the same music and colors but have completely different experiences based off their personal needs.

“What it does, in a nutshell,” Jean said, “is it puts the cells in a state of balance.”

She goes on to say that, “It’s kind of like chiropractic [adjustments] in the sense that when you get an adjustment, your body has to learn to hold that. Same with this. It needs to be able to hold that frequency.”

Some examples of what the Harmonic Egg can help with are chronic pain, inflammation and mental health issues, just to name a few.

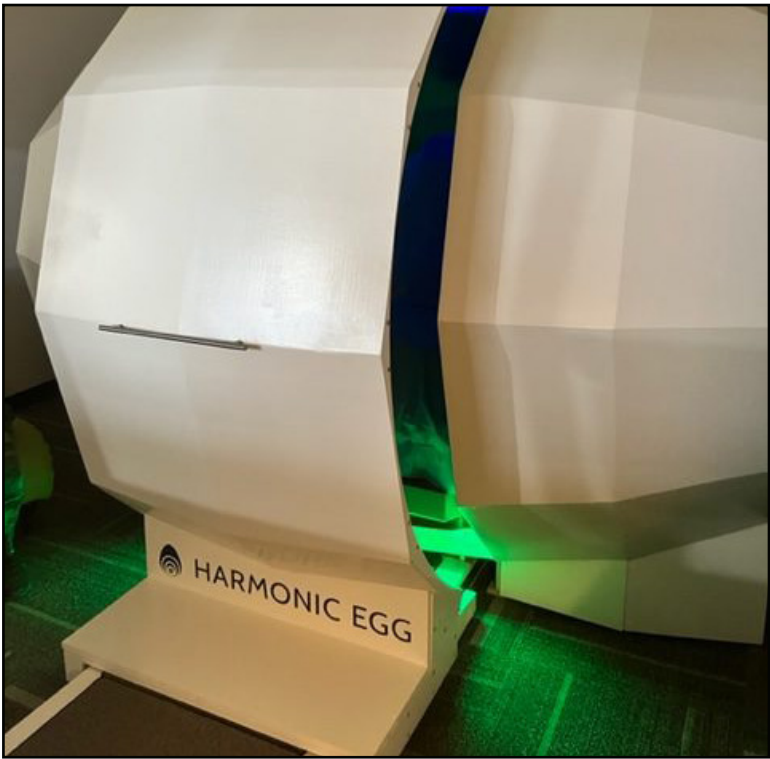
“Everything is a frequency” co-owner Julie Struzyk said, “We either chose frequencies that support us, or disrupt us. [The egg] supports us.”

As far as how it feels? Well, the chair inside the egg is stationary so you won’t necessarily feel movement, however, you will mostly likely feel something.

“There are amps right underneath you so you will actually feel the vibration” Julie said.

Each session will last 50 minutes. For 40 minutes the individual will experience both color and sound. The last 10 minutes of the session the sound is silenced and the person simply enjoys the color.

“Most people fall asleep”



photos by Leanne Loy

The Harmonic Egg can remain partially open for those who are claustrophobic and they can still get the same energy healing benefits.

Jean said.

In addition to the Harmonic Egg co-owners and sisters Jean and Julie Struzyk of Chakra Sound Garden, are hoping to bring a variety of old and new classes to the new space. The hope is to bring in instructors who are trained in various styles of wellness and healing classes.

Jean said, “We will see who wants to teach here and offer some regular [classes] and specialty [courses] as well. We are also hoping to have some sessions outside when the weather permits.”

And the space is perfect for this with its double overhead doors that allow for plenty of sunshine and fresh air to come in.

But that’s not all. Soon, this place will be a one-stop shop for all your needs.

“We will eventually be able to have people rent space from us,” Jean said.

Both Jean and Julie are excited to invite practitioners from a variety of different backgrounds.

The second floor is being renovated into separate offices that will be available for

rent to practitioners, such as chiropractors, massage therapists, acupuncturists and much more.

Their focus is really on what the community is looking for. If you’re curious about something, or want to learn more about alternative healing, this is the place to start.

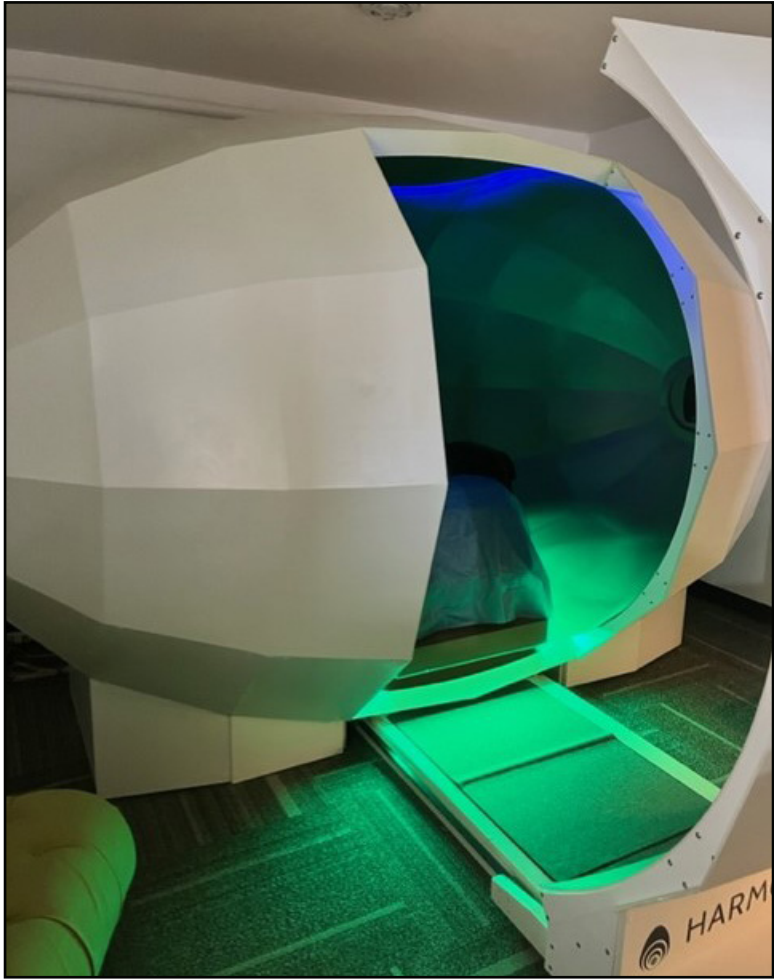
“It’s whatever the community wants,” Jean said, “If [they] want something, whether it’s a product or a class, or education, lets us know. We’re willing to do anything. No suggestion is too crazy.”

The sisters have a passion for helping people and it shows in their work and their future plans for the community.

“If you’re gonna do it” Julie said, “do it big.”

And these women have gone all out to offer Sartell and the surrounding areas the best in alternative health and healing.

For more information on what Chakra Sound Garden has to offer and to stay up to date on the re-opening, please visit their website at: <https://www.chakrasoundgarden.com/> or Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/chakrasoundgardenmn/>



The Harmonic Egg sits in its own private room at Chakra Sound Garden. Based off sound and light healing this unique device helps people heal their bodies through frequencies.

Chipotle, Starbucks planned soon for Sartell

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

Two businesses, Chipotle Mexican Grill and Starbucks Coffee, are expected to be built at Sartell River Crossings, a development area near the bridge in south Sartell.

Chipotle serves Mexican-style fast foods such as burritos, tacos and quesadillas. The franchise was founded in Colorado in 1993 and now has more than 2,000 locations in the United States, Britain, Canada, France and Germany.

Chipotle is the Mexican name for a smoked-and-dried jalapeño chili pepper.

Starbucks Coffee, founded in Seattle in 1971, is the largest coffee-shop chain business in the world. It now has more than 34,000 locations in 80 countries.

A timeline for the opening of the two new businesses will be announced once the required reviews are done by city staff, said Nikki Sweeter, Sartell’s engagement director.

Earlier this year, it was announced a Mister Carwash

will be constructed at that same site, River Crossings, which was a former residential neighborhood area. Part of that area is in LeSauk Township. The developer bought most of those lots from residents, but six declined to sell. That resulted in controversy when two of the residents, Jim and Diane Braegelman, re-



Tucci

peatedly raised concerns to the city council about noise and traffic. Mister Carwash will be built just a stone’s throw from the home they’ve lived in for nearly 50 years.

Up to four more commercial properties, as yet unnamed, could be built on that area near the river near Highway 15.

The developer of River Crossings is Paul Tucci, who is vice president of development for the Twin Cities-based Oppidan, a national property-development firm. Tucci earned a

degree in business accounting from the University of Minnesota and a master’s degree in finance from the University of St. Thomas.

According to its website, Oppidan “creates unique opportunities for industry-leading retailers and investors. Passionate and client-driven, we pinpoint their wants and needs efficiently, then develop and deliver well-designed and well-built properties in the best possible locations, at the lowest possible cost, in record time.”

Maximizing your Benefits

Taking full advantage of your company's benefits package can help smooth the way for retirement. You'll also live a healthier life along the way.

YOUR POCKETBOOK

Not taking advantage of your company's 401(k), retirement plan or related benefits package is like leaving money on the table — both now and in the future. Many companies have a match program where they will mirror your 401(k) investment up to a certain dollar amount, after you are fully vested as an employee. That doubles the amount of money you are putting into retirement with every pay check going forward. Program details sometimes change over time, and can be impacted by outside forces like market changes or a global health crisis. So check with human resources to explain your options.

YOUR WELL-BEING

Wellness is another way to build wealth, since you're saving on chronic doctor bills. Ask your employer about medial and dental programs, as well as flexible spending accounts. Health insurance is particularly expensive when purchased on the open market, so enrolling through your company makes great financial sense. These programs

can also reduce or eliminate some out-of-pocket expenses, which really add up. Some employers also offer wellness programs, in addition to insurance. These are often in the form of voluntary diet or exercise activities, but might include incentives like discounted gym memberships.

SMART CHOICES

Take advantage of life insurance options as early as possible. That builds security for later, and it's usually cheaper the younger you are at enrollment. Many companies are switching to insurance plans with high deductibles, leading to higher every-day expenses

for their employees. In some cases, these are the only plans available. Start a health savings account to build up a reserve of tax-free funds for emergencies. If you don't use it at the doctor, you can withdraw the funds later. Keep in mind that some of your benefits can be taken with you to a new job, or

rolled over into successive accounts. Depending on the firm, you might also gain access to a legal team, either for free or at a discounted rate. This can be a huge benefit, considering how much working with an attorney can cost — even for straight-forward processes like drafting a will.

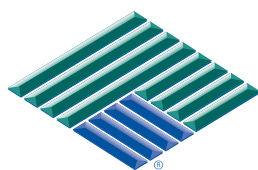


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