

Northfield News



ELECTION COVERAGE
2A, 3A, B6



RANDOLPH'S THIELBAR A LATE-INNING OPTION FOR TWINS
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Board pushes ahead with policy that would change school names

By SAM WILMES
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The Northfield School Board is moving to rename Sibley Elementary School as part of a broader policy change that would ban the naming district buildings after individuals.

A first reading of the proposed change took place Monday during a board meeting. Final approval could come next month. Under the policy, schools could only be named for the areas where they are located, including neighborhoods, townships and natural features. Sibley and Longfellow schools would also need to be renamed in the next 12 months.

Quinnell



Hardy

A controversial name

The first Minnesota governor and namesake for Sibley Elementary School in Northfield, Henry Hastings Sibley played a role in the trial and execution of 38 Dakota Indians in Mankato following the 1862 war in southern Minnesota.

Prior to the board meeting, more than a half dozen district parents wrote supporting statements to the board supporting changing the name of Sibley Elementary School.

Parent Michael Pursell, who has two children enrolled at Sibley Elementary, called the proposed name change "long overdue." Though Sibley was celebrated for his involvement in government, Pursell called him a "brutal enforcer of brutal treaties."

See **SCHOOLS** on 3A

BACKGROUND

The proposed policy change came through the district's Policy Committee that included School Board members Rob Hardy, Noel Stratmoen and Ellen Iverson and two District Youth Council members. The group evaluated action undertaken by schools throughout the nation.

Another draft policy change would set the terms for any business sponsorship. Such sponsorships could not cover an entire facility but could be used for spaces inside a building or stadium.

The School Board has also grappled with possibly changing its controversial mascot image in an attempt to eliminate any perceived racist symbols. In March, the board expressed support for reviewing whether the school should change the image and engaging the public during the process.

Challenger criticizes Congresswoman's suit to decide race in November

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Democratic U.S. Rep. Angie Craig is seeking a court order requiring that the November election in her congressional race be held as scheduled instead of being delayed until February under a Minnesota law that was triggered when a third-party candidate died.

Craig, who is seeking a second term in a competitive suburban and rural district south of the Twin Cities, said in a statement Monday that federal law requires the contest to be held as part of the November general election. And she warned that the district would go without congressional representation for several weeks if the election is delayed.

"The people of Minnesota's Second Congressional District deserve to have a voice fighting for them in Washington," she said. "Unfortunately, the process currently in place would deprive Minnesotans of their seat at the table at a time when critical legislation affecting our state will be debated — including bills to rid politics of special interests, ensure quality, affordable health care for every Minnesotan and safeguard our family farmers."

Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon postponed the 2nd District election after Adam Weeks, the Legal Marijuana Now Party candidate for the seat, died Sept. 21. Legal Marijuana Now has major party status in Minnesota under a law that lets a small party qualify if one of its candidates for statewide office got at least 5% of the vote in a recent election. Simon said state law requires that if a major party nominee dies within 79 days of Election Day, a special election must be held for that office on the second Tuesday in February, which is Feb. 9, 2021.

See **CRITIC** on 3A

MENTAL HEALTH



Assistance dogs Sully, left, and Nellie pose with Believvet Executive Director Sam Daly and volunteer trainers Patty Benson and Curt Johnston. (Misty Schwab /southernminn.com)

A LIFESAVING FRIEND

Believvet provides canines to veterans with psychological trauma

By MISTY SCHWAB
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For Dave DuChene, Believvet Canine Service Partners in Northfield offered him not only a dog but a lifeline.

"He saved my life," said DuChene, a veteran and Faribault resident, looking down at Jack, his standard poodle. "... My doctor said I suffered from PTSD, which I knew, so I say [Jack] saved my life."

DuChene's wife learned about Believvet from Executive Director and founder Sam Daly, who she met at their church. She urged her husband to learn more about the program, which connects veterans with custom-trained assistance dogs, and he agreed to give it a chance. A year after being matched with his dog, he's also a volunteer trainer, helping other veterans.

Another volunteer, Patty Benson, became involved with Believvet after one of its dogs helped her husband, also veteran.

"It has helped him reclaim his freedom,"

YOU BETTER 'BELIEVET'

Believvet Canine Service Partners accepts donations online at believvet.org.

The headquarters is located at 3885 100th St. E in Northfield. For more information, contact Believvet via phone at 507-649-1111 or email at info@believvet.org. Follow the Believvet, Canine Service Partners Facebook page to stay updated on activities.

Benson said. "I'm very grateful."

Volunteers train 10 to 12 assistance dogs per year for veterans in and far beyond Rice County. Daly reported over 30 veterans on the waiting list. Since it takes 18 months to train one service dog, some of these vets need to wait up to two years to receive their dog.

"What we do costs money just like any

charity, but the return on investment is also relevant" Daly said. "The benefit of the community is in keeping families together and keeping veterans employed ... Most people think this program is about the dogs, but really it's about disabled vets and their families and giving them back their lives."

April usually marks Believvet's biggest annual fundraiser, but the coronavirus pandemic prevented the event from happening. Daly said the organization is "OK for now" financially, but reduced funding could negatively impact 2021.

Daly started Believvet in 2015 after serving as a civilian contractor attached to the U.S. Marine Corps. During deployments in Helmand Province in Afghanistan, Daly used labrador retriever military working dogs for battlefield detection of improvised explosives devices. He noticed the dogs providing comfort to the Marines, and that inspired his efforts back in the U.S.

See **CANINE** on 3A

Candidates for hotly contested Senate races say health care, COVID-19 top challenges

By SAM WILMES
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Local candidates for two hotly contested state races said COVID-19 and lowering the cost of health care remain the top local issues during a Saturday debate sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Northfield and Cannon Falls.

District 20 first-term incumbent Rich Draheim, R-Madison Lake, and his challenger, Jon Olson, D-New Market, participated in the debate. Senate Dis-

trict 58 incumbent Matt Little, D-Lakeville, who is also seeking a second term, participated, but his Republican challenger, Zach Duckworth, R-Lakeville, did not.

COVID-19, health care

The virtual debate format, a way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, ensured the pandemic was a main discussion point.

To Olson, COVID-19 has separated three working groups: professionals who can work from home during the pandemic, skilled labor who were laid off and

frontline workers whose health and mental well-being have been impacted. Olson described his support for local government aid funding from the state to ensure local communities can make it through the pandemic.

Little said he supports the state's response to the pandemic and spoke favorably of Minnesota's relatively low COVID-19 numbers compared to the region and the south. He attributed that difference to the state's swift initial response to stop the spread of the virus and measured approach in

opening schools and industries.

As of Sunday, Minnesota had 95,711 COVID-19 cases and 2,056 deaths. In Wisconsin, a state with a slightly higher population, 120,000 cases have been reported with 1,291 deaths. In Iowa, a state with a lower population than Minnesota, 85,586 cases have been reported with 1,312 deaths. In Texas, a state with a much higher population, 765,000 cases have been reported with 15,792 deaths.

See **SENATE** on 3A



Draheim

Olson

Little

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COMING UP

Northfield Public School passes preliminary levy.

ONLINE

Check out videos, photo galleries and community calendar.



DEATHS

Jean Jandro, Al Winkels, Adam Weeks, Jacquelyn Detlie, Frank Ozmun, Lori Witt Macrae

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