

**SPEAK UP FOR SAFETY**



friends in trouble. crime. violence.  
 Download the free Rice County Tip411 app to quickly and anonymously report safety concerns. For iPhone: bit.ly/RiceTipApple For Android: bit.ly/RiceTipAndroid

Published by APG Media of Southern Minnesota  
 \$1 Newsstand

**WEDNESDAY**  
 www.faribault.com

Vol. 108, No. 112 ©2021  
 July 21, 2021

**Faribault couple  
 dead in apparent  
 murder suicide**

By SUZANNE ROOK  
 editor@apgsomn.com

Two people are dead in what Faribault police are calling a murder suicide.

Faribault officers were dispatched to a home in the 700 block of Third Street NW shortly after 8 p.m. Monday after a female caller reported that her boyfriend had been drinking, was throwing things around the residence and that she was unable to leave the residence, according to a release from the Faribault Police Department.

The caller also reported that her boyfriend had two guns in the home and that he might fight or flee when officers arrived.

While collecting information, the dispatcher heard the caller scream and lost contact. Calls back to the woman went unanswered.

When officers arrived, they received no response when they knocked on the door and could see overturned furniture inside the residence. The door was unlocked.

Officers entered the residence and found two people on the floor — one female and one male. Both were unresponsive.

The woman, Amanda Schroeder, 32, appeared to have suffered multiple gunshot wounds. Life-saving measures were attempted, but she was declared dead at the scene.

The man, Brandon Akermark, 27, appeared to have suffered a single gunshot to the head. He was also declared dead. A handgun was found lying next to Akermark. Officers and detectives worked through the night to process the scene.

Schroeder and Akermark's bodies have been sent to the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office for autopsy.

According to a 1989-2018 report on intimate partner homicide from Violence Free Minnesota, intimate partner murder-suicides are the most common type of murder-suicide. Of the 685 homicides recorded over the 30-year period, 258 (37%) were a murder-suicide or murder-attempted suicide with the homicide victims overwhelmingly female and the majority of perpetrators male.

Police had been called to the home previously, according to Faribault Police Capt. Neal Pederson, at least once on a domestic call.

See COUPLE on 3A



Ruth Murray, of Faribault, developed an interest in the Zentangle Method about 15 years ago. She has since began tangling on 3D objects, as pictured. Murray plans to teach a Zentangle class at the Paradise Center for the Arts Aug. 3-4. (Michelle Vlasak/southernminn.com)

**'ZENTANGLED' UP**

Meditative art form a relaxing, fun way to draw

By MICHELLE VLASAK  
 michelle.vlasak@apgsomn.com

When it comes to Zentangle, founders Maria Thomas and Rick Roberts say "Anything is possible, one stroke at a time."

In the early 2000's the Rhode Island duo developed the Zentangle Method, known as an easy-to-learn, relaxing and fun way to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns. Faribault resident Ruth Murray picked up on the meditative art form several years ago, officially becoming a certified Zentangle teacher in 2017.

Next month, Murray plans to teach two classes at the Paradise Center for the Arts. Though

this will mark her first time teaching a class at the Paradise, in previous years, Murray has taught friends and family members alike. She had high hopes to branch out into offering classes to others last year, but the COVID-19 pandemic put a damper on that.

During the pandemic, Murray was pleased to be able to go to her room and draw some tangles. The Zentangle website states tangles are made with combinations of dots, lines, simple curves, S-curves and orbs. Those patterns are drawn on small pieces of paper called "tiles" and can be assembled into mosaics once complete.

The ceremony of the Zentangle Method has eight steps, with the first being gratitude. Mur-

ray explains taking the time to think of something she is grateful for puts her in a positive state of mind, ready to begin tangling.

Next, tangles draw dots in the four corners of the tile, then create a border by connecting the four dots. A zigzag, wavy or straight-lined design is then drawn on the tile to separate the different tangle sections. The tangling then begins by following patterns developed/provided by Thomas and Roberts.

Each technique has a different name, though the name doesn't necessarily describe what the end result will look like.

See DRAW on 3A

**School Board adjusts job descriptions to support larger pool of students**

By MISTY SCHWAB  
 misty.schwab@apgsomn.com

The Faribault school district has adjusted the responsibilities of two open positions with the goal of broadening the number of students the new hires will serve.

At Monday's meeting, the board approved the job positions of student success coordinator and workforce development coordinator. These two positions existed under different titles and with different responsibilities prior to the board's approval.

The student success coordinator essentially replaces the multilingual and equity coordinator position, a position held by Sam Ouk until his resignation last month. The workforce development coordinator will pick up the job responsibilities of former Faribault Public Schools Career and Equity Coordinator Brian Coleman. The board on June 28 approved the resignation of Ouk, who accepted a position with the Prior Lake school district, and Coleman,

who is now employed by Owatonna Public Schools.

The student success coordinator position includes equity in the job description but focuses on supporting all students, not just students of color, Superintendent Todd Sesker explained. This employee will report to the superintendent.

Board member Richard Olson supported the practice of "not dividing anybody into groups" and said that the community has shared with him the perspective that Faribault Public Schools is "dividing its students."

Sesker responded, "I just want to assure you that we're not."

"We look at individual needs for all kids and we try to make sure that our goal ... is that we want to make sure that every student experiences success and achieves success in some way, form or whatever," Sesker said. "Not all people



Treadway



Olson

are equal and we have to make some adjustments, and we do whatever we can to take away barriers and make decisions based on what's best for the kids and do the best we can with those kids, making sure they succeed."

Olson agreed with Sesker's goal of supporting every student that walks through the doors of Faribault Public Schools.

Director of Teaching and Learning Tracy Corcoran explained the ways the student success coordinator position differs from the former multilingual and equity coordinator position. She said the new role looks at all students that need additional interventions, building a more comprehensive position. However, this employee would still be the expert in the English learner piece and bring their expertise to the cabinet in the development of curriculum.

Board member Carolyn Treadway had the concerns about the revamped job description.

"I believe Sam [Ouk] experienced a great deal of frustration, and perhaps that was because there was intent to change his position as he held it," she said. "But I don't want the next individual to experience the same level of frustration. I believe that someone with this level of skill set should come and have a level of agency in helping determine the programming that will move forward."

Sesker responded that the district works as "a collaborative team, so no one person does anything individually." However, he said the cabinet would "certainly weigh in on the expertise of that individual."

Treadway said she understands the team approach but added, "I do have some difficulty around the very centralization around decision making in our district. I think it has become quite insular to the cabinet. So that's where I sit."

See JOBS on 3A

**EMPLOYMENT  
 UPDATES**

At the Faribault School Board's Monday meeting, the board approved an administrative contract for Katie Rotvold, the district's new curriculum and instruction coordinator. The board met Rotvold during the meeting.

Rotvold has worked as a mentor coach in Mankato for the past four years and taught at the elementary level prior to that for five years.

The board also approved Ken Huber as the interim activities director following the resignation of Ryan Leuken. Superintendent Todd Sesker reported about 30 applicants have applied for the position so far. The position will be posted until Friday or until filled.

