

DISTANCE LEARNING

Teachers offer look into what remote learning looks like on Pg. A2.

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Photos courtesy of Karentina Albin
At Albin's apartment complex, one of three gates were open with one or two guards seated outside to take people's temperature and have them scan a QR code to fill out a form before entering. The form included a slot for a Chinese name which Albin does not have, but finally an option for foreigners was added.

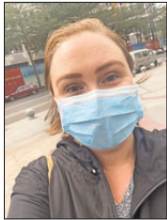
STAYING AT HOME 'IS GOOD FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR'

An experience of the COVID-19 lockdown in Guangdong, China



TOP LEFT: At the neighborhood Walmart in Zhuhai, Guangdong, China a big red sign is posted that, when translated, reads "When you go out wear a mask, you still stay healthy," according to Karentina Albin. Throughout the COVID-19 epidemic, a city ordinance required people to wear masks in public.

RIGHT: Albin received texts daily about staying inside and wearing a mask when outside. In this message, the Provincial Health Commission and the Provincial Emergency Management Department gave several tips for shopping at supermarkets or shopping malls. The message was translated into English by Albin.
TOP RIGHT: One of the challenges Albin encountered was purchasing masks, which people were required to wear in public. The mask she's wearing here was purchased in Sri Lanka in January.



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The Provincial Health Commission and the Provincial Emergency Management Department reminds you that the public should not relax their vigilance during the critical period of epidemic prevention and control. When entering supermarkets or shopping malls do a good job of personal protection by having temperature checks and wearing masks. Make a shopping list in advance to shorten the purchasing time. No loitering, no crowding. Line up to keep a distance. When you sneeze, cover your mouth and nose. As soon as you get home, wash your hands with running water and soap when you get home. Wishing you good health!

By Rebecca Mitchell
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As COVID-19 continues to spread throughout Minnesota and the United States with various safety and stay-at-home measures in place, Karentina Albin, formerly of Verdale, shared her experiences from the epidemic in the Guangdong province of China.

A message came through one of Albin's friends telling her that a person was diagnosed with COVID-19 and that person was in Sam's Club at the same time as her. Albin's friend wanted to know if she had been wearing a mask, a city ordinance when shopping or riding public transportation or being outside your residence during the epidemic. The Chinese government shared messages with information about individuals with COVID-19, from the stores they had shopped in to their seat on a specific train route and where they live. In Albin's apartment complex in Zhuhai, Guangdong she didn't know of anyone with COVID-19, though it was "terrifying" when she learned about a case across the street.

She was in Guangdong when the outbreak started getting serious in the province around Jan. 25, though Albin is from the Verdale area and graduated from Verdale High School, she has been living in China since 2012. At first, the cases of COVID-19

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Local pet adoptions remain high during COVID-19 spread

By Michael Johnson
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The Wadena County Humane Society had a record year for pet adoptions in 2019 and at this point, the COVID-19 concerns are not slowing them down.

Last Wednesday as the Humane Society prepared to open for the second shift of the day, cars began to pull into the parking lot, some with dogs ready to transfer and others ready to become proud new pet owners. This transfer from those fostering to those adopting takes place daily and has become the new norm for the shelter, which on that day had no pets in the shelter. They did, however, have 26 animals spread among

their army of 97 foster families.

One of those fostering for the last couple months is Jerry Karlson, who lives south of Wadena. He was dropping off a young pup that he almost didn't want to give up. He said fostering has been wonderful for him as he is disabled and unable to work. He's been through about five dogs in that time and said the experiences have all been good. Having the extra pet companions at home is welcome at a time when he'd rather avoid contact with other people. He said he has numerous health concerns that could put him at higher risk of serious illness if

ADOPTIONS: Page A8



Photos by WCHS staff and foster families
Just a handful of the pets adopted from March 16 - 22 at the Wadena County Humane Society.

Perham man arrested on murder charge

By News Staff
Perham police are investigating the death of a man found in Perham on Monday, March 30.

An officer responding to a disturbance report found the victim inside of a Perham residence at approximately 10:05 p.m., according to a Perham Police Department release.

40-year-old Derek John Sweere of Perham was arrested without incident at the scene and was booked into the Otter Tail County Jail early on Tuesday, March 31, on probable cause of second-degree murder, according to the release. Formal charges against Sweere are expected.

The victim has been taken to the Midwest

Medical examiner's Office for autopsy and formal identification. After the preliminary autopsy is complete the Perham Police Department will release the name and cause of death, according to the release.



The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office and the New York Mills Police Department are assisting with the ongoing investigation. The investigators believe that there is no ongoing threat to the public, according to the release.

Oma's Bread is rising to meet needs in future location

By Michael Johnson
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A growing customer base has been squeezing into Oma's Bread for some of the finest authentic German food right here in Wadena. There's soon to be much more room for all those visiting.

Oma's head baker and business development manager Yvonne Strom said people have been coming from all over the Midwest to visit the location as it's the only one

like it for many miles. They regularly have guests from the cities and Wisconsin. The only other places to get food like this are in Minneapolis, Duluth or Elbow Lake. It's no wonder people can't get enough. According to StatisticalAtlas.com, Wadena area residents alone have over 45% German ancestry.

In order to make room for those clamoring for spätzle and gulasch,

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Michael Johnson / Pioneer Journal
Steel studs are in place and a plumber was on hand installing lines throughout the future Oma's Bread location to the east of the current site. The new location will be about three times the current size with a bakery, restaurant and bar.



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HOME

From Page A1

and the lockdown were only in Wuhan, Hubei but then Albin said she got scared as the cases came to Guangdong and their province was also locked down. The South China Morning Post reported the Guangdong province had the second highest number of cases outside of Hubei, despite being 577 miles from one another, according to Albin.

Living in the lockdown

"It was really scary at first because most of the sources are in Chinese and so reading was overwhelming," Albin said.

Albin said the media was sometimes conflicting or confusing, she wasn't able to buy masks, there was nothing left at the supermarket and businesses around her were closing, like current experiences in the U.S. One of the differences was in completing grocery shopping or receiving delivered food.

"It was a little different here because we had to go through so many different little things in order to do simple tasks," Albin said.

Each time people went to Walmart, a woman with goggles, a visor and a full plastic sheet stood outside to take people's temperature,

which could not be above 37.3 Celsius degrees, according to Albin. When returning to her apartment complex, Albin again had her temperature checked, filled out a form and walked through a mat of disinfectant to avoid any virus droplets being tracked inside the complex. As a foreigner, the QR code form was a challenge: it required putting in a Chinese name, which Albin does not have.

"I'd have to be like, 'You know I'm not Chinese and there's no option for me, what can I do?' But they're (the guards) told that they have to have every person scan the code but what can I do, so that was always an issue with the guards," Albin said.

As the two-month period continued, Albin said there were frustrating times. She understood the precautions though, even as she was separated from her husband for about five weeks. He had to remain in Macau for his job.

In March, Albin visited Simon in Macau, with a journey over the border that took seven hours instead of 30 minutes to an hour. She traveled with her American friend, and as American passport holders in a time when cases in the U.S. were beginning to rise, the two received extra questions and precautions. On the Macau side, the

two sat in a huge room with approximately 600 people for temperature checks every two hours, which they only had to go through twice because their temperature stayed the same. The trip home included passport questions and temperature checks again, though only for three hours, according to Albin.

"Probably what I'm going to remember most from this is all of the passport check, the temperature check, the jumping through hoops," Albin said.

Throughout the stressful time, Albin saw the daily text messages from the local government as a good thing. People were encouraged to stay inside, to not go out unless necessary, to not gather and wear a mask outside.

"When we were told to do something we just did it because it was like this is good for the country, this is good for your neighbor, and I'm a foreigner so I'm not going to rock the boat," Albin said.

Adjusting to the lockdown

The lockdown started at the end of January and was lifted at the end of March with downgrading from "the most severe level of emergency response"

to Grade I to Grade II on Feb. 24, according to the South China Morning Post.

During these months, Albin felt lucky to continue her job online with a local university and found ways to keep busy, including going for walks, watching TV, reading, learning to cook Chinese cuisine dishes, communicating with people through technology and organizing her apartment.

"I think the most important thing is I know it sounds hard to stay inside and you don't have to stay in your house for 24 hours, you can go out to the front yard, and I mean it's March in Minnesota so it's not that cold anymore, you can go for a walk ... but obviously you shouldn't be going to your friends house," Albin said.

These types of activities helped Albin adjust to the lockdown measures, which were "a little bit different" than the stay at home orders for Minnesotans that Gov. Tim Walz started on March 27 through April 10. Albin benefited from creating a schedule and dressing like she was going out to work.

"I felt really down about myself because maybe I was wearing my pajamas every day and I wasn't washing my hair but I felt like after awhile if I did my makeup and I did my hair and I put on my normal work clothes that was really helpful for me to feel like not getting so sad or bored or frustrated,"

Albin said. With New York as "the most overwhelmed city in the U.S.," according to Politico, Albin knows if she were in Minnesota currently she would say New York is far away from Minnesota but after seeing 1,500 cases in her province 577 miles from the Hubei province, she says, "it's not as far as you think." New York City is about 1,350 miles from Wadena.

"I think it's just really important to understand that these measures are not to frustrate you or annoy you or hinder your life in some way. It's because what happens if everybody just says, 'OK, it's no problem let's go have fun,' then it is going to be a problem," Albin said.

The low population density in areas like Wadena and Verndale don't limit people's exposure because you can't know where everyone has been, from a plane ride to the grocery store, or how many people they have been in contact with that might have COVID-19, according to Albin. Albin said the uncertainty of COVID-19 should impact people's decision to stay home.

She also understands wanting to see friends again, like one who has been stuck in England since January and another couple living in Hubei. "If people are saying,

'I'm lonely, I'm frustrated,' well there's like probably a billion other people in the world that are feeling exactly how you're feeling, so you're not alone in these feelings," Albin said.

Slowly returning to normalcy

As provinces in China are "very slowly" returning to normalcy, Albin said she was recently able to eat lunch in a restaurant and buy new glasses, though tables are set one meter apart, full capacity is not allowed, temperatures are checked and forms are filled out. Schools in China have completed online learning for over two months and 18 provinces are returning to school after April 8, according to Albin.

She shared a reassuring, "it will be OK" and the Chinese phrase "jiayou" meaning, good luck, which she said during the worst part for Wuhan. On March 28, Wuhan was "partially reopened," according to the Bangkok Post. The current difficulty is imported cases, though Wuhan had no new infections for a period of seven days as of March 30, according to Reuters.

"Things aren't totally back to normal here and it'll take some time, so that's what the U.S. has to take time to get back to normal," Albin said.

LOCATION

From Page A1

the business has decided to move operations to the former Family Dollar building, just a hop-and-skip away from their current location squeezed between Verizon Wireless and Central Minnesota Credit Union. You may have noticed the new site has been under construction for weeks now as the interior and exterior are being remodeled from a convenience store to a modern eatery.

"There are many days during lunchtime where people don't have a spot to sit," Strom said.

That brought the owners to start looking for another location for about a year. This one seemed like a great location as they wanted to try to use a pre-existing building.

A bigger kitchen will help abundantly as they currently only have room for one oven. Strom can push out about 12 loaves at a time. But when mother's cooking has to start, daughter's baking has to stop.

Baking happens each morning by about 3 a.m. It happens daily because they like to have fresh food available and they use no preservatives in their food, so it's meant to be eaten quickly. Most guests barely

The restaurant offers up a different special each day of the week for lunch. You can also pick from 12 pastries, at least four different breads, fruit tarts, cakes, quiche, kuchen, biscotti and a cup of coffee as you find a seat. Currently there is no dine-in due to the coronavirus closures, however they are still open

make it out of the business before pecking away at a loaf or tart.

Not only will the business enjoy a space about three times the size as their current building, they'll be bringing in another member of the family, Strom's brother, Martin. She's hopeful that he could be coming this spring, but as he is immigrating from

What's cooking?

Germany, there are many steps to complete. Of course the other anchors for the business are Yvonne and Martin's parents Annette and Martin Schmidlin.

Strom said her mother does the cooking but as soon as her younger brother arrives, the plan is for him to cook in the evenings so the business can expand

and offering pickup. Watch their Facebook page for regular schedule and menu updates.


Here's what Strom has to say about baking the bread each morning. "Sometimes it doesn't turn out and then I get mad, but if it doesn't turn out, the kids get to eat it at home," she said with a laugh.

after she chose to remain here, her parents immigrated, too. Strom said her brother's arrival will be a fun addition to the business.

The goal is to open this new location in June. Because of the bigger spaces and more staff, the family believes their offerings will expand.

"You do have to always offer something new," Strom said. "People have different palettes."

The business is only closed Sundays when the family does most of their shopping for the next week. Oma's Bread will celebrate their third anniversary in Wadena this August.





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