

Substitutes instrumental in district success



ISD 47
By Dr. Holly Schoenherr,
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Storm Corner

One of the things that make Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools great is the dedication and partnership of our communities. Our students are truly blessed when citizens make donations and volunteer their time and talents with students at Hillside Early Childhood Center, Mississippi Heights Elementary School, Pleasantview Elementary School, Rice Elementary School, Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School or Sauk Rapids-Rice High School.

Do you enjoy being around kids? Are you looking for meaningful ways to spend your time?

Hardly anything is more enjoyable or meaningful than investing in the education and well-being of kids. Members of our community can engage in an important partnership with Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools by becoming a substitute teacher. An attractive benefit of serving as a substitute teacher is you can build your own schedule – work as little or as much as you want. Imagine the fulfillment of making a difference in the lives of children in your own neighborhood.

Substitute teaching is fun. Teaching definitely isn't a typical 9-to-5 job. Every day is different, and there's nothing quite like witnessing a student have that light bulb moment when everything clicks. There is never a dull moment. With a classroom full of personalities, there's always something fascinating going on. Also, you quickly become part of the Storm family where fellow educators and staff care about your success and are there to help with ideas and any questions you may have.

This is what some substitute teachers have said about their experiences:

– “I want to make sure the students don't miss out on their 'aha' moment just because their regular teacher is not in class. Every day matters, so it matters to have a

great sub, and that's what I aspire to be.”
 – “I sub because I love being able to go into a different school or different classroom every day and create an environment that is both inclusive and safe all the while bridging the gap between students and their teachers.”

– “I sub because the next generation is our future leaders, politicians, health care professionals, trade workers and lawyers. Teaching gives a platform to lift others up, inspire and challenge students to become the best version of themselves.”

Substitute teaching is safe. Now that we are emerging from the coronavirus pandemic, we are excited about the opportunities for increasing the number of volunteers and substitutes in our buildings.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, in-person learning in school buildings has not been associated with substantial community transmission of the coronavirus. Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools has been operating under a Safe Learning Plan that addresses a number of prevention practices and is instrumental in keeping our students, staff and volunteers safe.

Becoming a substitute teacher is easy. If you have a four-year college degree in any field, you can apply for a substitute teaching (short call) license through the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board. Contact the human resource department or visit the district's website to receive instructions on how to sign up for substitute opportunities.

Interested in other types of roles with the district? There are also needs for substitutes in non-teaching roles, including cashiers, custodians, health and nursing staff, food service, paraprofessionals and van drivers.

Our kids are counting on us to be there for them. Let's work together to make great things happen.

He didn't have to be

As I wrote this column, Father's Day was just a couple days away.

Since losing my dad, I've been asked about my emotions on that weekend.

It's tough – no doubt about it. This was the third one without him, and it hasn't gotten easier. I don't think it does until you have a child of your own and they can celebrate their dad. But no matter what, that hole in your heart is always there.

I still buy Father's Day gifts, though. The gifts go to two fathers from different bloodlines than mine.

One of those men is my maternal grandpa. The 88-year-old is not my biological grandfather, but you'd never know it.

My mom's dad died of cancer when she was 10. A few years after his death, my widowed grandmother, a longtime organist for her church, struck up conversation with Vernon, a fellow parishioner and lifelong bachelor who lived on a farm not far from her. A carpenter, he offered to do some work on her house. Not long after, they built a life together, marrying in 1976.

Vernon, who does not have any biological children, accepted us as his own and has always been affectionately called Grandpa.

When I think of him, crappy experiences come to mind. He was a septic pumper and had a big truck the grandkids thought was cool (until we were teenagers). We often rode with when he pumped tanks at a little Menard's store in Belgrade that has since become a manufacturing plant for the home improvement retailer. The store used to give away free pretzels and had a 25-cent pop machine. I thought I was the luckiest kid in the world as we climbed in that old Spartz Septic Service rig.

“And away we go,” Grandpa would say as we pulled out of the driveway, polka tunes playing softly on the radio. We traveled at a snail's pace, holding up a long line of frustrated drivers on Highway 71 until, finally, he'd say, “Well, by golly, we made it.”

The pumper truck has been gone for more than a decade, but Grandpa still drives 30 miles under the speed limit.

The other Father's Day stop was to see Bill, the man who married my mom 11 years ago.

Bill has been a constant source of support all my adult life. It first became apparent he cared about more



EXPRESSIONS BY EL
BY ELLARRY PRENTICE

than just Mom when he came to my high school honors banquet. They were newly dating, and I was surprised to see him there, smiling proudly and waving.

From that day on, he has never missed a special event and has always been there when I needed him, which has been a lot more frequently since Dad died.

“Your Mom's got a good man, huh?” my dad asked me, out of the blue, a week before he died.

“Yeah,” I responded.

“You talk to him a lot then?”

“Well, yeah,” I said. “He's there most of the times I see her.”

Before I could ask why all the questions, Dad fell asleep again.

For a few moments, I watched his labored breaths and listened to the hum of his oxygen machine. Then, it dawned on me why he had asked those questions. He was making sure I had someone in his place.

When I think of Bill, I am reminded of a country song by Brad Paisley. And, to be honest, when I hear it now, it makes me cry.

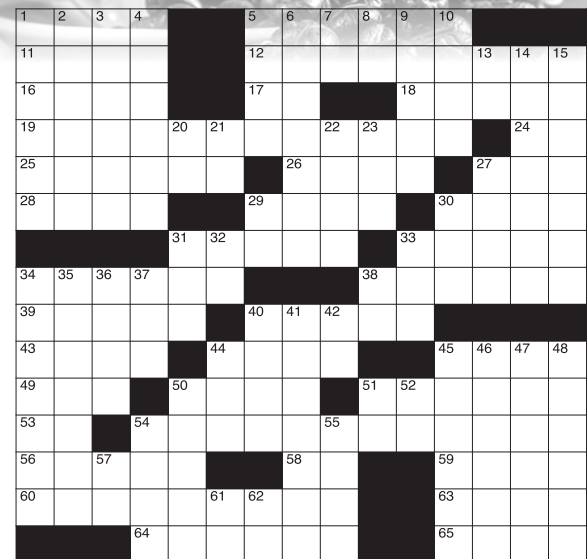
The song, released in 1999, tells a story of a stepfather's love seen through the eyes of an 8-year-old boy who becomes a father himself by the end of the song.

“When a single mom goes out on a date with somebody new, it always winds up feeling more like a job interview. My momma used to wonder if she'd ever meet someone who wouldn't find out about me and then turn around and run. I met the man I call my dad when I was 5 years old. He took my mom out to a movie and for once I got to go. A few months later, I remember lying there in bed. I overheard him pop the question, and I prayed that she'd say yes. And then, all of a sudden, oh it seemed so strange to me how we went from something's missing to a family. Looking back, all I can say about all the things he did for me is I hope I'm at least half the dad that he didn't have to be.”

Today, Bill has more girls to love. My sister has two daughters, ages 3 and 6, who adore him. Like Vernon, Bill is simply Grandpa.

Bill and Grandpa have shown me that blood has nothing to do with the ability to love a child deeply. I hope I'm at least half the parent and grandparent they didn't have to be.

COFFEE BREAK CROSSWORD

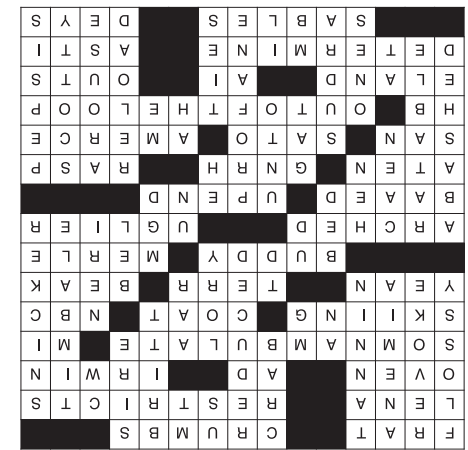


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. College group
- 5. Small morsels of food
- 11. Actress Dunham
- 12. Puts a limit on
- 16. Used for baking or drying
- 17. Commercial
- 18. Zookeeper Bindi
- 19. Walk in one's sleep
- 24. The Great Lakes State
- 25. Winter sport
- 26. A thin layer on something
- 27. Peacock network
- 28. Give birth to a lamb or kid
- 29. “Too Scared to Cry” author
- 30. Nose
- 31. Friend
- 33. Country music legend Haggard
- 34. Curved
- 38. More deformed
- 39. Bleated
- 40. Set on its end
- 43. An aspect of Ra
- 44. Releasing hormone (abbr.)
- 45. Harsh, grating noise
- 49. ___ Francisco
- 50. Common Japanese surname
- 51. Punish with an arbitrary penalty
- 53. Football position (abbr.)
- 54. Not in the know
- 56. African antelope
- 58. Popular tech (abbr.)
- 59. Baseball teams get three of them
- 60. Make up one's mind
- 63. ___ Spumante (Italian wine)
- 64. Martens
- 65. Susan and Tom are two

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Excessively showy
- 2. Put an end to
- 3. Blood disorder
- 4. Ingredient in wine
- 5. Shellfish
- 6. Made smaller
- 7. We
- 8. The Treasure State
- 9. ___ Eklund, actress
- 10. Male parent
- 13. One hundredth of a watt (abbr.)
- 14. Dish of minced meat
- 15. Smothered laugh
- 20. Article
- 21. Atomic #12
- 22. Small parrot
- 23. Fictional “Star Wars” planet
- 27. French wine grape
- 29. Football stat (abbr.)
- 30. Sound unit
- 31. Where you sleep
- 33. Miller beer offering
- 34. Feel embarrassed
- 35. Able to be estimated
- 36. Commune in NW France
- 37. Adult female chicken
- 38. Intergovernmental organization
- 40. Archaic term for until
- 41. That which is not sacred
- 42. Sound made in speech
- 44. Handgun (slang)
- 45. Fill up again
- 46. Evoke or awaken
- 47. Beam Me Up, ___!
- 48. Spider wasp genus
- 50. Headdress
- 51. Exclamation of surprise
- 52. Of I
- 54. Figures
- 55. Men's fashion accessories
- 57. Indicates position
- 61. Megabyte



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