

Jordies from page 2

Soups are mostly made by Jordie and her mother, Rosella Keeler, who is 84 and lives behind the restaurant and is the creator of the popular Granny's Creamy Potato soup. She also helps with laundering the restaurant's wide variety of table cloths.

"Grandma needs to stay busy," said Jordie, who usually opens the restaurant and handles the breakfast crowd. "It keeps her spry."

The three generations share a bond bolstered by a love for cooking and serving people with a smile, though they admit to occasional disagreements.

"Being able to work side by side with my mom and grandma is quite amazing," Sonya said.

"We're Polish, and we're pretty strong-willed women, so it can get a little

fuzzy at times. But at the end of the day, it's a great thing."

Sonya's love for the Twins is obvious upon walking into the mens restroom, where her shrine to her favorite team, Target Field and favorite player Justin Morneau are proudly on display. The main dining room is full of all sorts of crafts created by local artists, adding to the ambiance.

Signs with both humorous and inspirational messages are an important part of the decor. Sonya said she hopes the signs make people smile and feel good about themselves. Her favorite sign reads, "Choose faith over worry."

"Sometimes, people need a message like that," she said.

With the Fourth of July holiday approaching and another two months

before Labor Day weekend signals the unofficial end of summer, Jordie and Sonya are eager for what is on the horizon. At the same time, they remain humble while taking great pride in their creation.

"There's a lot of dedication that goes into this place, and it comes with a lot of rewards," Sonya said. "You don't think you could have this in the town you grew up in. When people say Bowlus, this is what they talk about. We've created a little gem."

PHOTOS BY TOM FENTON
Preparing a few plates of butterfly shrimp for hungry customers is Sonya Stay, who owns and operates Jordie's Trailside Café in Bowlus with her mother, Jordie. The perfect June 28 weather meant customers were able to enjoy their lunches at the outdoor pavilion at the popular restaurant.



Cylie Brezinka, a senior-to-be at Royalton

High School, scoops ice cream for eager young customers during her shift June 28 at Jordie's Trailside Café in Bowlus. Brezinka was plenty busy during the lunch rush as a steady stream of customers filled the restaurant.

School board from front

At the June 27 meeting of the Sauk Rapids-Rice Board of Education, superintendent Bradley Bergstrom expressed his excitement for the project but added patience may be required for those wanting to see the complex open.

In addition to ongoing supply chain issues that could delay arrival of fencing and epoxy paint, the project was set back several days due to problems receiving a plumbing permit. The several inches of rain that fell in a 48-hour period late last week also proved problematic.

"It still baffles me why we needed a plumbing permit but so be it," Bergstrom said. "Then, of course, we got the deluge of rain. With (those two factors), it's highly unlikely we will start playing there by the beginning of the season. They've been pumping water out of the ground, and it doesn't drain well around here."

The \$1.062 million project was approved at the board's April 25 meeting. The complex will include eight courts, windscreens and a spectator path. It is located just west of the newly-paved parking lot on what was previously a baseball field.

"It's disappointing we lost a couple of weeks that we could've gotten a lot done to stay on track," Bergstrom said. "At the end of the day, the construction has started. I was over there last week watching and drooling as they were digging a hole."

Operational plan unveiled

Bergstrom outlined the six-part District Opera-

tional Plan he said has been 18 months in the making. Bergstrom's goal is to have the plan in place by the 2025-26 school year.

The detailed plan includes strategies that start in the 2022-23 school year to achieve several goals. The goals range from all third-graders being able to read at that level to all students graduating from high school as well as students being ready for college or a career, among others.

"These are our goals and our expectations we have as a part of this district operational plan," Bergstrom said. "We will be spending lots of time throughout the course of the year talking about this. We will be bringing teams to buildings to talk about where we're at and taking time to talk about each of these components. This is our roadmap for 2022-23. The work we will be doing will be purposeful, meaningful and moving us in the direction of reaching these goals."

Pandemic update

Holly Schoenherr, the district's human resources and administrative services director, provided a review of the coronavirus pandemic during the 2021-22 school year. District staff totaled 844 days of paid COVID-19 leave, which added up to about \$239,000 in costs that were paid for by federal and state relief funds.

Schoenherr said federal and state funds related to the pandemic are likely to start dwindling. Board chair Ryan Butkowski lauded the district's handling of the pandemic for 2021-22, noting it was one of the few districts that did not have a mask mandate while prioritizing the need and the desire to go to distance learning.

"That was what our community wanted," Butkowski said. "We realize we did things differently from our neighbors. Superintendent Bergstrom took a little bit of heat from other superintendents because not everybody was doing this. It was the right thing to do. We all lived through the tough times and did everything we could to keep the kids in classrooms."

In other board news:

- Approved a contract for food service with Chartwells effective July 1 through June 30, 2023, at a cost increase of 7.8%. This will be the sixth year the district has contracted with Chartwells.

- Approved the hiring of Gail Bialke as head volleyball coach. She replaces Karen Beckmann, whose resignation was accepted at the May 31 board meeting. Beckmann led the Storm to the Minnesota State High School League Class AAA State Tournament last fall and said she resigned to spend more time with her family.

- Approved the district's membership to the Minnesota Rural Education Association, Minnesota School Boards Association and Minnesota State High School League.

- The annual cost for the MREA is \$2,500 and is \$10,706 for the MSBA - which provides policy services, legislative analysis and updates, and training. This membership delegates the control, supervision and regulation of interscholastic athletic and fine arts events to the MSHSL.

- Extended the probationary period from three to four years for Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School social studies teacher Cara Fransisco.

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