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Students start finance club at Mayo High

BY JORDAN SHEARER
Post Bulletin

After classes on Thursday, a group of 17 teenagers gathered in a room at Mayo High School and started comparing investments. Sam Kalina, a senior, worked the laptop, projecting one graph after another onto the board at the front of the room, showing how everyone's stocks performed since they last met. The students' gains — and losses — were all over the map: some had lost ground. One student who invested in Tesla gained more than 30%. The teens booed and cheered for each other when their portfolios showed larger than expected improvement or decline. Kalina started the investment club this school year, giving himself and his peers a chance to dig into the world of stock markets, gains, losses, supply chains, and everything else related to the realm of finance. "As I started to get more into it, I realized this is knowledge that other people should have — that other teenagers also need to have for their future financial success," Kalina

said. "And I began to get a lot of comments from adults, wishing they had started at the same age I had — telling me how much of a head start I had compared to them." Kalina had some rudimentary knowledge of the stock market beforehand. But when the pandemic hit and began wreaking havoc on the marketplace, he realized he wanted to know more. He created a custodial account with his parents, allowing him to take part in the action directly. He invested in industries like airlines and travel. He didn't know much at the time, but he realized that anything he bought in March probably would rebound at a certain point after taking an initial hit. When he first began investing, he'd set an alarm every morning so he could be ready to go as soon as the market opened. As chance would have it, he realized a group of his friends also had been looking at the stock market. One of those was Jack Koesterling, another senior who is involved with the club. "That COVID summer, we

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Joe Ahlquist / Post Bulletin

Sam Kalina, a senior and founder of the Mayo High School Stock Club, leads a club meeting Thursday at Mayo High School in Rochester.



Photos by Traci Westcott / Post Bulletin

Vada Kay Wiginton, 3, and her parents, Matt Wiginton and Beth Timm, are greeted by a horse-drawn carriage as friends and family celebrate her last day of chemotherapy Thursday outside Saint Marys in Rochester.

3-YEAR-OLD BEATS STAGE 5 KIDNEY CANCER – TWICE

BY ERICH FISHER
Post Bulletin

When you're a 3-year-old girl and have just finished beating cancer for the second time, a grand exit from the hospital is in order. For Matthew Wiginton, of Rochester, that meant arranging for his daughter Vada to leave Mayo Clinic Hospital-Saint Marys on Thursday afternoon as a princess in a horse-drawn carriage. Vada had just completed her 46th chemotherapy session for the stage 5 kidney cancer she was diagnosed with when she was 20 months old. The newly crowned princess walked out of the hospital on her own, ringing her "end of chemo" bell in front of a crowd of family, friends and Mayo Clinic employees with her dad and mom, Beth Timm, not far behind. Coming up the driveway was Cinderella's carriage being pulled by two matching black Percherons.



Vada Kay Wiginton, 3, is greeted by her day care provider Marcia Carmack as her dad, Matt Wiginton, becomes emotional.

"Just the look on her face said it all," Matthew said. Vada's grandparents Mike and Colleen Wiginton were in the crowd, struggling to hold back tears. "It was very heartwarming," Colleen said. "This is a major, major wonderful day." "She's had a lot of blessings. She's handled this really well. She's always got a smile on her face and she's always upbeat," Mike said, a 20-year colon cancer survivor himself. For the past two years, Vada's childhood has revolved around cancer. At 20 months old, doctors found a Wilms' tumor on each of her kidneys. Chemotherapy for 16 weeks

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Phil Gartner has been a key to shaping Lake City

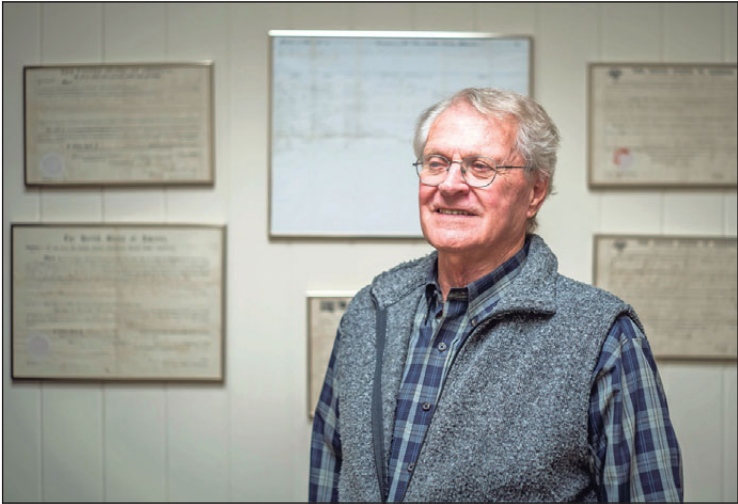
BY BRIAN TODD
Post Bulletin

LAKE CITY — On Oct. 11, the Lake City City Council and Mayor Mark Nichols presented Phil Gartner with the key to the city. Gartner, who spent 50 years serving the city in various capacities — from being city attorney and a member of the city council to serving on boards and commissions — before deciding in 2020 not to run for re-election. In that time, he helped the city get a new hospital connected to Mayo Clinic, purchase a camping park that is a jewel of the region, and voted for changes to U.S. Highway 61 that reshaped the road through

ASKED & ANSWERED

downtown Lake City. "I had some people say, 'They probably should have given you the key a long time ago,'" Gartner said. Still, he said he was honored the city chose to recognize his years of service to Lake City. A native of Preston, Gartner graduated high school in 1957 from there with his high school sweetheart. Sixty years later,

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Joe Ahlquist / Post Bulletin

Lake City lawyer Phil Gartner, seen Thursday in his office, was recently presented with a key to the city.

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Was that the high school band or the Rolling Stones?

Ninth-grade band concerts are not something one attends voluntarily. You normally know someone in the band. You normally have an obligation. But of all the things I've missed during the pandemic, live music, it turns out, may have been at the top of my list. Even when that music is played by a few dozen freshmen who have only been practicing together for a month or so. Last Monday night's Mayo High School October Concert, for many of the kids and parents, was their first live performance in nearly two years. For me, after that break from live shows, it



ODD CHESTER
Steve Lange

felt like I was seeing the Rolling Stones. Especially if the Rolling Stones had my 14-year-old daughter playing tuba. The Ninth Grade Concert Band — we call them NGCB — opened the show with their cover of “Byzantine Dances” by Carol Brittin Chambers. And closed it out with their cover of “African Celebration” by Justin Harden. Those were the only two songs, but still. Then they came back

with an encore — a cover of “Mayo School Song.” Anyone who has followed a child through the elementary and middle and high school music programs can attest to how far these kids come. It was not unusual, after some of those early elementary school concerts, for exchanges such as the following. ME: Great job! Hey, what was that first song you guys did? Was that “Byzantine Dances” by Carol Brittin Chambers? ONE OF OUR KIDS: What? No. It was “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” ME: Right, right. Yes, I definitely hear that now. And the second song, that was, what, “African Celebration” by Justin

Harden? ONE OF OUR KIDS: What? No. It was “The Alphabet Song.” ME: Right, right. Yes, I definitely hear that now. And the third song was ONE OF OUR KIDS: “Baa Baa Black Sheep.” ME: Those are all exactly the same tune. By ninth grade, these kids are starting to put it all together musically. By junior and senior years, the shows could easily be something one attends voluntarily. We’ve seen it firsthand. Our oldest, Hadley, spent years in Honors Choir. By her senior year, there wasn’t a dry eye in the house when they sang “Silent Night” during their annual Christmas concert.

Son Henry was part of a Mayo/Century/JM drumline battle fundraiser that was one of those things that gives you hope for the future of humankind. Immediately following October's Ninth Grade Band, the featured act, the Mayo High School Marching Band, took the stage. Or at least the floor of the gym. From that first note — of Queen's “Bohemian Rhapsody” — I remembered, once again, how much I've missed live concerts. Especially, maybe, when the band is made up of high school kids who've only been practicing together for a month or so. Frankie Valli's “Can't Take My Eyes Off Of

You,” Neil Diamond's “Sweet Caroline,” an original mashup of “All Of The Lights” (by Kanye) and “Listen To Your Heart” (by Roxette). The drumline danced in sync. The crowd sang the “bom bom bom” part of “Sweet Caroline”. One of the kids played a theramin (that instrument that you wave your hand over and it makes weird electronic sounds). A theramin. And, by the last song of the night, many of us in the crowd couldn't wait to attend, voluntarily even, the next high school band concert.

Steve Lange is the editor of Rochester Magazine. His column appears every Tuesday.



Vada Kay Wiginton, 3, gets a kiss from her mom, Beth Timm, outside Saint Marys.

Traci Westcott / Post Bulletin

Cancer

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eliminated those tumors and she was in remission for a year. One tumor was discovered on St. Patrick's Day and she began more aggressive chemo. That discovery also meant she wasn't able to

travel outside a 20-mile radius of the clinic, which has become essentially a second home for her. She hasn't been able to interact with anyone outside of her immediate family or at the clinic. “The only life we’ve known as a family is go to the doctor,” Matthew said. “I had to shave my daughter's head twice.

That took a lot out of me as a dad. “She's done more than any child should have to do. She's so strong and brave, and she does this with the utmost courage, strength and resilience. I mean, it's crazy, he said. “She's a unicorn — just a magical creature.” Next for Vada is a scan on Nov. 8 to make sure there are no more Wilms'

tumors on her kidneys. If so, Vada will begin a schedule of checkups every three months until she's 8. Matthew knows the family will never be able to fully put her diagnosis behind them. “When cancer is diagnosed, it's with you and your family for life,” he said. “It's always this cloud that hangs over

you that you don't know if a relapse is coming.” Matthew and his wife wonder what side effects of the chemo Vada may have in her life. They already know that the possibility of her having a child is slim to none. But for now, all Matthew wants to focus on is giving Vada the childhood she hasn't had yet.

If they get a “green light” on Nov. 8, the family plans to start with a trip to Disney World. “She needs to be a kid. She needs to experience normal things,” he said. “What's next is normal.”

Contact digital content producer Erich Fisher at efisher@postbulletin.com

Gartner

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he and Dana are still married and enjoying the beauty of the town along Lake Pepin. **When did you start serving Lake City?** We moved to Lake City in 1966, right after I finished grad school (at William Mitchell College of Law). My old football coach from Preston, Joe Denzer, he left Preston and became football coach here. Dana and I kept in touch with him while we were in college. He told us to check out the town. We loved this little town. We knew we wanted to sail and also ski. There was a ski hill about 9 miles up the road. It was such a beautiful area, we decided to stay. I started practicing law in 1966, and after about four years I was appointed city attorney, which was a part-time job. I did that for 37 years. **What were some of the big changes to the city that you helped**

with? I helped the city with the purchase of Hok Si La Park. It was a Boy Scout camp, and they'd maintained it very well. The camp was on a 350-acre parcel. There was a dike road that led to a big dining hall. The city thought it would be an ideal location for a park, kind of like a state park in the vein of Frontenac, which is right up the road. But the Boy Scouts had a couple of requirements. One was that it be maintained as a place for primitive camping. The other was the price. They wanted \$500,000, but the city didn't have that kind of money. We put together grants from the federal and state government to help, and that covered 90 percent of the cost. **How did you help change the way Mayo Clinic delivers health care around the region?** I was involved as a negotiator with that as well. This was probably 20 years ago. We became the first

outreach facility for Mayo Clinic from Rochester. This was the start of Mayo bringing medical facilities to small communities. They were looking for a medical facility that would be a feeder for Rochester. Later they did this in many, many different communities. They could send clients, patients, from Lake City to Rochester. Medical facilities were starting to change at that time. This was an experiment on their part. Lake City had its own hospital. It was successful, but it was very old, and the local doctors were trying to do everything. They can't do that anymore. At the same time, Fairview Hospital in the Twin Cities was very interested in doing outreach as well. We had to decide which of those would be best, and we picked Mayo. It was closer to Lake City, and there was already an attachment with the local physicians to send their patients to Mayo.

They built a new hospital, but we had a nursing home at the time and we wanted to include it as part of Mayo's operation. This all became a forerunner of how Mayo would operate. **How well has this worked for Lake City and Mayo Clinic?** It's been good. Not always perfect, but we had an arrangement with them that they had to honor the long-term commitment to Lake City. It was a 30-year agreement, which we are approaching the end of in about 10 years. But I knew we needed a different approach to medicine and care. The doctors we had at the time were two old-timers. And newer doctors did not want to work the way the old-timers did. **What was your next big step in serving Lake City?** When I retired as the city attorney after 37 years, I was hustled to go for the city council. I served two (non-consecutive) four-year

terms, and in between I served on several boards and commissions. When I look at my total, it's been 50 years working with the city. Hok Si La and Mayo are always the two accomplishments that stand out for me. **Were you part of the vote on the new alignment for U.S. Highway 61?** Yes. I was not in favor of it in the beginning, but when I started looking at it and talked to the (county) highway department and the department of transportation (MnDOT), I saw it was a good thing. It slows traffic down, which is a good thing, especially in the summer with all the marina traffic. MnDOT did a marvelous job of improving the highway through Lake City. **With 55 years in one town, you've got to have some great memories.** The marina is the largest recreational marina on the Mississippi River. It's got

slips for 600 boats right in this small community. When we first came to town, we bought a 20-foot sailboat. It was the first fiberglass sailboat in the marina here. Our three children grew up here. Our son was a dock boy. Our two daughters were lifeguards at the beach. It's been an enchanted area, and people who grew up here are moving back. A lot of towns have lost some of their businesses, but we're lucky to have the amenities we have, a great grocery store, a hardware store and the marina. It's a lovely community with the bluffs and the river. Well, we call it a lake, but it's really a wide spot in the Mississippi. Asked & Answered is a weekly question-and-answer column featuring people of southeastern Minnesota. Is there somebody you'd like to see featured? Send suggestions to news@postbulletin.com.