

OUR VIEW

It’s easy to get involved in city business

It’s easy to get involved in city business. We’re a government of, by, and for the people, so we always need people who are willing to serve. We pay a lot of attention to the elected officials, but there are other ways you can make a difference in your community. Best of all, there’s no campaigning!

In Esko, there are volunteer opportunities on the Planning Board, and everyone is welcome in the community garden, board chair Ruth Janke told the Pine Knot News.

The city of Cloquet is looking for people to serve on the Citizen Advisory Board, which works with the police chief on discipline, citizen complaints and hiring at the police department. After the chaos in the police department these past couple of years, this position is certain to garner some interest. The incoming City Council will choose the next member, so it would be nice for them to have a large selection of applicants.

Cloquet also has openings on the Library Board, the Parks Commission and the Planning Commission. With the upcoming expansion at the library, that seat could be rewarding and intense. Both the Parks Commission and the Planning Commission have important responsibilities in the community and are great ways to get deeply involved in City business.

Wrenshall needs a member for its Planning Commission too,

according to assistant City Clerk Renae House. She also pointed out that the new mayor, Donna-Mae Weiderman, will be vacating her council seat as she steps into the mayor’s seat, so the incoming city council will need to appoint a replacement. (The Pine Knot News will have an update as the new council decides how they intend to fill that seat.) And city leaders are hoping a good citizen steps in and leads renovations at the Hugh Line Park, which needs some help.

Carlton will have an opening on its city council since councilor Ann Gustafson will be resigning to serve on the school board. Carlton City Clerk Carol Conway said that interested candidates should write a letter of qualifications to the City Council, whose members will then conduct interviews and choose a new councilor. An advertisement will be posted in the Pine Knot News next month after the new city council meets. And, Conway mentioned, Carlton has not had a representative on the CAT-7 cable commission, and would love to have someone step up and volunteer for that position.

Getting involved is easy and rewarding. Take the plunge and apply in your community.

*We welcome your input to the Pine Knot News community newspaper. Send your thoughts, letters, or news to [opinion@PineKnotNews.com](mailto:opinion@PineKnotNews.com).*

Comments on Facebook can get pretty nasty

Life has gotten too political, and the divisions are becoming too destructive.

As an example, I got some disturbing posts on my Facebook page the other day.

Now, I’ve seen the vitriol that exists in Facebook posts, but haven’t experienced it personally. Mostly, I read others’ comments, and shy away from adding my two cents, except in rare circumstances. I decided a long time ago that I wasn’t going to add to the discussion unless my comments were either a) really brilliant, or b) very, very funny.

One of the local chapters of a political party is hosting a pizza buffet for all its members and interested parties. So, I thought it was perfectly acceptable to repost their little blurb on my Eskomo Pizza Pies page last week.

Almost immediately, I got some nasty feedback. Someone posted that because the DFL was hosting a party in my restaurant, they were never eating there again, and then wished that my restaurant would go out of business.

I was angry. I responded that the poster was an idiot, which I probably should not have done. I explained that all types of political events have happened at Eskomo Pies, from both ends of the political spectrum. Chip Cravaack held several fundraisers there when running for Congress. Other conservatives have held meet-and-greets. During this last election, my prime corner in Esko hosted lawn signs from both Mike Sundin and Jeff Dotseth; for both Joe Radinovich and Pete Stauber; and for other candidates from both sides. Mike Sundin, whom I consider a friend, teased me about it but never asked me to take down his opponent’s sign. In fact, Rep. Sundin commented that he appreciated a businessperson like me who was such a fan of the election process. When Amy Klobuchar showed up at my place in October, I later told Pete Stauber he can have an event in Esko, too.

And my attitude extends to competing businesses too. My pizza is great, but I order



Harry’s Gang

Pete Radosevich

Sammy’s sometimes and I’m a sucker for Casino Pizza’s take-and-bake. I treat my wife to dinner at Trapper Pete’s sometimes, and we love the cappuccino at Magnolia Café. It’s not a bad thing to enjoy

the perspective of others, whether it’s their political views or their dinner recipes.

This division has gone too far. But I don’t think it’s over, yet.

For some time, I have joked that it won’t be long before sports teams get into the picture. What better way to stoke a rivalry than to adopt a political identity? The “Minnesota Viking Liberals.” The “Green Bay Packer Conservatives.” You get the idea.

Then I started thinking about the damage such hateful comments can bring.

In the months before the last national election, a deranged conservative opened fire in a Washington D.C. pizza joint, hoping to liberate the child-slaves he’d heard Hillary Clinton was imprisoning there. Not long after, a deranged liberal gunned down Republican Congress members who were practicing for the annual bipartisan Congressional Baseball Game. This Facebook writer who wishes ill will to me and my restaurant could be dangerous. Seriously. After all, this guy won’t eat at my restaurant because some liberals have eaten there, too. That’s disturbed. I just donated a pizza party to the Esko kids who raise the most money for the American Cancer Society. Will the American Lung Association now picket my restaurant? I sure hope not.

I think a little common respect and polite discourse will go a long way toward Making America Great.

*Pete Radosevich is the publisher of the Pine Knot News community newspaper and an attorney in Esko who hosts the talk show Harry’s Gang on CAT-7. Reach him at [Pete.RRadosevich@PineKnotNews.com](mailto:Pete.RRadosevich@PineKnotNews.com).*

Make peanut butter balls, not war

Guest Columnist

Mothy Groves

The recent passing of former President George H.W. Bush got me thinking about presidents past and present. It’s tempting to compare them, holding them up to some standard that we each have, and pass judgement on their “greatness.” For his part, H.W. could turn a pretty good phrase, and the idea of “a kinder, gentler America” seemed almost Mr. Rogers-like in evoking memories, real or imagined, of a time when hearts could still afford to be tender.

My own favorite president remains Jimmy Carter. The peanut-farming, graciously chagrined brother of Billy “Beer” Carter, Jimmy always seemed to embody the kinder, gentler American. He still wears his faith on his sleeve, yet he makes it real by regularly rolling up those sleeves to help out someone in need. Even now, at age 94, Jimmy will show up at a Habitat for Humanity building site in blue jeans and a work shirt to get his hands dirty for a good cause.

Back when Jimmy was President, the hippies were quickly becoming a dying breed. Their cultural battle cry of “Make love,

not war” was disgraced and fading in America’s post-Vietnam haste to forget about a difficult and divisive chapter in our history. Along about this time, I had grown my hair out and was running a hippie natural foods lunch counter in my small Midwestern college town. As cultural subversion goes, lunch seemed pretty innocuous, but that was when I first began to realize that some Americans really didn’t like hippies, at all. I don’t know if it was Merle Haggard or, much later, Tom Brokaw who expressed most eloquently that “the hippies ruined America.” Dang. And I was just trying to “let my freak flag fly.”

Well, I’ve felt pretty bad about that ever since, and have tried really hard to make it up to America. It’s been important to me to bridge the gap between Americans divided by their culture wars. Wanting to “think globally, but act locally,” and live out Gandhi’s “Be the change you want to see in the world,” I have managed to dig my own entrenched position in the latest American Culture War — the Zombie Apocalypse. In this

war, Americans on both sides consider the opposition to be the mindless, soulless “undead” that threaten to tear apart the very fabric of the nation. Believe me, I’ve tried to be a good citizen, with petitions to the government, well-reasoned letters to Congress members and the local Pine Knot News editor, and insightful analysis of our predicament on Facebook, but it seems you just can’t teach zombies anything, myself included.

I’ve been at wit’s end trying to figure out how to get ourselves out of this national bind, asking myself WWJD (“What Would Jimmy Do?”).

Well, the old peanut farmer came through for me, telling me in a flash of blinding insight, “Make peanut butter balls, not war.” I knew instantly what he meant. So I offer to you, my fellow Americans — your hearts weary from the long years of culture wars, separated from

friends and loved ones by our own myopic understanding of what it means to be human — a healing balm. Well, maybe something that just tastes good, but, trust me, it’s a peace offering. It amazes me that now, rolling down the corridors of time, come these Hippie Peanut Butter Balls, just when our nation needs them most. Be careful with this gift. My wife tells me that, like so many things hippie, these peanut butter balls can be addictive.

Hippie Peanut Butter Balls

*In a large mixing bowl combine: 28 oz. extra-crunchy peanut butter 1 cup raisins 1 cup roasted, salted sunflower seeds 1 cup quick 1-minute oats 1 cup sweetened coconut flakes ½ cup honey Mix thoroughly.*

*In a small bowl pour out more sweetened coconut flakes. You’ll need an additional 1 ¼ to 1 ½ cups of the coconut flakes for this. Roll the peanut butter ball mix into balls an inch to an inch-and-a-quarter in diameter. These balls*

*will be pretty sticky, and much peace and joy will be had by you (or others) repeatedly licking this delicious goo off your fingers and then washing your hands so that the next few balls that you roll won’t stick to you. Be sure to practice good hygiene here, but allow yourself to “live in the moment.” Now, roll each ball around in the small bowl filled with sweetened coconut flakes, causing sweet coconut to stick to the outside of each ball. Serve chilled, frozen, or at room temperature.*

If you are worried about the calories, you are not yet in the proper frame of mind to enter into “The Peace.” Serve these to your loved ones, friends, and long-lost but treasured zombies, while taking a moment to consider that we are all still one.

Wishing you love, peace and joy.

*Tim “Mothy” Soden-Groves is a writer and thinker, a one-time baker and candlestick maker living around these parts in Carlton County. He wishes you and yours all the very best.*