BEEP! BEEP!

ernies

AGENDA

Commentary

WAS HOPING HE'D

WITHOUT TAILGATING

GET BEHIND ME



Letters to the Editor What kind Of country do we want?

To the Editor:

The recent pandemic has exposed some deficiencies in our current system. For example, millions of people have lost their jobs and therefore lost their medical insurance when they may need it most. Others may put off going to the doctor because of high deductibles which could be fatal.

Trump fired the pandemic response team two years ago after they predicted a respiratory virus originating in China would cause a world wide pandemic, the exact situation we are in today. That saved a billion dollars. It has cost 2.2 trillion dollars so far. Trump was penny wise and dollar foolish and his error cost many lives. We could have been prepared, instead we are floundering without leadership.

Will we continue privatizing profits in good times and socializing the costs when things turn bad? Will we continue welfare for large businesses that don't pay their taxes while complaining about the small amount spent on food and education for needy children? Who wins from Trump rolling back milage standards on vehicles? Do we want dirtier air and higher fuel costs even though car manufacturers can easily meet prior targets?

Most of our problems can be easily solved. The problem is not the inability to find solutions, it is unwillingness to do what is necessary.

Inequality can be decreased by raising the minimum wage and increasing taxes on the wealthy to pre-Reagan rates, a time when the economy was doing better. The answer isn't to get a better paying job. The low paying jobs need to be

deserve to make a living.

Yale School of Public Health published a study in Lancet showing Medicare for all would save 450 billion dollars and 68 thousand lives per year. It would provide more choice of providers and cover everyone even through job loss on pre-existing conditions.

Coronavirus is the focus right now, but it will seem like a Sunday school picnic compared to climate change the coming years. We know what needs to be done. The will and leadership are lacking.

According to Cornel West, professor of philosophy at Harvard there are currently three viable political factions in America. 1. Neo-fascist gangsters, Trump's minions who are willing to follow "Dear Leader" and ignore his lies, crimes and incompetence. Their belief is, what is good for me is good. 2. Neo-liberals, traditional Republicans and traditional Democrats who support rule by wealthy elites. They limit the discussion of ideas to what will maintain the status quo. They worship markets and extractive capitalism. 3. Neo-populist progressives or social democrats, who believe in democratic rule, worker's rights, strong safety net, level playing field, environmental protections and think in terms of the common good.

Which will we choose? We will end up with the government we are willing to work toward. Each of us must decide what is worthy of our effort. We don't want to go back to normal, normal wasn't working.

Dr. Bryan Van Gorp Rushford, Minn.

Hagedorn town hall provides answers to many COVID-19 questions

To the Editor:

One thing Americans have always been able to count on is our ability to come together in challenging times for the good of all. With few exceptions, what has happened in our country the last month has been heartwarming: folks making the effort to 'carryout' food from local restaurants, pro athletes donating thousands of meals to local food shelters, shoppers tipping cashiers at grocery stores for coming to work under trying circumstances, the list could go on and on.

In that vein, I would like to thank Congressman Jim Hagedorn, Brian McDonald from the Small Deepi Goyal of the Mayo Clinic for taking the time from what I'm sure are incredibly busy and hectic schedules these days to host a telephone town hall to answer all sorts of questions about the coronavirus. For an hour a doctor, a federal executive and our United States Representative patiently answered

questions about small business loans, direct payments to individuals, unemployment regulations, the

risks of contracting and caring for

those with COVID-19 and on and

There is no shortage of questions and hoops to jump through when trying to access a \$2 trillion plus government package that was passed less than two weeks ago. I'm also sure all three of these gentlemen had no shortage of calls to take and virtual briefings to attend so I want to thank them for patient ly, thoroughly and professionally fielding such a vast array of ques-

Business Administration and Dr.

What you're not reaching is people who do not yet see your business out there, and they may never see it due to all of the items on Facebook; from status updates, photo albums, links, games, group chats, buying, selling, etc.

can see up to 1,500 things every day, and that is usually limited to 300 items out of 1,500. Who wants to look at 300 items? Not me.

competitor newspapers were a vice, but we also had hopes businesses would support local journalism. Every few months, every few special sec-

tions, we seemed to get less and less advertisers. Sometimes we'd know the reason, other times we did not know. Sometimes my articles might have ticked people off for the sake of journalism.

End of an era: A 129-year-old newspaper is gone

But print is still not dead

BEEP! BEEP!

BEEP!

It's incredibly important to advertise with your local paper. I cannot stress that enough, and now we've seen the effects of not advertising enough: it can kill a paper.

I know Facebook and other social media is instaneous versus waiting a week for the paper to come out, but Facebook misses at least half your audience, if not more.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said he would "fix Facebook" to prioritize posts from friends, family and groups over posts from brands and businesses. Even with "free" advertising, it still misses your audience.

The majority of people liking and commenting on your posts are already fans of your business and loyal customers.

According to research, Facebook followers

Now if you take a look at the Argus, there's a significant lesser amount of ads and news items, which is good because an ad here has a much better chance of being seen than on Facebook.

@PAVEGRANLUND.com

Plus, our ads don't move. They get plopped on the page and they stick. Do you ever have that frustration of seeing a cool video or product on Facebook, but then it's never found again? Our ads stick.

I know for my generation it might seem like newspapers are "outdated" or "irrelevant," but they're not. We keep churning out print editions because it works, but if businesses do not utilize print's tried and true method, Facebook will be the final nail in the coffin of newspapers all over. And it already has been.

The solution is to ask businesses to coexist with newspapers and Facebook.

A business can really build up its customer base with both, and that's the key. Maintain your existing customers on social media, and gain new ones with the newspaper. And finally, not everyone has a social media account or uses it every day.

And that's my sales pitch for the week. For the future, we are hoping to expand our coverage to Spring Grove, since it's only just down the road, as our other communities are.

Every small town deserves a good newspaper, and print is not dead.

Holding your hock in our social world

By Keith Anderson

taken it down.

have taken me down with it.

By Jordan Gerard

Editor, The Caledonia Argus

The lights are off, the door is locked and no

one's home. The phone is off the hook and the

wifi is disconnected. The mail is stopped and

the emails are forwarding on to someone else.

It's the end of an era for my former newspaper.

The death of the 129-year-old Spring Grove

Herald and the remaining newspapers of Bluff

Country News Group (Spring Valley Tribune,

Fillmore County News Leader, Chatfield News,

Tri-County Record and Bluff Country Reader)

I was speechless when I heard "No, it's closed

Yep, it's gone. The dark shadow that followed

permanently," from our printing company's

manager. Flabbergasted, I quickly confirmed

it for recent years had finally caught up and

I couldn't have stopped it from coming even

There's more than just the COVID-19 fac-

tor that went into closing the paper. Though

COVID-19 has decreased advertising in many

papers, that dark shadow following the news

group around consisted of a lack of advertising.

get advertisers in the paper. It was exhausting.

We knew that businesses had a set budget of

advertising and that radio, social media and

It always felt like the "fight of our lives" to

if I tried. Even if I was still its editor, it would

with David Phillips, the owner of the group.

shocked me on a Monday morning.

concern.

In the late 1800s, tuberculosis vaccines were developed to nearly make a witch blus rid our communities of these diseases, the ordinances seemed less important; in some cases, they ended up being repealed. So the slippery slope of a sputum sanctuary on city sidewalks and streets successfully surfaced again. Today, some of our most beloved backdrops are the breeding grounds of an all-out spatter circus. Who does more spitting than baseball players? Their hock-per-hour ratio is off the charts, well, if they tracked it, which is surprising that they don't since they have a stat for everything else. Many of them chew bubble gum, sunflower seeds, peanuts or tobacco, which generates excess saliva. And they're also constantly flinging back copious amounts of water and Gatorade, half of which gets swirled around the pearly whites, then cannoned into the dirt as a

But as science improved and watery bomb of germs that would So here we are again, in 2020, facing another pandemic and the thought of anyone spitting anything out of their mouth might lead to a social media flogging. Certainly, it would be enough to earn a deserved scowl and scolding from anyone nearby. So might those city ordinances be resurrected? You bet. And might it actually make a difference? Perhaps.

done and the people doing them

I wouldn't classify myself as an expectorant extraordinaire, but I do spit occasionally. Never when others are around, opening the opportunity for gasps of "gross." I usually fling my excess into a grassy knoll along whatever path I am running.

I started at a young age. An older brother probably set an example and the rest was spittle history. As a child, there was something satisfying about the ability to hit a distant target with my own ammo.

These days my neatly packaged salvos are typically restricted to my runs. Anybody who jogs knows what I'm talking about.

Of course, the history of spitting and our desire to restrict its occurrence goes back a century in some locales, to a time period that was similar to what we are experiencing now, when the spread of tuberculosis and flu was a serious health

killed one in seven people in the U.S. and Europe. A German bacteriologist by the name of Robert Koch was able to identify the germ that was responsible for the spread: mycobacterium tuberculosis. It was the deadliest infectious disease of that era.

In New York City from 1810-1815, 25% of all deaths were attributed to tuberculosis. According to a chart in the Minnesota Historical Society's archives, an estimated 15,000 people died in Minnesota in 1888. The No. 1 cause of death at that time was tuberculosis, or consumption as many people called it then.

So it came as no surprise to anyone at that time when city ordinances quickly surfaced around the desire to stop the spread of infectious diseases, and one way of doing that was making it a violation to spit in public.

So my pledge going forward is to holster the hock. Sideline the sputum. And disable the discharge.

It's a whole new world. Stay home and be safe, Minnesota.

And for the good of us all, socially secure the spit.

Keith Anderson is director of news of APG of East Central Minnesota.

tions

We have survived great challenges in the past, and together we can and will survive this challenge as well. Thank you, Congressman for hosting this town hall, rolling up your sleeves and helping lead the way.

Jason R. Reiland Spring Grove, Minn.

Letters to the editor

The Caledonia Argus encourages readers to submit original letters for publication. Letters may also be emailed to jordan.gerard@apgecm.com. Please include a phone number for verification. Letters must be signed and should be 500 words or fewer. Those that exceed that limit will be edited. We will not contact the writer prior to making changes for length. Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. We reserve the right to reject letters that we feel may be libelous. We charge for "letters of thanks or appreciation." They appear in the "card of thanks" section on the classified page.

When a school is not a place and a classroom is not a space

By Peggy Bakken

Nothing is as usual. Our home is still our castle but it is also a place of confinement. Our friends are still our friends but from at least six feet and six weeks apart. Families are still very much the cornerstone of society. It is now the rule every day, every hour, and in every nook and cranny of home, for three meals or more every 24 hours.

Public and charter schools are still public schools but a school isn't a place and a classroom isn't a space without kids and staff. It is this last change, the change in the education of more than 900,000 Minnesota students to which each family must focus their attention.

History tells us that from great challenges can emerge great progress. The COVID-19 pandemic health emergency now gripping our nation is indeed difficult and threatening but it too may hold opportunity for progress. Minnesota has had to implement an online system of teaching and learning for students at all levels.

Prior to the pandemic we could see the emergence of technology in classrooms and we could envision the possible benefits and shortcomings of more far-reaching online learning. It was in the future. But in a few weeks it has gone from a tempered inclusion to being the primary vehicle of delivery for public education.

No one is suggesting that this is an ideal substitute for the education of Minnesota's students. It isn't — it's a substitute in an emergency. It is, however, a chance to learn and test the powers and limitations of the existing technology-based distance learning. Like it or not the experiment is underway and we should fully utilize it and document our experiences.

Early on we heard of system failures. The technology didn't function correctly early on the first day. Those issues were soon corrected.

We also question the possible discrimination of students who couldn't access a computer and areas of the state that may not have the necessary

communication networks. We think the feedback from parents and students on this experience is critical to understanding what future distance learning efforts will need at the home level.

What were the demands placed on parents? Many are now required to work from home and left with a new task of minding school-age kids while doing their jobs. It also seems logical that the effectiveness of homebased instruction by computer differs by age and grade level. What are those differences? We have seen examples of subject areas that require a varied approach to online instruction, like music, physical education, laboratory and shop classes. How are these handled?

Most critical to the lessons that we can learn from this experience will be teacher feedback. It would seem critical and opportune to gather teacher assessment and documentation of what was gained and what was lost during these months of online teaching and learning.

Learning is both an individual and a social experience. What is lost when other students are not an immediate part of the class interaction and perhaps more important, the after-class discussion?

Hopefully we won't again be faced with an emergency learning challenge of this magnitude and duration, but in case we are, let's learn and prepare now. Let's also take away from these experiences new applications of techniques that can be a part of mainstream learning program without a crisis.

For many students, especially those of you in your final year, the end is compromised and technology can't replace it. We do not know how long this ordeal will last. We need to find ways to celebrate your great efforts and we wish you well as you move on. Our communities need to work with our schools to help make that happen.

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