



# Opinion

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## When words aren't enough

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Davis

Sometimes there are no words that can be enough. As a writer, I make my living off of them. And yet there are times that none will come which express thoughts and emotions appropriately.

We've been here before. Not even 11 months after the death of George Floyd, during the trial of the man accused of killing him, our corner of the nation is once again in the spotlight, facing heartbreak, outrage, protests, curfews, and violence after the death of 20-year-old Daunte Wright. It's a spotlight none of us wanted again.

Whether we admit it or not, we all have biases on what happened. We all have these biases because of our lived experiences or conceived beliefs. Biases are actually hardwired paths in our brain.

Can you do me a favor? Just for a moment, would you try setting aside your initial reaction to the event? Whatever lens that you may be viewing this time and story, pause your reaction for a moment and sit and acknowledge the grief. From every angle, there is sadness to be found. Lives have been permanently altered after this traumatic event.

There is a young man dead. His loved ones will never get to hug him, laugh with him, or talk to him again. Their lives are forever changed. For people of color, particularly the Black community, his death adds to the trauma and the fear they feel of being unfairly targeted.

There is also a police officer whose career has ended and criminal and civil litigation against her seems likely in her future, as well. Her life and the lives of those who love her are permanently changed.

As time passes, we will learn more about what happened. Was it on purpose or was it an accident? Was it his fault for resisting arrest? Was it her fault for shooting a deadly device by mistake? What about his alleged criminal past? Did she have a racial bias?

There will be a time we can debate those questions. But right now, I'm going to choose to see the pain of others, to sit in that pain, to mourn with those who mourn. Just for a moment, stop and see the fear and the pain in each other.

So take this space, the space left blank on this page, and use it as a symbol to pause. To pray. To lament. To extend a hand.

To see each other. To hear each other. To have compassion on one another despite our differences.

For that is love, and that is community, my friends.

## Forest Lake moves forward

### The Mayor's Desk

Mara Bain



There are many sure signs of spring in Forest Lake: the ice going off the lake, the first dock being put in and of course, the city's compost site opening for the season (which officially opened for the season on April 3 by the way). While I always look forward to spring, I am especially looking forward to this spring given the challenges of the past year. Even though we are still feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are starting to see signs that life may soon be returning to more normal footings.

Since last March, the city has not only worked to address the challenges brought on by the pandemic, but we have also begun work to ensure that the City is positioned to meet the opportunities that the future will bring. One thing we have done to ensure we are ready for the future is to draft a 10-year financial plan for the city. The 10-year plan identifies the future needs of the city in areas such as infrastructure, capital equipment, and staffing levels. It also identifies the best way to finance these needs.

In addition to the 10-year plan, the Economic Development Authority is about to embark on a downtown planning process. This work will be led by planners from

HKGI and is funded in part by a grant from the Washington County CDA. Planning efforts are set to be in earnest later this spring and will include numerous opportunities for residents to provide input on the plan. Keep an eye on the city's weekly email and website for additional information on how you can participate in the downtown planning process.

We are not only focusing on the future needs of the city, we are also continuing to work with local businesses to do what we can to provide some relief from the impacts of COVID. The City Council approved the waiving of city-issued on sale liquor and massage licenses for 2021. Combined, these fee waivers provided over \$45,000 in savings to local businesses. To prevent the need for budget cuts or raising the levy as a result of this fee waiver, the EDA agreed to use a portion of its fund balance to cover the lost general fund revenues.

Similar to last year, the city is once again allowing local restaurants to expand their outdoor seating for the upcoming patio season. Restaurants who wish to expand their seating can do so by completing the application found on the city's homepage.

While we are all longing for a return to in-person meetings until it is safe to do so, all city council and board meetings will continue to be held virtually. Information on how to attend a virtual meeting and how to view the live stream can be found on the city's website.

As I wrap up this column, I would like to mention how I am in awe of how this wonderful community has demonstrated perseverance and patience in the wake of the multitude of challenges we have faced throughout the past year. I am both humbled and proud to serve as your mayor.

*Mara Bain is the Mayor of Forest Lake*

## Happy to see the return of spring sports and activities

### The AD's Office

Mike Hennen



When most of us adults think back on our high school experience, the things that stand out most in our memories are the sports and activities we participated in, the friends we made along the way and the life lessons we learned while participating: perseverance, teamwork, goal-setting and so many more.

That's why it feels good to see our high school students participating in their spring activities and sports this year, especially after last year's spring season was canceled. Athletes are working out at their fields and facilities, music students are preparing for spring concerts, and student performers are honing their skills in speech and drama. It's great to see these students able to participate in the things they love.

Sports and activities are more than "extras" to the students who participate. For some, these extra curricular activities might be the reason they

get out of bed and get to school every morning, or the motivation that propels them through their school day. In the teenage years, students crave independence from their parents and begin looking for social and emotional support from peers and other caring adults. For many students, that support comes from those they know through a sport or activity. When all of this is in place, students are more easily able to focus on school work and think ahead toward the future.

We know that participation in extracurricular activities has a strong positive influence on students. The physical and mental challenges of these activities nudge students to work a little

harder and push outside of their comfort zone in order to achieve their goals. Team and group efforts show students how to work together with others toward a common goal. Coaches and advisors provide an additional layer of caring adults to help guide and support our students.

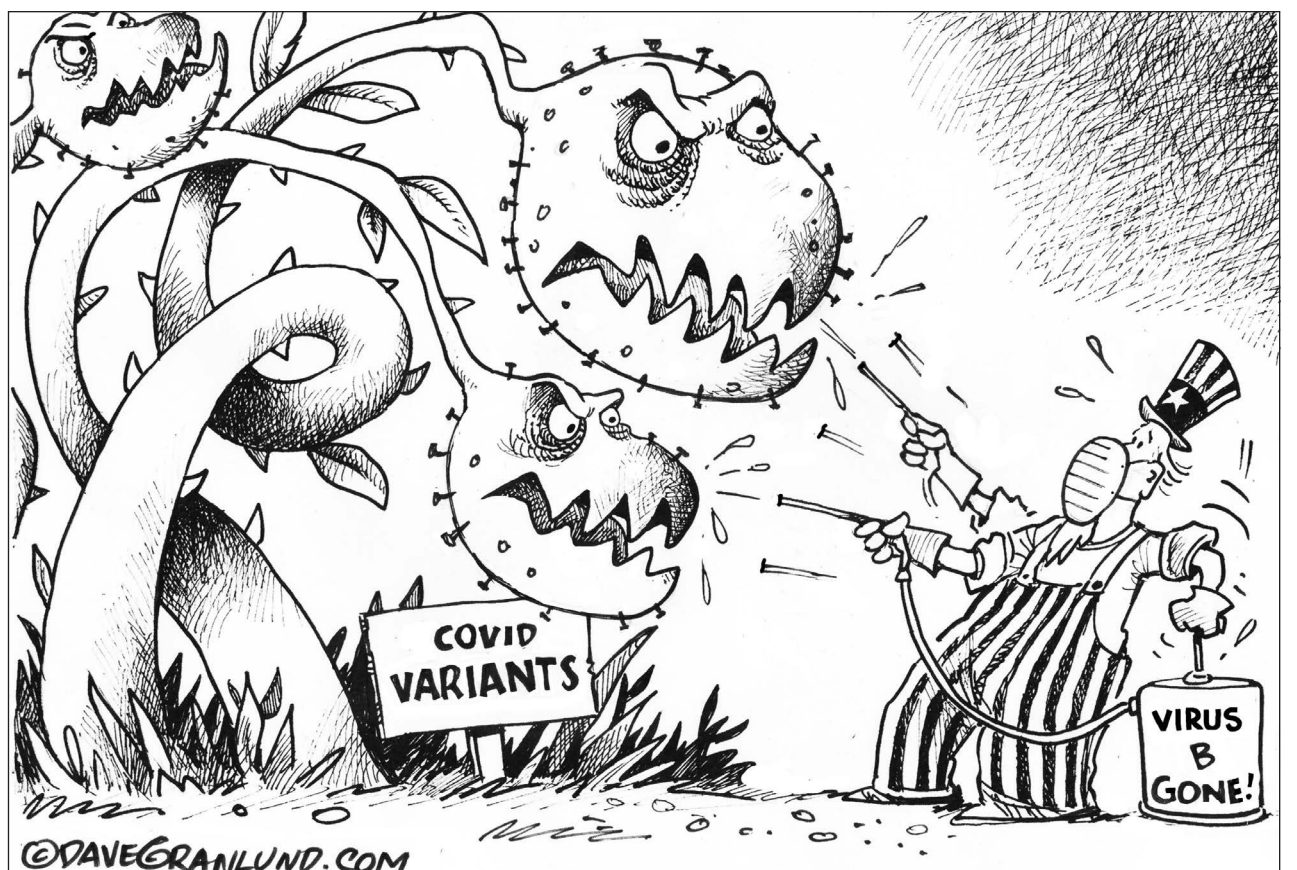
This year, with COVID adding many more complications to student participation, sports and activities are teaching a few additional life lessons. Safety guidance like social distancing and masks have taught our students to be adaptable and resilient. In some cases, in order to participate at all, students, coaches and advisors have needed to use a lot of creativity to come up with ways to make

things work within the safety guidance.

Most importantly in this year of COVID, we've learned gratitude and appreciation for the ability to play or participate whenever we can. We've seen many cases in our school and others where big games, tournaments or events were canceled due to COVID. One case of the virus or one group of students on quarantine can quickly derail the season or force a new game plan, and all of us — parents, students and staff — have learned to appreciate every competition and every chance to perform, and not to take those opportunities for granted.

As we look ahead to the spring season and the last several weeks of this challenging school year, it's great to see our students participating in the sports and activities they love, especially when these seasons were lost last spring.

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