Opinion

Minnesota Newspaper Association — Free Press, Free People — 1867
2011–2018 Editorial Page Award-Winner

PILOT EDITORIAL

Elected officials can't listen to us if we don't talk

A complaint we often hear regarding our elected officials is that they don't listen to us.

The truth of the matter is we don't often give them the chance.

How can we expect our representatives in government to properly represent us if they are unaware of our concerns, our requests, our positions or our thoughts? And, in this day and age of instantaneous communication, it's never been easier to get in touch with them.

With the 2021 legislative session just under way in St. Paul, our four local legislators are busy. But they are not too busy to take time to communicate with the people who sent them to the capital city.

Here's how to get a hold of them:

Rep. Bjorn Olson
375 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-3240
rep.bjorn.olson@house.mn

Sen. Julie Rosen
95 University Ave. W.
MN Senate Bldg., Rm 2113
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-5713
sen.julie.rosen@senate.mn

Rep. Rod Hamilton
277 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-5373
rep.rod.hamilton@house.mn

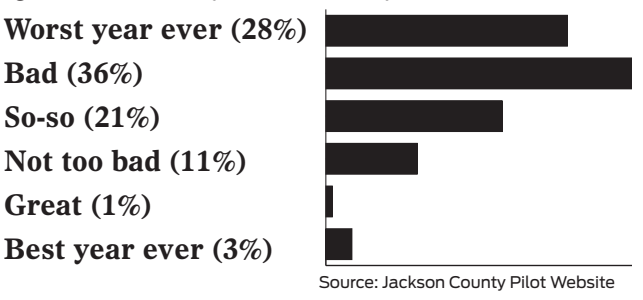
Sen. Bill Weber
95 University Ave. W.
MN Senate Bldg., Rm 2109
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-5650
sen.bill.weber@senate.mn

So make the effort and reach out to our elected state officials. Make your thoughts known.

Give them the opportunity to listen. If we don't, they won't.

LAST WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: How would you rate the year 2020?



Source: Jackson County Pilot Website

THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: How do you take your coffee?

Vote online at jacksoncountypilot.com.

Life lessons from the cruelest game

Back in March, I took it upon myself to find a new hobby, something I could do socially — but not with too many people — and virtually.

That led me to take up backgammon, partially due to its antiquity — as a history buff, I love all things ancient and backgammon was invented by the Romans — but mostly due to its fun, fast-paced blend of luck and skill. I invested in several books on it and play regularly with my friends, my father and people online.

An important feature of backgammon, learned by most players after a few rounds, is making the best out of a bad roll. The dice are not always kind; for every lucky throw, it can feel like you face three unlucky ones and even if you do get the numbers you want, bad choices can spoil your advantage. Games that seem all but won can turn ugly on a dime, even if you play well. It's not for nothing that backgammon has been called "the cruelest game" by aficionados.

If 2020 taught me anything, it's that life is a lot more like backgammon than chess. Bad things — and good things — happen on a regular basis, to varying degrees, but what matters is our reaction to those things.

I'm still learning that lesson, however imperfectly.

It's tempting to respond to the difficulties of last year — and the challenges we face in this one — with fatalism. The dice are bad, the situation is bad and we seem to have little control over our fates.

That's true to a point; none of us can will away the virus, the economic damage or our political divisions any more than we can will the dice to give us the perfect number. However, we can make the best decisions with the numbers we roll — and increase the likelihood of a better outcome.

It's a fitting lesson for an age when the precautions people take and the extent of support for local businesses can make the difference between getting the virus or not and between a business closing or surviving. But it's also a lesson that can be applied in almost every walk of life. Good things will always happen, as will bad things, but how we respond to them is all we can control.

So, the dice are cast. How will you move your checkers?

The decision, my friend, is yours.

JUST JOSHIN'
Joshua Schuetz

Reflecting on the year of the fight

If you were not one of those who had to fight for something in 2020, consider yourself fortunate.

Just like you, I have friends, family and others in my small sphere of influence who have had to not only fight, but battle COVID-19 in one way or another, and some of my family's close acquaintances have either had COVID-19 or one of their family members or friends has had to battle it. Thankfully, only a few of those folks succumbed to the disease or the aftermath of it.

Others have had to battle for their businesses, their jobs and just to gather together to have some form of celebration, whether for a birthday, wedding, anniversary, holiday or even a celebration of a life well lived.

I would have to say without question this past year has been a struggle for nearly all of us in some way, shape or form.

But as we have said goodbye to 2020 and are moving forward into this new year of 2021, I was reading in the Bible, 2 Timothy 4:7-8, where the Apostle Paul writes:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me — the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me, but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing."

You may feel as if you have fought the good fight this year or have finished the race, but in these troubling times the question is, 'Have you remained faithful?'

"Faithful to what?" you might ask. Faithful in believing the Lord will see you through all this and that no matter what you have or have not experienced or will experience in the future, the Lord God is with you, for you and will not let you perish but bring you out to the other side of your troubles, even from death itself.

So, looking back at this past year, how have you been running? How have you been faithful? And are you wondering if God has even noticed?

Well, I am certain he has noticed your trials and troubles and whether you have failed or faltered, but he also knows when you have been faithful and surged forward even with great courage and determination for him and others.

God knows those you have influenced or tried to point in his direction, as well as the good words of encouragement you have spoken, and you can bet he has heard every prayer you have given up for others.

How do we know this? Because the scriptures — God's word — tells us he has it all written down.

Like Paul whose coming death didn't bother him, make him feel sorry for his lost opportunities to serve or his failures, we can move forward in 2021 with God as our helper and face whatever heads our way without fear or regret.

God has a plan for each of us in this life and, if we remain faithful to his plan for our life, we can look forward to God's rewards for our faithfulness, not only in this life but the life to come.

If you might question whether or not you are walking in God's plan for your life, just ask him to reveal it to you and he will in his good time.

OUT AND ABOUT
Mike Jordan

READERS WRITE

Trump, his allies are all guilty

To the editor:

There is nothing good about Donald Trump. Not only will he be remembered as a liar, cheat, corrupt and bankrupt businessman, adulterer, sexual predator and impeached president, but he will also be remembered as the worst mass murderer in this country's history.

By ignoring his security briefings in December 2019 and beyond, which warned of the coming virus, and doing nothing for months to stop it, Trump is personally responsible for the deaths of 350,000 Americans. He deserves a life sentence in prison for each person who has died.

Now, as more than 3,000 Americans die each day, Trump is spending his remaining days in office being a sore loser, spreading lies and disinformation about the election, and engaging in criminal activity by still trying to force and threaten state employees to overturn a legal and constitutionally held election, along with playing golf almost every day.

Trump lost the 2016 popular vote by nearly 3 million votes. He only won because of the Electoral College. After nearly four years of hatred, racism, death and destruction, a blue wave came through in the 2020 election and Trump lost by more than 7 million votes.

Now he has fellow Republicans engaging in sedition by trying to overthrow the incoming administration and remain in power. Trump has made America a third-world country by becoming an authoritarian dictator. These people need to be tried on felony sedition charges and be imprisoned for trying to overthrow our government as traitors to our Constitution. This includes Tom Emmer and Jim Hagedorn.

American democracy used to be a beacon to the world; now we are just a laughingstock to the rest of the planet.

Paul Bland
Jackson

You lost; get over it

To the editor:

I don't have a crystal ball, but I know one thing that will happen this month. Joe Biden will be inaugurated as our next president, no matter what Donald Trump and his jock supporters try to do.

In a recording obtained by The Washington Post, on Saturday Trump called the Georgia secretary of state, a Republican, to ask him to "find" 11,780 votes, "which is one more than we have because we won the state." He sounds like a very desperate man and for good reason. He has done the dance and must now pay the fiddler.

All Americans should demand Trump be impeached again immediately and the stooges who have vowed to reject the votes from the Electoral College should be tried for treason. These efforts strike at the very foundation of our country, and Republicans claim they are the party that upholds law and order and the Constitution.

Hillary Clinton's supporters were termed "The Resistance," a far cry from what Trump's jock supporters are doing. One third of Trumpers follow former KKK leader David Duke or another white supremacist group such as the Proud Boys that promote violence and subversion. They will be in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday with weapons to riot and intimidate.

A letter printed in the Jackson County Pilot on Oct. 25, 2018, written by a very frequent contributor, stated "Democrats have a Frankenstein problem and don't know what to do." He got that so wrong. It's the Republicans who have a Frankenstein. They built him; they know there was no voter fraud but to keep the Trump voters happy they have to keep the monster happy. Trump is intent on burning down the house; will you hand him the match?

Elections have consequences. Get over it; you lost. Where have I heard that before?

Cheryl Brooks
Jackson

Election battle about more than him

To the editor:

There is a plethora of evidence of election fraud all across this nation, along with foreign interference. People need to realize, though, this battle is not just about Donald Trump vs. Joe Biden. It's so much more. It's about saving our republic. We are fighting to save an America that has been sold out to the Chinese Communist Party.

Attorney Sidney Powell is asking to open up church doors this Sunday, take the masks off and pray to God to send his warring angels to protect this nation from the evil that is trying to destroy this country. We need to bring God back to this nation! Put on the full armor of God!

The American people have the right to know the truth about nefarious legislators, both Democrats and Republicans. Our basic freedoms have been removed. We are condemning our children to a darkness we cannot understand.

We, as Christians, cannot allow Biden to become president. We cannot accept this voter fraud.

I'm asking the churches of Jackson County to open up their doors this Sunday so we can gather together in worship. Our republic depends on it.

Tamara Engbarth
Jackson

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Jackson County Pilot welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must include the writer's name, as well as address and phone number for verification purposes. Letters should be brief, up to 300 words. The editor reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and the right to edit as needed. Submit letters in person at the Jackson County Pilot office, mail them to 310 Second St. in Jackson or email them to editor@livewireprinting.com The deadline for letters is Monday noon. All submissions become the property of the Jackson County Pilot and may be published or otherwise used in any medium.

JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

PRINTED WITH SOYINK ON RECYCLED PAPER

Printed on Recycled Paper Read and Recycle

310 Second Street • Jackson, MN
(507) 847-3771 • jacksoncountypilot.com
Published Weekly on Thursday
USPS 271880
Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, Minnesota

—SUBSCRIPTION RATES—
In Jackson County, $64.00/Year. Elsewhere in the United States, $75.00/Year. Nine-month students, $55.00. ePilot, $30.00/Year.

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P.O. Box 208
Jackson, MN 56143
Phone (507) 847-3771

Member of
Minnesota Newspaper Association — Free Press, Free People — 1867
National Newspaper Association