

OPINION



PILOT EDITORIAL

Too many fires

There's been too many fires lately. Last month started off bad — a house fire in Lakefield that displaced six people and an apartment fire in Jackson that displaced 51 on the same day — and didn't end much better — two grass fires, one vehicle fire, one combine fire and another house fire in Jackson that displaced four more people in the span of one week. National Fire Prevention Week, which runs through Oct. 10, couldn't have come at a better time. It's a nice reminder to us all to check our in-home smoke detectors, think before we burn outdoors and make sure our vehicles and implements are equipped with working fire extinguishers. We got lucky last month, with nobody sustaining serious injuries in the myriad of fires that burned across Jackson County. This month — and in the months ahead — let's do our part to prevent fires altogether.

In times of crisis, take a step or two back and just breathe

I'm not writing on current events this week, because anything I put to paper will likely be outdated by publication day. Rather, I'd like to offer a word of advice — and comfort — to those struggling mentally and emotionally amid the various crises wracking our nation. It's OK to be overwhelmed. In fact, I would say it's normal to be overwhelmed. We're in the middle of a pandemic that has reached the heights of our national leadership. We see financial ruin, social unrest and general devastation all around us. So, don't blame yourself for being overwhelmed or angry. Instead, ask yourself what you can do with those feelings. If you want to see change, think locally. If you're not especially vulnerable and have time on your hands, consider volunteering and doing what you can to take weight off the shoulders of the most vulnerable in our society. Take time for yourself, also, since emotional exhaustion leads to poor decision making — believe me, I know. When out in public, take precautions. Even if you're not worried about getting the virus, there are other people around you who are more susceptible to its worst effects. Those people have an equal right to share the public square, so make it easier for them to do so by being careful. Learn to accept some discomfort for yourself as small price for helping others. This lesson,

especially in a country as rich as ours, is among the most difficult to accept. Talk to your family and friends as much as you can. Make it a point to reconnect with people you might not have spoken with in a while. Phone calls, Facebook and Skype can help foster friendship from far away. Be patient with others, especially those who are frightened or suffering from depression and other forms of mental illness. I think most people are at least a little depressed right now. Whatever our differences, we're all stuck together with this thing and it's important for us to work together to keep things running and keep each other safe. Prudence, humility, kindness and basic decency are never more important than they are in times like these. The pandemic will end, along with the unrest, the election and all of our other crises. We won't be proud of our political system's response, nor that of our leaders. But we can at least take precautions, care for others and participate in daily life with humility, kindness and dignity. And that will be enough.



LAST WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: How far will the Minnesota Twins go in the postseason??

No farther (41%)
ALDS champs (7%)
ALCS champs (8%)
World champs (14%)
There's still baseball? (30%)

Source: Jackson County Pilot Website

THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: Which public policy area is most influential in deciding your vote for president?

Vote online at jacksoncountypilot.com.

READERS WRITE

Pray, and vote in that same spirit

To the editor:
We're facing lockdowns because we abuse our leadership authority, political deadlock because we abuse our lawmaking power, health and financial crises because we abuse the masses for profit, racism because we abuse our position in society and injustice because we abuse our authority to protect. All this abuse of power is because we've rejected what's good, calling good evil and evil good. We often forget history repeats. Because they murdered their own children as a sacrifice to an idol, ancient Israel was attacked in 605 B.C. as a warning, then judged by God 19 years later through disease, famine and war. America's the only other nation founded on faith in the same God, and we've similarly murdered our children through abortion. We were attacked in 2001 as a warning; are we being judged 19 years later? On April 9-10, 1970, abortion was first legalized in New York. Fifty years to the day, April 9-10, 2020 (also Passover), the coronavirus "plague" peaked in New York, targeting those 50-plus years of age. Corruption exists in both political parties, and no politician — no person alive today — is uncorrupted. However, there are those who stand for what's good. For the most part, Republicans like Donald Trump, Jason Lewis, Jim Hagedorn, Julie Rosen and Bjorn Olson, along with Minnesota Supreme Court candidate Michelle MacDonald, stand for life and acknowledge God. And for the most part, Democrats have openly defied God and desecrated his core creation — the identity of those created in his image, marriage and unborn children. Neither presidential candidate will be our savior; that title belongs to Jesus alone. I've been praying we, as a nation, would repent and return to God, and I'll vote in that same spirit.

Ryan Brinks
Jackson

Keep yourselves and others safe

To the editor:
The Fire Prevention Month theme for 2020 is "Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!" This campaign helps educate individuals about simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe. According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries in the United States. Almost 50 percent of reported home fires started in the kitchen. Almost 67 percent of home cooking fires start with the ignition of food or other cooking materials. A cooking fire can grow quickly. According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, fire deaths have increased 39 percent compared to 2019. Prevention tips for cooking-related fires include: When cooking, stay in the kitchen, use a timer and avoid distractions such as electronics or television. If you have to leave the room, turn off the stove and move the pan from the burner. Keep oven mitts, towels, wooden spoons and other materials that can burn 3 feet or more from the stovetop. Slide a tight-fitting lid on the pan and turn off the heat if a fire starts. Avoid wearing loose clothing while cooking or baking that can easily catch fire. Have a "kid-free zone" greater than 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or beverages are prepared or carried. Stay alert while cooking — do not cook or bake if you're sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs or consumed alcohol that makes you drowsy. Prevention tips to prevent smoking-related fires include: Smoke outside. Extinguish cigarettes in appropriate ashtray filled with sand or water. Avoid discarding cigarettes in potted plants, leaves, mulch or other vegetation. Don't smoke while on oxygen. Avoid smoking while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. As we move into the holiday season, use these tips to stay safe!

Luke Ewald
Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services
Jackson

Look past labels when voting for rep

To the editor:
I'm writing in support of Pat Bacon's candidacy for Minnesota House District 23A. I'm asking folks to look past the usual labels that separate us and toward a person of integrity and common sense. She will work together with both "sides" of the political aisle and will represent our district well. She is a listener and a doer. She is aware of and will continue to listen to issues important to all of us — education, rural and community economy, health and medical needs and hardships facing families. She is a woman I respect and admire. Please give her your vote! I'd also like to thank our local county auditor's offices, election judges and officials and postal workers during this election season. You are appreciated!

Linda Shaw
Fairmont

FACEBOOK

COUNTY ATTORNEY APPOINTED JUDGE: Jackson County Attorney Sherry Haley has been appointed district court judge in Minnesota's Fifth Judicial District. Gov. Tim Walz announced the appointment Friday.

- BARB FELL** A double edged sword. You will be a great judge but you are also a wonderful county attorney.
- KERRI HENDERSON** Congratulations to you Sherry! Best wishes in your new position!
- LESLIE ERICKSON** How exciting and well deserved! Congratulations, Sherry!
- MARY KOKE NEEDHAM** Congratulations Sherry. Such a wonderful honor. Mary and Terry Needham
- RUTH HANSEN** God bless you as you serve in your new position.
- KATHY HEMEN** Congrats! You will be a great judge.
- BECKY MCCANN** Congratulations so happy for you but will miss seeing you everyday.
- SARAH OMMODT GULLICKSON** Congrats! So amazing!

- MONETTE BERKEVICH** Congratulations! Can't wait to work with you again!
- JAN OLSON** Congrats Sherry! It is a big honor
- KRISTEN HEUTINCK** Awesome! You will be fabulous!
- KARLA EBERT** Way to go, Sherry!
- CHELEY SMITH** Congratulations on your appointment!
- NANCY HALEY** We are so very proud.
- NANCY SADUSKY** How wonderful! Congratulations Sherry!
- LIZ PAUMEN NIEHAUS** So proud of you Sherry!

Five reasons to vote liberal

To the editor:
Here are five reasons to vote liberal:
• You think the cities and states managed by liberals are safe, well-managed and under control, including but not restricted to Kenosha, Minneapolis, Detroit, Chicago, Seattle and the state of California.
• You believe Joe Biden's fantasy list of what he has accomplished during his 47 years in the good old political slop trough.
• You are impressed by Biden's self-proclaimed college class ratings, full scholarships and many academic degrees. Maybe a few fibs and stretching the truth a bit!
• You believe Biden usually knows where he is, who he is and what he is saying.
You think President Donald J. Trump is responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic and you don't like his hair. Vote. It's your responsibility and your privilege.

Eugene Stene
Alpha

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.

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