## JPINION



**EDITORIAL PAGE AWARD-WINNER** 

**PILOT EDITORIAL** 

### **Programs, concerts** set the mood for a very merry season

What a joy it is to see our local kids back on stage performing Christmas programs and concerts once again.

After being completely wiped out last year by the COVID-19 pandemic, local school programs and performances are back in full this year.

Riverside Elementary School presented its Christmas program last week, and Pleasantview does the same this week. The Jackson County Central High School band and choir perform their Christmas concert next week.

While not a prerequisite to getting in the holiday spirit, there's something to be said about seeing costumed kiddos sing about Santa and hearing live Christmas music ring out that really sets the mood for a merry season.

Thank you to the teachers who help prepare our kids for these programs and performances, thank you to the students for taking center stage in them and thank you to school officials for ensuring all are

open to the public. Bring on

Christmas.

# On Diogenes the Cynic: Not that kind of 'cynic'

Picture yourself in ancient Athens, in the mid fourth century B.C. You're in the Agora, which is the city's chief marketplace, appropriately surrounded by merchants selling their wares, politicians arguing about this or that and people inspecting the various items on offer.

Suddenly, you see a man, shabbily dressed, walking around the Agora with a lit lantern. There'd be nothing unusual about that, except it's midday, with the hot Mediterranean sun beating down on you and everyone else at the market. Some things are in short supply, but light isn't one of them.

One of the leading politicians pushes his way through the crowd and shouts at the man:

"Diogenes!" he yells.
"You fleabag philosopher, what are you doing with that lantern of yours, walking around in the afternoon sun?'

By this point, several other politicians and merchants have joined him, along with a few other people. The crowd looks between

the philosopher and assemblyman. Now, Diogenes, seemingly unperturbed, looks at his opponent as one might look at a particularly interesting specimen of worm.

"Why," he tells the politician, with a sneer on his face and a flick of his lantern. "I'm looking for an honest man.

The crowd roars in laughter, a few clapping at his joke. The politician goes red in the face, turning an unhealthy shade of purple, before retreating, defeated, back into the crowd.

This story is an adopted version of an ancient anecdote about Diogenes of Sinope, whom we know better as Diogenes the Cynic.

The philosophy of Cynicism was quite different from the modern meaning of the phrase. The Cynics were a loosely organized school of thinkers, mendicants and ascetics who held the following to be true: The goal of life is to live virtuously, which they defined as living in agreement with nature.

To that end, the Cynics favored poverty, selfsufficiency and absolute freedom of speech. They rejected opulence, mocked and derided both the pursuit of wealth for its own sake and the use of legislation as a cudgel by political leaders. Most of all, the Cynics held true wealth consisted in training oneself to want nothing, rather than trying to satiate desires that will always move their goalposts when one comes within striking distance of them.

Their attitude to the world was put eloquently in the poet Lucian's dialogue, titled "The Cynic," like so:

God is that gracious host who provides many dishes of various kinds, so that his guests can have whatever suits them the healthy, the sick, and the infirm. We are not supposed to eat them all indiscriminately; each should take what is set in front of him and of that only as much as he really needs."

Cynicism is, in many ways, an untenable philosophy for most

age, but it offers us an example worth considering in a world of consumerism, dishonesty and centralized government. While cynicism in the contemporary sense does us little good, a little dose of Diogenes's Cynicism with its advocacy of free speech, focus on the limitation of wants and penchant for criticizing the poor decision making of stubborn leaders — can go a long way.

However shabby his clothing, that philosopher whom Athenians called "The Dog" was right about more than they cared to admit - and more than we care to, as well.



#### Joshua Schuetz

#### LAST WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: Should the U.S. Supreme Court uphold or overturn Roe v. Wade?

**Uphold** (58%) Overturn (37%) Not sure (5%)

#### THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: Hot apple cider, or hot cocoa?

Vote online at jacksoncountypilot.com.

#### **READERS WRITE**

#### Hoping I am wrong, but not likely

To the editor:

For the last few months, I have been warning people of the dangers of getting the COVID-19 jab, calling it "doctor-assisted suicide." I also stated I will get no satisfaction from telling those who disagree with me, "I told you so," when time proves me right, because most of my friends and family have gotten the jab. In fact, for the first time in my life, I have actually wanted to be proven wrong. Unfortunately, that isn't what is happening. A Dec. 6 report by David John Sorensen and Vladimir Zelenko presents evidence of millions of deaths and severe adverse events resulting from the experimental COVID-19 injections.

No one wants to believe this is happening, that this could be allowed to happen. That doesn't change the fact it is happening. Just read the above-mentioned report and if, you still insist on getting the jab, or the second jab, or one or more of the "boosters," then, for starters, I suggest you start researching how to survive the upcoming cold and flu season with a destroyed immune system.

Finally, for those who attack the messenger because they don't like the message — like the anonymous letter-writer who contacted me last week — if my letters have saved even one person from death or disability, it will have been worth all the hate and name-calling directed my way.

Sam Smith 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 shal 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

## Southern Minnesota is in need of real infrastructure

During my time in Congress, building true infrastructure in southern Minnesota has been one of my biggest priorities. I have worked to promote projects that build and repair our airports, roads, bridges, railroads, ports, locks

Just recently, local stakeholders came together to celebrate the completion of the Highway 14 expansion project from Dodge Center to Owatonna. The completion of the Highway 14 corridor from Rochester to New Ulm, a project dating back roughly 60 years, has been my top transportation priority. I'm pleased to report that my work with the Trump administration's U.S. Department of Transportation secured a \$25 million Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development discretionary grant.

This federal funding, combined with dedicated state dollars, have paved the way for completion of the last Highway 14 four-lane expansion from Nicollet to New Ulm. I'm proud of this bipartisan effort. Groundbreaking should commence in the near future and about two years from now we will celebrate enhanced transportation that will facilitate economic growth, transportation efficiencies, safer travel and improved quality of life for southern Minnesotans.

The Mankato Regional Airport also recently received funding to make changes to its airfield and update the airport's runways. I fought for this and am working closely with local leaders to gain authorization and

funding for a new control tower at the Mankato Regional Airport, our state's busiest airport without a tower. Moving forward, this will provide additional safety as the successful airport and pilot education training programs continue to

In addition, I worked to gain funding for the Rochester International Airport's substantial runway and lighting upgrade project critical improvements to facilitate transportation during inclement weather conditions of tens of thousands of daily time-sensitive lab tests, along with critical care patients and medical experts who travel to the Mayo Clinic from points around the world every

It is projects like these that will go a long way toward expanding commerce, enhancing safety and improving travel in our communities. It is critical we focus on projects that will result in meaningful infrastructure investments.

Transportation and infrastructure have certainly been in the news a great deal recently as the U.S. House of Representatives passed two massive tax-and-spending packages. These two packages are inextricably linked, as the so-called "infrastructure" package was nothing more than a Trojan horse aimed at greasing the skids to pass President Joe Biden's "Build Back Better' reconciliation bill, the largest spending package in our nation's history.

The "infrastructure" package comes with an expensive price tag — \$1.2 trillion, with \$600 billion in new spending — and only a fraction of the new money goes toward what the American people would consider true infrastructure. Moreover, most of the new spending is not paid billions of dollars in new debt that will ultimately lead to higher taxes, spur additional inflation and make America less competitive.

In addition to piling on mountains of new debt, nothing was done to systematically reform our transportation and infrastructure system. The package contains no meaningful improvements to the often misused and lengthy regulatory and permitting processes. Projects that take years to complete will continue to do so.

Even worse, we've now interjected new radical policies and ideas like the Green New Deal, which will only compound our nation's infrastructure challenges, drive up the cost of energy and make us dependent upon foreign countries like communist China. Centralizing transportation decisions in this way takes us further away from putting these decisions into the hands of elected local and state officials, where they should reside.

Without a doubt, there is a need for more transportation dollars, but we must fund projects in a responsible manner. That means being paid for, instituting meaningful reforms and empowering state legislators, not Washington, D.C. politicians, bureaucrats

and Green New Deal lobbyists with project decision-making.

House Republicans put forth a vision along these lines. The STARTER Act increases funding for transportation and infrastructure but does so without mortgaging our children's It streamlines the regulatory and permitting process in order to reduce burdens on states and localities. And it makes permanent the BUILD grant program, which was so successful for the Highway 14 expansion, while creating direct set-asides for rural transportation projects.

For these and other reasons I strongly supported the STARTER Act, which invests \$400 billion over 5 years.

This is very much the sort of vision that should have been put in place, and it's the type of true infrastructure reforms I fight for in Congress every day. Doing so would vastly increase funding for true infrastructure like roads and bridges, as well as improve the quality of life for the hardworking men and women of Minnesota's First District and reinforce the commonsense conservative sensibilities that have made our country great.

(About the author: Jim Hagedorn represents Jackson County and all of Minnesota's First District in the U.S. House of Representatives.)

> **GUEST COLUMNIST** U.S. Rep.

Jim Hagedorn

Publisher

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