

OPINION



PILOT EDITORIAL

A future without Hamilton up to us

In state Rep. Rod Hamilton, Jackson County has had a tireless advocate for agriculture, transportation, long-term care and the rights of the unborn, regardless of where those issues may fall on the political spectrum in any given year. In his decision announced last week to not seek re-election this fall, we are at risk of losing that. Since taking the mantle of leadership from longtime local state Rep. Elaine Harder of Jackson back in 2004, Hamilton has represented Jackson County well. A farmer himself, he championed issues of importance to those involved with the backbone of our local economy and served as longtime chair of the Minnesota House Agriculture Finance Committee. Among his proudest legislative accomplishments is delivering a four-lane Highway 60 from Bigelow to St. James, even though he had to buck his party — and his governor — to get it done. And he has consistently prioritized funding for the district's long-term care facilities and been an outspoken advocate of the unborn. With Hamilton, we have a known — and appreciated — entity. His decision to not seek re-election — while respected — casts uncertainty over what we may have in the future. The good news is we are in control of our own future in this regard. It is from us candidates for Hamilton's seat will emerge and it is up to us which of those candidates will take it. Here's hoping a candidate steps forward who, like Hamilton, is a tireless advocate for agriculture, transportation, long-term care and the rights of the unborn. Here's hoping a candidate emerges who, like Hamilton, is not blinded by party allegiance to a fault. Here's hoping a candidate emerges who is like Hamilton. And here's hoping we elect that candidate.



Against the tendency toward anger

“See the foundations of the most celebrated cities hardly now to be discerned; they were ruined by anger.” So says the Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca in his essay, “On Anger.” The work, one of many written by the Roman thinker over the course of his life, defends a startling position by modern standards — that anger is never justifiable, nor useful. It’s a strong stance to take, and I will take up the position of defending it. I will begin with a look at anger at the societal level and then proceed to a look at the individual level. America is addicted to anger. Indeed, we have turned that most unholy of emotions into a kind of civic virtue. Political movements are justified on the basis of the anger their participants feel. But has any emotion cost our country so much in recent years as anger? Look around; see how political factions stoke anger

among their supporters, then set them loose like rabid animals on the body politic. And what are the consequences of such actions? Anger is a weak god, and a cruel one; its demands are endless, its rewards lacking. In 2020, whole neighborhoods were set ablaze at anger’s altar, and what did that burnt offering bring? Nothing to speak of except rubble and ruin. From Minneapolis to the U.S. Capitol, anger demanded offerings of blood and ash, sending its frenzied soldiers to fight in the streets. And for what? No act of injustice was put right by anger; it heaped injustice on injustice, as though filling the world with evil might purge it of the same. We call people who try to put out fires with gasoline crazy, but we view those who address injustice with anger brave and noble. Yet in every way they are identical. And that’s just at the societal level. Individuals who give their assent to anger act immaturely,

destroy objects they must pay to replace and wreck relationships they may never repair. I’ve struggled with anger for most of my life and have only recently come to terms with the fact. My anger is and was both childish and counterproductive; it never helped me, but caused no end of pain, anxiety and suffering. Stoicism has helped, but the exercise of any new technique requires practice, and I am a novice. The most pernicious thing about anger is how the angry person feels at once like a martyr and a conqueror. When you give into anger, you give all power over yourself to that which made you angry. It’s a position of weakness, not strength. One may react to something with the physiological symptoms that mimic anger — a bitter thought, a twist of the face, a faster heartbeat and a rush of adrenaline.

But these are of no more consequence than a headache, and nobody destroys their brother over a headache. So, we should say, when such feelings afflict us: “You are just an impression and not at all the things you claim to represent.” The initial symptoms are not the same as giving assent to them and becoming angry. Tell your anger that, and take a breath. It’s not perfect, and I still fail at it often, but I think it has made me a better person. If you struggle with anger, maybe that will help. I know it’s helping me.



JUST JOSHIN' Joshua Schuetz

Heron Lake is vitally important to birds

Spend a little time exploring Heron Lake and you will quickly realize this system of shallow lakes and wetlands is home to many species of birds. Once known nationally as “the Chesapeake Bay of the Midwest,” this diverse ecosystem is a state-recognized Important Bird Area due to the sheer number of avian species that nest and make their homes in its marshlands and surrounding uplands. The IBA is also an important resting site for many migratory waterbirds and has a long history associated with waterfowl hunting. Minnesota’s Important Bird Area Program helps to provide critical habitat for both breeding and migrating birds. Many of these are listed as state Species of Greatest Conservation Need that are prioritized in Minnesota’s Wildlife Action Plans. The birds and their required habitats are meant to be monitored and conserved through the IBA program. It is

designed to be proactive, voluntary and science-based in order to preserve ecosystems most essential for native bird species. The Heron Lake IBA encompasses all of North and South Heron Lake, the Talcot Lake Wildlife Management Area and several smaller lakes and wetlands scattered in between. In total, this IBA includes 11 WMAs equaling approximately 7,700 acres and four Waterfowl Production Areas, which adds another 1,183 acres of wetland/upland habitat. Besides the Heron Lake complex of shallow wetland lakes and grasslands — under both private and public ownership — the Talcot Lake WMA is one of the largest publicly owned set-aside wildlife areas in southwest Minnesota, at 5,103 acres. The lake and associated wetlands were created with a dam and 2,000 feet of dikes, which are managed to provide nesting habitat for dozens of species such as American bitterns, sora and Virginia rails,

common yellowthroats and indigo buntings. Although the Heron Lake ecosystem has been degraded by poor land management decisions and agricultural drainage, conservationists truly value the habitat that remains. In 2007, the Minnesota Biological Survey conducted breeding bird surveys on Heron Lake as part of a larger inventory of the Jackson, Cottonwood, Martin and Watonwan County bird populations. An impressive 77 species were documented, including all typical wetland birds and 10 duck species. Some of the most notable birds recorded were western grebes, least bitterns, trumpeter swans, Forster’s tern, marsh wren, blue grosbeak, swamp sparrow and Henslow’s sparrow. The wildlife habitat provided by the Heron Lake IBA is truly a treasure to our community. It provides vital habitat for species that are threatened and endangered in Minnesota

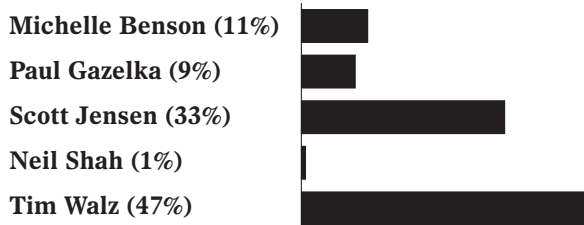
and the surrounding upper Midwest. Wetlands and native prairie are important not only for increasingly uncommon birds and mammals, but they also provide ecosystem services such as water storage and infiltration in addition to replenishing valuable groundwater resources. Furthermore, an entire community of birders and waterfowl hunters seek out the remaining natural habitats that provide incredible opportunity for recreation and the conservation of unique species, some found only in the highest quality natural habitats. Thus, we should continue to protect and preserve Heron Lake as a financially significant resource, which has potential to bring tourism into our community.

(About the author: Lloyd Kalfs has a degree in natural resources from Northland College. He lives in Okabena.)

GUEST COLUMNIST Lloyd Kalfs

LAST WEEK’S ONLINE POLL

Q: Who is your preferred choice for Minnesota governor?



Source: Jackson County Pilot Website

THIS WEEK’S ONLINE POLL

Q: Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Joe Biden is handling the COVID-19 pandemic?

Vote online at jacksoncountypilot.com.

READERS WRITE

Sad to see county offices in turmoil

To the editor: It saddens me to see our county offices in turmoil. After reviewing the concerns from the county attorney and the details provided, I would like to pose a couple questions to our county commissioners: Why are we fighting so hard to maintain low wages amid high caseloads? Why are we not marketing Jackson as a premier place to live and work? If Jackson’s is indeed the third lowest-paid, full-time county attorney’s office in the state, why would we not want to work to change that, at the very least providing some sort of a framework for catching it up to where it should be? It’s unfortunate and it saddens me this is the way we choose to do business. I feel you would be hard pressed to find an individual who cares more about our county and its residents than someone who grew up here and chose to return to public service here like former Jackson County Attorney Tom Prochazka has done. We just hired a new county administrator and have agreed to pay him \$146,000 in 2022, which is 39 percent higher than the pay for county attorney. In addition to questions surrounding the nature of the county administrator’s departure from his previous position and whether he meets the minimum education requirement posted by the county when the position was advertised, I am also disappointed the administrator is not required to maintain residency within our county. Why would we want the person holding one of the highest-paid positions — if not the highest-paid position — in the county to not reside in the county? These tax dollars we are spending on this position do not stay within our county tax base.

Rachel Hawn Jackson

Before you get too busy in the new year, read this

As if people aren’t busy enough trying to navigate their jobs, raise and educate their families and care for their homes, cars and other possessions, as well as their extended families and friends, they are once again having to contend with lockdowns, as well as inflation eating away at their income and savings, further complicating their way of life. But it is a new year, and the hope is things will get better and not more like hell on earth, which most of us have been experiencing over the last almost two years. To get an understanding of how we got to where we are, I would encourage everyone to take the time to read Michael Rectenwald’s article, “What is the Great Reset?” This article appears in “Imprimis,” a Hillsdale College online information source. Rectenwald is the chief academic officer for American scholars. He knows of which he speaks. In this rather lengthy article, Rectenwald addresses the reality of The

Great Reset outlined in a book by Thierry Malherc called, “COVID-19: The Great Reset.” The essence of his book, according to Rectenwald, is to point out the weaknesses of capitalism supposedly exposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within his article, Rectenwald shares a history of the Great Reset going back as far as 1971 taking the reader up to 2010 and beyond. In reading this article, you will discover some unhappy news about the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The foundation actually rehearsed, if you will, a pandemic exercise, along with Johns Hopkins University in 2019, that became — for the most part — a reality in 2020 for the entire world. Accordingly, the Great Reset has been pushed and presented during the worldwide pandemic to not only answer the “problem of capitalism,” but also to supposedly take on the climate-control issue. Thus, the Great Reset people, or “Woke Folk,” are

following the Communist Party ideology of taking advantage of crises — or creating them — to push their agenda. And Rectenwald notes, the entire playbook of these “Woke Folk” is working in the current reality: Increasing inflation rates, interrupting the supply chain, escalating real estate prices and diminishing available housing on the market, creating high fuel costs and threatening workers, businesses and business leaders to become woke or lose their business or job. Their goal? So we on the bottom rung of things end up with little or no choice, no worshipping our God, no selling or buying anything and no freedom. These folks keep pushing toward a two-tiered society, Rectenwald asserts, with what they call a few high-end stakeholders and the rest of us living under socialism at its lowest level. I believe this article is a must-read if you are concerned for your families, your business, your futures and our freedoms as outlined in our

Constitution and our Bill of Rights. The last two paragraphs of this article lay out what is happening now here in this country and in our world and the hope we have, as Rectenwald notes the Woke’s plans are doomed to failure, but not without we the people standing up against the tyranny. The reality is you cannot replace God in people’s lives and expect God to bless your plans — whether with a Great Reset or any other godless plan contrived by man. Woke won’t work. For further detail, I would recommend Rectenwald’s own book, “Beyond Woke,” to learn why before it is too late.



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