

OUR VIEW

In the interest of transparency

Our publisher, Pete Radosevich, is running for public office, he announced this week. And your local community newspaper, the Pine Knot News, is announcing that our publisher is being placed on sabbatical leave, effective immediately. He will no longer have any input on how we run this newspaper, and he will no longer contribute to the newspaper, including his column on these pages.

There is no legal restriction preventing him from continuing to work for the paper. The First Amendment guarantees that the press is free from government restrictions, and we take that responsibility seriously. But we feel that our journalistic integrity requires us to furlough our publisher until after the election. We will reassess the situation then.

Not all publications would silence one of their popular columnists. In fact, some newspapers would continue to run a candidate's columns, and some candidates will even publish their own newspapers, sometimes filled with propaganda for their platforms.

But newspapers that want open and clear lines of communications with their audience simply won't do that, including the Pine Knot News. It really wasn't much of a discussion. Our publisher announced at our last staff meeting that he is running for office. Our editor told him we were putting him on a sabbatical. That was the end of the discussion.

We're proud to exhibit such integrity in our local newspaper. We believe our community is better for it. At a time when many small towns are losing their newspapers, and when many of those remaining newspapers have decided to take a "liberal" or "conservative" bent, the Pine Knot News continues to be committed to real journalism, with our best efforts to not slant the news in any way, a difficult job given perspectives in the current political climate.

We are committed to covering local government units and elected officials as best we can. We're committed to fairness, accountability, and truth. We put out a newspaper that is committed to the local community, and in order to do that, we must treat all subjects fairly and without bias.

While columns and editorials certainly have a bias, and are on pages clearly marked as "opinion," you'll find the news stories are direct and impartial. That's critical to credibility — no one will trust the Pine Knot News if we injected our personal opinions and biases into news stories. Our goal is to present the facts and let you decide what information you feel is important. That's accountability to our community.

And while we won't be running the "Harry's Gang" column during the election cycle, you can trust that we'll continue to put out the same local news coverage that has earned the Pine Knot status of "Best Weekly Newspaper in Minnesota" two years in a row. Pete will be part of election stories, as will the other candidates. All candidates will have a voice, either through letters to the editor, news coverage, paid advertising, and the fall election guide.

Because our reporting will likely cover the race our publisher is in, we can't allow him to be involved in any part of the newspaper until after the election. To do otherwise would compromise our credibility and would do a disservice to our readers and our community. Eliminating any doubt is what a trusted newspaper should do.

We welcome your input to the Pine Knot News community newspaper. Send your thoughts, letters, or news to opinion@PineKnotNews.com.



See you on the campaign trail

This will be my last "Harry's Gang" column for a while. I have decided to run for Minnesota House of Representatives in District 11A, which encompasses all of Carlton County and a small part of Pine and St. Louis counties.

And I can't do both.

So, I'd like to share some of my random ideas I've accumulated since we started this paper a few years ago.

My dad used to say that when just as many liberals complain that the local paper is too conservative as conservatives complain the paper leans liberal, you can trust the integrity of the newspaper. That's certainly true with the Pine Knot News. I hear enough complaints from each side that I know Jana, Mike, Rose and the rest of the staff are doing something right.

Unlike the gossip you hear on social media, and the rip-and-read reporting we sometimes see on TV news, the Pine Knot News doesn't publish facts unless they are verified. That's no small task. A good amount of time is spent by the staff making sure that what is printed has been verified, and by reliable sources. Certainly, many facts are self-verified, and occasionally, something slips by that turns out to be inaccurate. Do we just hope no one notices? Absolutely not — we print a "corrections" column where we fix every error we find — even something as simple as a misspelled name or address. That's because we want people to trust our reporting.

We used to name our parks, streets and schools after prominent people, as a memorial and in appreciation of the work these people did in our community. We

don't do that anymore. The last significant park we built is called "Braun Park" after the family who did so much to encourage youth sports in the area. After they died in a tragic car accident, we honored their contribution

by naming the park after them. Remember Hubert Humphrey — statesman, defender of civil rights and clean government? We named a stadium after him. The trend, however, has been to name these public places after anyone willing to spend enough money to get the naming rights. What

happened to honoring those who worked to make our lives a little better, rather than some corporation looking for an advertising opportunity?

I love the skate park we built in Athletic Park over by the library. It's clean, well-designed, and visible — not much monkey business can go on when dozens of cars are constantly driving by. The skating ring on Dunlap Island is similar — cleverly designed so people can skate without being run over by a hockey game. I wish it were more popular, but that takes time, I guess. A boys swim team would be nice, since we have that great pool at the new middle school. There are plenty of activities for our kids, but I still feel it's too bad Quidditch can't be a real sport.

Sunday "blue laws" weren't so bad. It used to be that most stores and events were not open on Sundays, based on the Christian premise of a day of rest. That idea had some merit. No matter your religious beliefs, having one day a week where life is a little slower is beneficial to everyone. Nowadays, about the only thing you can't do on Sunday is buy a

car or renew your driver's license. I understand that businesses should have the right to be open at any reasonable time they want. But I still miss the serenity of the Sundays of old.

I don't understand why we don't fix the postal service. Until just a few years ago, we could drop a letter into the mail and count on having it delivered anywhere in Minnesota the next day. Now, it's at least three days, and sometimes a week or more. We certainly haven't gotten more patient — in fact, now more than ever we want our stuff delivered to us as soon as possible. Soon, the postal service will be irrelevant, and only private companies will be able to deliver things quickly to our homes. Which, I suppose, is their motivation. As soon as they get the postal service out of the way, the big companies can charge whatever they want to deliver our things. Then we'll be sorry we let them dismantle the postal service.

Have you ever had old, drooping celery stuck in the back of your refrigerator? Someone once told me that you can get it crispy again by putting the stalks in water. I tried it, and it really works.

Well, I have a lot more to say, but that's the last of my popular and well-written "Harry's Gang" for a while. I hope to see you on the campaign trail, and I hope you keep supporting our community newspaper: the Pine Knot News.

Pete Radosevich is the publisher of the Pine Knot News community newspaper, board member and an attorney in Esko who hosts the talk show Harry's Gang on CAT-7. His opinions are his own. Reach him at Pete.Radosevich@PineKnotNews.com.

HARRY'S GANG



Pete Radosevich

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