

EDITORIAL

We need good candidates for office. It could be you

Want to make improvements? File for local office.

We're a month away from the June filing deadline for our city and school board positions in Harvey County.

We have a list of various positions up for election in this week's paper. So far, the filings are few. While that's no cause for alarm with a month until the deadline, we'd like to call the election cycle to readers' minds.

Local government makes a huge impact on all of our everyday lives.

So take a minute to consider if you or someone you know would be a good candidate for election.

What, though, makes a good candidate or elected official?

We have a few thoughts after attending so many public meetings.

For one, they need to be informed about the community and care about what's going on.

This sounds like an obvious point, but we've seen many candidates over the years confuse local office with either personal ambitions or a specific issue they can't impact once elected.

The good news here is if you're reading this, it means you either subscribed or purchased a local newspaper. You're on the right track.

The more people understand our community, its various groups, its differing local governments, as well as the challenges and goals the community possesses, the better equipped they are to serve.

It makes for less of a learning curve once elected. It also demonstrates an interest and commitment to keeping up-to-date on the world around them.

On the topic of serving in office, we find that service-minded people often make good candidates. You find these people in local service clubs. You find them volunteering, organizing community events, coaching youth teams, or helping out at the church fundraiser.

Public office means serving something larger than yourself. People with that mindset usually already make such efforts.

We also want to highlight the importance of a person's willingness to reserve judgment or at least change their mind.

Leadership today often gets confused with stubbornness. A toddler might be resolute in their wish to not go to bed. But in crying and screaming, they're not showing leadership, just throwing a tantrum.

There's something to be said about making a decision based on facts and analysis and sticking with it.

However, often in local government, we see the information change. We also see a public that sometimes has different opinions on how their community should operate than a government's staff does.

We think it's important for a leader to be willing to weigh all options before making a decision.

We also think it's important, when faced with new information, that a leader be willing to change course when new information or public feedback comes in. We'd encourage our readers to not view this as a lack of conviction but instead as a willingness to listen and re-evaluate.

Our point with all of this is everyone currently in office at one point sat down and decided if they would run for office or not. All of them are everyday people. Knowing this, we know there are likely many readers who would do well in elected office.

So consider your thoughts, what changes you'd seek to make, what current actions you'd wish to grow on, and how you would lead.

If you think you or someone you know would have potential, we'd encourage you to put your name on the ballot.

Giving voters a choice is important. And as a community, we do best when we elect the most effective leaders.

-Harvey County Now Editorial Board

You don't need a dentist, until you do

I'll make a confession. When the pandemic hit, I ended my lifelong dental trips with everything closed. And since then, I've never taken visiting the dentist back up.

There have been plenty of times I've said, "I need to schedule an appointment." And I just haven't.

I never liked going to the dentist. But every time I went, they made an appointment for the next year, and I showed up.

I bit down on something a week or two ago in the back of my mouth. Sourdough crust, I think. It caused irritation.

That irritation was over a bump of bone. I now know it's called a spicule. I don't know how long I've had it, but I kept running my tongue over it. Eventually, probably already damaged from the bread, the spicule exposed itself.

It's not positive, but I've always held to the "wait and see" practice when it comes to ailments.

Many times, it's turned out OK for me. Stuff resolves on its own. I worry about everything, so it's hard to tell

when I have a legitimate worry or just picked something new to fixate on.

By Monday, I was eating on one side of my mouth and in a significant amount of pain. It was bad enough that I was thinking about what tools I had in my garage that might remove the issue.

According to the Internet, at-home surgery is a bad idea.

Having done a story on Health Ministries expanding it's dental footprint in the past, I gave the organization a call.

And I was able to set up an appointment for the next day.

I think we often run the risk of looking over parts of our community that function well. I don't know if I was living somewhere else that I could have gotten in so fast.

But it is appreciated. It's made an impact on my quality of life. Dental complications, when left untreated, can lead to far more complicated health problems.

Quick access like this helps



ADAM STRUNK
STRUNK IN PUBLIC

improve the outcomes in our community. I already thought the expansion was a great idea and represented Health Ministries continuing to succeed.

Now I got to experience that work firsthand.

In other news, I do a large amount of the cooking at home. In recent months, with some of the political uncertainty going on, Sam and I have been working to sock away cash. As part of that, we're trying to figure out how to save money on the meals we eat.

That journey, unsurprisingly, has led me back home. Come to find out, back in the day, my parents were doing the same thing.

My brother ended up sick, so we had a smaller Easter at my house with an Easter ham. With only four of us eating on it, that resulted in weeks worth of lunch meat, as well as a ham hock.

Ham and beans is one of my favorite dishes. When Mom knew I'd be visiting, she'd sometimes whip it up.

To be fair, she'd make liver and onions when my brother showed up. I think my preferred dish was far less gross.

Ham and beans are a ridiculously easy dish. A ham hock, water, beans, and if you have something like celery or carrots in your fridge, throw those in, too.

In 30 minutes, my Instant Pot made a delicious meal for Sam and me that lasted all of the week.

Another standby growing up was some various meat—usually sausage or spare ribs—and saurkraut.

I had that this week, with spare ribs on sale. That made for another delicious nostalgic dish.

So many staples I grew up with, I've learned later in life, were dishes cheap to make.

Despite that, they're still dishes that are my favorites. I think those dishes were flavored more by the people around the table than the ingredients that went into them.

Adam Strunk is the managing editor of Harvey County Now. Strunk can be reached at Adam@harveycountynow.com.

Free expression, neutrality essential for learning environment

On the evening of May 2, the Pride Alliance Council at Bethel College will host its annual drag show at Krehbiel Auditorium. The Pride Alliance Council is a recognized student organization that supports LGBTQ+ students.

The drag show is a performance in which individuals, often called drag performers, use clothing, makeup, and exaggerated gender expression to entertain audiences.

These performances often use humor, storytelling and creativity to explore gender roles.

The drag show has grown in visibility, and this year it sparked strong reactions online. Some people welcome the drag show as a symbol of inclusion, whereas others view it as offensive and inconsistent with their Christian values. I acknowledge and respect the full range of thoughts on the event.

I want to use this moment to explain two important principles that help guide Bethel College: free expression and institutional neutrality.

Free expression means that people can share their thoughts, beliefs and ideas without fear of punishment or censorship.

This right is protected by the U.S. Constitution and is essential to college life. It supports open conversations, creative work and deep learning. The drag show—like a student presentation, an art display, or a public lecture—is an example of that freedom in action.

The college's commitment to free expression goes hand in hand with another principle: institutional neutrality. This means that Bethel, as an institution, does not take official stances on political or social issues unless they



JON GERING
BETHEL COLLEGE

are specifically relevant to our educational mission. While we support our students and employees as they speak about their own values, the college itself remains a space for dialogue, not a voice in the debate.

These two principles—free expression and institutional neutrality—work together to create a healthy learning environment. At Bethel, we want our community to hear different ideas, ask questions, and grow in understanding. As president, I support the right of students and employees to express themselves in ways that reflect their identities, experiences, and beliefs. At the same time, I reaffirm that our college will always encourage discussion rather than choose sides.

These principles are consistent with our Anabaptist Christian tradition, which calls us to love without judgment and to listen with humility. Practicing these principles takes courage, especially in moments of disagreement. But practice we must, because the principles are vital to building strong communities and strengthening democracy.

We are actively working to ensure support and safety for those involved in the drag show. Whether you celebrate, question or object to the drag show, I ask that you approach this moment with care.

Avoid hateful speech, consider the impact of your words and actions, and—above all—extend kindness and peace to others even when you don't understand or agree with them.

Jon Gering is the president of Bethel College and lives in North Newton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Newton stepped up

I am writing to say how proud I am of my Newton community. I recently helped coordinate a two-day conference for healthcare professionals from all across the State of Kansas. This group has been gathering for more than 30 years, and Newton was selected to host their 2025 conference.

Typically, communities much larger than Newton are selected, but we stepped up to the challenge and met it head on.

The Meridian Center team (Den, Mike, chef and their crew) did an amazing job of creating the perfect space for us to meet. The meals and refreshments were fantastic. Their attention to every last detail to make it a seamless event was impeccable.

This conference usually features a fun evening outing. But the size of our group was going to have most of our local sites bursting at the seams. So with the help of a local painter recommended by Carriage Factory (the gracious Connie Rhodes), the fantastic wines from Grace

Hill, and the ingenuity of the Meridian Center, we hosted a large paint party and wine tasting that filled the conference center with laughter and creativity.

After jumping on a party bus, we headed to Back Alley Pizza, where Jason Palmer and his team stayed open late for us. They quickly took over the fun, turning out dozens of pizzas to a noisy and energetic crowd. The food was top notch, as always, and many remarked that they would definitely come back.

As the conference closed, attendees commented on how smoothly everything went, how ideal the space was, how much fun they had, and how great the food was. Leaders of the group mentioned that this year's event set a high standard.

I couldn't be more grateful for my Newton community. You hit it out of the park.

The best thing: this was a group of marketers and communicators, so you know they will be talking about how great Newton is to others. I'm sure there were more than a few social media posts tagging us over the course of

the event.

Thank you, Newton!

Shelley Conrady, Newton

Newton visit just a photo op

Senator Roger Marshall visited Newton last week, claiming to "evaluate the value of mental health and addiction services in the area." However, this visit appears more like a publicity move than a genuine effort to address the root causes of these crises.

Marshall has stated that "individual choices—such as diet and environment—are primary drivers of mental health outcomes." While personal responsibility plays a role, his focus on this narrative consistently downplays the overwhelming evidence that poverty is a major factor in both the incidence and severity of mental health and addiction problems. The reality is that poverty and mental illness are locked in a vicious cycle: financial hardship increases vulnerability to mental health and substance use disorders, which in turn

make it harder for individuals to escape poverty.

Despite the urgent need for comprehensive solutions, Marshall's policy approach often centers on law enforcement, regulatory rollbacks, and blaming individuals, rather than addressing systemic issues like economic inequality and barriers to health care.

Sadly, this domain is probably where Senator Marshall does his best work! More importantly, in being a yes-man to Trump and Musk, he is helping to destroy our economy and our reputation in the world. Our grain and beef markets are shrinking, and our former allies are planning for a future where the U.S. is not a reliable partner.

Yet, Marshall seems more interested in photo ops than in holding open town halls where he would hear the concerns of everyday Kansans.

Don't be misled by carefully staged visits. If you aren't a multimillionaire or billionaire, Senator Marshall's record suggests he isn't fighting for you.

Gary Lyndaker, Newton

SAY WHAT?

Don't quit. Never give up trying to build the world you can see, even if others can't see it. Listen to your drum and your drum only. It's the one that makes the sweetest sound.

Simon Sinek