

# COMMENTARY

## One Moment, Please... Let's not make it more difficult for small business owners

By Jason Sethre  
Publisher  
*Fillmore County Journal*  
[jason@fillmorecountyjournal.com](mailto:jason@fillmorecountyjournal.com)

Many of our small businesses — restaurants, hair salons and fitness centers in particular — have suffered greatly throughout this pandemic.



Jason Sethre

When the mandate to close their doors went into effect back in March, they were restricted from generating

income. At the same time, these business owners were told they had to pay state licensing fees that come along with owning their business. So, the State of Minnesota cut off their ability to generate income, but still expected them to pay these fees. There was no wavering. And, as I've said before, when a small business owner struggles with their business, they feel that pain at home with their personal finances, as well.

I've heard this story shared by countless business owners in our region. Any business cannot survive forever if they have to keep paying fixed costs while seeing their only source of revenue diminish so significantly.

So restaurants, bars, hair salons and fitness centers were eventually allowed to reopen.

And, then the mask mandate went into effect, care of Governor Walz.

People can debate on the subject of mask effectiveness all day long. I'm not here to debate that subject.

What concerns me is how so many of these small town locally-owned businesses have struggled through the shutdown, and now they are contending with citizens who want to turn in anyone who isn't wearing a mask.

There are people walking into restaurants and taking pictures of people not wearing

masks. There are people calling the Minnesota Department of Public Health to report people not wearing masks. There are people calling our local police departments to report people not wearing masks. There are people going on social media and blasting businesses about their social distancing and mask-wearing concerns.

What have we become? Neighbor versus neighbor?

One restaurant owner told me that on the first day the mask mandate went into effect, July 25, she told an early morning regular customer that he had to wear a mask (he wasn't wearing one). That customer said, "I guess I'm out of here."

He walked out the door and hasn't been back to spend any money at her restaurant since that day. Can you see the awkward tension these business owners are facing?

I hear about these situations all the time.

In another conversation I had last week, a restaurant owner pleaded, "Do people want me to go out of business?"

There are so many of these business owners who have invested their blood, sweat and tears into their dream, and they are caught in the middle of decisions that are beyond their control. And, then they feel like they have people in their community working against them.

They are doing their best, given the circumstances. Let's not make it more difficult for small business owners.

## Expertise?

By David Webb, MD  
Lanesboro, MN

Tired of being told what to do by experts? Perfectly understandable. After all, highly educated, experienced individuals have time and again been completely wrong about things — to the dismay and often detriment of us all. That said, I would add that we might do well to differentiate true from self-proclaimed expertise and not to disparage as "so-called" experts, those individuals who do have recognized competence in what has been their



David Webb

life's work.

I would also suggest that we might do well not to equate being given sage advice with having things dictated to us with no good explanation.

Your neighbor who has worked his family farm all his life probably knows more about animal husbandry and crop rotation than some recent agribusiness graduate working for a DC lobby firm. Perhaps even more than you do. And while you might not appreciate his always telling you what to do, you actually might not mind "picking his brain" about some problem you're having on your own farm.

Chances are EMT-Paramedics know more than most of us about how safely to immobilize, extricate, and transport victims of motor vehicular accidents. I dare say that if

you or a loved one were inside the wrecked car, or if you just happened to come upon the scene of the accident, you likely would not object too strenuously to being told by a paramedic, clearly and precisely, exactly what to do, what not to do, when to do it, and how to do it.

On a personal note, as a retired physician, a former commissioned officer in the United States Public Health Service, and someone dedicated to life-long learning, while I certainly don't pretend to have all the answers about the pandemic, I am at least conversant with those who do have some of the answers.

For example, one of the speakers at a Mayo Clinic conference I recently attended noted that back in March, when there was still some question about it, the Mayo proto-

col was to give all COVID patients hydroxychloroquine. He went on to say that 100% of Mayo patients who died from COVID had been given the drug. Consistent with that fact and with numerous peer-reviewed studies showing it to be of no benefit, COVID patients at Mayo no longer get hydroxychloroquine.

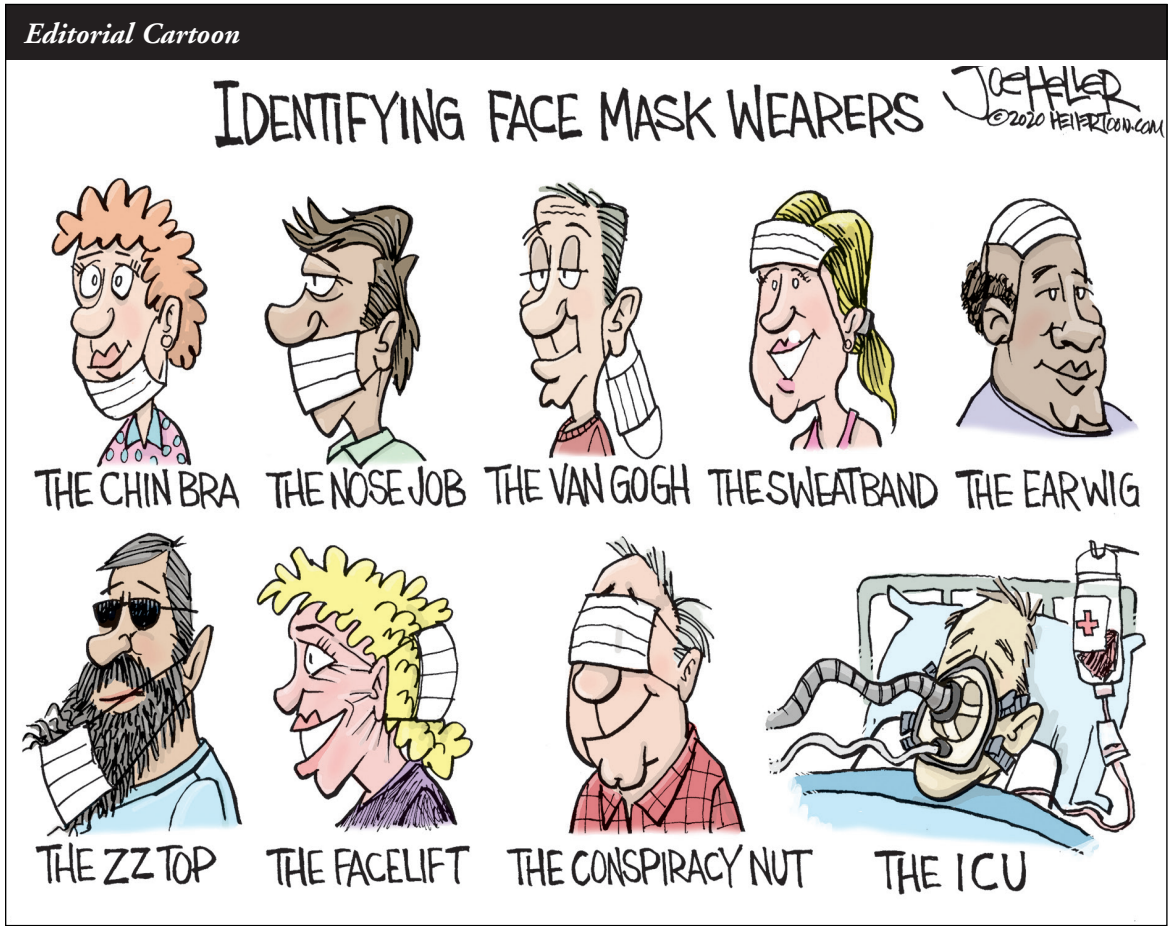
Frankly, I would give more credence to the carefully considered opinions of these experts than to those of some guy on the next barstool.

On an even more personal note, as a father and grandfather, let me conclude by telling you about my youngest daughter, a physician's assistant in the Twin Cities, who has been on the frontlines, and who has just tested positive for COVID. Now she's at home ill; she, son-in-law, and grandson are in quarantine. So, sadly, I have joined the ranks of families all across the nation who have seen nearly six million of their loved ones contract and nearly 200,000 — babies, children, young adults, older adults — succumb to this plague — and for no reason other than our nation's untimely, utterly chaotic response to the unfolding crisis!

Tired of being told what to do by experts? I am mightily

tired of being told what to do and what to think by ignoramuses. I am mightily tired of being lied to by self-serving, anti-science politicians more concerned about their polling numbers than about our lives and livelihoods.

We must end this madness lest it be the end of us.



## Correction

In the August 24, 2020, edition of the *Fillmore County Journal*, in the the article titled "Rushford Village to push on continuing maintenance," it was stated the next Rushford Village Council meeting will be held September 8. The correct date for the next meeting is September 1, at 7 p.m. at the Village Hall.

We apologize for this error.

**FILLMORE COUNTY JOURNAL**  
136 St. Anthony St. • P.O. Box 496  
Preston, MN 55965  
507-765-2151 • 1-800-599-0481  
FAX 507-765-2468  
e-mail: [news@fillmorecountyjournal.com](mailto:news@fillmorecountyjournal.com)  
website: [www.fillmorecountyjournal.com](http://www.fillmorecountyjournal.com)

Publisher/Editor	Jason Sethre
Associate Publisher	Amanda Sethre
Creative Director	Taylor Case
Graphic Designer/Sales	Sara Schultz
Graphic Designer	Megan Warner
Assistant Editor	Ellen Whalen
Website Administrator	Michelle Quanrud
Sales	Sherry Hines
Sports Director	Paul Trende
Photo Journalist	Barb Jeffers
Office Assistant	Olivia Sethre

**Contributors:** Mary L. Allen, Tammy Danielson, Janette Dragvold, Lee Epps, Leif Erickson, Debra Finseth, Pailey Gordon, Wenda Grabau, Wanda Hanson, Steve Harris, Jessi Jablonski, Barb Jeffers, Barb Kerns, Heather Kleiboer, Kathy Little, Ron Mayer, Karen Reisner, Hannah Rothen, Dianne Ruud, Sandy Seha, Charlene Corson Selbee, Melissa Vander Plas, Christine Vreeman, Charlie Warner, Mary Whalen, Rich Wicks, Hannah Wingert, Kirsten Zoellner

Published by Sethre Media Group, Inc. every Monday and mailed third class. Circulation: 17,000 FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS to zip codes served, 470 FREE STORE DISTRIBUTION and 1,441 PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS at \$55 per year, third class or \$105 first class.

The *Fillmore County Journal* is a continuation of the historic newspapers *Bluff Country Reader*, *The Chatfield News*, *Fillmore County News Leader*, *Rushford Tri-County Record*, *Spring Grove Herald* and *Spring Valley Tribune*.

**DEADLINE for news & advertising is 5PM TUESDAY for the Monday Edition.**  
© 2020

**OFFICE HOURS:**  
Monday-Thursday 8am - 5pm  
Friday 8am - 12pm  
Closed Saturday & Sunday