

# OPINION



PILOT EDITORIAL

## Early interest is a good sign

We bemoan the increasingly earlier start of the national election cycle. Let's celebrate the apparent earlier start of the local election cycle.

Still days ahead of the closing of the filing period for county and statewide offices, we already have a handful of declared candidates actively campaigning for our votes in November. It's refreshing to see friends and neighbors interested enough in serving the public good that they step forward early in the process, especially in light of past struggles to secure candidates to fill certain available local public posts.

Here's hoping the level of interest and engagement already displayed carries on throughout the filing period for county and statewide offices and is mirrored — or even exceeded — come July when the filing period for seats on local school boards and city councils opens.

We need quality folks at all levels of government.

## Are we still a praying nation?

They prayed to God in the morning each day when they awoke. They prayed over their breakfast meal before eating it. They prayed as they went about their morning chores. They prayed over their noon meal and, as their day went along, they prayed for God's help in doing their daily tasks. And if they encountered trouble, they prayed to God for His help. Then, as they sat down to enjoy their evening meal, they gave thanks to God for His provision and, before going to bed, prayed, thanking Him for His protection, His constant love and care.

Who were these praying people? They were the men and women who founded this great nation. They were the people who realized the limits of their human abilities and their need for help from their Heavenly Father. And they soon learned without His help their chances of even surviving here were very limited.

So what happened

to these folks? They prospered, created a God-fearing nation and laid the foundation for this free country that became the envy of the rest of the world.

These people believed in a Higher Power and understood the importance of staying in communication with their Father in Heaven, maker of all things, the Almighty God, creator of the universe.

John 14:13 offers this promise: "You can ask for anything in my name and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father."

Ask people who have prayed to God for help about how He has answered their prayers and you will get a variety of answers — everything from healings from infirmities to financial miracles and from restored relationships to spiritual growth and understanding.

But that wouldn't surprise anyone who prays earnestly to God. In fact, James 5:16 states,

"The effectual, fervent prayers of a righteous man avail much."

In other words, if you believe in God and have accepted His son as your Savior, pray to Him and expect to hear from Him — you will — oftentimes the result is even better than you could have expected when you began praying.

You see, it was Jesus who told his listeners they could ask for anything in His name and he would do it.

That doesn't by any means indicate God is like a vending machine in which you place your prayer and get your answer. That's because we should be asking with an unselfish motive and for that which will bring glory and honor to God the Father.

That's right; we do have unlimited access to the One who has unlimited power. Think about that. God not only encourages us to speak with Him of our needs and concerns, but also wants us to ask in such a way He can

answer, "Yes."

Like our Founding Fathers and all those who sacrificed to create this "better union" through prayer and hard work and sought God's continued blessings — those who saw their hearts' desires fulfilled — we too can ask Him in confident faith, in Jesus' name, and then experience what He will do to bless us and our country once again to the glory of His Father.

But we need to believe in God, turn to Him and trust He wants to hear from us and will answer our prayers issued in Jesus' name for ourselves, as well as those we care for and our nation.



## MnWest invests in social, economic well-being of southwest Minnesota

Minnesotans are stubborn, resilient and passionate. The effects of the pandemic are threatening the social and economic pillars of southwest Minnesota, but our grit will not allow these pillars to fail. Many of our neighbors across the private and public sectors are making unprecedented sacrifices, yet finding new ways to be in community, to support each other and together grow. The faith, determination and collective resolve of Minnesotans provides great hope for tomorrow.

Your college, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, is prepared for and essential to this collective endeavor. During the pandemic, MnWest has centered on three priorities: 1) ensuring the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and communities; 2) assuring our students advance their educational plans; and 3) committing to the economic continuity of

our communities and college. Coupled with the care, compassion and dedication of our faculty and staff, our determined focus on these priorities brings an innovative energy to our commitment to students and region we serve.

Education and training are essential to the social and economic recovery of southwest Minnesota. MnWest's portfolio of well-established transfer courses, relevant career/technical and management programs and accredited nursing/allied health offerings are paired with tele-support systems that assure our students complete their education and transition immediately into a career or a four-year educational institution.

MnWest's proven history in distance education enables us to provide essential programs and training to our students — your neighbors. We have been delivering award-winning education via distance for more than 20 years;

our faculty members have developed and honed their approaches through informed and tested methodology. Our portfolio consists of online classes enhanced with simulations and engagement strategies, flexible programs that blend online and essential face-to-face education and small-group on-campus courses delivered with personal safety protocols and social distancing expectations.

We understand many students and their families are experiencing hardships, uncertainty and difficult decisions. Our student support functions are fully accessible to all students and have been expanded to include food pantries, social and mental health services and emergency grants. The MnWest Foundation Board has prioritized its efforts to solicit financial support from our friends and alumni. These donations will help offset unexpected financial hardships witnessed by

our students and their families. Collectively, we are dedicated to supporting those who are just beginning college, those in midst of their educational plans and our neighbors who are seeking a new career.

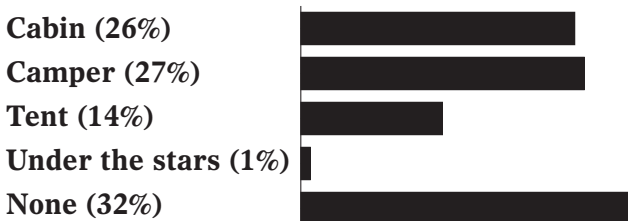
Education is the pathway to social and economic prosperity — for our students, their families and our communities. MnWest is laser-focused on providing safe, affordable, relevant and highly supportive educational programs. This is the resolve of your college, and we are investing entrusted resources and reserves for the social and economic well-being of southwest Minnesota. It is our purpose and our privilege.

*(About the author: Terry B. Gaalswyk is president of Minnesota West Community and Technical College.)*

**GUEST COLUMNIST**  
Terry Gaalswyk

LAST WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: What's your preferred method of camping?



Source: Jackson County Pilot Website

THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: Was the decision to cancel this year's Minnesota State Fair the right one?

Vote online at [jacksoncountypilot.com](http://jacksoncountypilot.com).

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**CONTACT YOUR COMMISSIONERS.**

READERS WRITE

Grateful for celebration, last 32 years

**To the editor:**  
"Wow" and "grateful" are the two words that keep going through my mind since the celebration/parade in my honor last Tuesday night. Thank you to Michael Haeffner, Laura Bidne, Erika Voss and Kathy Voss for thinking of me and putting this all together. To present and past teachers, police, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, neighbors, friends, relatives, parents and students and all of those in this community, thank you!

It was a very special night for me and will be in my memory forever. Thanks also for all the kind comments and cards and gifts that were shared with my family and me. I have been blessed to work in this community and appreciate the support it has shown for me and our

ag and FFA programs.

I am proud of what has been accomplished within the local agriculture department and FFA chapter over the past 32 years. The support from our parents, school staff, administration, school board and community is an envy of other programs throughout our state and nation.

Thank you to my family — Erika, Ethan and Grant — for putting up with me never being home. You all were accepting of me being gone and I am very proud of the adults you have become. And to Kathy — my wife of 32 years — I feel blessed you came into my life. You have always supported me and, without that support, my teaching career would not have happened. I love you and thank you for everything.

**Jeff Voss**  
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 shall 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](mailto: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.

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