

To whom it may concern:

It is with great pleasure that I enthusiastically nominate Joshua Schuetz of the Jackson County Pilot for the Dave Pyle New Journalist Award. Joshua has only been with the Jackson County Pilot for a short time — since early June — but in those few months has proven himself an inquisitive journalist, masterful storyteller, insightful columnist, skilled photographer and key member of the community he covers.

Joshua has a passion for news and his community — two elements so vital to the making of a fine journalist. He also is adept at collecting information and detail, then distilling it into a meaningful end product easily grasped by his readers. This skill is evident in his handling of both hard-hitting investigative news and softer human-interest feature news that often requires a delicate touch. His writing has made a difference, with his digging into county government inaction regarding a building purchased at taxpayer expense years ago prodding the county board to finally host open public meetings on the subject and formulate plans. His writing has laid bare the effects of controversial government restrictions on businesses, nonprofit organizations, schools, churches — even the census — in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. His writing has stirred thought, provoked conversation, spurred action and touched hearts.

Joshua is also a skilled columnist. His weekly column — Just Joshin' — has quickly become a cornerstone of Pilot's Opinion page. He has developed a loyal following with his insightful commentary on local, state national and even international topics. Whether readers agree with his viewpoints or not, they cannot dispute the fact his arguments are well researched and rife with logic.

Though not a photographer by training, Joshua has quickly made himself comfortable behind the camera. Whether breaking and spot news, feature shots or portrait work, Joshua brings a unique perspective to each of his images. He realizes the importance of illustrating news, as well as the value of capturing images of the community as it continues to move forward.

A key element to the success of a community journalist is becoming an integral part of the community one serves, and Joshua has quickly established himself as a known and respected quantity. Doing so has opened new doors to him as a journalist, providing him access to a wider network of sources, offering fresh insights into happenings and other items of newsworthiness and reflecting well upon the newspaper he represents. While Joshua prides himself on the objective news coverage of his community, he is also unashamed of his desire to see it — and the people he serves through his work as a journalist — thrive and flourish.

It's clear Joshua takes pride in his work as a journalist for the Jackson County Pilot. His skill in all facets of the job, coupled with his passion for the calling, truly sets him apart as one of the state's finest young journalists. The future of newspapering in Jackson County — indeed, in the state of Minnesota and beyond — is brighter because of him.

Sincerely,

Justin R. Lessman  
Publisher/Editor  
Jackson County Pilot