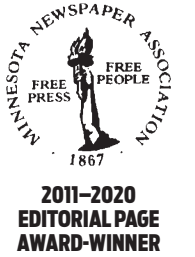


# OPINION



## PILOT EDITORIAL

### Effort, support of many made expo a success

Hats off to all those — organizers, financial backers and participating families — who made this year’s Minnesota Youth Livestock Expo a success.

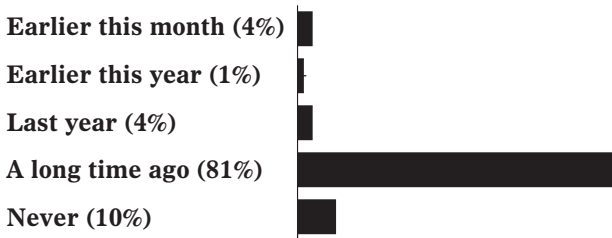
Though born from the ashes of canceled shows last summer in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the expo returned this year for another go-round thanks to the continued dedication of a team of volunteer organizers from around the state. Planning a dual-location, five-species, seven-day livestock show for youngsters from across an entire state is no easy task, yet the committee once again pulled it off in impressive fashion.

An event of this magnitude and level of professionalism requires money to make happen, and local and area businesses once again stepped forward to offer financial and in-kind support. Here’s hoping those who value this support of the expo in turn support those businesses that gave.

And the event would not be an event without the youth and their families from across Minnesota who attended and showed. Numbers were strong again this year, boding well for the possibility of a third annual expo returning to our area next summer.

## LAST WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

**Q: When's the last time you slept in a tent?**



Source: Jackson County Pilot Website

## THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

**Q: What's your favorite fair food?**

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

## Why Americans distrust experts, institutions

“I don’t trust experts, especially when they’re telling me what to do.”

It’s a common refrain here, one I’ve heard from numerous people over the past year, especially when COVID-19-related policies are being discussed.

The intense distrust of those with technical knowledge — and institutions more generally — is a problem whose severity has only really become apparent as that distrust has interfered with the vaccination effort and accelerated the rot of our civic sphere. Distrust and cynicism are to modern Americans as water is to fish — we’re so constantly awash in it that we fail to recognize it.

Those who look at lower vaccination rates — like ours — or the spread of conspiracy theories on Facebook and other social media sites and despair often fail to recognize this. In truth, they often behave the same way, in different contexts.

Polls have shown fewer Americans trust the government, corporate America, state governments, public health authorities and other institutions both public and private than at any other time in recent memory. Less than 20 percent of Americans trust Congress, and this is true during periods when both parties have been in power. The presidency, again over a bipartisan period, has also experienced a decline in trust. Schools and universities face similarly poor statistics, as does the American health care system. The media also have record low levels of

trust in general, though people are much more amicable to the outlets they read or watch — just as they are with their congresspeople, amusingly enough.

Wherein lay the origins of this decay? Our leaders and thought leaders have quite a few theories. Some blame one political party or another, others blame one or two institutions in particular and still others blame social media for poisoning American discourse and giving voice to radicals.

In truth, playing the blame game like that is sort of like if the Roman senators who stabbed Caesar proceeded to host a debate about the cause of Caesar’s death. Sure, the person who landed the killing blow can’t be determined, but the blood remains on the hands of many all the same.

So it is with our institutions. Beginning in the 1970s and continuing — I would say worsening — until today, the leaders of American institutions in government, business, finance, medicine and even religion made numerous horrible decisions that led people in general to write them off as being worthy of trust.

Take the opioid crisis: An epidemic that is still killing around 70,000 Americans per year was started, in large part, by pharmaceutical companies that wanted to flush the market with their products without communicating to doctors and patients the actual risks present with the prolonged use of these drugs. Nobody from these companies has ended up in jail, nor faced any

other penalty beyond a slap on the wrist.

What about government? Multiple public figures have become embroiled in scandals and kept their offices regardless. In domestic policy, attempts to make health care more affordable failed to do so, and while the government has continued to spend large amounts of money, little has been done to address the crises of health care and housing squeezing the American working class. That working class has sent its young men and women to war, many perishing or suffering injuries both physical and mental on battlefields in wars launched by Democrats and Republicans alike, most of which have not led to victory or a long-term accomplishment of their missions.

At the same time, ordinary Americans are constantly lectured by their “betters” to be more responsible. But what responsibility was shown by our leaders when it came to ill-advised wars, bad economic policies, a financial crisis that led to the — at that time — worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, an opioid epidemic that has killed at least as many Americans as COVID-19 has, if not more, and an economy increasingly reliant on foreign trading partners, many of whom don’t share our values or interests? That American companies can claim to defend justice while using slave labor from Chinese concentration camps to make their products is an indication of just how shameless and diseased

things have become.

Is it any wonder, then, that when social trust was most sorely needed, it was nowhere to be found? That when an actual success — the invention of COVID-19 vaccines — was achieved, people looked askance?

Likewise, is it any wonder young people on the left, identifying the failures of American institutions with the country itself, have turned to radical ideologies like communism and anarchism? Or that many frustrated people on the right have done the same, flirting with everything from theocratic integralism to fascism?

Of course, it’s not surprising. The current system’s legitimacy rests solely in that Americans are too divided on what to replace it with. The culture wars may be tearing America apart, but the disunity they’ve caused is, in a sick way, also keeping the country together. People don’t trust institutions because, for nearly a half-century, they haven’t worked and when they have, it has been at the expense of ordinary people.

So, what is to be done? Everyone has ideas, this writer included. Next week, I’ll sketch them out for you, in detail.



**JUST JOSHIN'**  
Joshua Schuetz

## READERS WRITE

### This is more than an old man like I can comprehend

**To the editor:**  
A man pays a fee to his veterinarian to get his dog a rabies shot that will protect the dog and people with whom the dog comes in contact. This same man refuses to get a free COVID-19 shot that

will protect him and those with whom he comes in contact.  
This is more than an old man like I can comprehend.

**Gary Natterstad  
Jackson**

### Democrats are caught and cannot free themselves

**To the editor:**  
As the Arizona and Georgia forensic voting audits make it more and more clear Democrats, RINOs (Republicans in Name Only) and the Deep State stole the 2020 elections, I think I have a good analogy to the Democrats’ situation. And strangely enough, it comes from a vampire movie. In the 1979 remake of the classic, “Dracula,” Frank Langella is battling against Dr. Van Helsing (Laurence Olivier) and his band of brave men in the hold of a sailing ship. The tide of battle is turning in favor of the vampire when one of the men slams a loading hook on a rope into Dracula’s back, releases a counterweight, and the vampire is launched up out of the hold and high into the ship’s rigging where, bathed in the sunlight, he screams and franti-

cally struggles to free himself from the hook. The sunlight burns up the vampire and all that remains is a wisp of black to be blown away by the winds.

Like Dracula, the Democrats are caught and cannot free themselves, no matter how much they scream and thrash. Their voter fraud and treason are on display in the light of day for all the world to see. And reading the liberal “fact-checkers” who try to “debunk” this truth, it’s hard to know if you’re listening to Baghdad Bob claiming Saddam’s forces are crushing the American invaders or a travel agent trying to book for the Titanic’s next cruise. The truth is like water; you can contain it for a while, but eventually it comes out.

**Sam Smith  
Jackson**

### My thoughts on how to avoid trouble with the law

**To the editor:**  
My thoughts on how to avoid trouble with the law:

1. If you have no vehicle insurance and no driver’s license or current license plates, don’t drive. Park it. Black or white, you are wrong.
2. If your vehicle has defective headlights or taillights or glass tinting that is way too dark, get it fixed. Black or white, get smart.
3. If you drive over the speed limit, run red lights, squeal your tires or drive around town at 2 a.m. with a carload of buddies, you have made a bad choice. Black or white, you will be watched and may be caught and fined.
4. If you have a handgun or some other weapon and no permit to carry, don’t. Just leave it home, lock it in the car trunk

or — better yet — get rid of it. Black or white, this is a no-brainer.

5. If you get pulled over by officers enforcing the law, obey their instructions and don’t complain about being picked on because you’re black or white — or Scandinavian for that matter. That crap has run its course. Man up. Act adult.

6. If you go to bed at night and rest up, you will find the employment offices open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Black or white, a job and a load of self-pride can make for a good feeling.

Be good, have fun and hang in there!  
If I’ve offended anyone, send a letter to editor.

**Eugene Stene  
Alpha**

## Weed me not: It’s a temptation

The magenta beets burst from the topsoil, crowned in waving green and fuchsia plumes. A sunflower planted late and haphazardly, in the spot where my carrots failed to sprout, broadens its leaves as it tries to make up for lost time. And an entire plant unfurls itself meticulously from one small green pea buried in the dirt.

July bears witness to the magic of gardens. I can almost see the plants growing in front of my eyes, when for so long they appeared to do nothing at all. This includes a healthy new crop of weeds. Weeding is my nemesis.

After doting on my garden last year while I worked from home during the pandemic, I doubted I could maintain it half as well once I was back at the office this spring. I’ve always liked the idea of a garden more than the maintenance of one. Frankly, the little four-square raised bed I had in Jackson was probably the size best suited to me. But my husband tilled up an ambitious plot in our yard in Glencoe when we moved in, and I just keep filling it with seeds each spring.

My father, the best gardener I know, is partly responsible. He’s a garden evangelist. He shows up at my house with a tiller, dry manure, his own collection of row markers and a raised eyebrow for whether or not I can coax carrots from my poorly managed clay soil (I can’t, it turns out).

This year, I surprised myself by keeping after the weeds despite returning to work in a real office space and resuming every known activity that had been missing from our family calendar, plus some. I don’t have a great track record with tidy gardens; there have been contributing factors.

One year, my husband wanted to try mulching with oat straw for a garden-sized cover crop experiment. The oats grew incredibly well, and it ended up being hard to find the veggies. Another year, my mom suggested leaving the “clover” as ground cover. It was actually yellow woodsorrel, and it covered the ground quite quickly. Overzealously, one might say.

The thing with weeds is how well suited they are

to neglect. I can carefully nurture a patch of green beans that barely get by, while weeds flourish without encouragement. A marathon day of weeding is satisfying — the first time. Then, in a few weeks, it all comes back, and there I am sweating as I uproot the lily pads of common mallow, succulent stems of prostrate spurge and tendrils of creeping Charlie that doesn’t so much creep as sprint. In the time it takes to go to the shop to retrieve a hoe, tiny water hemp spring up from bare soil. Still, spending long hours bent over the dirt has helped me see the hidden wisdom in weeds: No matter what happened before, each new day is a chance to prove you can make a comeback.



**MISS COMMUNICATIONS**  
Marie Zimmerman

## 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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**JACKSON COUNTY PILOT**  
310 Second Street • Jackson, MN  
(507) 847-3771 • [jacksoncountypilot.com](http://jacksoncountypilot.com)  
Published Weekly on Thursday  
USPS 271880  
Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, Minnesota  
— SUBSCRIPTION RATES —  
In Jackson County, \$64.00/Year. Elsewhere in the United States, \$75.00/Year. Nine-month students, \$55.00. ePilot, \$30.00/Year.