

# Gitche Gitche Gumee



# Graduation goodbye

A few years ago I wrote a column for the parents of the Cook County High School graduates. I didn't intend to write a column for parents; I started writing to the seniors themselves. But I realized that the students finishing their last week of high school and preparing for commencement exercises don't really want to hear from some newspaper woman.

But I thought their parents may be ready to hear from a Mom who has made it through the graduation of two children. I was right—the column resonated with parents. I received more comments on it than just about any other *Unorganized Territory*.

So, a column dedicated to those frantic parents has become a tradition. Not that I don't wish the members of the Class of 2009 well. I just have a feeling they are too busy to listen. They are making plans for the summer and for the future. What a wonderful time for them!

I remember the giddy feeling of finally being finished with school, ready to take on the world. I recall that those last days were bittersweet—happiness mixed with sadness because my friends and I knew we were heading off in a dozen different directions. Things would never be the same. But the sadness of goodbye could not overshadow the excitement

over what was to come.

It's a different story for parents. It's a happy time, of course. Parents are filled with relief that all those battles over homework and curfews are

those years of teacher conferences, spring concerts, sporting events, and last-minute grade concerns, flew by.

The last few months are the craziest, with the final chaos of invitations and open houses. Parents scramble to make sure they have enough brats, buns, and balloons for the party. It's a good thing there is a lot to do—it makes it a bit easier for mom and dad. At least until the graduate packs up his or her belongings and leaves them to the empty nest.

For those parents, I'm ending with a longer-than-usual quote. I received it from my mom when my first "baby" graduated. I've shared this Erma Bombeck quote at graduation for a couple of years now. It still makes me tear up when I read it, but I still find comfort in it. I hope the parents of the Class of 2009 do too.

*Children are like kites. You spend a lifetime trying to get them off the ground. You run with them until you're both breathless - they crash - you add a longer tail - they hit the rooftop - you pluck them out of the spout - you patch and comfort, adjust and teach. You watch them lifted by the wind and assure them that someday they'll fly! ...Finally they are airborne, but they need more string - you keep letting it out and with each twist of the ball of twine, there is a sadness that goes with the joy, because the kite becomes more distant and somehow you know that it won't be long until that beautiful creature will snap the lifeline that bound you together and soar as it was meant to.*

Erma Bombeck

## UnORGANIZED TERRITORY



Rhonda Silence  
starnews@boreal.org

over. They are proud that their child has fulfilled the requirements of graduation and will make a dramatic entry in his or her cap and gown.

But there is also that looming goodbye—the one that every parent dreads from the time their child takes his or her first steps, gets on the bus on the first day of kindergarten, or gets behind the steering wheel for the first time. Graduation is a final rite of passage, one that comes all too soon.

It's hard to believe that the tiny baby that changed your world could turn into an adult in such a short passage of time. It's hard to believe how fast all

# Letters to the editor

## GM's Brave New World

Grand Marais has lost a great asset; our local car dealer had its franchise pulled out from under its feet. Not because it was not profitable, not because they did anything wrong. It didn't cost GM a single penny for Grand Marais Motors to sell GM cars. In fact, GM will lose monthly franchise fees from these dealerships.

Small towns and rural areas do not fit into General Motor's Brave New World. A piece of our independence has been taken away. Some of you may be saying, "I didn't shop there anyway, so it won't affect me." Maybe not today, but imagine what may be taken away in the future.

So who can we thank for this loss? Hedge fund manager Steven Rattner, appointed to the Treasury to assist former Federal Reserve Bankster Timothy Geithner, deal with our auto industry.

Rattner founded the six billion dollar Quadrangle Group back in 2000. He drives many different cars but his wife, Maureen White, got her drunk driving arrest last October in their 2006 black Mercedes-Benz 350.

Rattner's new emission standards will raise the price of a new car \$600 - \$1300, probably more on a new Benz. I'm not sure about that. But don't worry Rattner will still have enough money to finish his 15 million dollar 15,500 sq. ft. mansion on Martha's Vineyard even though it's a little too close to an Indian burial ground, according to some historians in the area. It's a place where he can relax while he is under investigation in the New York pension kickback scandal.

This is America. He has the freedom to be a hypocrite, but I have the freedom to hate hypocrites.

I'm not making a Hegelian left/right argument. Politicians are like pro-wrestlers; they only act like they hate each other. Example: Obama's Supreme Court nominee, Sonja Sotomayor, was first nominated to the US district court by George H.W. Bush in 1991.

Sadly, we the people pick sides and end up hating each other.

Tom Crosby  
Grand Marais

## Don't support new firearm licensing law

The HR 45 Blair Holt Firearm Licensing And Record of Sale Act of 2009 will soon be introduced to the U. S. House. This law will make it illegal to own a rifle with a clip or any pistol unless it is registered. The owner will be fingerprinted, with a copy of his or her driver's license and social security number. You will be required to submit to a physical and mental evaluation upon demand.

The gun owner must pay a \$25 record update when a gun is sold. Failure to do so will mean loss of the right to own a firearm and make you subject to one year in jail. It also requires that guns be locked and inaccessible to children under the age of 18. There is a right to inspect at any time and noncompliance is a five-year prison sentence.

Hitler took total control over Germany when he confiscated all private weapons. Don't be a bunch of sheep, call all your Congressmen today.

C. A. Frees  
206 Malcon Avenue  
Rainsville AL

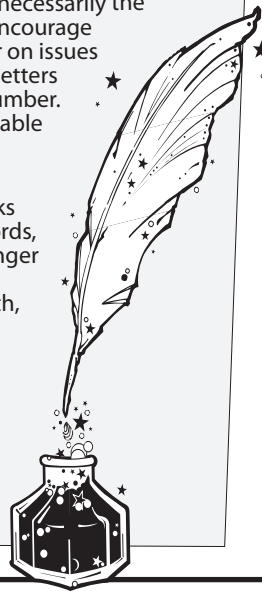
## Reminder for letters

Letters to the editor, columns, and cartoons are all the opinions of the contributors and not necessarily the *Cook County News-Herald*. While we encourage readers to submit letters to the editor on issues they feel strongly about, we ask that letters include name, address, and phone number. Unsigned letters or those of questionable credibility will not be published or acknowledged.

The *Cook County News-Herald* also asks that letters be no longer than 350 words, however at the editor's discretion, longer submissions may be published. All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, and libelous content.

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:  
Cook County News-Herald  
P.O. Box 757  
Grand Marais, MN 55604

OR E-MAIL:  
starnews@boreal.org



# Veterans benefits and services available to Cook County vets

Jane Howard

A May 8, 2009 letter from Clark Dyrud, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, to Cook County Board Chair Fritz Sobanja offered some enlightening statistics on the benefits received by Cook County veterans and their dependents.

"Many veterans and dependents are not aware of the range and scope of benefits available to them, including programs that provide income, medical care, and nursing home care," Dyrud wrote.

In 2008, Cook County's veteran population was 576, and those vets received a total of \$1,577,917 in veteran benefits -- \$2,739.44 per veteran.

One hundred three, or 18%, of Cook County's vets used \$409,202 in Veteran's Administration (VA) medical services, both inpatient and outpatient -- an average of \$3,973 for each person who used the services.

Benefits from the regional office totaled \$1,151,000, an average of \$1,998 among all 576 vets, for compensation, pension, vocational rehabilitation, and education.

In 2008, \$1,815 was also paid out by the Minnesota Department of Veterans for subsistence.

Commissioner Dyrud encouraged Sobanja to support training for its county veterans service officer and to apply for grants provided by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Your County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) is an incredible asset to the economy of your county," Dyrud wrote.

Veterans interested in finding out about benefits and services can contact Cook County's new veterans service officer, Richard McKenzie, by calling (218) 370-9726, emailing veteran.services@co.cook.mn.us, or writing VSO Richard McKenzie, PO Box 246, Grand Marais, MN 55604.

# COOK COUNTY NEWS-Herald

PO Box 757 • 15-1st Ave West • Grand Marais, MN 55604  
218-387-1025 • 218-387-9100 • email: star@boreal.org  
www.CookCountyNews-Herald.com

## NEWS-HERALD STAFF

**Owner/Publisher:** Hal & Deidre Kettunen  
**Editor/Writer:** Rhonda Silence  
**Advertising & Production:** Hal Kettunen, Laurie Johnson, Andy Brostrom  
**Writers:** Jane Howard, Bill Neil

Published Every Saturday in Grand Marais, MN by H & D Kettunen, LLC. Circulation 3,600



## Subscribe to the Cook County News-Herald!

Under new management! Once again locally owned!

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

	1 year	2 years
In Cook County	\$28	\$54
Minnesota	\$37	\$72
Out of state	\$40	\$78
Snowbird	\$35	\$66

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Send your subscription to:  
Cook County News-Herald  
PO Box 757 • Grand Marais MN 55604

For subscription information:  
218-387-1025 • 218-387-9100  
E-mail: star@boreal.org