

Gitche Gitche Gumee



Letters to the editor

Not "Fish Pic" please!

In the past few years I've noticed that some people refer to the annual Fisherman's Picnic as the "Fish Pic." I don't know how, who, or why it started, but personally, as someone who grew up here, it bugs me no end.

I find it kind of disrespectful, even offensive... It makes no sense. It isn't cool or cute. If you have to abbreviate, it's been called "The Picnic" or "Fisherman's," but not "Fish Pic," PLEASE!

*Carah Thomas-Maskell
Grand Marais*



Editors note: In response to recent news about Cook County's efforts to "get a handle" on noxious weeds and insects and the June 6, 2009 Cook County Agricultural Inspector notice informing the public that Local Weed Inspectors are "township supervisors, city mayors or their appointed assistants," this cartoon was submitted by Orvis Lunke of Grand Marais.

Grasshoppers and weeds not out of control

I am writing in response to the "General Notice" to control or eradicate noxious weeds and grasshoppers. What?

The taxpaying public owns less than 10 percent of the land area in Cook County. How can an average citizen be responsible for all of the noxious weed problem when government is in charge? I have yet to see more than two grasshoppers together in 30-plus years of living in Cook County.

What is a noxious weed? I personally do not like thistle or dandelions, but they thrive here even when cut, dug up or sprayed. I think the agriculture (Ag) inspector should get real and concentrate on things that truly are a detriment to the average property owner in Cook County and stop making work to justify a position and the costs involved.

The Cook County Board should be aware that every nitpicking item created by their employees affects not only us but them too. Wake up County Board!

*Tom Thompson
Colvill*

Don't assume tackle killed pelican

I would like to say the article *Pelican perishes from lead poisoning*, seemed to put the cart before the horse. The header was misleading in the fact that the poor bird was not proven to have died from lead poisoning, it was assumed.

The jury is still out on this one. Innocent until proven guilty, they say. Yes, the symptoms were there, but at the same time there are a lot of other diseases this could have been.

In most cases of this nature, I thought they send the bird or animal for testing to know for sure what the cause of death really was. It is unfair to the fishing public to assume it was caused by fishing tackle. The sportsman of this country gets blamed for a lot of things that seem to happen to wildlife. We are also the front line in conservation and the protecting of wildlife.

So please, in the future, make sure of the facts in the case before you write articles of this nature. Let's not assume, that's how gossip and labeling starts.

*Don Hill
Lakeville, MN & West Twin Lake, Grand Marais*

Congress must pass healthcare public option

A letter to our President:

I'm writing you to express my opinion on the public option for healthcare reform. I feel strongly on this issue, because for most of my adult life, finding a reliable affordable healthcare plan has been an experience in frustration and confusion. Out of the all the full-time career positions I've held since I graduated from college, only one provided healthcare.

And even now, despite working full time for a 140 employee corporation, I have to buy my own healthcare plan. The private options are a complete nightmare to choose from. Even the Blue Cross - Blue Shield agent that I deal with isn't any help, because there are so many choices and they're all worse than they should be.

I've been hoping for a public option since I voted for President Clinton. And it is depressing that my government continues to fail the American people on this issue. We deserve better and, in my opinion, this is the single most important issue facing us. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that between 65 and 68 percent of Americans want a public option.

If a healthcare plan doesn't include a public option, I would rather see it fail. I would rather see it fail, because it gives us another chance in the future. If something passes, there will never again be the political will to pass.

Please, please, please, express to the congress that any healthcare reform MUST include a public option. If we Americans don't pass this now, I fear it is our last chance. And you are our last hope.

*Bryan Hansel
Grand Marais, MN*

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.

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No simple solution for sound

The city of Grand Marais has been discussing and debating an ordinance to end neighborhood conflict over outdoor musical performances for several years. The matter seems to arise every summer as the weather warms and local establishments provide entertainment for customers on decks and patios. I respect the current city council for its determination to resolve this matter—but I think their solution needs more work.

The current proposal is simple, which the council has said it wanted from the outset. Sheriff Mark Falk, facing personnel shortages, also wants an ordinance that is easy to enforce. The council's latest draft is that. It is simple. But I don't think it's fair, to folks who want peace and quiet or to people who want to rock and roll outdoors.

The ordinance which saw its "first reading" on Wednesday, June 24, does not take into consideration the volume of the music played. It instead sets a time limit. Bands may play at any sound level until 10:00 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday and until 12:00 midnight on Friday and Saturday nights. To me, it's a lose-lose proposition.

The people who want quiet in their homes or for their motel guests don't want loud music playing, no matter what time of night or day it is. They may be somewhat appeased by knowing that there is a time when music will cease, but they would prefer for it to end long before even the earliest cut-off time. Whether they need rest for health reasons or whether they need to get up for work early in the morning, the time restriction on outdoor music is not helpful to someone trying to rest early in the evening.

Likewise, the establishments who hope to entice customers to stay to eat and drink

UnORGANIZED TERRITORY



*Rhonda Silence
starnews@boreal.org*

into the late evening hours are not happy to have to shut the music down up to three hours before closing. Customers will likely go home—or to an establishment outside of Grand Marais proper where bands can perform as they do in most of the state—until 1:00 a.m. The time restriction is not helpful to the hardworking bartender or server who loses several hours of wages via tips.

Another solution is to set a standard for noise allowed and to use a decibel meter to ensure that musical performances are quieter than the standard. Yes, it would cost the city some money to purchase a noise meter. Yes, it would take law enforcement away from other possibly more critical duties. Yes, it would be more difficult—but it would be fair.

There may even be a way

to make that solution easier. As one citizen Jef Cerniak suggested, perhaps a "noise deputy" could be hired. If the need for noise checks became too much for law enforcement, perhaps a part-time worker could perform noise monitoring, freeing up law enforcement for other matters.

I don't think it would come to that. Use of a decibel meter would settle the argument in a neutral and analytical manner. I believe that a few times of conducting a decibel meter test would finally settle the debate. Overly sensitive folks could see that the sound really is within reasonable limits—or bar owners would see that their entertainment really is intruding.

Businesses have already taken steps to modify the areas where music is performed. One has installed air conditioning to allow entertainment to be inside more frequently. Another rearranged its stage and speaker set-up. Some of the people who were most bothered by music in years past say that things are better.

If businesses know just how loud music on a deck or patio can be, they can take other steps to conform to the standards. If the music gets quieter through these measures, nearby neighbors can relax and once again enjoy their days and nights.

Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast,

To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.

William Congreve

Correction:

In the caption of last week's photo of a broadwinged hawk dining on a grouse, we incorrectly identified the dead bird. It is a ruffed grouse. The *News-Herald* apologizes for the error.

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