

Gitche Gitche Gumee



A happy July 4 for Franken

It seems fitting somehow that the eight-month controversy surrounding the Minnesota senatorial race ended so near the 4th of July, Independence Day. I am proud of our country and its citizens and the way we handle elections and recounts, whether presidential or for a senate seat. There may be people who disagree with the outcome of an election, but they do so in an appropriate manner—by slapping an angry bumper sticker on a vehicle or by becoming involved in the next election. I am glad that we live in a nation in which concerns and conflict over an election can be expressed without the Iranian style of fighting—and deaths—in the streets.

I respect Norm Coleman for conceding and not dragging this out any longer. It had to be difficult for Coleman, who was ahead by more than 1,000 votes on election night. He could have hung on and taken the recount results to the US Supreme Court. He could have obstinately insisted on taking the matter to the highest court. It is good for Minnesota that he did not. It will be good for Minnesota to once again have two senators.

Our new senator, Al Franken, was also gracious in his victory. In an interview on MPR, he acknowledged

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Rhonda Silence
starnews@boreal.org

that he had been elected by a very thin margin—312 out of the 2.9 million cast. He promised to do his best for the state of Minnesota—for all of Minnesota. He pledged to earn the trust of those who did not vote for him.

I am one of those folks. I liked Al Franken as a writer-comedian. I enjoyed his work with Tom Davis on *Saturday Night Live*. I enjoyed their sacrilegious sense of humor. As a member of the *I'm Okay, You're Okay* generation, I appreciated Franken's cheesy motivational

Stuart Smalley character. The 1976 movie *Tunnel Vision*, in which Franken and other SNL cast members lampooned America's obsession with television and advertising, was one of my favorite movies.

But I didn't vote for Franken because I did not care for his post-SNL career as a "political pundit." I don't think his books: *Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot and Other Observations* and *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them* are helpful. My "straight-ticket DFL" friends insist that Franken's writing and his sarcastic radio program on Air America is in response to similar Republican attacks. I don't like those either. I don't understand how responding in kind helps the situation. I am skeptical that a man, who made his living by first making fun of people, then rigorously attacking people, will be able to work well with his senate colleagues.

I'm hoping I will feel better once I get to meet our new senator. I hope he makes a trip to Cook County relatively soon. A political litmus test for me is how willing our representatives are to make the trip up the shore, to listen to concerns and learn about the issues in our area. Norm Coleman made several trips to Cook County and his office was very responsive to letters and phone calls. Senator Franken says he will work for all of us. We'll find out in coming months if that includes the citizens of little towns on the North Shore.

People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote - a very different thing.

~Walter H. Judd

Letters to the editor

Use decibel meter for enforcement

I have been following the Grand Marais City Councils' convolutions on the noise ordinance as the Cook County News-Herald has been reporting it.

I think Rhonda Silence's June 27 column is right on.

Without a nonsubjective measurement allowance such as a decibel level at a specified distance from the noise or music source, the city will have no legally enforceable ordinance.

The sheriff should know better than to

question the accuracy and reliability of decibel meters. There are plenty of court cases, which have upheld them.

And I find it interesting that your City Councilman Tim Kennedy, a former professional land use planner, has waffled on this issue. He, of all the councilpersons, should know that any sound ordinance based on subjective measurement is unenforceable.

John LaVine
St Paul

College news is appreciated

As a long-time seasonal resident of Cook County, I have for many years enjoyed reading the news of the county in the *Cook County News-Herald*. I've been especially delighted in recent issues to read College News information.

One of the most important things we can do is highlight the academic accomplishments of local youth and young adults at public and private colleges and universities in Minnesota and beyond. I've enjoyed reading about the achievements of all of our extraordinary youth, and taken particular pleasure in the recognition of Paul Gecas, a student at the University

of Minnesota, Morris; Alexander S. Hegg and Martina S. Mellang, students at the University of Minnesota Duluth; Gwendolyn Danfelt-Martin, a graduating senior of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; and Shanel Cherie Finke, a student at the University of Minnesota, Crookston.

Drawing attention to our outstanding young scholars is a great reflection of the positive values of the *Cook County News-Herald* and the residents of Cook County.

Robert Bruininks, President
University of Minnesota

Keep the focus on the lake

I just read the latest *Herald* article and viewed the Grand Marais Recreation Park "Plan 3" on the web. As someone who has enjoyed Grand Marais for over half a century as a visitor, camper, North House Folk School and Grand Marais Playhouse supporter, hiker, and shopper, I would like to share the following comments with the Grand Marais Park Board and the community.

1. I (we) continue to return to Grand Marais because you have done an excellent job of maintaining a small town atmosphere (keeping out chain stores and not commercializing the shoreline).
2. It was a great idea to use the old gas station property to make a beautiful park that can be enjoyed by all.
3. If you are seriously planning for 40 years

out, it will be for preserving the shoreline for all that you will be remembered and, hopefully, honored

4. The proposed trail along the shoreline needs to be a boardwalk/biking trail so everyone (young, old, local, visitors that stay or are passing through) can enjoy the beauty of Lake Superior all year (well, almost)
5. The lake is the gold mine in the plan - other interests could/should be as far back from the shoreline as possible for a totally unobstructed view
6. Imagine anyone of us returning in 20, 30, 40 years and being able to enjoy a walk along the shoreline comfortably...a vision too often only found in dreams

Gwendolyn Neumann

Noxious or Ob-noxious?

I am writing in reference to the letter written by Tom Thompson concerning a General Notice posted by the Cook County Agricultural Inspector (aka: Weed/Grasshopper Inspector) in the June 6, 2009 edition of the *News-Herald*. The General Notice informed the public that responsibility and cost for the eradication of noxious weeds and grasshoppers on privately owned land was to be laid on their shoulders. Should property owners not comply, the inspector could hire a contractor and costs incurred would be assessed to your property taxes.

Thompson took issue with the notice. He wondered what plants were to be considered noxious weeds and stated that he has not experienced a grasshopper problem in Cook County during the thirty years he has resided here.

County Agricultural Inspector is a second title worn by our County Highway Engineer Shae Kosmalski. She is paid an additional \$6000 per year to perform these duties outside of her regular work schedule.

Kosmalski's full time salaried position as Cook County Highway Engineer includes a full county benefits package and a "take home" county vehicle. The additional compensation figure of \$6000 is more than double what her

predecessor was paid as "Ag" Inspector.

The increase was requested by Kosmalski earlier this year and was approved by the county board. Is the County Highway Engineer required to have any expertise in botany or entomology to perform these duties?

Many plants we consider to be wildflowers are non-native...Lupine, Forget-me-nots, Orange Hawkweed, Yellow Iris and Day Lilies to name a few. Might they be included?

Will other insects besides grasshoppers be added to the list private property owners will be required to eradicate? Gypsy moth, forest tent caterpillar, emerald ash borer and some earthworm species certainly cause more damage currently than grasshoppers.

It could get quite costly to control these pests on your property. About ninety percent of our county is not privately owned...will government be required to be as diligent on lands in their control? Weed seeds and insects do not respect property lines.

Would it be more cost effective to eradicate the ob-noxious County "Ag" Inspector?

Bob LaMettry
Pike Lake Road

CORRECTIONS:

- » In the June 27, 2009 article entitled *Park board struggles with master plan*, the date of the next regular park board meeting was mistakenly listed as Tuesday, July 14. The actual date is Tuesday, July 7 at 3:30 p.m. in the tourist park recreation hall. The *News-Herald* apologizes for the error.
- » The June 27, 2009 article entitled *Good food and hearty stories at Cross River* states that Dale Mulfinger will give a lecture on cabins after the annual Schroeder Area Historical Society Lundie home tour. Mulfinger will be speaking at 10:30 a.m., before the tour, and his lecture is free and open to the public. The *News-Herald* apologizes for the error.

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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

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