

Down Memory Lane

10 YEARS AGO • JULY 5, 1999

The Cook County Women's Club has announced that it will disband as of this summer, with no fuss or fanfare after 35 years of existence.

On June 5, the officers of the Women's Club sent a letter to all current members, now numbering 43, explaining that no activities had taken place for two years and the officers believed the time has come to dissolve it.

County Engineer Chuck Schmit was on hand at the Grand Marais PUC's regular meeting to discuss the realignment of the Gunflint Trail.

While the need for the PUC to plan underground infrastructure early in the realignment process was uncontested, there was discussion of the cost of such planning.

According to Russell Good, the Public Works director for the city, engineering costs for the project combined with the actual construction of the sewer and water infrastructure would cost roughly \$162,000. Because improvements such as that infrastructure project are usually assessed to the property owners, and because there are only two property owners in the immediate vicinity, Good was looking for ways to cut costs.

"The property owners probably aren't going to be too happy with an assessment that high," he said.

20 YEARS AGO • JULY 3, 1989

July marks the beginning of a study along the North Shore that will determine the feasibility and locations for protected harbors and public accesses on Lake Superior outside of Duluth.

The study will consider the relationship of boating facilities including marinas and public accesses, and the economic development of the land base.

It will also consider public/private partnerships between the local governments and private development.

Grand Marais is featured in a short story appearing in "Christmas: The Annual of Christmas Literature and Art."

The short story, "Angels in the Snow," is by Kristine Staples Nymoan. She grew up in Grand Marais and uses the awesome power of a Lake Superior storm and a drive between Duluth and Grand Marais as the backdrop for her story about a young boy's questions and his mother's return to faith.

50 YEARS AGO • JULY 2, 1959

The bear are again raising havoc with the campers at the West Bearskin campground.

Ed Cavanaugh went on a canoe trip for a couple of days with several guests, and during the night he was awakened by the prowling of a bear. Crawling out of the tent in his underwear, he was confronted by a large bear which he estimated to weigh close to 400 pounds.

He pelted the bear with rocks and hung the food packsack high in a tree. At daylight the bear returned to take another look at the strange and unfriendly apparition that had emerged from the tent, and then left quietly.

Peterson Rexall Drug was very happy to announce a winner from this area — Tom Hussey was a lucky winner of an RCA clock radio in the Rexall Super Plenamins Contest.

90 YEARS AGO • JULY 2, 1919

D.L. Bole certainly made a "flying trip" to Grand Marais when he made the grounds from the Spaulding Hotel in Duluth, to the Paine Hotel in three hours and 20 minutes.

Mr. Bole was on his way to Fort William and had four other passengers in the car.

The Royal Neighbors pleasantly surprised Mrs. Hussey at a birthday party given at the home of Mrs. Matt Lanktree Monday evening.

Five hundred was played, Mrs. Vernie Johnson winning the head prize and Mrs. Victor Skoog the consolation prize.

A beautiful set of china cups and saucers was presented to Mrs. Hussey in honor of her birthday.

"The Land of the Free," the William Fox Production directed by Richard Stanton, the life story of the great commander of the American army of liberty lovers that traveled across 3,000 miles of sea to show the barbarians of what Americans are made, will be presented at the Princess Theatre on July the Fourth, both afternoon and evening.

Minnesota Hospital Association president shows support for hospital

Jane Howard

Cook County North Shore Hospital received a visit on Wednesday, July 1, 2009 from Minnesota Hospital Association President Lawrence Massa, roughly the 40th of 147 Minnesota hospitals he has visited since he began his tenure last October.

Almost a dozen and a half staff and board members from the hospital and Sawtooth Mountain Clinic listened as Massa outlined the association's lobbying efforts on behalf of Minnesota hospitals.

The Minnesota Hospital Association is committed to affordable access to quality health care for all Minnesotans, Massa said. This will be a challenge, however, because of the state's aging population and its limited resources.

The association maintains a large database of information used by hospitals, research organizations, and the legislature (which pays for the information). One of its core values is organizational accountability. It maintains a "patient safety registry" of "adverse events" that can help member hospitals learn from others' mistakes and develop safe practices.

As Baby Boomers retire, Massa said, the hospital industry will need to redesign its workforce, because hospitals will simply not have enough people to fill jobs in the way they have been filled in the past.

Massa described the association's response to numerous legislative initiatives that have included legal recourse for employees who blow the whistle on government contractors making false billing claims, mandated staffing ratios, and payment caps for independent and hospital-based birthing centers.

If you come to the health care industry from the world of business, Massa said, "you become aghast very quickly" because they do not work the same way. Massa decried items in Governor Pawlenty's proposed budget that called for rate reductions to hospitals and elimination of adult coverage under Minnesota Care. Since hospitals provide care to all who come to their emergency room doors regardless of ability to pay, they are faced with different challenges from other service providers, Massa said.

In the end, Massa said, the governor signed the legislature's spending bills but did not sign the bill authorizing payment for those bills, leaving him with the ability to "un-allot" programs. The Minnesota Hospital Association will be working to come up with ideas to offer the legislature regarding how to cover necessary expenditures without adding to the state's budget deficit.

Massa said that Minnesota has a reputation for providing high-quality health



Staff photo/Jane Howard

Lawrence Massa, president of the Minnesota Hospital Association, standing with Cook County North Shore Hospital Administrator Diane Pearson. Massa met with North Shore Hospital and Sawtooth Mountain Clinic staff and board members Wednesday, July 1, 2009, updating them on the association's advocacy efforts on behalf of Minnesota hospitals. Massa set out to visit all 147 of Minnesota's hospitals when he began his tenure last October.

care at low cost. Medicare payments in Minnesota are substantially lower than those in some other states, such as Florida and California, he said.

The "Dartmouth Atlas Project," a research engine that studies medical resources in the U.S., has done a study that shows variations in per capita expenditures for Medicare beneficiaries. The study (found at www.dartmouthatlas.org) indicates that Medicare spending per beneficiary throughout almost all of Minnesota, including the Arrowhead region, is significantly lower than in many other regions of the United States. While Medicare costs per beneficiary in portions of the country's southeast, mid-south, and northeast and in the Chicago area and eastern Michigan average between \$9,000 and \$16,352, costs throughout almost all of Minnesota average between \$5,310 and \$7,000.

According to the project's website, "Research has shown that some of the variation is due to differences in the prices paid for similar services, and some is due to differences in illness; but even after accounting for these factors, twofold differences

remain. In other words, the differences in spending are almost entirely explained by differences in the volume of health care services received by similar patients."

Massa said the Minnesota Hospital Association would like the state's hospitals to be rewarded for providing high-quality care at low cost. The association is watching numerous payment reforms being considered in the legislature that could impact the state's hospitals.

Hospital board member Howard Abrahamson asked Massa to comment on the state of nursing care funding. A lot of hospitals, Massa responded, are discontinuing their nursing home care because they "are such a drag" on hospital budgets. Some facilities are laying off employees, offering fewer hours of work, or discontinuing previously offered health care coverage, he said.

In the face of continuing funding challenges, Massa made it clear that he is fiercely advocating for the interests of Minnesota's hospitals.

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Fisherman's Picnic is coming...

COOK COUNTY NEWSHERALD

The Cook County News-Herald is publishing a special insert for Grand Marais' Big Bash. This insert is what everyone will use to discover the who, what, where, when and why of **Fisherman's Picnic 2009**.

Inserted in the Cook County News-Herald on July 25, 2009 and available the weekend of the event.

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