

Gitche Gitche Gumee



A cruise down memory lane

Some childhood memories don't hold up well when they are revisited. TV shows aren't as funny; special candy concoctions don't taste the same; snow banks are never as high as remembered. However, last weekend I had the chance to relive a favorite childhood adventure that stands the test of time. I was able to float down memory lane.

I was a very lucky kid. My grandpa was Roy Oberg, a ship captain. He piloted several boats, commemorated in a wonderful Howard Sivertson painting, which depicts grandpa surrounded by all his boats. The last two boats I am familiar with—the *Voyageur* and the *Voyageur II*.

I was lucky to be able to make the trip from Grand Portage to Isle Royale every summer. Our family spent many hours on the deck of the *Voyageur*, relaxing in the intense sun reflecting off the water on calm trips or enjoying the crash of the waves on stormy days. I remember being a bit nervous on foggy days when the shoreline wasn't visible. I remember the relief when the rugged shoreline did come into view. And I remember marveling at the beautiful scenery—Rock of Ages lighthouse, The Palisades, the sailboats skittering across the water in the bays.

I enjoyed sitting on the ledge in the pilot house as

grandpa steered the *Voyageur* through narrow channels and brought her snug against the dock at his numerous stops—Belle Isle, the Daisy

UnORGANIZED TERRITORY



Rhonda Silence
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Farm camping area, Chippewa Harbor and others. One of the most fascinating parts of the trip was through Washington harbor, over the ghost of the steamship *America*, which can be seen from the surface on very calm days.

I miss those special days. The last time I was on the *Voyageur* was shortly after Chuck and I were married. We came home to Minnesota

on vacation and found time to make a trip to the Island as grown-ups. We had a wonderful time with grandpa. He tried to teach us cribbage and we had a delicious lake trout dinner at Rock Harbor Lodge.

Last week I was a very lucky grown-up. My brother-in-law, Brian, invited Chuck and me to go fishing with him—to Isle Royale. We had marvelous luck fishing. We caught our limit of nice eating sized lake trout.

But even more wondrous for me was to once again cruise out of Grand Portage, past Grand Portage Island (which used to be Pete's Island), past the Susie Islands, out onto the lake until the Minnesota shoreline was barely visible. Coming upon Rock of Ages was like seeing an old friend. We trolled along the edge of the island and I enjoyed seeing the rocky shore pocked with caves and decorated with ancient cedars.

After catching our limit, Brian took us into Washington Harbor where divers were exploring the *America*. We docked and visited Betty Strom, who invited us in for hot-from-the-oven caramel rolls. We had a wonderful chat. Betty was one of the many people who for many years got her mail and supplies from grandpa on the *Voyageur*.

Her kind words about grandpa made him seem close. Or perhaps it was because I was lucky to be on the water and the island that he loved.

A happy childhood can't be cured.

Hortense Calisher

Letters to the editor

Change in spiritual reflections needed

What a refreshing change to hear from Mark Ditmanson earlier this month. Is there some reason that there are 13 community churches in the "church services schedule" and yet one dominates the *Spiritual Reflections* space?

It makes for the "same-old same-old"

dull message which I no longer bother to read. Why not allow others to contribute more than once a year? It could be very stimulating.

Lou Jensen
Grand Marais

Another Viking was in All-Star game

It seems Mitch Dorr didn't do his research concerning what CCHS players played in the All Star game. He left out the very first one. I will give you a hint...Robin Ekroot had an older brother who played in the game in 1976.

It might be considered significant that two members of the same family played in the game...how many times has that happened?

Vince Ekroot
Grand Marais

Editors note: Vince Ekroot, Cook County High School class of 1976 also played in the Minnesota High School All-Star Football Game in 1976.

Firewise not invited?

I recently received a notice from the Cook County Firewise folks inviting themselves to my home for an inspection of my property. The letter arrived on Thursday June 25 for inspections beginning the following Monday, June 29. Hardly ample time to prepare for guests, although they were coming whether or not I'd be home. A procedure I suspect they learned from the nice people that occasionally leave copies of the *Watch Tower* on my doorstep.

According to the notice my options for declining their visit were to:

(1) gate my driveway, (2) post a "No Trespassing" sign or (3) sign and attach the notice to my mailbox. The visit seemed rather presumptive on their part, for what has always been a voluntary program.

Is Firewise worthwhile? Most certainly. When Board Chairman of our area lake association, I had invited Firewise personnel to speak at our annual meeting and Firewise inspections were encouraged

through our newsletter. I had personally attended one of the area's first Firewise inspections at the home of Cook County's previous Emergency Management Director.

I support the Firewise program, but object when county officials invite themselves onto private land to implement a voluntary program unless the property owner takes specific action to "un-invite" them.

While there is no charge for a Firewise inspection, those performing the inspections are certainly not working for free. The current inspection effort is being funded by a "mitigation" grant from the MN Department of Natural Resources.

And why not spend all this "free" money? Because ultimately...like all government spending...it comes from us in the form of taxes, fees and licenses.

Bob LaMettry
Pike Lake Road

Support right-to-repair

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation strongly supports the Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act (HR 2057) and urges Congress to swiftly pass the legislation in order to safeguard individual vehicle ownership rights today and in the future.

We believe that consumers are entitled to the right to choose how their motorcycle, car or other type of vehicle is maintained or upgraded. The point of Right to Repair is to protect the freedom of American consumers to choose how they take care of their vehicles, be it in their driveway or at a trusted repair facility, and to ensure that they have access to all the information required to complete service and repairs.

Vehicles, including motorcycles, are

becoming increasingly complex with the addition of more and more computer technology, and that is only going to increase in the future. Ready access to accurate service and repair information from the manufacturers is essential to the safety and well being of the entire American motoring public.

We encourage all motorists to visit www.righttorepair.org to send a letter to each of their congressional representatives, urging them to support the Right to Repair Act by adding their names to the growing list of co-sponsors.

Jeff Hennie
Motorcycle Riders Foundation
Washington DC

Farmers support carbon emission cap

America's family farmers and ranchers have a unique role to play when it comes to combating global climate change. Congressman Jim Oberstar understands that and I thank him for his vote in support of the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. As President Obama said about the legislation's passage, it is a "bold and necessary step."

Farmers Union supports a national, mandatory carbon emission cap and trade system to reduce nonfarm greenhouse gas emissions. A flexible agricultural offset program within the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 will allow producers to mitigate climate change by adopting sound science and proven environmental practices.

With the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in control of sound science and climate change statistics, it will allow individual producers to be recognized as early actors for their innovative efforts in sequestering carbon using a variety of techniques, and will allow American farmers and ranchers to continue to provide consumers with the most affordable and abundant food supply in the world.

Allowing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) control over climate change regulations was not an option because farmers would have been hard hit.

Doug Peterson,
MN Farmers Union President
Madison, 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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