

OUR VIEW

Pitch in for our fab Fourth traditions

Every year, Cloquet puts on quite a spectacular Fourth of July celebration. But it's a lot of work, and while most of the volunteers do their work with a smile and a positive attitude, they are always shorthanded, especially on the day of the event.

Coordinator Alyson Leno told the Pine Knot News that volunteers are especially needed on the Fourth of July itself.

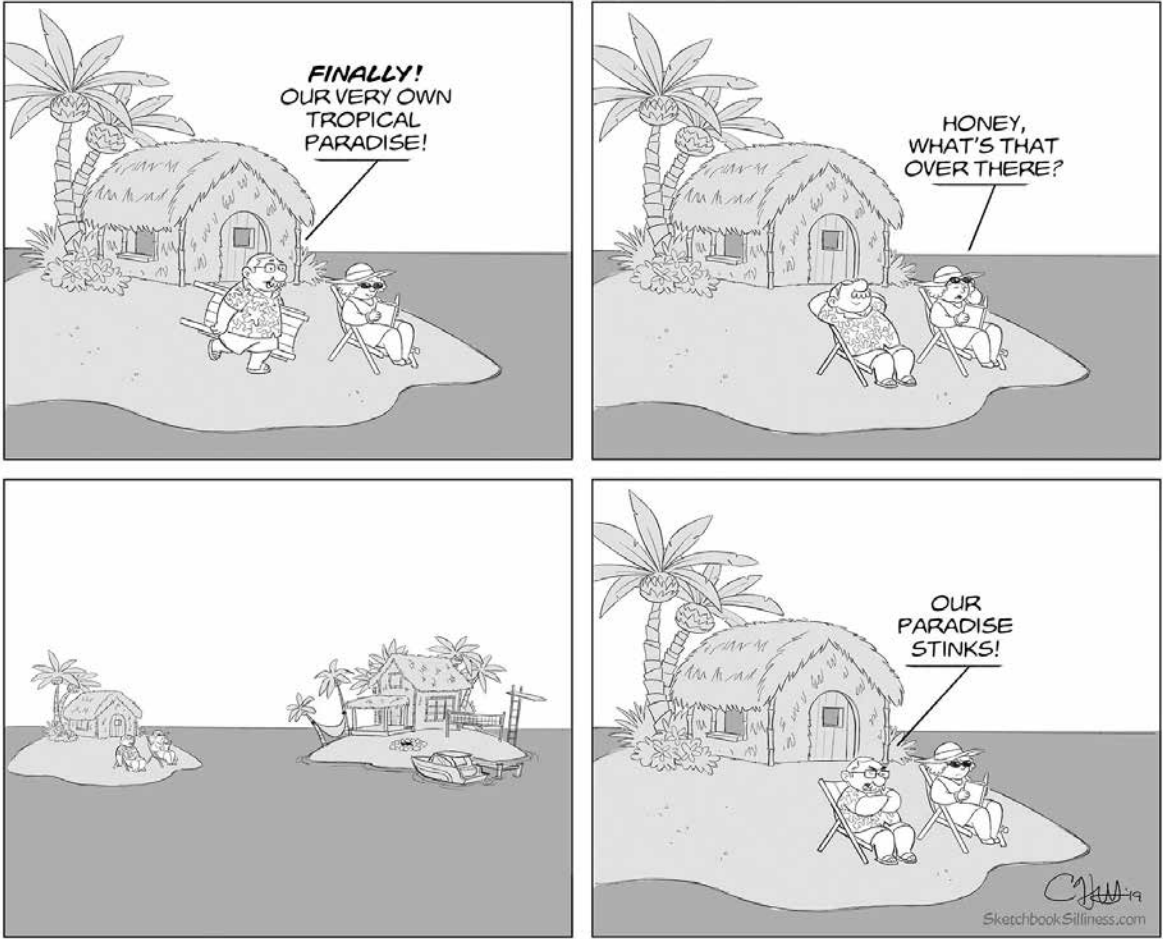
"If we don't have enough help the day before, it takes forever to get everything set up. If there are not enough volunteers on the Fourth, we have chaos. We need help cleaning up afterward, but there's not such a time crunch for that. Definitely we need more help setting up and on the Fourth of July itself," Leno told us.

That's understandable, as most people want to relax on the Fourth of July and enjoy everything that is offered.

And there is a lot that's offered. And most of it is free. Because that's what communities do — give and give back.

We hope some readers will decide to step up and help out on the Fourth of July, just for an hour or two. Maybe a group of teenagers can get their friends together and help with the children's games at Veterans Park? Or, maybe a few parents can rotate watching each others' kids so some can help empty the garbage cans. And they need about a dozen people starting around 5 p.m. the day before to set up tents, tables and more, to get ready for the thousands of people that will wander through town the next day.

If a few more people are willing to spend an hour or two on and around the Fourth, we'll all enjoy a better Independence Day event in our hometown.



Treasured pond could use tweaks

Now that summer has arrived, The Beach at Pinehurst Park is open and ready for swimmers.

Or is it?

The City of Cloquet spent millions to renovate Pinehurst Park to make a clean, safe swimming facility. It was a long, community-involved process. Consultants gave us three options for remodeling the old Pinehurst Pond and neighbors debated the merits of each option for months.

tear was finally repaired.

Then, the "washed sand" turned out to be tiny gravel, and despite promises that the pond would be as clear as a sand-bottom lake, the water gets pretty murky by late afternoon, when sediment is churned up from all the activity in the pool. That's still an issue.

But most of the glitches worked out fine, and The Beach is now lightly chlorinated, so you don't have that bleach smell you get from a swimming pool. The water is sanitary and clear, until those late afternoons.



Pete Radosevich

It didn't help much that the consultants labeled the options as "Good," "Better" and "Best." Those designations caused a lot of contention between those who wanted a traditional concrete pool, and those who wanted to keep the traditional swimming pond. Many City council meetings were devoted to debate on the issue, and eventually the council agreed with the "best" option: a sand-bottom pond, with sandy beaches and filtered water to cool off in over the summer months.

The pond was troubled right from the start. Right away, a leak developed in the rubber lining and the water level dropped noticeably every day; the city pumped millions of gallons of water into the pond before the

There are lanes for serious swimmers to do laps, and zero-entry beaches for little kids. The staff, mostly young adults, are attentive and pleasant. The showers are clean and hot, and there are concessions, tables with umbrellas, and lounge chairs.

It's pretty full, too, on sunny days. The Beach at Pinehurst has become a popular regional attraction, and we should be proud of our pool.

I've been around the country and seen many community pools. The "splash pads" that were to become a part of our pool never materialized, and those seem to be pretty popular with younger kids. Things like water slides, wave machines, and water sports

appear to be popular, too. I like our approach, though — we've figured out how to blend a natural lake with the cleanliness of a chlorinated pool, with some of the best features of both.

It would be nice if the pool were open early mornings for adult swims. I also wish it could be open later in the evening; it closes at 7 p.m. now, and the last few weeks of summer, it closes at 5 p.m. And, the pool is drained by September, so no matter how warm it gets in the fall, the pool is closed. These ideas may be logistically difficult, but it would be nice.

I do hope that Community Education, which operates the pool on behalf of the city, addresses one major concern: we never know when the pool is open or not. It seems that on cooler days the pool closes early or opens late, but the real annoyance is when it rains early in the day and the pool closes for the whole day, even if the skies clear up and it gets warm outside. It's disappointing to get all ready for the pool, only to arrive and find it closed.

Pete Radosevich is the publisher of the Pine Knot News community newspaper and an attorney in Esko who hosts the talk show Harry's Gang on CAT-7. He can be reached at Pete.Radosevich@PineKnotNews.com.



Express yourself

The Pine Knot News encourages readers to participate on these pages. Let your voice be heard by following these basic guidelines:

- Letters to the editor should be kept to under 300 words. Longer pieces could be considered for a guest commentary. Commentaries should be kept to around 600 words.
- If you write a guest commentary, be sure to include some background information and any expertise you may have to lend credibility to your piece.
- Items dealing with local issues will take first priority.
- Letters over the word limits will be edited at the discretion of the editor. That discretion could include allowing a piece to run long.
- Any reader comments should be respectful.
- The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity, concision, grammar, newspaper style, libel and length.
- Letters and commentary must be original works by the author.
- Thank-you notes, congratulations or other form material will be sent to our advertising department for consideration.
- Include your name. Also include your address and telephone number for verification purposes only. Only names and home cities will be published.
- No anonymous letters are allowed.

Send your thoughts to:
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