

Ely Echo Editorial

Twin Metals Minnesota proposal puts the spotlight on Ely area

For the next several years and maybe as long as a decade, the spotlight will be on Ely after Twin Metals Minnesota submitted its proposal to build an underground copper-nickel mine off of Highway 1.

The \$1.7 billion project will be scrutinized, agonized and decried as either the best or worst thing to happen to our community.

We're just glad the process has finally started. For too long those opposed have resorted to outright guesses and claims of horror and destruction. Now we're down to science.

Twin Metals didn't take the easy way out. Making a mile plus long road underground and using dry stack tailings isn't the cheapest route to go. But environmentally it's the best way to go.

And that should be what is most important as the debate moves forward. We must require the best available technology and methods be used to extract this treasure of minerals. That is what the laws require and what we expect the company to follow.

Up until April 1, 1967 we had an underground mine operating within the city limits. It reached 1,700 feet underground and pumped a million gallons of water every day into Shagawa Lake.

If you know how the water flows around here, that million gallons of mine water flowed from Shagawa into Fall Lake and from Fall Lake into the Boundary Waters, first through Newton and then into Basswood Lake.

Of course there were also a couple dozens of resorts on Basswood complete with septic systems and thousands of guests every summer. But that's history the anti-groups don't want to talk about or even mention.

When you go to get your BWCA permit from the Forest Service you can ask about the history of resorts on Basswood Lake but unless you get the right person at the counter, all you will receive is a blank stare.

It's the ignorance or outright denial that

mining and motorized tourism have existed in this area for over 130 years that should be used as background for the Twin Metals debate.

Certainly the Pioneer Mine didn't use dry stack tailings as it hoisted material from below ground. Nope, the excess material is now either the dirt below Grand Ely Lodge or in the Lucky Boy ponds behind the Golf Course. And where does that water flow? Through a trout stream, to Shagawa Lake, to Fall Lake, to the...BWCA.

What's the point? That we all try to keep common sense and history in mind as we move forward. Mining has been done here before at multiple locations. What Twin Metals is proposing is light years ahead of what was done here in the past.

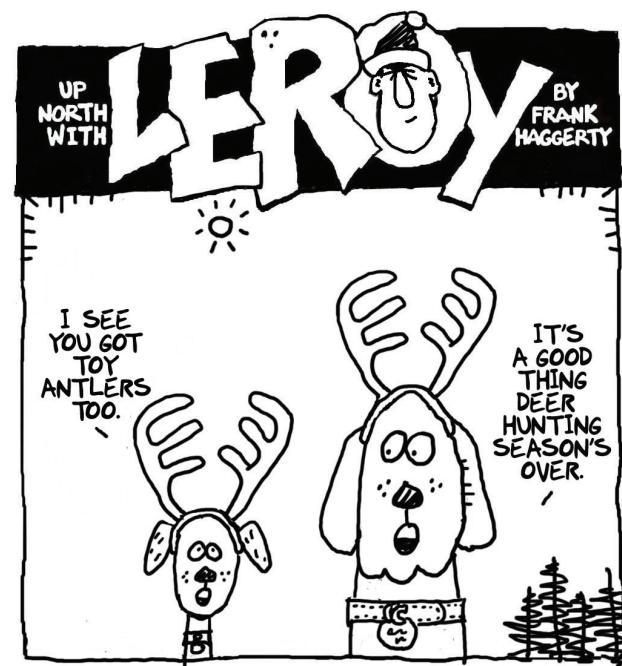
We want both the state and federal agencies involved with this project to ask questions, delve deep into the proposal and make sure this is going to be done right. And if the company can't meet the laws and regulations, then they can't mine here.

There will be opportunities for the public to have a say as well, because the laws allow for that to happen. We're hoping those public hearings are peaceful and both sides respect the process. If need be, let's agree to disagree.

We will say the effort to ask Gov. Walz to end the process before it started showed a sense of desperation and a lack of reality.

There's a saying that everyone should be able to have their day in court. The laws that are in place allow for the process to take place. The company submits a proposal then state and federal agencies review it. In the end either permits are granted or they are not granted.

From there comes the day in court. PolyMet is going through that now, no doubt Twin Metals will end up there as well. And all the while, Ely's future hangs in the balance.



Letters

...we found an incredible town

Editor:

Our gratitude...

When Georgia and I moved to Ely in 1954, our thoughts were to have two years of experience in teaching...then move back to our hometown area of central Minnesota...However, after one year we realized that we found an incredible town, filled with loving and kind, caring people...And after 65 years living in Ely...that feeling has grown stronger each year...

Many of you know that our son John was airlifted to the Mayo Hospital in Rochester to be treated again for his serious condition... now, we want to thank all of Ely for their love, concern, and especially your badly needed prayers...for John's recovery...we especially want to thank the wonderful, caring staff at

our hospital and especially John's personal doctor, Dr. Jim Montana...who has spent countless hours helping John to recovery...Dr. Montana rode with the ambulance to Hibbing to assure he was taken care of before John's airlift to Mayo...he mentioned "if the plane cannot get John to Rochester due to flight conditions, he would continue to be with John by ambulance"...to provide all needed medical care.

What a wonderful, caring and dedication physician... and Brauns' thank him, with love and gratitude...

John will be in Rochester for a long time., as he recovers his health...your prayers are so needed and appreciated...

With love and gratitude,
The Braun Family
Thanks "Incredible Ely," our home...

...We support that process

Editor:

A bipartisan group of northern legislators commend Twin Metals Minnesota for reaching the important milestone of submitting its mine project proposal to state and federal agencies for review.

Mining is our heritage and an important aspect of our future. We are pleased that environmental review is about to begin for a project that would provide vital economic benefits for the communities and families in our districts for years to come.

Our communities have long benefitted from an economy supported by natural resources-based industries. We have an equally strong history of enjoying and protecting the environment in our beautiful part of

the state.

We commend Twin Metals for their commitment to build a project that meets or exceeds state and federal standards to protect the environment where we live, work and play. We expect no less.

Our state regulatory agencies and the public will now begin the process of thoroughly reviewing and commenting on the proposed Twin Metals project.

We support that process and look forward to participating in it. We hope all Minnesotans will do the same.

Senator David Tomassoni
Senator Justin Eichorn
Senator Paul Gazelka
Rep. Dave Lislegard
Rep. Rob Ecklund
Rep. Julie Sandstede
Rep. Dale Lueck
Rep. Sandy Layman

...decidedly an international issue

Editor:

"It's another lost year, another lost decade. I don't want to belittle the important things that have happened and are happening, but they are not enough. People will look back at us and wonder, 'What were you doing?'" These gloomy comments were spoken by Rod Jackson, a professor of Earth Science at Stanford University and Chair of the Global Carbon Project, held in Madrid.

Global greenhouse emissions hit yet another record high this year. Carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels and industry totaled 36.8 billion tons.

The impact of climate change upon planet Earth is not evenly distributed. There are major variations and different degrees of destruction of housing, transportation and communication systems. This devastation is taking place in diverse geographical locations due to multiple causes of climate devastation. There are no boundaries.

Nothing is immune to the forces of climate change and it is manifested in numerous forms such as floods, droughts, fires, winds, disease, lack of potable water,

and food scarcity.

It seems paradoxical that, after years of study, an international seed vault was established on the Svalbard archipelago, Norway. It was expected to be viable for many centuries and to withstand even a nuclear bomb. The billions of flora seeds from all around world are stored in the vault to be used at times when climate change eradicated various types of vegetation. It was designed not to rely on potentially vulnerable breakdown mechanical refrigeration equipment, but to be kept constantly cool by the natural environmental permafrost. Ironically, due to climate change, the permafrost is beginning to melt.

Sad to say, the President nor any member of the White House staff attended the Paris accords conference even though the United States is a prime contributor to the adverse elements causing global climate change.

Global climate change is decidedly an international issue and the Administration should not ignore the issues, but participate in seeking remedies for this realistic threat to humanity.

Gerry Snyder
Ely

Hook and Bullet Club

by Nick Wognum

Dave "Otto" Merhar and I were bound and determined to knock down a deer during the last weekend of muzzleloader season. First we had to shovel out our trucks after getting stuck in the deep snow.

Otto went first, attempting to turn around at the end of the Cloquet Line. But there were two Forest Service trucks and trailers parked there along with a cable for tying off sled dogs.

He tried to get around them but the deep snow sucked his truck in. Otto is nothing if not persistent and didn't want to call for help. Finally he sent me a text.

"I'm a retired Army officer, bo-hunk. So this hard...Help!"

Little did I know I would be in his shoes an hour or so later.

It only took a few minutes to pull Dave's truck back on to the plowed snow. From there we decided to consolidate into my truck and try our luck on the Fernberg.

Now we were a mobile hunting force. He had the right side of the road and I surveyed the left. Where we really wanted to go was a set of clear cuts where he had spotted deer earlier in the season.

With knee to waist deep snow it was going to be a challenge to drive in there. I think we made it 200 yards. "I'll keep an eye on this side," said

Merhar as I tried to back up and keep the tires on the packed area.

That didn't last long. Boom. We were stuck. I grabbed the shovel and we traded off removing snow from around the tires.

Then it was the tried and true method of rocking back and forth. That actually worked and we were back on track.

Otto hopped back in and we made it to the power line, halfway back to the Fernberg.

Then the right front tire took a dive and I reached for my phone. Time to call for help.

But Otto was stubborn and kept hopping out in the waist deep snow and shoveling. I figured it couldn't hurt so we cleared the snow again.

But the tires spun. Hop out. Shovel. Hop in. Spin. Rinse, repeat.

I was ready to give up and wait for the tow truck. But there was one last trick to try. For the first time I put the transmission in four low.

It took some rocking back and forth but somehow we got out. There may have been a high five in the truck.

I called and canceled the tow truck so we could continue hunting.



We cruised around various roads, looking for horizontal in a land of vertical. Stories were told including one where Dave Merhar greeted Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as she arrived in Washington, D.C.

Our hunting luck didn't change until the next day when Otto knocked down a nice doe to put venison in his freezer this winter.

And, we were able to gut, drag and lift the deer into the back of the truck without any injuries.

We didn't get to sit in the Princess Stand this year but we did get to spend time hunting together. We got stuck, we got out and we got a deer.

Well, Otto got a deer. And he was home in time to watch the Army vs. Navy football game.

As for me, there's always next year.

In the Ely Echo for **December 24, 1979, 40 years ago**, the headlines were:

- As weather gets colder, council heats up;
- Echo welcomes 100 new subscribers in December;
- Three appointed to management posts at U.S. Steel;
- Ely has an expensive sewage problem they're attempting to solve;
- Podominick's 33 paces Ely over Mt. Iron;
- Hidden Valley jump record broken by Williams.

who were handy.

I brought the small fan into work and convinced a worker to see what I had done wrong and to fix it.

Before long he came back to me and asked where the rest of the fan parts were. Somewhat embarrassed, I handed them over.

He returned with a working fan.

So much for my mechanic's aptitude!

Now some 50 years later, I decided against trying to fix my small humidifier. Amazing how easy it is to just buy a new one! And even at that I had to have grandson Evan get it working.

From the miscellaneous drawer

by Anne Swenson

Did you ever have to take an aptitude test when you were in school? Mine came back stating I should become a mechanic as an adult.

That wasn't too surprising given that I repaired my bike when needed and changed car tires for my parents. I also took apart a small table top fan in the heat of the summer to fix it.

The only problem was that when I re-assembled it, the fan ran backwards, pushing the blades so they revolved over the motor which heated up easily.

Nobody had air conditioning back then, and I was stumped and hot. I was again working for my dad that summer and knew there were men in the plant