

Ely Echo Editorial

Border closure helps Ely, hurts others

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused untold economic damage around the world and even right here in Ely. But with U.S.-Canadian border closed again this summer, many Ely businesses will prosper.

We saw this last summer when tourists used to going to Canadian resorts and outfitters came to Ely instead. What was looking to be a bust of a summer instead turned into a record numbers of visitors who wanted to get away.

They filled cabins, hotel rooms and camp sites on area lakes and in town. They rented canoes and headed into the BWCA. And many of them came into town to buy meals, groceries, liquor and items from Ely's summer businesses.

But the border closure has been deadly for Canadian resorts that count over 90 percent of their customers coming from the United States. Our friends at Zup's Fishing Resort and Canoe Outfitters have been hit hard. As an American owned business in Canada, they don't qualify for many of the bailout options. So, they have persevered by continuing to offer outfitting services with the hopes the border and their resort on Lac La Croix will finally be able to open in 2021.

Rep. Pete Stauber held a roundtable discussion last week on the border issue. Joined by Rep. Michelle Fischbach and two Canadian Members of Parliament, Stauber gave those

impacted by the closure an opportunity to tell their story and raise awareness of the amount of trade that crosses our northern border.

Stauber must've been on the right track because U.S. Sen. Tina Smith finally joined the cause and wrote a letter Secretary of State Antony Blinken asking that the border be opened.

Stauber knows the issue isn't just the virus, there's politics as well (see what's going on at our southern border for proof of that).

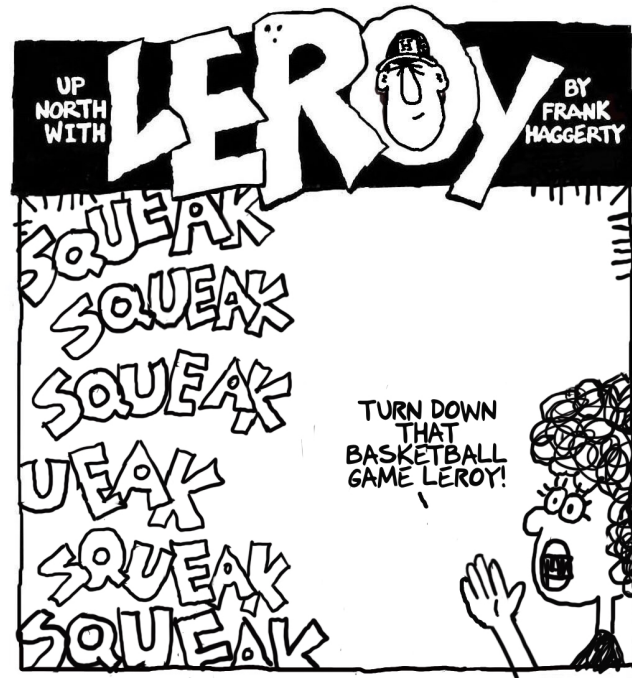
After hearing horror stories from those directly impacted by the border being closed, Stauber placed blame where it belongs:

"You have to push [Prime Minister Justin] Trudeau, and we have to push President Biden and his administration," said Stauber. "We can't wait any longer."

While Nero, Trudeau and Biden fiddle around, Ely will likely continue to benefit. Resorts and outfitters are reporting high numbers of reservations as summer is set to begin. That means retail and service businesses in Ely will reap rewards as well.

With all the economic harm this pandemic has caused it's refreshing to see some good news. But for people like Mark and Kathy Zup, being unable to fully operate your business on an island on Lac La Croix, this doesn't make sense.

But in this crazy world we live in today, our doses of common sense are fewer and fewer.



Letters to the Editor

...maybe Mike's letter opened the door

Editor: I commend Mike Banovetz on his letter to the editor in last week's Echo. The letter criticized Terry Peterson's previous letter to the editor, yet thanked Terry for his service in the Marines. Mike gave Steve Piragis, an opponent in the copper-nickel mining issue, credit where credit is due. And, in his statement, "We want the same thing, to protect the BWCA for future generations to enjoy," Mike found common ground for

those of us with strong opposing opinions about the prospect of copper-nickel mining in this area.

It's this kind of approach, starting from a place of agreement and acknowledging the positive aspects of opponents, that promotes civil discourse and can lead to solutions that most can live with. Maybe Mike's letter opened the door.

Rich Floyd
Ely

...join me in voting for Paul Kess

Dear Ely voters,
I will be voting for Paul Kess for mayor of the City of Ely on April 13, 2021.

Paul has been a councilor for approximately twenty years. In that time he has become one of our premier councilors. Paul is articulate, and comes to the meetings prepared. He contributes wisely to discussions and asks important questions.

I sat on the budget committee for ten years. Every year at the start of the budget process Paul would lobby to keep the city levy at zero, or give something back to the tax-payers. When projects or large purchases would come up for discussion, Paul would ask the questions, "Why do we need this? How

are we going to pay for it?"

Paul is very approachable and truly cares about the City of Ely. Paul will always return phone calls. If Paul doesn't know the answer, he will find out and call you back.

Paul was a leader in a recent attempt to lower commercial garbage rates. Though unsuccessful at the time, Paul continues to look for avenues to reduce costs to the tax-payers so we can all continue to afford to live in this great community we call home.

Please join me in voting for Paul Kess for your next mayor.

John Lahtonen
Ely, MN

...Paul Kess for Ely's next mayor

Editor:
As a resident for 44 years, I join many of you who have observed city government in Ely. From those years as residents, we know all the ways that our local government functions and the importance of voting in all elections including the upcoming mayoral elections.

Each of the candidates for mayor should be given thoughtful consideration and appreciation for their desire to serve this area's residents and visitors.

All of the current candidates have performed various roles in this community over the years giving us an opportunity to know them. Our vote must be in support of the best prepared candidate to work as mayor with the city council and the city manager and in that role to provide political leadership and represent Ely.

I believe that in his years of experience as a city councilor, educator and resident of this community Paul Kess stands out as the best suited candidate to engage in

the problem solving, public engagement and leadership desired in a mayor for Ely.

His years of experience in city government and long-standing working relationships with Ely businesses and residents, councilors, mayors, township boards, public agencies, county and state officials contribute to a mayor's perspective. His insight into the workings, challenges and potentials of the city will enable him foster Ely's assets.

Paul will understand and value local talents, resources, history and determined citizenry to encourage the building an even stronger Ely. Talk to him and vote for him. He will listen and work to help you continue improving Ely's quality of life.

Being Mayor of Ely is big responsibility as Ely is a small town of widespread interest. I support Paul Kess for Ely's next mayor.

Vote in the Wednesday, April 13 Primary!!!

Bill Tefft
Ely, MN

Write a letter to the editor and sign your name, phone #. Send it to: Ely Echo, 15 East Chapman St., Ely MN 55731 or email to: elyecho@aol.com. The Echo reserves the right to edit.

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...thankful that President Biden has made infrastructure a top priority

Dear Editor,

This is the first letter I've written to any paper but I felt I needed to speak up concerning a letter to the Editor in the 4-2 edition of the Echo by Lawrence Aho.

He asks, "Since when is it healthy to isolate people away from other people?" I can answer this. When you have a history of the flu turning into something more severe. Over the last 4 or 5 years I have landed in the hospital with pneumonia every time I came down with any type of flu. Not just overnight but days in the hospital. My doctor gave me a 50/50 chance of making it through when it was at its worst in the metro area. Which is why my family has refused to see me for the last year. Which is why I have been working from home for the last year (and thank you God for a job that allows me to do so). Which is why I have not seen my grandchildren for a year. At least not face to

face. Again thank you God for giving us the brains to develop the technology that brings us face to face with people at this time.

You see Lawrence, my family is not taking chances, conspiracy or not, that I could die. They value my life as, I'm sure, do the families of the children you speak of. What they are doing is not cruel. It's protecting them, just in case. When I was young, we had to practice getting under our desks, just in case there was a nuclear attack. (Like that would help!) Just in case. It didn't affect me one way or the other.

In the past I had spent a lot of time in Ely and have many friends there (shout out to Silver Rapids and Gary for pulling me and the ATV out of 7 mile swamp years ago... still sorry about your ATV Brian!). We were married there back in the 90s.

My husband went up there for a fishing trip last

year and had been talking about how no one was, as of yet, wearing masks or social distancing. We thought it stood to reason that would change, and it did.

So that begs the question...is the whole town in on the conspiracy or is the whole town having the wool pulled over their eyes? Herd immunity kicks in when 50-60% of the population is immune. Last I heard that was not Ely. They have a ways to go.

Until then think about this: Aside from Covid, did we have a serious flu outbreak this year as we do every other year? I'm glad we didn't. I did not want to end up in any hospital when this started.

If it keeps the kids from spreading other illnesses, great! It's not hurting them. It's not causing and mental health issues that I'm aware of by wearing a mask.

We've had issues with youth for many years and

none of it stemmed from wearing a mask or social distancing, which is not to the extreme.

It certainly does not make me weak and I know none of my grandchildren are weaker because they were asked to wear a mask or social distance. To say a person is weak because they are protecting their children is so off the mark. Especially in a time where too many are not caring for nor paying attention to their children.

At least these people care enough to do something about it. They already ARE standing up for what they believe in Lawrence. In addition they are showing their children they do care, as well as teaching their children great parenting skills and that sir, is what will ensure that this country stays strong in the future. Just saying...

Nancy Noonan Kelly
White Bear Lake, MN

...thankful that President Biden has made infrastructure a top priority

Dear Editor,

Two items in the New York Times about recent weather disasters caught my attention. The first explained why February's severe arctic blast shut down the electrical grid in Texas, resulting in huge commercial and human losses: "The continent-spanning storms showed that American infrastructure wasn't ready for climate change. Extreme weather is placing growing stress on a system that was built decades ago under the expectation that the environment around it would remain stable."

And, regarding Australia's record-breaking flooding, following last year's catastrophic wildfires, this analysis: "There is a very strong link between global warming and that intensification in rainfall," said Andy Pitman, director of the ARC Center of Excellence for Climate Extremes at the University of New South Wales. "There's good scientific evidence to say extreme rain is becoming more extreme due to global warming." Australia's conservative government — heavily resistant to aggressive action on climate change that might threaten the country's fossil fuel industry — has yet to

make that link. The Trump administration talked a lot about the need to update our country's highways, bridges and water pipes — but kept kicking the can down the (crumbling) road. I am thankful that President Biden has made infrastructure a top priority and has proposed a serious, ambitious plan. What is increasingly obvious is that any new construction projects, whether public or private, must take into account the new normal of extreme weather events. Houses should no longer be built on flood plains nor ocean beach-fronts. And,

closer to home, any Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed mine should prove that the project can be done safely not just in average conditions but able to withstand our increasingly frequent "storms of the century."

For the foreseeable future, given this new unstable climate reality, the cost of building a copper-nickel mine which would assure protection of the BWCA watershed from toxic runoff, if even possible, would likely be prohibitive, cancelling the company's profit motive.

Elton Brown
Morse Township

...I know we all agree we love our country above all else

Dear Editor,

I would like to apologize for any inaccuracies made in my editorial and thank Mike Banovitz for pointing them out to me. First I would like to apologize for not proof-reading my letter better, to Steve, for calling you Paul it seemed the astute readers knew who I meant. And I should brush up on civics & town government.

And I should keep my opinions about Ely town politics to myself as I'm not from there but live in lake county & to fellow veterans my criticism may seem harsh, for I know the sacrifices all of you and I made for this great country of ours, a better band of brothers&

sisters I've never found!

It was my own confusion and frustration at your support of a candidate who would trash the commitment and heroism of Senator John McCain on national television, and I very seldom agreed with his political position. Still honored his selfless service. My personal opinion is our country would not be so polarized if every young American served, and to the gentleman from Brimson who seems to have learned his history from Hollywood fiction movies I believe my account would be more accurate than his as I experienced the 1968 Tet offensive battling with my band of brothers for the

city of Hue Vietnam where I experienced the communism in action and I saw no comparison between it and any socialism in our country. As for duality I believe there's a touch of hypocrisy in all of us, you look in your mirror and I will look in mine.

Ross Peterson I agree 100% with you on China I believe we must not let inner turmoil distract us from our outside enemies. And again thank you Mike for taking me to task for any

of my inaccurate statements and for thanking me for my service. I feel privileged to have served in the greatest fighting force in the world, — may the sharp tip of the spear give our enemies pause!

I know we all agree we love our country above all else. Thanks again to the Echo staff for printing my opinion.

Still from Lake county,
Terry Peterson
Ely, MN

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