

The Prairie Spy
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Last time Stinky admitted to a sore throat

Stinky Yurho had the worst sore throat he thought he had ever had. He was sick. The injustice of being sick upset him. You know the feeling. Just not fair.

His throat was killing him. That morning, at breakfast with his also-bachelor brothers Pinball, Coffee, and Belkula, he had to pass on Pinball's pancakes, which had a lot of body. (Uncured concrete compared favorably.) They had so much body he was afraid he'd choke to death trying to get them down his swollen throat.

The Yurho brothers had been bachelors their entire lives. Survival meant eating what was put on the table. Undue comments as to the quality of the cooking meant that the critic shortly found himself at the stove, and no one wanted to cook. Pinball put up with cooking because it gave him license to go to town on Saturday night to throw money at the machine at Smut's Bar and Butchershoppe Emporium. In turn, the others put up with Pinball's cooking because while Pinball was setting world records on the pinballs there, they got drunk. In short, the Yurho brothers had found a balance to their lives.

Pinball, who noticed that Stinky wasn't putting away his usual number of cement Frisbies, asked: "Stinky? Something wrong with the pancakes?"

Secretly, he hoped Stinky would say yes. He'd done just about everything possible to make them inedible. He was tired of cooking. Today's were specially bad, so thick he had to mash the batter down with a scoop shovel.

"No," Stinky croaked, "My throat's sorer than it's ever been. Can't swallow." "Sore throat, huh?" mused Coffee out loud, sensing an opportunity to torture the oldest—and bossiest—brother. "Ain't that what done Ma in? A sore throat?" There. Let him stew on that.

Pinball dropped another batch of pancakes on the serving plate. The plate broke. No one said anything for a minute, until Stinky said: "Looks like your best batch ever, Pinball. Darn this throat." To himself, he thought if he was going to die of something, better it be this throat than a twisted gut, like the cows got if they ate rocks or cement or something.

Belkula, the youngest, said, "Maybe it's time to treat that throat with something." Otherwise, they'd all maybe catch it.

Stinky had been afraid of something like this. Maybe dying on a pancake was preferable.

So they all got to talking about the best remedies. Pinball suggested tying a wool sock around his neck,

adding, "You could put on one of those you ain't washed this year." That would kill just about anything.

"Tried it the last three nights," Stinky croaked.

"How about the horse liniment?" Belkula said. "Remember that horse a couple years ago? Had that huge goiter on his neck? Shrunk that sucker down to nothing."

Coffee said, "That horse died, didn't it?"

"Yeah. It was gruesome," admitted a somewhat gleeful Belkula. "Goiter went away, though." That went well, Belkula thought to himself. Got Stinky squirming, sure enough.

More remedies were bandied about, along with who died of throat cancer over that past forty years. Lots of throat cancer. Wasn't often they got a shot at Stinky.

Pinball got out a sauce pan, put water in it, started it boiling. "This'll fix you," he told Stinky, as he spooned in the last half of a jar of Vicks that likely was forty years past its expiration date. He threw in some turpentine, like ma did. He made Stinky put a towel over his head and bend over the steaming pot. While he kind of held Stinky's head down, he looked at the other brothers and winked. Said: "Remember grandma? This was her favorite treatment. Remember how she always 'doped up' before bed?"

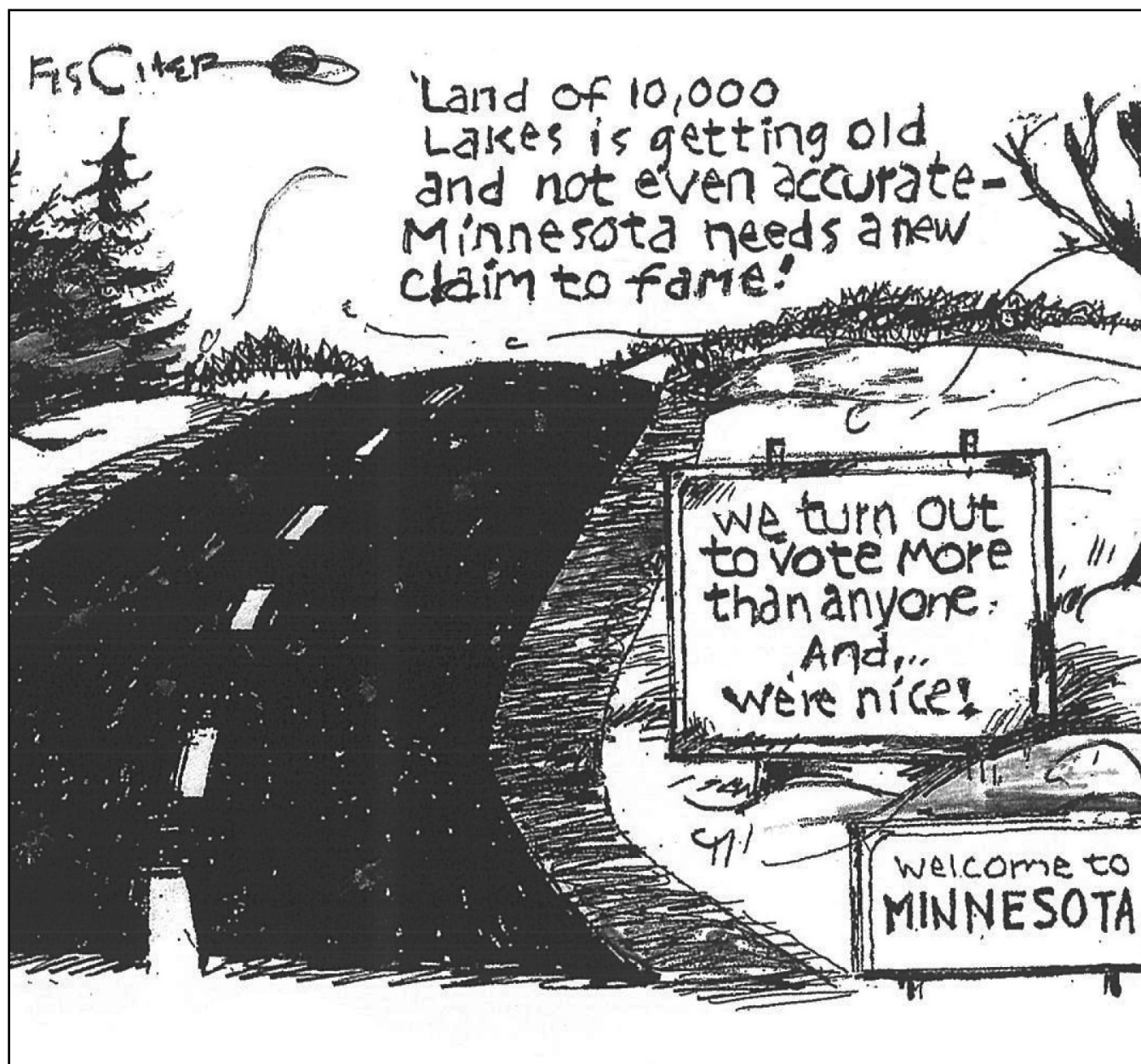
Grandma had lived to a hundred and four. Unfortunately, she did it without her mind, which everyone surmised the Vicks had killed years earlier.

The others watched the scene at the cook stove in some awe. The menthol smell hung thick in the kitchen. Coffee wanted a cigarette, but was afraid to strike a match. From under the towel, Stinky was making sounds like a truck tire going flat. Finally, Stinky stood up, staggered back to the table, and sat heavily down. One eye was stuck shut; the other was bright red.

Suddenly Stinky sat bolt upright at the table. His shut eye popped open. He looked at the others and said: "I'm cured! It's a miracle!" He immediately tucked into one of Pinball's concrete pancakes. He had suddenly remembered that it wasn't that dad's tonsil-tickling kerosene treatment had been all that medically effective, it was that no one ever admitted to being sick again after it. Next thing you knew, these idiot brothers of his would start remembering horse-manure chest plasters and leeches.

Out loud to his brothers, he said: "You know. Those old remedies really are the best."

And try as they might, they couldn't get Stinky to admit to a sore throat again.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A new way to look at politicians

To the Editor,

I think I found a way for me to understand politicians. Look at them as a used car being sold.

Used cars get paint over the rust, an air freshener to cover up the smell. Tire rotation to squeeze out a few more miles. Fresh oil to cover up the dirty oil. Shampoo the interior to cover the stains. Wax and buff the outside to make it look younger than it really is. Then advertise them as the best deal on the lot.

So, when I see a politician being marketed as someone new with their sleeves rolled up, and are ready to get things done I have to wonder; why is their background not publicized until after they get the job?

They look great for their age remember Bernie swing the bat after heart surgery, Hillary walking up steps without help or Joe Biden walking down steps. They give us a sense they have all the answers

but in reality, they fake it every day (did I mention Kamala). Mayor Pete is secretary of transportation, great choice because of his past experience in driving a car. He must have super powers because of his sexual preference (why do I know this or need to know this). Did this make him more special or more marketable?

If Nancy was driving, would she pass a sobriety test? I have problems un-

derstanding her when she talks, she is always fighting or angry, waving her arms like she has a severe nervous tic. If she acted that way being pulled over, she would be tased, hog tied and thrown in the back of a squad car.

If these people were cars they would be called Lemons. Who knowingly buys a lemon? I guess we do.

Mike Wasche Perham

Out with the old growth, in with New York Mills

By Tucker Henderson
Reporter

A native welcome

Before this land was settled by European immigrants, old growth forests grew tall with their towering white pines and floors covered in ruddy-brown needles. American Indians called this their home along with herds of elk, moose, and even bison. Bands of rival Chippewa and Sioux once roamed the prairies that bisected this region.

Modernly referred to as tribes of Ojibwe and Dakota, respectively, these groups of Native Americans lived here when the first settlers arrived. The Chippewa were noted to be especially kind and friendly neighbors to the early residents of Minnesota. Members of the Sioux tribes used this area as a hunting haven as it was the host to a large number of game animals.

An early settler that lived in the New York Mills vicinity owned a guard dog to help keep away preda-

tors. The dog attacked a Native man and in turn, the dog was killed. It was a tense time for that settler and his family. The settler was told through sign language that his dog was not fit to be in the vicinity of Natives, but soon enough, the Native family came bearing a gift: a puppy to replace their guard dog.

Families of Native Americans and European Americans were great neighbors. They traded provisions including fish, venison, and waterfowl. The children all played together and the Native families helped the pioneering settlers with their gardens, firewood, and other tasks. Gifts were exchanged for help in both directions.

In one instance, a Finnish family that had settled south of town gave a loaf of flatbread to a Native woman and her child who were in need. She returned the favor after a few days with a handmade pair of moccasins. The Native Americans slowly disappeared as they moved north to

occupy the land that the government allotted them. Before long, most traces of our Native brethren were gone.

Clearing the Timber

When the members of the newly-formed New York Mills Company first arrived on the scene of what was at that time known as "Frazee's Mills," virgin white pines were so prevalent that making your way through the country was not an easy task. R. L. Frazee, namesake of our own Frazee Avenue, first homesteaded what is now downtown New York Mills after moving here from Otertail.

He had his own mills set up here, though not all of them were lumber mills. When the Northern Pacific Railroad had bisected the unnamed Township 135N-037W (now Newton) in 1871, Frazee was first to capitalize on this area.

Frazee sold the land to the NYM Company which was eager to start business. The first sawmill

was erected in 1872 and was located where Central Park now stands. Advertisements were sent out across the country to lure in working men to log off the region's forests. Otto Township was thickly forested all the way to the east end of Rush Lake, where the prairie country starts.

Within only ten years, the forests were logged off and the sawmill was dismantled in 1882. The New York Mills Company had a very short tenure here, but their endeavors have left this region in stark contrast to what it looked like when they stepped off the train.

The white pines no longer dominate the skies, farmers' fields have taken over where their stumps once stood. While this spot used to be the home of Native Americans and Minnesota wildlife, settlers and their descendants have replaced the majority of those who lived here prior to 1870. Life as they knew it is very different from life as we know it today.

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Dispatch

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