

OPINIONS / LETTERS

The Reluctant Editor



Forrest Johnson

Somehow the Big Lie continues and now we have restrictive voting laws in many states. Minnesota members of what was once known as the Republican Party, want that to happen here as well, just to provide “a little more trust” in our election system.

Some of these folks will say the measures are the result of “outright voter fraud” while others couch the idea in a more subtle notion, saying voters “have questions about the legitimacy and integrity” of our elections and thus should have “more transparency” in the system.

Of course many of us know quite well that the idea of voter fraud is the fraud.

Apparently many members of our society

didn't notice that the 2020 election, from national, state and local levels, came off without a hitch or a hint of overt voter fraud such as bad actors raising the dead so they can vote. Maybe they didn't notice a certain former president calling the Georgia secretary of state to urge him to find just enough ballots to push him over the top.

Maybe those voter worrywarts back in the heady days of early January, 2021 didn't notice the false narrative about the hidden ballots in the van of an appliance technician in Texas who was nearly killed when vigilante self chosen election officials figured he was the kingpin of a voter fraud ring. The vigilante self chosen election officials ran the technician off the road in the early morning hours and pulled weapons only to find tools and appliance supplies in the van. The missing ballots were missing.

I saw one recent letter to the editor in another paper claim that the party on the left side of the aisle is aiming to nationalize elections and institutionalize voter fraud. The writer plied disinformation that claimed ballot boxes are not secure, duplicate voting is rampant, voters are voting outside of their precincts, the dead are voting, nonexistent voters are voting, and election officials are counting spoiled ballots and those that are cast beyond the deadline of voting hours.

That is another part of the Big Lie that has ramifications beyond the simple lie fostered by a certain former president who has a habit of cheating on his wives, cheating on his taxes and golf (see Commander in Cheat: How golf explains Trump” by sportswriter Rick Reilly). Many people are willing to believe fiction over fact. And now there's a documentary called “2,000 mules” that was immediately debunked but will gain traction with the believers of the Big Lie, a movie that falsely claiming it has evidence of organized ballot harvesting in swing states.

Probably time the secretaries of state in all fifty states get together, along with thousands of election officials who worked the election, and have a reckoning with the country and the deniers.

The 2020 election was secure. After all the counting was done, after all the recounts were done, all fifty secretaries of state, all fifty of them, certified the results. Election integrity was upheld.

The Big Lie is the fraud.

The irony now is that in those states with restrictive voting laws the 2022 election might prove to be quite insecure if legislatures can overrule a result they don't like.

In case you haven't heard, conservative Arizona state senate members continue to call into question the 2020

results and spend money to recount. It all started shortly after the election when they subpoenaed the state election commission to hand over 2.1 million votes from Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix, and have yet another recount, this time done by a company called CyberNinja, whose CEO blatantly called the election fraudulent. Trouble was that the recount found more votes for the other guy who now lives in the White House. Doesn't matter, have another recount.

Like I said, a guy who cheats on his wives, his taxes and golf should not be in the business of calling elections fraudulent.

But he has. And people believe him. Or at least believe he believes it so why not believe him?

The Big Lie.

I'm not an election expert but if you want to make things easier for voters why not just hand out a voter registration card for everyone over 18 years old who has a social security number. Register everyone—bingo. Let the experts decide how to manage the system, you know, deciding who might be a serial liar, a tax cheat, a guy who cheats on his wives and cheats at golf.

Take down the roadblocks to vote and make it simple. Kind of like it was before so many of our fellow citizens drank the kool-aid of the Big Lie.

Peninsula on a bone-chilling day, with a four-foot easterly swell and a southeast wind. People often wonder how we survive the cold on a long sailing day when the air temperatures dip to the 30s right over the water and the breeze cuts through our clothing like ice. The answer is: windproof layers, continuous hot drinks, sleeping below once the wooziness subsides, and good read alouds. We careened into Chippewa Harbor just as the sun emerged from the clouds in the later afternoon. Within minutes we were in a whole different world, one at least fifteen degrees warmer.

Most striking this year was the barren landscape. Icebergs and snow patches lined the shores and some of them shimmered blue. Some were big enough to crawl under. Very little had started to grow, and the bits of green we saw were gobbled up by moose as soon as they sprouted. Within a quarter mile of the first trail, we smelled a dead moose. Later we learned that the winter moose die-off was the worst in over 20 years due to the deep snow, lack of food, and wolf pre-

dation. Moose have been severely overpopulated for years so this will hopefully bring their numbers more into balance and help the forest regrow. Wolf numbers are likely looking healthy, according to head researchers John Vucetich and Rolf Peterson, with lots of beaver and moose to feast on and deep snow all winter.

Every year a small group of young adult interns live on the island for a month and collect data. One thing they do is study balsam trees, what is left of them. Moose are eating the balsam to death; very few can survive the browsing. Budding trees were clipped down to nothing, leaving entire forests looking dusty and forlorn. For the first time this year we also saw bark-eaten trees, “desperation food,” according to Peterson, further indications that the moose are starving to death if not succumbing to the winter ticks.

We visited another volunteer group that was combing the island to collect moose bones and record moose deaths. Many of these volunteers have been coming for years

and were unperturbed by the temperatures in the 40s and the cold rain that deluged us. “No bugs!” is their rallying cry. Inspired by their work, we followed the scent of that dead moose to its resting place just twenty feet off the trail. We studied it and took a few pictures. It did not appear to have been eaten by wolves but had simply fallen. From years past we knew that rotten teeth can cause terrific infections in old and infirm moose, so it was interesting to note that this moose appeared to have great dental care. We know that arthritis can also be a debilitating factor for older, starving moose, but we couldn't determine from the bones whether this moose was afflicted. So many mysteries, just with one moose!

Stay tuned for next week to learn about the citizen science we conducted this year in the southwestern third of Lake Superior.

Katya Gordon is a Two Harbors resident and reporter for the Lake County Press. She can be reached at kgordon@cherryroad.com.

Letters TO THE Editor

Letters to the editor, columns, and cartoons are the opinions of the contributors and not necessarily the Lake County Press. While we encourage readers to submit letters to the editor on issues they feel strongly about, we encourage writers to be respectful to one another. Your message is more likely to be heard if it is delivered in a civil manner. We also ask that letters include name, address, and phone number. Anonymous submissions or letters of questionable credibility will not be published or acknowledged. The Lake County Press also asks that letters be no longer than 350 words; however, at the editor's discretion, longer submissions may be published occasionally. All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, and libelous content. Letters can be submitted to editor@lakecountypress.news.

Homeowners in Two Harbors target area urged to apply for forgivable rehab loans

By Kitty Mayo

The Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA) is seeking applicants in the current Small Cities Development Program in Two Harbors.

A specific area in Lake County is focused on for each grant cycle, and currently applications are open for a neighborhood in Two Harbors, roughly north of 7th Avenue up to approximately 13th Avenue, and between Highway 2 and the railroad tracks (see map for specific area details).

Previously a section of Silver Bay was the target area of focus, with those grant projects ending this year, and all work needing to be wrapped up by this fall.

AEOA lending and construction program lead Beth Davies says that if you are unsure if your home is in this cycle's target area, don't hesitate to call to find out. On that note, she encourages anyone with any questions at all to call for more information, saying, “Everyone's situation is different, we can talk through your situation.”

This program is based on income eligibility, depending on the number of people living in a household. For example, a household of four would qualify with an income less than \$66,650 a year. It also requires a 30 percent contribution by homeowners, and a maximum loan amount of \$24,750.

According to Davies, additional funds may be available to help individuals with the percentage that they are responsible for outside of the grant.

Paul Iverson of the Lake County Housing and Redevelopment Authority says this program has worked well in other areas of the county in the past, adding, “It's also an excellent way to get our hard-earned tax dollars back into our community at the ground level.”

Anyone interested is urged to apply soon, as the Two Harbors area grant projects will need to be completed by September 2023. For questions about the program or eligibility contact Kim Perrella at AEOA Housing Services at (218)735-6879, or kim.perrella@aeoa.org.

The types of home improvements that would be covered under this program include things that improve livability, accessibility and safety, as well as energy efficiency. A few examples could include; electrical upgrades, accessibility ramps, bathroom accessibility improvements. Other possibilities are windows, doors, roofing, siding and plumbing.

This program is a 0% interest deferred loan, sometimes called a forgivable loan. That means that if you continue to own and occupy the home for the next seven years, the 1/7th of the debt will be forgiven each year.



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