

# OPINIONS / LETTERS

# 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. We also ask that letters include name, address, and phone number. Anonymous submissions or letters of questionable credibility will not be published or acknowledged. All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, and libelous content. Letters can be submitted to editor@lakecountypress.news.

## The Reluctant Editor



Forrest Johnson

There is turmoil in town. Turmoil town. Yes, I'm talking about Two Harbors--"Turmoil Town of the North Shore." How's that for a motto. As I mentioned in earlier columns, I came back to newspapering blissfully ignorant of local politics and intrigue. La-dee-da, I hadn't a care in the world. All I did was read other newspapers and news magazines to see what was happening in other parts of our big wide world, have my opinions and not really bother anyone with them. That changes when you become a reluctant editor and decide to write about local, state and national happenings from

the perspective of a local newspaper desk. I remember many a challenging issue from my past at the Lake County News-Chronicle. As I explained, I too often see the world through rose-colored glasses, hoping everybody and everything will have a happy ending, that the locals will get along and solve problems together. I knew at some point with our new venture at the Lake County Press there would be controversy of some sort. It didn't take long to find controversy. A newspaper strives to cover the news, not make the news, and keep a certain distance from trying to influence the behavior of others, even though the behavior of others is often what confuses the issues in the first place. A newspaper can be subjective in its objectivity, you know, by deciding what gets covered and what doesn't. Once on a story, that's where the objectivity comes in, to cover an issue with honesty and fact. There was a time when facts could be challenged and scrutinized with the best intent and an honest conclusion be reached after discussion. That doesn't work very well when behaviors get in the way. And as we all know in today's news cycle, a whole host of characters are doing their best to refute facts and muddy the waters, promoting decep-

tion as fact, saying "truth is in the eye of the beholder." A civil society doesn't function very long when you muddy the facts. Last Monday, the Two Harbors city council held a special meeting "To discuss and consider addressing concerns regarding Mayor Chris Swanson." During the meeting, the council unanimously voted to ask the mayor to resign. Council members noted the challenges in focusing on the work at hand in the city as notoriety about his positions on a number of ideas emerged. Say Underwater hotel and "Mr. O." the reclusive faux billionaire with a questionable past. For me, a writer who delves into some measure of fiction (see runoff report) the notion of an underwater hotel in Lake Superior was comedy handed out on a platter. I've a little fun with Tony's Underwater Limousine Service and the continuing march for community newspapers in the outdoor section of the paper. What I didn't discuss was the contract that Tony had with the existing underwater yurt colony already in business with a no-compete clause. Watch future Runoff Reports for more on that fictional story. There were ideas about Two Harbors emerging as a cryptocurrency capital, rivaling New York and Miami. (In my study about digital currency, seems

like a ponzi scheme in my opinion.) The overlap between his businesses and his elected role as mayor, with City Attorney Tim Costley offering the opinion that the bounds had been overstepped and the council appearing to agree. Then last week a thorny issue showed up at City Hall as a Silver Bay family wanted to address the council regarding the mayor, a legal issue that had me in discussion with an old acquaintance who happens to be the longtime attorney for the Minnesota Newspaper Association. A thorny issue to be sure. If you have your ear to the community you will no doubt hear more. Last month the council voted to hold a recall election in August. The mayor has said he will not resign and will run on his record of accomplishments in town. The story is ongoing with plenty of twists and turns likely ahead. To lose the confidence of the entire council speaks volumes. My old friend and neighbor Robin Glaser told the council at Monday's meeting, "It is going to take years for future councils and administrations to clear up this mess and make Two Harbors respected again in the state and across the country." To lose the entire council, which represents the citizens, speaks volumes.

## Katya's Corner



Katya Gordon

I've been back on land for two weeks now. I encounter friends and neighbors in the streets and on the trails, many of whom want to know how it feels to be back on land. I tell them the truth--it feels great. There's no place like home, and with 14 years under our belt, we have dug in some roots here. A few wellwishers have mentioned, almost wistfully, "Oh, you're 'livin' the dream!'" People have said this to us for years. It used to excite in me a perverse response--perverse because

I know they mean only to compliment us for the life we've chosen. For a long time it would make me bristle anyway. I sensed, beneath the compliment, the implication that we are luckier than most or have no excuse to be unhappy. It made me feel lazy, or self-seeking, as if our life purpose was to relax and enjoy endless warm beaches.

But the beautiful thing about us humans is that we can change. So I did. Now I respond, "Yes, and I hope you are too!" If I can articulate the dream that I am trying to live with my husband Mark, it's that of having a clear, mutual life purpose to guide our choices. One of the best things I did while living aboard in May was to read Viktor Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning. He says, "Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual. These tasks, and therefore the meaning of life, differ from man to man, and from moment to moment."

Yes, I have had a broad

range of choices in my life for which I am profoundly grateful. But the truth is, everyone has choices of some kind. 'Livin the dream' doesn't mean relaxation, or a relief from cares or responsibilities, as exemplified by a sundowner in the cockpit in the tropics. Mark and I work hard for the life we have. You can have *anything* you want, I have told people, you just can't have *everything* you want. Gaining one thing entails giving up another. We give up a lot for our life onboard: A fridge and a full size bed. The comfort of living without seasickness. Space and privacy. Family-only vacations. Fresh and frozen food. If you are thinking, by now, that this is not a "dream" that you would want, you are probably right! It's not for most people. But sacrificing lesser wants to have a life you *really* want begins to sound more like 'livin the dream' to me.

Sometimes, Frankl acknowledges, we are mostly powerless to do more than suffer honorably. As a holocaust survivor, he should know. Simply returning, alive, to

his writing and his development of logotherapy, was a dream he appeared to cherish throughout his post-holocaust life. In this way, we are all living someone's dream--hopefully our own as well. It is someone's cherished dream to have children. To own a home. To live in one place. To have full mental capacity or full use of the five senses. To know where one's loved ones are at any moment. To practice one's religion or pursue one's education without restriction.

I have a niece who is undergoing a long recovery from a complicated surgery. She is an active outdoorswoman with a full life on Manitoulin Island, on Lake Huron. But right now she can't tolerate light or sound and must be inside in the dark for most of the day. Her dream is to walk the way I do every morning along Lake Superior and feel the wind, see the sun rise, and hear the waves. Yes, I am livin the dream, every day.

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

Our Federal Government significantly benefited Lake County's citizens through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) signed into law by President Biden on 3/11/2021. The ARP is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill designed to assist the country's recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting staggering recession.

The ARP passed the House by a vote of 219-212 with all but two Democrats voting for the bill. Importantly, ALL House Republicans voted against the bill. A modified version passed the Senate on March 6 by a vote of 50-49.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Rescue\\_Plan\\_Act\\_of\\_2021](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Rescue_Plan_Act_of_2021)

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[https://ballotpedia.org/American\\_Rescue\\_Plan\\_Act\\_of\\_2021](https://ballotpedia.org/American_Rescue_Plan_Act_of_2021)

In Minnesota \$8.5 Billion in ARP Federal funds were awarded in response to COVID-19 including Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to Minnesota cities, counties, and towns estimated at \$2.132 billion to help small local governments address the economic catastrophe of the pandemic by:

- Responding to the public health emergency
- Serving the hardest hit and addressing inequities
- Addressing negative economic impacts
- Improving access to water and broadband infrastructure

<https://mn.gov/mmb/arp/>

**Local governments received:**

- **Direct federal payments to Minnesota counties: \$1.11 billion.**
- **Direct federal payments to twenty-one large cities (including Duluth): \$644 million.**
- **Pass-through payments to remaining cities and towns: \$377 million.**

<https://mn.gov/mmb/arp/local/>

Lake County's 2021 budget was approximately \$30.8 million with approximately \$11.8 million coming from property taxes.

[https://www.osa.state.mn.us/media/0dwbtok/cobudget\\_21\\_report.pdf](https://www.osa.state.mn.us/media/0dwbtok/cobudget_21_report.pdf)

The ARP provided \$2.06 million in additional Federal funding to Lake County for any government purpose. ARP's \$2.06 million funding allows Lake County to act on important opportunities benefiting residents including new housing solutions, targeted infrastructure spending and assistance for Finland area daycare services.

We must recognize the true value and importance of our government, and the people who make it work for us, providing the essential services we commonly take for granted. Please vote this fall, remember the choices of each of our Members of Congress regarding helping Lake County through ARP, and recognize the good work of our local government members to improve all our lives.

*Michael Overand  
Larsmont, MN*

## Festival of Sail costs for Two Harbors taxpayers questioned

The city was told it would not have to bear the costs of hosting the tall ships event. Presented with the costs for law enforcement and emergency response preparations, the organizer is now saying the costs are unreasonable, compared to costs in other cities. The issue is that our city has only one main thoroughfare through the town, our own police and emergency forces are quite small, and all aid will have to come from Duluth, Beaver Bay, Silver Bay, and wherever else that can spare the resources. This help will be far more expensive than if it had to come from only a few miles away. Our physically small city will have a far more difficult job to handle a crowd several times larger than the population of our city. The effort will be monumental and unimaginable.

The lives and well-being of tens of thousands of people cannot be quibbled over.

If it is the case that we were asked to host this event, as opposed to us asking to be the host... then the entire cost of the event properly falls to the organizer of this event. No special benefit will come to the people who live here and pay taxes here. Our various hospitality businesses - gifts, liquor, beds, food, and fuel - are already as busy as they can possibly be, and are hard-pressed to have enough workers at hand for the summer season. More workers are simply not to be had. It is unconscionable to expect the citizenry of our town to subsidize the profit margin of this event organizer.

*Thomas V Koehler  
Two Harbors*

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Sincerely,

*Jeremy Gulban, Publisher*

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