

A column is one person's perspective on any given issue, published as a regular feature. A column does not necessarily reflect the views of the newspaper.

STAFF VOICE

They've found us again!

We've been waiting and now they're here. It's that time of the year when locals move over to let our visitors flood the streets and trails, the restaurants and shops, the resorts and campgrounds.

Like a parade down Pokegama Avenue at noon, Memorial weekend Friday opens a floodgate of new faces to the Northland ready to make the most of Minnesota summers and create memories and traditions that last lifetimes.

Most of us are happy to welcome those new faces and the business they bring to town. Some of us are prepared to cater to their experiences while others are just happy to see the influx of new friends. And a few of us are ready to retreat to quieter places.

As our local economy begins to rebound after two tough tourism seasons, I think we can all appreciate the investments these visitors make in Itasca County. The decades-old lake lodges hold the common comforts of bringing family together again. The popular resorts offer all the latest in water and woods activities to try. The new craze in VRBOs allow people to feel like property owners if only for a week.

After months of hibernation under lingering cold and snow, isn't it great

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to see movement again?

One quick trip through town this weekend can be a reminder that the world didn't collapse under COVID. The gal pals are back for mom's weekend, ready for Saturday to sleep-in. When they're not painting their nails or fluffing their pillow, they do their shopping at Lake & Co., or Red Willow. The guys are here too, stopping for a quick brew. They go to S&S Meats for steaks and get

their minnows at Thousand Lakes.

We're starting to see those big-rigs again with license plates from Texas carrying retirees hungry for breakfast. The young families have returned in their minivans loaded with swim toys, tents, coolers and bikes - swinging into Target for still more things... yikes! The summer residents are sweeping out their cabins, stacking firewood, and finishing projects like they should. Then, there are the new-to-towners, the adventure-seekers, the young professionals taking personal time all-weekers. They drive through in their Subarus topped with canoes, craving cappuccinos and scones ready for some time alone. And, of course, there are those who come for a day of surf and turf (not walleye and venison of yesteryears but high-speed connection and golfing with peers). They may come to

They're back!



celebrate Judy Garland in June and we hope they'll return for Tall Timber days, Riverfest or another time soon.

What was once an area that relied on industries like timber and logging, mining and agriculture, has become more reliant on its travel industry. We're learning to share - our pristine waters, clean air, remarkable history and friendly way of life. And, it's drawing the attention of people of all ages from all over the world.

We should feel honored that some-

one would choose Grand Rapids and Itasca County to spend their summer free-time and their hard-earned money. I think it's great to know that people look to our hometown for fun, reconnecting with nature, learning about the past and finding joy in a small town born on the Mississippi River in America's Heartland. As Visit Grand Rapids has discovered, some of these visitors may just become our neighbors, employees and good friends someday.

SCIENCE VOICE

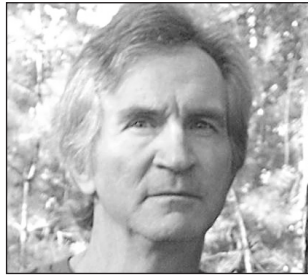
All are free to read this article and yet I must give fair warning to my friend, who shall remain nameless but who will know what I am talking about, who recoils from all scientific things related to 'outer space'. It is not that this person has no interest in what's out there, but rather prefers to remain in awe at the spender and wonder of the great panorama of stars and planets on a clear Minnesota winter night.

Knowing too much about creation and the chaos and violence involved and the 'cold' science in some ways does, at least for some people, take away something from the aesthetic inspiration that it can elicit. But humans have a tendency to analyze everything, to discover how things work, what they are made of, and how they came about. That is what we do as a species. This curiosity, at least to the degree it exists today, is a relatively new human endeavor. For most of the two to three hundred thousand year history of anatomically modern humans, people were too busy trying to survive. Certainly curiosity existed but it was channeled

into practical applications out of necessity. The causes of Natural events and phenomena were explained by good and bad spirits together with gods and demigods. These explanations served the purpose of creating explanations for the 'great unknowns' and left people free to think about more immediate concerns.

So to my artist friend, I have to suggest that one can be overwhelmed by the beauty of Nature and still want to understand how it all works. To know that the myriad points of light in the night sky are actually planets and distant suns or understanding how a brilliant sunset or the Northern Lights are naturally created doesn't detract from the wonder of it all. Or noting that the motions of celestial objects including planets, stars, and galaxies and their intricate interplay can be explained by a set of mathematical equations doesn't make them any less beautiful. For me at least, the more I learn about Nature, the more beautiful she becomes. Studying how Nature works will not change Nature one iota but it will change those who take the

For some, but not all



By Terry Mejdric
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time to learn about and appreciate her.

There is, however, the saying: Ignorance is bliss. New discoveries, about Nature in particular, have often been met with stiff resistance when those discoveries come into direct conflict with established ancient stories that were based mostly on imagination, fear, and wishful thinking. This has always been the case. One can imagine the first primate to realize fire could be contained and controlled and created was probably regarded as some kind of crazy and either worshipped or thrown over a cliff. New discoveries are almost never immediately accepted especially when they disprove

generations of established doctrine.

At our 'core' people haven't changed much in two hundred thousand years. The same reluctance to abandon even what has proven to be wrong in favor of better explanations is still present within us even when presented with undeniable facts. In terms of our tenure on Earth and our intellect, we are still just one step beyond the entrance of the cave.

Whether or not understanding the Cosmos will be beneficial for human survival remains to be seen. Whether it is just the current curiosity that will fade in time when our collective attention is diverted to some other unknown also remains to be seen. But the point of view my friend presents has some validity: Can we learn too much and can that knowledge then have a negative effect on humanity, whether from an aesthetic perspective or a purely practical one? Would the discovery of the tremendous power stored in atoms that led to atomic weapons have been better left unknown? One can speculate that at some point in the

future someone might wonder about the creation of Artificial Intelligence and whether or not it was a good idea. Or whether the creation of machines to do virtually anything a human can do, only faster and better, was a wise use of our brain power? Human discoveries have led to a multitude of ways to manipulate at least some parts of Nature to our advantage but also created the potential for our own destruction. And from a long-term perspective, there is no way of knowing which is which. Someone might eventually ask: Would we have been better off as a species to have been a little less curious about how Nature works and more content to appreciate and accept the beauty of Nature at face value? But, of course, we will never know because the past cannot be changed and the course of humanity was probably set from the moment our proto-human ancestor picked up the burning stick from a lightning strike and realized he could control fire.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

1902

April 26, 1902-A delegation of students fro1902

May 31, 1902-Itasca County will make an elaborate display of agricultural products for exhibit at the state fair.

May 31, 1902-The second annual commencement of Grand Rapids Central High School has come and gone. Jarvis Partridge was the lone graduate.

May 31, 1902-Surveyors started this week platting the new town of Nashwauk.

1912

May 29, 1912-Itasca Paper Co. in Grand Rapids has finished work on its chimney, the tallest in northern Minnesota at 208 feet.

May 29, 1912-Itasca County will take advantage at once of the opportunities which the Elwell Law affords. Village, town and county officials will meet to lay out Lateran roadways for the county.

1922

May 31, 1922-Jesse Anthony, clerk at the Pokegama Hotel, has secured a wireless radio and has accepted the task of getting it in shape for use. It is the first radio in the community.

1932

June 1, 1932-Martin H. Madson, a well-known and highly-respected citizen of Grand Rapids and father of Sheriff Elmer Madson, died.

June 1, 1932-Andrew Backlund, 24, rural Cohasset, died in a farm accident on the Fred Heinrich farm west of Cohasset.

1942

May 27, 1942-George Campbell, 20, Lawrence Lake, died when he accidentally shot himself while driving a tractor.

May 27, 1942-Alton Rosvold, 21, died when he was crushed in a ore elevator at the Galbraith Mine Washing Plant near Nashwauk.

1952

May 29, 1952-The Grand Rapids Junior Chamber of Commerce voted not to host a potato festival this year.

May 29, 1952-Sixteen property owners on Fourth Street between Third Avenue East and the junction of Highways 169 and 2 have convinced the state highway department that the street should be 60 feet wide instead of 50. The group paid \$3,572.26 to village treasurer Gertrude Montague, its share of the additional cost of widening the street.

1962

May 28, 1962-Katherine Paine, Grand Rapids High School junior, has placed second in the annual essay contest sponsored by the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association.

May 28, 1962-Sally M. Ahola is the valedictorian of the Class of 1962 at Greenway High School. John Wirtanen is the salutatorian.

Ed. note: There was no June 1, 1962, edition available.

1972

May 29, 1972-Some 420 seniors, along with administrators and teaches, parents and relatives and friends will be at the IRA Arena for the 73rd annual commencement program of Grand Rapids High School.

June 1, 1972-Mrs. Kenneth M. Melquist has been named as postmaster of Jacobson.

June 1, 1972-High-intensity development of the south corridor of Grand Rapids along Highway 169 South received another major impetus with the announcement of plans to construct a 100-room motel complex on a recently purchased parcel of land on Highway 169.

1982

May 26, 1982-Marlys J. (Marcy) Gobell, a Grand Rapids High School counselor since 1969, and a leader in Mississippi Melodie Showboat and Performing Arts Council work, was appointed full-time communications director for District 318.

May 26, 1982-Itasca County District 3 County Commissioner George Predovich won't run for re-election after 24 years.

May 30, 1982-Directors of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce passed a motion instructing President Harold Bjorklund to form a Tax Alert Committee.

1992

May 27, 1992-A second ice arena facility could best go hand-in-hand with the creation of a new softball field complex, the Grand Rapids City Council heard.

May 31, 1992-Up to 20 food service positions were eliminated in the district when the Greenway School Board voted to contract with Tahar, Inc., Minneapolis, to run the food service for the entire district.

May 31, 1992-The Itasca County Hospital Board passed a resolution recommending the sale of land adjacent to Itasca Medical Center for the building of a new clinic.

2002

May 26, 2002-A wanted fugitive hijacked an Itasca County woman's car at gun point south of Marcell on Highway 38, but before an Itasca County Sheriff's deputy could arrest 33-year-old Timothy Wayne Partlo, he shot and killed himself.

May 26, 2002-Saying he had lost "the fire in his belly," state Sen. Bob Lessard announced his retirement in Duluth.

May 26, 2002-The Forest History Center in Grand Rapids has escaped the veto pen of Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura when he signed a bill providing funding for the Forest History Center.

May 29, 2002-The Itasca County Board voted to allow the easterly portion of Grand Rapids Township to attach itself to Trout Lake Township.