

OPINION

"CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW...
ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM
OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS;"

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

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Editorial

Community gardens

Studies show they bring many benefits, so why don't we have more of them?

What if our area communities could play a role in helping residents respond to sharply higher food costs? And what if we could improve the physical and mental health of our area residents while boosting our sense of community at the same time?

Pie in the sky?

Not at all. Studies from all around North America have demonstrated that the creation of community gardens provide these and many other benefits to nearby residents. Adults who participated in a community garden reported eating more fruits and vegetables than people who didn't take part, and that means improved health. Community gardens help make fresh fruits and vegetables more affordable for residents, and that's especially important at a time when general inflation and the increased concentration of ownership in the food industry is pushing food prices through the roof.

Studies have also demonstrated that community gardening is good for our mental health, and that's especially valuable at a time when so many people are struggling emotionally from a wide range of issues, from the isolation of the pandemic to economic and environmental despair. Studies have shown that the stress hormone cortisol noticeably drops in people after 30 minutes spent working in a garden, demonstrating that gardening can promote relief from acute stress. It wasn't just time spent outdoors, either. Just spending time sitting outdoors, for example, didn't provide the kind of stress relief offered by gardening.

Community gardens provide benefits beyond the individuals who utilize them. Studies have found that community gardens strengthen social connections, increase mutual trust and cooperation, as well as encourage further civic engagement. That's good for the community. And it's been shown that community gardens, particularly active ones, actually improve property values and discourage blight. They also help to generate economic development, since they add to the quality of life that makes communities attractive to new residents.

Given such benefits, community gardens would make an excellent organizing focus for community

leaders in our area. While there's been talk of community gardens in the past, we've yet to see those discussions come to fruition. Every community in our area has a spot that would work, an under-utilized patch of reasonably level ground that could be transformed into a remarkably productive use.

While not everyone is in a position to garden for themselves, community gardens could provide space for local growers who wish to grow for more than themselves. That's produce that can be given away to neighbors who can't otherwise grow for themselves, or sold in one of our local farmers markets.

It doesn't necessarily take much to create a community garden, although a bit of infrastructure, like water for irrigation, can make a big difference. Some fencing to discourage the deer and other critters from garden raids would be important as well. Funding sources are out there, and a community garden is almost certain to attract volunteers for things like tilling, subdividing garden spaces, and erecting fence.

There are several steps involved in creating a garden, first of which is organizing a meeting of interested people. From there, you can form a planning committee that develops the concept and identifies potential partners. Then find a sponsor. That could be the landowner, which might be the city, a church, or a business that has some land that's sitting idle. The city of Tower, for example, has been looking for good uses for the Tower-Soudan School's former football field. Right now, the city just ends up paying to keep the area mowed all summer, so a community garden could help reduce that chore for the city's public works department, while providing the opportunity to develop a significant public asset.

With a site in hand, some tilling, a soil test, and a garden layout to establish plots is all you really need to finish the job and get the community planting. A tool shed would be a handy addition, and you might be able to find a business willing to donate funds to buy or build a small shed and, perhaps some community tools, for use at the site.

Plenty of folks have talked about creating community gardens in our area. Let's quit talking and start

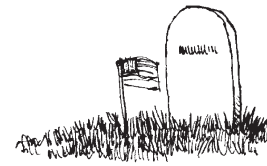
HERE'S A
LITTLE STICK



ON A LITTLE FLAG.



PLACED IN THE GROUND
BY A LITTLE GRAVE.



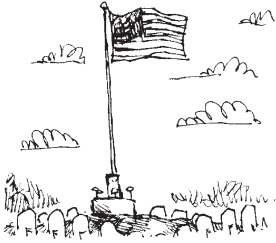
MULTIPLY THAT-
AND A LITTLE
BECOMES A LOT.



AND A LOT HAVE
GIVEN ALL ...



TO PROTECT THE
FREEDOM YOU
HAVE GOT.



SO, TAKE A LITTLE
TIME AND THINK
OF THEIR SACRIFICE.



BECAUSE A LOT OF
LITTLE THINGS ADD UP...

AND A LITTLE
THANKS IS
NICE.



Letters from Readers

Two neighbors with a tree problem

The more I learn, the more I see an opportunity. It's kinda like the two neighbors with a tree on the property line. It's a birch and it's dying from the top. One thinks it should be cut down. The other thinks it will die slow and won't have to be cut down for a long time. Leave it alone, it's fine. What's the best solution?

The same out here at Eagles Nest. The majority of folks out here do not own an ATV but have no argument with the traditional neighborhood use of ATVs by friends. Leave it alone. The other neighbor is the Prospector ATV Trail committee. They see a reason and an opportunity to develop a Primary Corridor Trail through our community. Cut it down and be done with it. What's the best solution?

The first thing is that they will have to be neighbors for a long time and staying good neighbors is the best way to approach this. The challenge of a Primary Corridor Trail running

through the denser populated areas, and most likely within earshot of many camps, homes and the lakes is asking for the current residents to possibly give up what they value most; simple, quiet enjoyment. For many of us, there is no "upside". Yes, we think it's fine if Tower, Ely and Babbitt want to develop the economic gain through commercial ATV use. Already, approximately 10 million dollars has been invested or allocated by government agencies using ATV dedicated funds. That's just in the area described above. But Eagles Nest generally feels that the trail would be better off "elsewhere". Yes, our ATV neighbors would like access to the new trails, but not too many would want to take a chance on an ATV Highway with a realistic possibility of 100's in a week motoring by, and that's not the local clubs or neighbors, it's tourism.

So, my point: I'd like to see this process slow down a bit, let's take the time to get it right and find the best possible solution to this challenge for everybody. The

other main trails can open and be used and the delay here would be worthy if we can all work for the best solution and stay good neighbors.

Thanks for listening today.
Bud Van Deusen
Eagles Nest Township

Biden shows anyone can be president

I found this quote in the New York Post fitting in response to the Teacher's Unions, Steelworker Union Bosses, environmental extremists and AFSCME public employee union bosses who spend time defending Joe Biden's dismal performance as President:

Proof you can be prez

Reader Collette Curry sees a bright side in the stumbling and fumbling of Joe Biden. She writes: "He has given hope to all under-achieving students that someday they can grow up to be president."

Dementia is a terrible disease, even if you are not President.

Jimmy Saranpaa
Orr

COMMENTARY

Honoring veterans also means taking care of those who return

Across our state, families are gathering to remember the members of our military we've lost. Memorial Day is a time to reflect on how we honor these fallen heroes and do right by servicemembers and veterans who are still with us.

This year marks the 105th anniversary of our nation entering World War I. It was a war that thousands of Minnesotans had a part in – Minnesotans like Sergeant Louis Cukela.

In the summer of 1918, Sergeant Louis Cukela and his company were stopped by a large enemy force in the woods



SEN. AMY KLOBUCHAR

of Northern France. Ignoring the potential danger, Sergeant Cukela crawled and fought his way forward, facing heavy resistance. He was even able to get behind German lines to drive off the crew of enemy soldiers. That display of determination saved lives and earned him the Medal of Honor from both

the U.S. Army and Navy.

Sergeant Cukela is just one of many courageous people from our state who put their lives on the line for our country.

So how can we best honor the fallen? One way is by better caring for those who follow in

their footsteps.

Take Amie Muller. Amie enlisted in the Air Force in 1998 and joined the Minnesota Air National Guard in late 2001. While in Iraq, her quarters were right next to one of the most notorious burn pits – it operated twenty-four hours a day and consumed about 100 to 200 tons of waste each day.

Amie tragically passed away nine months after being diagnosed with Stage III pancreatic cancer that was likely linked to inhaling toxic fumes during her service. She left behind her husband Brian and their three children.

Amie wasn't the only one who suffered from toxic exposure

See **KLOBUCHAR...pg. 5**

As veterans dwindle, Memorial Day history repeats

"An appeal to the people of Tower and Soudan to observe Memorial Day this year in a manner that will pay fitting tribute to the soldier and sailor dead was made by Nelson-Jackson Post No. 245, American Legion, in a resolution which was adopted at a recent meeting of the post.



DAVID COLBURN

country are making special efforts to bring before the public the importance of this day, which, they say, has deteriorated from a day of observance to one of mere sport and recreation."

-- *Tower Weekly News, May 28, 1920*

Sound familiar? For most of us, Memorial Day today is the official kickoff of summer,

a three-day weekend often stretched to four by folks eager to get in an extra day of fun and frolic. Nearly 40 million Americans will make this one of the busiest travel weekends of the year, and few will be carrying flowers to place on the graves of those who died in military service to the country.

That's not to say that there won't be special observances of Memorial Day. There will be many, including the return this year, after a COVID-related hiatus, of the National Memorial

Day Parade in Washington, D.C. To be honest, while I've harbored a reverence for the meaning of Memorial Day all my life, I didn't have a clue there was an actual National Memorial Day Parade. As I'm decades beyond being a teenager, it's fair for me to call it a "recent" development, as the first one was staged in 2005. Prior to that, there hadn't been a Memorial Day parade in Washington, D.C. in nearly 70 years. But by and large, it seems that for the vast majority of Americans these days, observing Memorial Day is

largely an afterthought, if even a thought at all.

Why is that? Why did the importance of officially honoring the nation's military dead wane in the early part of the 20th century, and why has it done so again in the 21st? Not surprisingly, I have some thoughts on the matter.

Memorial Day began as a grassroots movement after the Civil War to honor fallen Union and Confederate soldiers. The death toll of about 750,000 was

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