

## OUR VIEW

## A simple solution for Wrenshall woes

What is wrong in Wrenshall? That's a question that has been vexing anyone following the actions of the district school board in recent years.

As it was stated at Monday's regular board meeting during the public comment period, Wrenshall once had a reputation as a small and efficient place to get an education, a "hidden gem."

Today, that status is damaged. While often there can be myriad reasons for discord in a small community, in this case there is just one: a mostly dysfunctional school board.

It's a board with members who have insulted community members, injected politics into supposedly nonpartisan representation, uttered racist and homophobic words, allowed community members to harass and threaten those with different ideas, and allowed all things regarding the board to spiral into a web of conspiracy theories, community gossip, and personal beefs writ overly large.

All this has left the community bereft.

Set aside, for a moment, the personalities on the board today. As was stated by a former school member on Monday, there are some basic problems with how the board runs what usually is routine business. It's obvious that illegal discussions are happening before meetings when deciding things. And in the rare times there is a full discussion, it is often couched, coded and indecipherable.

As stated Monday, members of a school board need to represent the best interests of the school. They need to know what is happening in the classrooms, with employees, and with the district's future. They need to do the work.

The maddening thing about today's Wrenshall school board is that for all of its machinations and distractions, one would assume a sort of end goal. But there doesn't seem to be one. It has members who seem to be good at creating chaos. When facts, rules and public rebuttal are entered in, they simply slink away without explanation or apology. Nothing is gained, but damage is done.

We are all for the idea of elections having the ability to change things. We certainly know that the elections in 2020 greatly played a part in where the board is today. Teachers and parents in the district are rallying people to run for three open seats and will host a candidate forum to talk about education issues before the election in November. We urge anyone with a yen for making things better to run for a seat.

But remember, public service is hard work. If you are there for a singular issue or mindset, think again. It is work, and if it doesn't get done, you won't have a school district to represent.

Right now, the board has members who aren't doing the work or don't know how to do it. We have a simple request for them if they can't begin to better handle their positions. Resign.

# Express yourself

Send your thoughts to:

[news@PineKnotNews.com](mailto:news@PineKnotNews.com)

# Happy Father's Day



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## A decade ago, it rained and rained and rained

It began raining at midday on June 19, 2012. Five inches and about 10 hours later, I found myself driving in the heart of what has simply become known as the 2012 flood.

I had been working two jobs. One was for the weekly newspaper in Two Harbors and another was for the daily News Tribune in Duluth. When I pulled off the expressway coming back from Two Harbors and into Duluth, I called the News Tribune office and reported what I had seen. Water was covering blocks and blocks of Superior Street and it was rushing down the avenues. Debris was everywhere. For all I know, my report became the first journalistic account of what was to be a historic and catastrophic event in the region.

Official records state that the rain started around noon on that Tuesday and didn't stop until 24 hours later on June 20. More than 10 inches of rain had fallen in the Two Harbors area and I was lucky to have returned to Duluth without putting my car into a crevasse created by the rain. There was slightly less rainfall over Duluth, but its physical features, being a city on a series of hills, meant rushing water in its many streams, some open, some buried years before under the city streets, and down the avenues tore infrastructure apart.

Nearly 8 inches fell in northeastern Carlton County.

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the St. Louis River at Scanlon rose 11 feet and hit a record crest of 16.62 feet, breaking the old record of 15.8 feet set on May 9, 1950. Some evacuation of homes was necessary.

I was assigned to cover the record water levels in Thomson and the damage caused to the bridge,

dam and the road to Jay Cooke State Park, where parts of the famous swinging bridge had been swallowed up and swept away by the river.

The school in Moose Lake flooded, eventually leading to a new campus there after years of trying through referendums. Mother Nature often speaks louder than any of us can. Streams and rivers throughout Carlton County hit high-water marks.

Roads were washed out all over Carlton County: County Road 4 in Mahtowa, near the Minnesota Highway 210 bridge, and University Road on the Fond du Lac Reservation.

The county highway department reported 318 damaged sites and 42 road closures.

There were the crazy and imprinted photographs of animals floated out of the Lake Superior Zoo, including a seal on a roadway looking bewildered and so out of place. There were cars tipped into gaping holes in the streets. Bridges disappeared, parking lots collapsed.

Viewing the damage in Duluth and later in other parts of the region, after the rain subsided that Wednesday, was like looking at war zones I had only seen in books and on TV.

In Moose Lake, the water kept rising after the rain stopped, and parts of the city were islands popping up from a brown sea.

Duluth hadn't seen such flooding since 40 years earlier, when a series of August rainstorms led to similar problems with overflowing creeks and eroded streetscapes. Just as then, one person ended up getting sucked into a culvert and survived a wild ride down it. I interviewed the man who as a boy had that experience in 1972 in the Miller Hill area of Duluth.



Mike Creger

One reason for all that rain in 2012 was the giant body of water that often protects Duluth.

As we saw earlier this week, Lake Superior creates some bizarre weather patterns in the region. While the rest of the state broiled in humid, 90-degree weather, people in downtown Duluth, Canal Park, and in Superior, saw temperatures barely getting over 50 all day Tuesday.

In 2012, something akin to what we see in record snowfalls happened. Think of the infamous Halloween blizzard in 1991. The rain hit Lake Superior and just started swirling over the region. For 24 hours.

There have been more floods and, most recently, drought in the area since those historic days a decade ago. The rapid up-and-down cycles in weather are seen as examples of our changing climate, mostly man-made with the emissions we put into the atmosphere. What used to be seemingly one-off, history books events are now becoming more common.

The 2012 flood was exacerbated by one of the wettest Mays on record for the region.

It's important to remember these events, and do what we can to stem what scientists have warned us about.

As a father, I certainly think more now beyond my mortal existence on the earth. I enjoy the perverse anomalies in weather we see around the region. I couldn't help but laugh as the 4-year-old and I tried to take in a baseball game Tuesday night in 50-degree weather and a stiff breeze. We made it through the third inning. That was my first game with her. I'm hoping we can get a whole game in soon.

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