

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Community stands at the crossroads

to the Editor:

Our community stands at a crossroads between choosing a path of aggressive growth that will change the soul of our community or a path where we make careful choices to accommodate modest growth, preserving the character of our town, the welfare of our economy (both locally and globally) and the welfare of the abundant natural resources God has blessed us with.

If a complete stranger picked up the Jan. 22 edition of the *Waupaca County Post*, it would be crystal clear to that person that our idyllic "Norman Rockwellesque" community is evolving into another sprawling suburb driven by the false gods of growth, convenience and consumerism. Note the stories featured in the *Waupaca County Post* last week:

"Mayor confirms Wal-Mart rumors," and numerous stories and letters supporting and opposing big-box retail growth in Waupaca. Ralph

Brehmer's letter supporting Wal-Mart was compelling, but I would argue that Wal-Mart has done more to accelerate the migration of American jobs to China than any other force in our economy. Mr. Brehmer believes that Wal-Mart will employ more young people in our community; but what he isn't considering is that Wal-Mart has pressured hundreds of American manufacturers to drive their costs down by moving production to China, providing Mr. Brehmer with prices that are lower than other retailers. When the American laborer shops at Wal-Mart, he or she is shopping their way out of a job by supporting Wal-Mart's global sourcing strategy.

The story "Construction on County Q bridge may begin in spring" detailing construction of a new Indian Crossing bridge. The new bridge, along with the "improvements" recently on County Trunks QQ and Q, are transforming our rural resort community into a suburban subdivision around our fragile Chain O' Lakes. Car traffic on the Indian Crossing bridge certainly doesn't jus-

tify the cost and environmental impact of the new bridge. While boat traffic is heavy on weekends and requires careful navigation near the bridge, I've never heard of any deaths or injuries due to the "one-lane" channel under the bridge. Why change the charm of the Indian Crossing channel and spend unnecessary federal money to accommodate boat traffic during a few weekends every summer?

The story titled "Amendment would allow larger homes on the lakes" described proposed changes to regulations that will allow more expansive homes, paved driveways and other structures to be built, reducing or eliminating the natural "filters" that protect our beautiful lakes from damaging runoff.

Helen and Ray Robinson's letter regarding "Beauty sacrificed on County K" describing "improvements" made to this scenic road in the name of safety and progress. An inordinate number of trees were clear-cut and burned for more road construction in a nearby rural area. While portions of the road are dangerous, measured changes to improve safety were not considered in favor of major road "improvements" where the monetary and aesthetic costs outweigh the benefits.

We live in a free-market economy that has benefited many of us (me included) and change is inevitable. Many of us live in the Waupaca area for the outstanding quality of life we all enjoy, but I fear the reasonable pace of change we've seen over the past 30 years is accelerating at a rate that will damage the beauty, character and charm of our community. Is it possible to manage modest growth, while preserving the beauty and soul of Waupaca?

BILL ZIMMERMANN
Waupaca

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