

# OPINION

OUR VIEW

## Safety first this week

With Fourth of July serving as the full kick off to summer, many people will likely celebrate with a cold beverage or two.

But a memorable day with family and friends can turn tragic quickly when alcohol, boating and fireworks are in the mix.

Using legal fireworks or heading out onto the water are a traditional way for Borderland residents and visitors to celebrate this red, white and blue week. But we urge everyone to put safety first.

Boaters should think twice before opening a cold one. Adding alcohol to the heat, sun, noise and waves could be a deadly mix on the water. Consuming alcohol while operating a boat not only impairs judgment, which can lead to bad decisions, it sends the wrong message to young people, the next generation of boaters, and can end a fun day with a trip to jail.

Impaired boating is one of the leading factors for boating accidents and injuries in Minnesota and across the nation. In 2012, alcohol was a contributing factor in 33 percent of the deadly boating accidents in the state. Operating a boat with a blood alcohol level of .08 or higher is against the law.

And we urge people to wait until after the sparklers and firecrackers are put

away if they choose to have a celebratory beverage.

Flying or exploding fireworks are illegal in Minnesota, but legal fireworks like sparklers – which can burn up to 1,200 degrees – can be just as dangerous and cause injury. Fireworks injured 55 people – many of them children.

It's important that adults make good decisions when using or supervising even legal fireworks. Adding alcohol can lead to bad decisions. Adults must ensure that fireworks are handled safely and that means never allowing young children to handle them, having water at the ready should something go awry and never attempting to alter or modify fireworks.

And, most often, fireworks and the family dog is not a good mix. We urge pet owners to ensure that their dog is in a safe place when it comes time for any kind of fireworks. Many are frightened by the sound and sight of all types and this vulnerable family member may react by attempting to grab the firecracker, run away, or experience physical and emotional anxiety that can last a lifetime.

With warm temperatures and the holiday, memories will be made this week in Borderland. And putting safety first can help ensure they are good ones to share for years to come.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Animals used in circuses teach the wrong lessons

**To the editor,**  
Circus life is brutal to all the animals forced to perform unnatural acts for human “enjoyment.” But it was especially appalling to learn that elephants and other wild animals were being used in the circus in International Falls this summer.

The travel and space restrictions of a circus are particularly cruel for elephants, born to roam many miles per day in their natural habitat. Circus records show that the elephants are chained while confined in boxcars for an average of more than 26 hours at a time, and sometimes for as much as 60-100 hours, as the circus moves across the country. Chaining severely restricts an elephant’s movements,

eliminating its ability to lie down, walk, or socialize with other elephants. The severity of these restrictions can result in neurotic psychological behavior, physical injury, and even the death of captive elephants.

Every unnatural act the elephant is forced to perform in the circus ring is the result of brutal training. To control the elephants, a bull hook, or ankus, is used. It is made of wood, metal, or other substantial material, and is approximately 2 to 3 feet long; at one end is a sharp steel hook and poker. It is used to pike, prod, strike, and hit animals to “train” them through fear and abuse-all for a few moments of human amusement. Your children who watch, or even worse ride, these poor abused

animals are not learning anything about the true nature and behavior of elephants. Seeing wild animals perform unnatural tricks does not teach our children respect or appreciation for animals. Circuses teach children that it’s acceptable to exploit and mistreat animals for amusement.

Using animals in circuses is an unnecessary and inhumane practice that is harmful to both the animals and the public. Unlike the human performers who choose to work in circuses, exotic animals are forced to take part in the show. They are involuntary actors in a degrading, unnatural spectacle. The time to end the use of wild animals in circuses is now.

**Susan Dow**  
International Falls, MN

## Immigration bill will increase unemployment

**To the editor,**  
An open letter to Rep. Rick Nolan,

On behalf of the residents of International Falls we ask you to vote no on the immigration bill now before the House. You are aware that the job market here in the Falls is critical due to Boise closing two of its paper machines. We will have 300 additional families without jobs. This immigration bill will only increase unemployment in an economy that is already in a free-fall job market. We do not need to add more unemployed to an already bad economy. We need jobs.

This federal administration has destroyed the job market with over-regulation by its EPA and higher taxes due to

Obama Care. The coal industry is severely over-regulated and oil exploration on Federal lands has been cut by Obama from 1.7 billion acres (Bush’s policy) to 700 billion acres. The Key Stone XL Pipeline is dead on arrival by the Obamaites. The cost of energy continues to sky rocket while jobs are being lost and the economy suffers. The cost of living continues to go up for middle class Americans. Everything this administration has done has harmed the economy.

We have become an extremely over-regulated nation on all fronts including environmental, banking, gun rights and health care. We need less government so America is FREE to become the great nation it is. We are

a people who are ingenious in our abilities and hard working only if government would get out of the way. At this time in history, our great nation is being brought down by its own government. My prayer is that we can rise from the ashes of this present administration and elect men and women who put the good of our nation first not their own liberal/progressive ideologies

The Immigration Bill has passed the Senate with all Democrats and fourteen Republicans voting for it. Shame on you all. Now we look to the House of Representatives to stop this bill. How will our Representative Nolan vote?

**Julie Hindman**  
International Falls, MN

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