

OPINION

OUR VIEW

State Capitol feels closer

International Falls is a long ways from Minnesota’s Capitol, but it felt just a little closer to home Wednesday.

Gov. Mark Dayton and Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben met with local leaders in Borderland Wednesday to hear about the community response to a loss of 265 jobs at the Boise Inc. paper mill.

Dayton, as several elected officials noted, has been a good friend to this community. He has offered compassion and support when this community has suffered similar losses, and again Wednesday offered words of encouragement and assistance as we work to diversify the economy and address the immediate and future needs of area residents.

The governor encouraged our community to think creatively when it comes to considering ways to move forward. Clearly, Dayton has done so himself. How many governors offer during public meetings their telephone number to an audience? He did just that Wednesday, and at previous meetings in the Falls, saying he gets more information that way than through the established bureaucratic channels.

And we appreciate Clark

Sieben’s visit. She listened as activities in the community were described, often jotting notes and offering to provide contacts and resources to people who spoke at Wednesday’s meeting.

Clark Sieben was appointed by Dayton to this very important position just one year ago. Based on her previous experiences, she seems to be the right person for the job, and to assist this community in finding ways to move forward. She previously served as the executive director of the Minnesota Trade Office and before that worked in business development and recruitment for the Target Corp. and other private businesses.

Dayton told the group he and Clark Sieben will do all they can to assist this community in determining its path and moving forward.

Recovery, he said, doesn’t happen overnight, but it does happen with dedicated people who volunteer their time and energy to that effort.

To the governor and DEED commissioner, we say thanks for the shoulder and considering ways you can help as you listen to our plans and concerns. And to the people working on the plans, thanks for caring enough about Borderland to invest in this community.

How to contact your lawmakers

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Duluth Office of Congressman Rick Nolan (TEMPORARY)
Gerald W. Heaney Federal Building and United States Courthouse
515 West First Street, Room 235
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218-464-5095, 5096, 5097 and 5098

Brainerd Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
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218-454-4078

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar
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GUEST COLUMNS

Who’s to blame for the shutdown?

“DEAR COLUMNIST: I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say the government shutdown will last a long time, America will default on its debt and our economy and the world economy will nosedive. They say conservative Republicans are bullying the America political system and economy in way that doesn’t fit with how democracy is defined in my history books. My father says President Barack Obama and the Democrats started it and want the government shut down and a default. Papa says ‘If you see it on Fox News, read it on a conservative website, or if Rush Limbaugh says it must be so.’ My uncle says some Republicans are Republicans in name only these days and are grieving for what has happened to their party.

“Please tell me the truth: who’s to blame, will America go down the tubes, and is this the same Republican Party I read about in the history books that gave us Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan and others?

“P.S. My friends and Eddie who’s five can’t believe grown-ups can be so immature.

“VIRGINIA EDNA SNODGRASS SCHMIDLAP, III, 285 Blizzard Street.”

Virginia, in my gut I’m convinced your little friends are wrong and that America will not default. Since you’ve read history, you know that underneath our partisanship, ideologies and divisions, Americans have above all been patriots who won’t sacrifice the national good and destroy our majority rule system for ideological gain.

But your friends are also correct: the current crisis was engineered by no-compromise Tea Party and fearful House Republicans, name recognition-seeking and donation-seeking politicians, talk show hosts who carve out audience share and deliver the demographic to



Joe
GANDELMAN
INDEPENDENT’S EYE

advertisers, and some (but not all) conservative pundits.

When you get older you’ll read “Democracy in America,” written in the mid-1800s by French historian and political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville who warned of both Tyranny of the Majority and Tyranny of the Minority. Republican President William McKinley warned us about what we’re seeing now: “The tyranny of the minority is infinitely more odious and intolerable and more to be feared than that of the majority.” Our traditional political system is being tested.

We’re also learning this shutdown maneuver didn’t happen spontaneously. It turns out that right after Obama was elected some conservative Republicans planned to use a shutdown to try and defund “Obamacare.” They created talking points (later used by GOPers in Congress) on how to frame the shutdown argument and then pumped money into the defunding campaign effort.

Deja vu: some GOPers in January 2009 laid plans to oppose Obama at every move before Obama had even been sworn in. Deja vu: it turned out that the early, big Tea Party rallies were aided by big bucks from conservative businessmen millionaires.

Your Dad is wrong about Fox News and the conservative entertainment media. The most notable

characteristic of 21st century America is the partisan belief that if you repeatedly state a non-fact it becomes fact. The United States has had “truthers,” “birthers,” and now we have Republican “debit limit deniers” who insist a debt default is no big deal. Republican Rep. John Yoho said a default “would bring stability to world markets.”

The National Journal’s Charlie Cook writes “...[Y]ou would be quite believable if you were to suggest that the GOP has been making an active, masochistic effort to isolate itself from moderate, independent, and swing voters, further exacerbating all the problems with target constituencies that cost Mitt Romney the presidency and the GOP a national popular House vote victory.”

Today’s Republican Party is not the same as it was even 10 ago. It is now dominated by a powerful, no-compromise, far-right segment ready to purge those “going moderate” and jettison accepted democratic norms to achieve via power politics what it couldn’t achieve in elections or legal rulings. People who 10 years ago would have disgustedly rejected some of what they say and do are supporting what they say and do now because it’s their political team. A political party holding our economy hostage is new.

Gandelman is a veteran journalist who wrote for newspapers overseas and in the United States. He has appeared on cable news show political panels and is editor-in-chief of The Moderate Voice, an Internet hub for independents, centrists and moderates. He also writes for The Week’s online edition. Gandelman’s column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate.

Reasonable people compromise



Susan
BROWN

Reasonable people compromise. Unreasonable people do not. Instead, they trample over those around them to selfishly get their way. And the government is shut down this chilly October day in 2013 because unreasonable Democrats behaving like spoiled children would rather refuse treatment to terminally ill children, ravage the economy, disparage veterans and make the rest of our lives miserable — than compromise.

The GOP has its share of problems, but one thing is absolute: Republicans made reasonable effort to pass legislation intended to keep non-partisan government agency programs running. All they asked for in return was to delay implementation of Obamacare, the Democrat Party’s illegitimate lovechild that nobody wants.

Sometimes it’s best to walk away. Sir Winston Churchill once so poetically quipped: “In war as in life, it is often necessary when some cherished scheme has failed, to take up the best alternative open, and if so, it is folly not to work for it with all your might.” The GOP offered Democrats an easy out...a way to save face...even raise Obama’s approval numbers. But sadly, and to the country’s detriment, Democrats don’t understand the art and value of compromise, let alone engage in it.

Merriam-Webster definition of compromise: “A way of reaching agreement in which each person or group gives up something that was wanted in order to end an argument or dispute.”

Obama-Reid-Pelosi definition of compromise: “Name-calling, threatening, and making life miserable until Republicans give up everything and Democrats give up nothing in

order to get your way.”

What possesses the heart of those who would allow harm to others in order to further an ideology? And how do they reconcile their consciences?

Per the Weekly Standard, the National Park Service was instructed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to barricade D.C.’s World War II Memorial, preventing the dwindling few of America’s Greatest Generation from viewing that which was erected in their honor prior to their passing on.

If you wonder who’s responsible for such callousness, look no further than Obama. According to Whitehouse.gov: “The core mission of OMB is to serve the President of the United States in implementing his vision across the Executive Branch...It reports directly to the President...to implement commitments and priorities of the President.”

During his weekly address October 5, Obama covered his own aversion to compromise with lies. He compared Republicans to “kidnappers” and suggested America may default on its debt because of the GOP. His words seemed to panic the markets when the Dow sunk below 15,000 the next day. Proverbs 22:18 says, “There is

one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” Obama and Reid are quite the swordsmen these days.

Just when you think they could sink no deeper into this sewage they call politics, a liberal opens his mouth as recently happened when CNN asked Harry Reid why the Democrat-controlled Senate refused to approve a spending bill offered by Republicans that would keep the National Institute of Health open and help “one child who has cancer.”

Reid quipped: “Why would we want to do that? I have 1100 people at Nellis AFB that are sitting home. They have a few problems of their own.”

So, Harry, why would we want to do that? Maybe a little wisdom from Batman might help? In the movie, “A Dark Knight Rises” lead character Jim Gordon tells Batman “I never cared who you were...but shouldn’t the people know the hero who saved them?” Batman: “A hero can be anyone – even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting a coat around a young boy’s shoulders to let him know that the world hadn’t ended.”

Or, maybe something as unpretentious as a compromise, so that a terminally ill child will know his world won’t end today because someone cared about him more than politics?

Surely, a dark night has risen over this great country as Democrats preside over the dismantling of America, one uncompromising position at a time.

Stamper Brown is an opinion page columnist who writes about politics, the economy and culture. Her column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons, Inc., newspaper syndicate.