

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Time to show off, celebrate

We've played host for the 10th time to the International Falls Bass Championship and it continues to grow into something for which we should be proud.

Not only does the IFBC showcase the magnificent bass fishery in our front and backyards, it's a chance for this community to show off its hospitality.

Clearly, we've got something to celebrate this year. We've come to terms with and are making plans to recover from the huge layoffs we experienced last year at this community's largest employer, and the severe winter we experienced was followed by intense struggles with high water that has impacted businesses and residents.

But this week has been a chance to put all of it aside and have some fun. This year's IFBC included an appreciation night for the many residents and visitors, businesses and employees who gave generously of their sweat and muscle, equipment and money to assist the people affected by deluge of rain that brought Rainy River and Rainy Lake

to historically high levels.

Marking the 10th year of an event that began with the ideas of a couple of community members in 2004 and has grown into one of the premier smallmouth bass tournaments in the region is an accomplishment in and of itself.

Now, anglers from across the state and Ontario talk about the wonders of our natural resource, as well as the spirit and support exhibited by this welcoming community. Borderland has always been known as a great walleye fishing destination, but we're also now known for the smallies that dance on two bodies of water.

This tournament couldn't happen without the many volunteers who give time, energy and money to help put up the big tent, organize the multitude of activities and offerings, and put up financial support to this event.

Kudos to us, Borderland; to the many volunteers; and especially to all the anglers who truly make this event something spectacular to witness.



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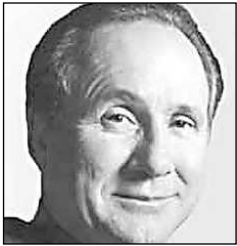
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GUEST COLUMN

Over-covering the Ferguson situation

Why have the protests and riots lasted so long in Ferguson?

Why have out-of-town agitators and opportunists like the Communist Revolutionary Party and the New Black Panthers flocked to a St. Louis suburb?



Michael REAGAN

MAKING SENSE

Why, 12 days after Michael Brown was shot to death by a policeman, do the good people of Ferguson who want to see a fair and just investigation into the facts surrounding Brown's death still have no peace?

It's the national news media, stupid.

It's the ratings-hungry, pot-stirring, sensationalizing TV media that never misses a chance to milk — and perpetuate — a white-on-black news story.

Ferguson is not just big news on network TV and in the Washington Post. It's become a nightly action-packed reality show on CNN, MSNBC and FOX.

The images of tear-gassed protestors squared off against militarized police make for great TV. So does the tension and drama.

Will protests turn more violent tonight? Will a provocateur throw a bomb, burn down a variety store or shoot a cop with a deer rifle?

We all hope not. But if anything exciting happens, don't you worry, America.

Jake Tapper, Chris Hayes, Steve Harrigan

will be there on the sidewalks of Ferguson to capture it live for CNN, MSNBC and Fox.

Then Anderson, Rachel and Greta will analyze and discuss everything until the country falls asleep.

Obviously, no one can or should stop the news media from stampeding in a herd to Ferguson. We need and want the national print and electronic media to thoroughly cover tragic events like this.

But we need the news media to do its job right — and with restraint.

We need journalists to dig up accurate new information, challenge the authorities, debunk rumors and lies and provide perspective, thoughtful analysis and commentary.

At this point in Ferguson the TV media's saturation coverage — and saturation commentary — is only making things worse.

Its round-the-clock presence is not only attracting publicity seekers and troublemakers who

give Ferguson's good people a bad name.

What's worse, the media attention is encouraging residents of Ferguson to continue the unnecessary daily protests that are destroying daily life in their town.

The people of Ferguson deserve to learn the truth. The investigation should be done properly, and state and federal agencies have come in to make sure that happens.

But the process of determining whether police officer Darren Wilson was justified or not in shooting Michael Brown is going to take months, if not years.

The autopsies are not complete. The grand jury hasn't finished its work. We don't have the police incident report yet. We've heard conflicting eyewitness reports.

Instead of standing around on sidewalks in the dark waiting for something exciting to happen, the TV news guys should do everyone a favor and back off for a while.

That will never happen. But if it did, overnight Ferguson's streets would be filled with cars again, not protest marchers, riot police and Al Jazeera camera crews.

Everyone involved — especially the TV news media — needs to calm down and wait for all the facts before they start spouting their pre-conceived conclusions.

The shooting death of a young black man

like Michael Brown is an American tragedy. Unfortunately, it happens all too often.

Too many unarmed citizens of all races are being killed each year by our cops. No one knows for sure how many. But in a handful of highly publicized cases, it's a white cop killing an unarmed black man without justification.

Maybe that's what happened to Brown, maybe not. We'll see.

Meanwhile, while the national media herd waits for all the facts about Brown's death, they might want to spend some quality time in Chicago.

Last year 500 murders were committed there. As in most inner cities, most of the victims and the perpetrators were young black men engaged in gang warfare.

Chicago's permanent murder spree is not as sensational or as racially charged as a white cop killing an unarmed black teen. But its causes and cures could use a lot more media attention.

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Candidate letter policy

The beginning of 2014 brought a new policy to The Journal. A charge of \$30 will be required to publish letters to the editor from candidates or about candidates. The letters must be 500 words or less and the fee must be paid prior to the letter being published. The name and city of the author will be published with the letter.

Letters may be emailed to laurel@ifallsjournal.com. The Journal will publish a deadline for publication of paid election letters prior to the Aug. 12 primary and Nov. 4 general elections.

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author's city address will be published.

Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifallsjournal.com.

Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal's Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.