

OPINION

FIRST AMENDMENT “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

OUR VIEW

Strengthening ties that bind

Residents who live along the border between the United States and Canada know first hand the value of the relationships between the two countries.

In Borderland, area residents travel back and forth across the border frequently as many live in one country and work in another, have family across the border, and attend church and civic gatherings on the other side of the bridge.

Gary Doer, Canada’s ambassador to the U.S., appears to understand the common-sense approach to border relations used every day by residents and local businesses must be applied to the economies and federal officials of our nations.

Doer reminded local folks last week about the economic interdependence of the two countries and encouraged everyone to help maintain that relationship.

Clearly, we understand the ties that bind, as well as bond, International Falls and Fort Frances. Without the river serving as a transparent boundary, the two communities would truly be one.

A few more facts about the relationship of the U.S. and Canada:

■ Canada is currently our largest goods trading partner with \$632 billion in total (two ways) goods trade during 2013. Goods exports totaled \$300 billion; Goods imports totaled \$332 billion. Canada was the United States’ largest goods export market in 2013. Canada was the United States’ largest goods export market in 2013.

■ About 300,000 people cross between the

countries every day. That means they spend money buying products and services here, and we do the same.

■ Canada is the single largest foreign supplier of energy to the United States. It’s better to rely on a country we have friendly relations with for our energy needs than unstable, unfriendly countries.

■ Canada shares miles of shoreline with the U.S., creating shared interests in maintaining and improving water quality and concerns about protecting it.

■ Canada and the U.S have been allies since the War of 1812 and continue to work together on international conflicts, outside security issues, and development of energy independence.

We know how important it is to maintain good relations with our friends to the north. And it’s good to know our local leaders have been working on shared interests intended to keep those security, trade and economic relations strong. The last couple years have brought renewed efforts to work together as one community to improve visitorship, diversify our economies and strengthen the ties that bond us.

Now, we need a uniform effort at the federal level on both sides of the border to establish policies that will see an alignment of security protections, break down of barriers inhibiting visitorship and trade, and improve the ability to share resources — all of which will help to create more jobs and allow our sister cities to flourish.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Report of meeting one sided

To the editor,
I am writing to report on the special council meeting regarding the city’s decision to proceed with the community picnic because Saturday’s Journal account reported only one view set forth in a private Journal interview. The views of all of the councilors and citizens who attended the public meeting were left out of the article.

On Monday, June 23, the council approved with a vote of 3-1 (Peter Kalar, Gail Rognerud and myself voting yes) to proceed with the picnic and program despite canceling the rope pulls due to flooding.

Community members speaking in support of continuing with the other Peace Pull events were Faye Whitbeck, Chamber president; Peter Schultz, executive director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau; and Terry Randolph,

local Veterans of Foreign Wars post commander. They pointed out how the event supports the goal of building a “360 degree” community and that much of the event’s budget in time and treasure comes from private individuals and businesses and has all ready been spent. Councilor Kalar stated that people from afar are planning to attend, canceling everything would only return a portion of the city dollars and that the wiser course is to proceed with the picnic and program.

Not one official or citizen at the meeting argued or spoke against proceeding but there was one nay vote.

The free community picnic, a kiddie pull, face painting, two performances by Darcy’s Dancers will be held; all with music provided by the Sloughgrass Band. Color guards from both countries will present flags.

Speakers include Canadian Consul General Jamshed Merchant, state Sen. Tom Bakk , Sate Rep. David Dill, and Fort Frances Mayor Roy Avis and International Falls Mayor Bob Anderson. Inviting our Canadian friends makes this our first international, public social.

We are the only U.S. city that holds an international rope pull crossing a river. This annual event — now in its ninth year — receives coverage in statewide media and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has proclaimed July 2 as International Peaceful Borders Day. The Fort Frances and International Falls councils promote cross-border culture, commerce and friendship. Nurturing those ties makes our lives richer in many ways.

For example, the council is facilitating discussion on sharing medical resources between the two cities. With

the billion dollar gold mining project getting ready to start 45 miles west of Fort Frances, our local businesses and individuals will have new opportunities to provide services to the mining industry and their workers. Economic advantages are not the entire story. The richness of friendships and sharing culture provide meaning and texture to our lives.

Help celebrate our special day on July 2, International Peaceful Borders Day, as people living near Rainy River’s shores gather to recognize that while the river runs between our cities, the river runs through us and the river binds us. We are remarkable in many ways because our daily lives are touched by two countries and by two cities situated on the banks of the Rainy.

**Cynthia Jaksa
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How to contact your lawmakers

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WHAT OTHERS SAY

Solid steps advance women but more needed

Minnesota women are lucky that state leaders understand the importance of fairness in the workplace. The enactment of the state’s Women’s Economic Security Act this spring shows great progress.

Under the new law workers can use sick time to care for grandchildren and in-laws; it bars employers from discrimination in hiring, firing, promoting or compensating for reasons of pregnancy or parenting of minor children; it increases required unpaid leave allowance for pregnancy, birth or adoption from six to 12 weeks; and it requires reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees and employees who express breast milk

during unpaid breaks.

Some of those measures seem like no-brainers, but women who haven’t had those rights at their workplaces are well aware of the relief this kind of legislation provides. No more pretending to go on a snack break while actually pumping breast milk. No more worrying about whether to hide a pregnancy for as long as possible because a promotion is in the air. No more leaving an ailing grandchild alone for longer than comfortable because getting off work to care for him is not an option.

But the law shouldn’t be the end of progress. There’s plenty left to be done when it comes to improving the status of women in Minnesota. That was made clear during a stop by representatives of

the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota and University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School Center on Women and Public Policy. They put together data every two years that address the status of women.

The research puts a needed spotlight on just how many obstacles remain for women today, despite decades of “roaring” a la the 1971 song “I Am Woman.” For example, despite women’s liberation in the ‘60s and ‘70s, women make up the majority of low-wage workers in Minnesota at 60 percent. And female-headed households are less likely to live in a home they own at 48 percent compared to 63 percent of male-headed households, the research says. Just a decade ago 59

percent of women heading households owned homes.

The figures also show that despite more women being breadwinners, they are often in lower-paying occupations earning less. Or they make less than men in the same field. For example Minnesota women in health care practitioner or technician jobs earned 57 cents for every \$1 earned by a man, the study said.

The research is compiled into a book of such discrepancies, showing clearly that more work needs to be done to close gaps, including making child care more affordable and accommodat-ing caregivers.

Minnesota is making strides, but there are lot more steps that can be taken.

**The Free Press of
Mankato, June 23**

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.

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.