

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

Working as one

This community deserves to pat itself on the back. Again we have put aside our differences and come together for the common fight against Mother Nature. While it may seem at times that she is winning, clearly the humanity being expressed will overcome this crisis. The concerns and issues caused by high winds and rising waters are not over and won't be over for a long time. These are serious issues involving financial losses by resort owners, regular folks and governments. Tourists are leaving, people's homes are being damaged and threatened, and our roads and bridges are under water. Kudos should go to Koochiching County staff who have worked hard to keep people informed and handle the incidents that come with these kind of events. Credit also goes to the local, state and federal representatives who have pledged to help all they can.

The fact no life has been lost should bolster all our spirits. As we've witnessed business after business donating staff, equipment and time to help those in need and the volunteers assisting the various efforts across Koochiching County our faith in humanity is restored. We've seen cooperation among local, state and federal agencies, but even more impressive is the staff that work for these governments giving much of their time and effort to ensure the basic needs of our community members are being met.

Help has arrived from the Northern Minnesota Region Red Cross staff and volunteers, who remind us to take a break and take care of one another during this scary, frustrating and overwhelming time, and bring in local resources to help if needed.

The Salvation Army staff and volunteers are feeding people working hard and freely giving words of encouragement.

Residents experiencing damage are not only filling and taking sandbags for themselves, but putting in a few extra hours to fill sandbags for others in need.

Just a few minutes at any of the sites where people are giving of their time and energy to help others can take the cynicism out of even the most cynical among us.

We truly are a community, from east to west and north and south. When it really counts, we are kind, understanding and giving to one another and we come together as one to fight together for the common good.

Stay strong, Borderland. This too shall pass and we will be stronger, better and tighter than ever before.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rule curves may need to be revised

To the editor,

The rule curves established in 2000 might need to be changed in the future to keep up with the climate change that is occurring when excessive water comes into the basin.

I am concerned about the high water levels and flows in the Rainy Lake Basin and on the Rainy River. It makes it hard for me to conduct my business activities of dock building and delivering fuel to customers on Rainy Lake.

I have lived and worked on the lake all of my life. I know that when the basins fill up faster than the drains at Kettle Falls dams, the Ranier Rapids

and the International Fall/Fort Frances dam can release, the levels in the lakes will rise out of control. That is what is happening today.

Once all of the gates are open at Kettle Falls and the Falls/Fort Dam, nothing can be done to further manage flows.

Back in the 1960s and through the '80s we had way colder winters, less snowfall and hotter summers. When I operated the Viking Cruise vessel, for several years low water occurred and I could not use the inside channels on Rainy. I had to adjust the routes because I was burning up props. I also maintained 35 miles of ice

roads and in some years only had to plow the roads twice.

It seems obvious to me that climate change is occurring producing more snow and rainfall in the basins. Many area residents were frequently consulted about the management of the water during this spring run off, to make room for snowmelt from the heavy snowfall thiswinter, including me.

Snowmelt normally contributes about 1/3 to the spring recharge and spring rainfall 2/3 to the recharge. We had close to 8 inches of rain in the region during the past two and one half weeks.

And at some places in the watershed, over 10 inches have fallen. It takes a long time for the north-country water levels, which have been at historic highs throughout the lakes and streams recently, to pass through the Rainy and Namakan lakes on to Lake of the Woods through Rainy River.

We are now out of control. Mother Nature has taken over. For this reason the rule curves established in 2000 might need to be changed in the future to keep up with the changing weather.

Carl Brown  
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How to contact your lawmakers

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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.

No need for new AV system

To the editor,

This is why the town of International Falls is in the shape it's in: Priorities of city council has no rhyme or reason for anything they do.

It's easy to spend someone else's money. They need this new A.V.

system like this town needs another EDA. Is it so they can record it at home then when they go home they get a box of popcorn and watch themselves on TV?

Why two 70-inch flat screens TVs installed in city hall? And why can't

they go through Sound North? Keep the money local. Saving thousands.

Cynthia Jaksa stated she won't waste taxpayers money on reassessing the Donahue property, but she will waste it on this foolishness.

Take a poll to see how

many people actually watch that channel. My guess would be very few.

Four more months then elections, and the people can have their town back with a new city council.

Darren Wallen  
International Falls,  
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GUEST COLUMN

Haven't we already done enough damage in Iraq?

In 2006, I invited the late General Bill Odom to address my Thursday Congressional luncheon group. Gen. Odom, a former NSA director, called the Iraq war "the greatest strategic disaster in American history," and told the surprised audience that he could not understand why Congress had not impeached the president for pushing this disaster on the United States. History continues to prove the General's assessment absolutely correct.

In September, 2002, arguing against a U.S. attack on Iraq, I said the following on the House Floor:

"No credible evidence has been produced that Iraq has or is close to having nuclear weapons. No evidence exists to show that Iraq harbors al Qaeda terrorists. Quite to the contrary, experts on this region recognize Hussein as an enemy of the al Qaeda and a foe to Islamic fundamentalism."

Unfortunately, Congress did not listen.

As we know, last week the second largest city in Iraq, Mosul, fell to the al-Qaeda allied Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Last week an al-Qaeda that had not been in Iraq before our 2003 invasion threatened to move on the capitol, Baghdad, after it easily over-ran tens of thousands of Iraqi military troops.

The same foreign policy "experts" who lied us into the Iraq war are now telling us we must re-invade Iraq to deal with the disaster caused by their invasion! They cannot admit they were wrong about the invasion being a "cakewalk" that would pay for itself, so they want to blame last week's events on the 2011 US withdrawal from Iraq. But the trouble started with the 2003 invasion itself, not the 2011 troop withdrawal. Anyone who understands cause and effect should understand this.

The Obama administration has said no option except for ground troops is off the table to

help the Iraqi government in this crisis. We should not forget, however, that the administration does not consider Special Forces or the CIA to be "boots on the ground." So we may well see Americans fighting in Iraq again.

It is also likely that the administration will begin shipping more weapons and other military equipment to the Iraqi army, in the hopes that they might be able to address the ISIS invasion themselves. After years of U.S. training, costing as much as \$20 billion, it is unlikely the Iraqi army is up to the task. Judging from the performance of the Iraqi military as the ISIS attacked, much of that money was wasted or stolen.

A big U.S. government weapons transfer to Iraq will no doubt be favored by the US military-industrial complex, which stands to profit further from the Iraq meltdown. This move will also be favored by those in Washington who realize how politically unpopular a third U.S. invasion of Iraq

would be at home, but who want to "do something" in the face of the crisis. Shipping weapons may be an action short of war, but it usually leads to war. And as we have already seen in Iraq and Syria, very often these weapons fall into the hands of the al-Qaeda we are supposed to be fighting!

Because of the government's foolish policy of foreign interventionism, the U.S. is faced with two equally stupid choices: either pour in resources to prop up an Iraqi government that is a close ally with Iran, or throw our support in with al-Qaida in Iraq (as we have done in Syria). I say we must follow a third choice: ally with the American people and spend not one more dollar or one more life attempting to re-make the Middle East. Haven't we have already done enough damage?

**Distributed by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate. Paul is a former Congressman and Presidential candidate.**