

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

Rest in peace, congressman

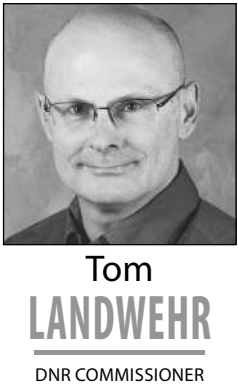
Many people in Borderland have a Jim Oberstar story. It may have occurred at a community gathering or DFL Party function, or it could have been a chance meeting at a local business or restaurant. But when former 8th District Congressman Jim Oberstar talked to someone, he made them feel like they were the only person in the room. Didn't matter if it was an elected state leader, a business owner, a receptionist, a reporter or just a guy walking down the street — he made people feel like they were important to him. Oberstar looked you in the eye and listened to what you had to say — about your issue or concern, your story, your parent's health, or even just the weather — like it truly meant something to him. We believe it did. That's what made him a great elected leader and a wonderful man. Oberstar appeared to epitomize the phrase “public servant.” He wanted to fix things, solve problems, come up with the answers, and he did. One doesn't have to travel far in this community to see the results of Oberstar's efforts. He touched just about everything having to do with transportation in Borderland. From improving the safety of travel on U.S. Highway 53 to making sure the Falls International Airport had what it needed to continue

to serve this community — he was on top of it and carried our needs with him in Washington. His name welcomes people to city developments along Rainy River to the east. Having his name greet people as they drive into Voyageurs National Park makes sense, as he was instrumental in the creation of Minnesota's only national park. He certainly wasn't without criticism during his tenure in Congress. Some said his assignments to powerful committees allowed him to bring home the bacon too easily. Some said he leaned too heavily to the left's liberalism, when he represented an area more in the middle. Regardless of what Jim Oberstar did in Congress, he was the consummate gentleman here and in Washington with an incredible amount of energy and drive to do what he believed was right for his district. His genuine hugs to the many he called friend, his advice to those he mentored, and his wide smile upon greeting people will be missed. Also missed will be his sincerity, the ideals by which Oberstar lived and his great intellect, among other facets of his personality. Only now does it seem he can take break and relax. Take this hug from Borderland and rest in peace, congressman. You deserve it.



GUEST COLUMN

Experience what only Minnesota offers



than electronics. Inertia can keep us on the couch or checking off to-do lists rather than spending life-enriching time on the water. A “plugged in” population tends to “tune out” the outdoors. That's why it is as important as ever to get out and enjoy what only Minnesota has to offer. There's no better time to start than this spring, with a fishing rod in hand when the fish are biting. And consider the opportunities. Only in Minnesota can you put in a canoe and continue that trip from Ely, paddling the Voyageurs' canoe route through the border waters wilderness, and land at Grand Portage looking out to the largest freshwater lake in the world. Fantastic fishing for walleyes and smallmouth will keep you busy on

the inland waters, and the lake trout is king on Superior. Fishing for brook trout and steelhead along the North Shore will also bring you through beautiful towns with shopping opportunities like Grand Marais, Two Harbors and Duluth. Or, head to northwestern Minnesota, near Hallock, where you can fish for channel catfish in the Red River of the North and not far away see trophy, world-class elk running around on some of the largest remnants of tall-grass prairie left on the globe. A short jaunt east lands you in Warroad, on the shores of Lake of the Woods, a truly phenomenal fishery shared with Canada, where giant sturgeon lurk. Head to southeastern Minnesota, where you can stay at a welcoming bed and breakfast in quaint towns like Lanesboro and Preston, then experience blue ribbon trout fishing in beautiful bluff country. Not far away, the mighty Mississippi River provides outstanding fishing on a dizzying array of species near towns like Winona and Red Wing. Only in Minnesota can you catch a basket of jumbo perch and dandy walleyes in Big Stone

Lake near Ortonville, then head downstream to Lac qui Parle near Appleton and relish the great crappie bite. A short jaunt downstream, near the towns of Olivia and Redwood Falls, 50-pound flathead catfish are caught with regularity in the Minnesota River. Or, if like me, you live in the cities, don't go far at all, because only in Minnesota are there so many of these opportunities readily available in a metropolitan area. The Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix rivers are all there to be enjoyed, as are hundreds of lakes with public accesses or public fishing piers. We have 800,000 registered boats in the state. Hunting and fishing is a \$2.4 billion dollar industry here. Visitors to our parks spend about \$280 million in this state. And visitors to our trails add \$2.6 billion dollars to our local economies. Spring is when we get outdoors, and after this long winter, we are anxious to do so! Minnesota is truly an outstanding place. This fishing opener, get out-of-doors and experience the life that only Minnesota has to offer. What's your excuse? The fish are biting.

How to contact your lawmakers

FEDERAL OFFICES
President Barack Obama
Democrat
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20500
202-456-1111
Website:
www.whitehouse.gov
E-mail:
president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
202-225-6211
Website: www.nolan.house.gov
Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan
Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Duluth Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
11 East Superior Street
Suite 125
Duluth, MN 55802
Phone: 218-464-5095
Fax: 218-464-5098

Brainerd Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
Brainerd City Hall
501 Laurel Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-454-4078

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar
Democrat
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-3244

Minnesota Office:
1200 Washington Avenue

South, Suite 250
Minneapolis, MN 55415
612-727-5220
Website:
www.klobuchar.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Al Franken
Democrat
Senate Hart Building 320
Washington DC 20510
202-224-5641
Website:
www.alfranken.com
E-Mail:
info@franken.senate.gov

STATE OFFICES
Gov. Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN, 55155
800-657-3717
E-mail:
Mark.Dayton@state.mn.us

Rep. David Dill
571 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2190
800-339-0466
rep.david.dill@house.mn
Assistant: Joan Harrison

Sen. Tom Bakk
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol, Room 226
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
Capitol Office phone:
(651) 296-8881
Email:
www.senate.mn/
senatorbakkemail

We are blessed in Minnesota to have an abundance of natural resources. Minnesotans love them as do our visitors. So do our children when we explore our state with family, and so do anglers looking forward to the May 10 fishing opener. Only in Minnesota do we have such a winning combination of lakes and rivers, public accesses, and fish species that make for an overwhelming abundance of quality fishing experiences. We have more than 1.5 million licensed anglers in a state where it's fair to call fishing the Great Minnesota Pastime. Yet it's not a given that we will continue to realize the unique natural beauty that our state has to offer. Adults and children alike have a wide array of recreational options that involve nothing more

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We must stop judging ourselves to death

To the editor
Recent national news reports indicate that when it comes to matters of race we no longer believe in freedom of speech. The right to say what we think and feel is no longer a civil right in America according to those who make a living via free speech by denying others the right to speak freely; and yet we wonder why our nation is dying. Because we do not know how to be free and fair it is now a breach of social norms to be ourselves and say stupid things; and so our nation shall die as we judge ourselves to death, because at times we are all a bit candid and say stupid and hurtful things as well.

Our founding fathers did not forge a nation so we the people would have the freedom to judge and condemn ourselves to death for what we think and say. They gave us a Bill of Rights so that we might learn to forgive and live with our sinful, covetous nature; but because we fail to realize this we continue to destroy ourselves with our foolish pride that prevents us from learning that the easiest thing to forgive is stupid speech because it only causes harm if we choose to believe it and use it to cause harm. All races and beliefs put themselves and each other down from time to time, but because we do not

know how to control our fallen legalistic nature we continue to let our sinful nature lead us to death. We the people have not been called forth to stand up against the sin of hateful speech by unfairly judging it, simply because we are all sinners and to do so only makes us defeat ourselves. We have been called forth to stand up against persecution, bondage under law, deception, and injustice, and we can only do this fairly if we admit that we all take from time to time. Taking (i.e. sin) comes natural to us and is often fun and rewarding, and so is stupidity of the tongue, and we shall let our taking kill us unless we learn

that we can only defeat sin and death by freedom and fairness for all people and not just for those who exercise power via the media and the rule of law as led by our misguided church, state, and fraternal orders. We are losing our nation because we no longer believe the words of our Founding Fathers, for our founding documents call us to embrace the rule of love and do onto others only as we would have them do onto us; regardless of what is said, or what we believe, or what we do to ourselves. Until we understand this, we the people shall continue racing toward death.
Maury W. Olson Baudette, MN

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.