

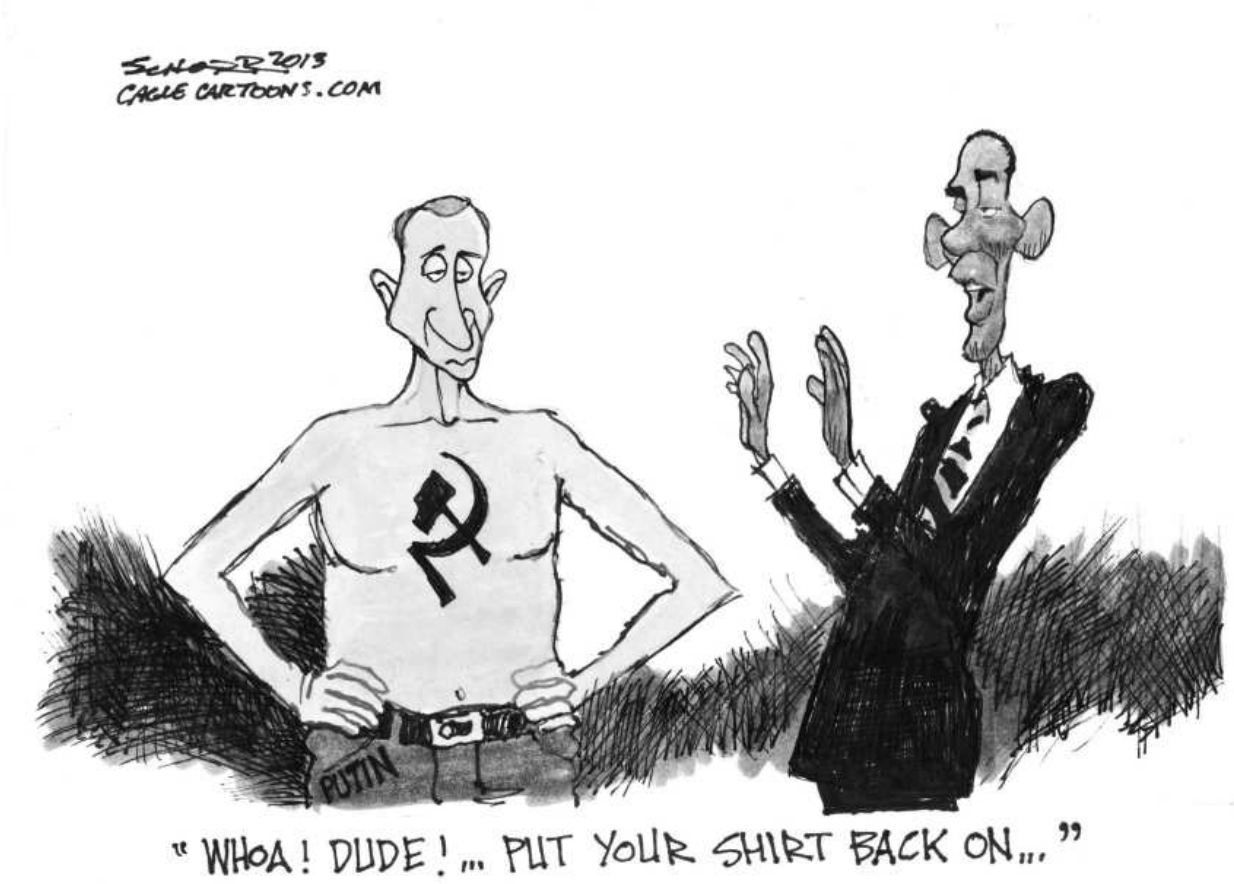
OPINION

OUR VIEW

A time to shine

There are times when it makes one proud to be a member of a community. This week is one of those times. This week's International Falls Bass Championship has grown into a healthy and vital 9-year-old catch-and-release fishing tournament that is well-known, and highly competitive and respected. And this community deserves to be proud of itself for that. Because the credibility of the event didn't just happen. It was nurtured from conception to the maturity it now experiences by a dedicated group of board members and volunteers who recognize that this event challenges bass anglers like no other tournament we know. The fishing pits teams not only against one another, but also against the features of two distinctly different bodies of water. Competitors feel their skills have truly been tested and champions carry bragging rights for a good reason. Rainy lake and river play a big role in why many of us have chosen to make this place home. It's no secret to us lucky enough to live here that these

two natural wonders offer recreation, a respite from the worries and concerns of the world, and even a place to earn a living for a few. This week we have shared these two great places with anglers who will serve as the best ambassadors we can have for this community as they tell their stories of this unique area and this unique fishing event. As anglers cross the stage at Smokey Bear Park, most compliment the area for its hospitality, warmth and the fine fishing that brings many back year after year. We simply can't purchase that kind of publicity as we attempt to lure visitors to Borderland. And while the IFBC is about fishing, it's also about offering this community and its visitors a chance to have a little fun while rooting for their favorite teams. The entertainment is designed to offer something for everyone. Congratulations to all involved, from the anglers on stage to the board members and volunteers who have truly provided a platform from which to showcase Borderland and source of community pride.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

How do pinheads stop the leaks at Hoover Dam?

**To the editor,**  
Let's pretend that the management of Hoover Dam thought by sticking pins into the leaks of Hoover Dam that the leaks would all stop and the dam would be sheltered and saved. However, management did not listen to the engineers and experts telling them that the pin heads would not work and

at the very best, were just a short, thoughtless fix. Now, throw in small groups of pinheads expounding how great the dam is and why people from the "outside" should come and build, bring businesses and jobs around a dam that is full of leaks and will not address the obvious problem. Growth and change is vital

for survival. Now, let's just pretend that the pinheads would be the board of directors of a local hospital and the small groups would be an agency called economic development authority and the water behind the dam are the people of a great community.  
**Dick Garbe**  
International Falls, MN

How to contact your lawmakers

FEDERAL OFFICES	
<b>President Barack Obama</b> 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	1200 Washington Avenue South, Suite 250 Minneapolis, MN 55415 612-727-5220 Website: www.klobuchar.senate.gov
<b>U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan</b> 2447 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515 202-225-6211 Website: www.nolan.house.gov Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan Twitter: @USRepRickNolan	<b>U.S. Sen. Al Franken</b> Democrat Senate Hart Building 320 Washington DC 20510 202-224-5641 Website: www.alfranken.com E-Mail: info@franken.senate.gov
STATE OFFICES	
Duluth Office of Congressman Rick Nolan (TEMPORARY) Gerald W. Heaney Federal Building and United States Courthouse 515 West First Street, Room 235 Duluth, MN 55802 218-464-5095, 5096, 5097 and 5098	<b>Gov. Mark Dayton</b> 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
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<b>U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar</b> Democrat 302 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 202-224-3244  Minnesota Office:	<b>Sen. Tom Bakk</b> 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

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.

GUEST COLUMN

Fidel Castro goes to confession

After celebrating his 87th birthday last week, semi-retired communist dictator Fidel Castro did something nobody expected him to do: He contacted Pope Francis to hear his confession.  
"Forgive me, pontiff, for I have sinned. Is 65 years since last confession."  
"Sixty-five years!" said the pontiff. "This is going to be a long one. Go on, Fidel."  
"As a boy, I once cheat on an exam."  
"Yes?"  
"As a teen, I once steal a melon from market."  
"Yes?"  
"And in 1959, I and my rebel forces squash evil dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista so common man could share wealth of great Cuba, and to ensure sharing, I imprison and kill my enemies, seize most property and become new dictator of Cuba!"  
"Have you ever considered cutting back on your caffeine, Fidel?"  
"Then in 1961, great Fidel rise against Yankee imperialists and win victory at Bay of Pigs! For many years, Fidel squash American attempts to dispose of him. And today, Fidel's great revolution continues! In my country, wealth is shared between rich and poor."  
"Wealth, Fidel. What wealth?"  
"Cuba boasts largest fleet of 1950 Studebakers in all of Caribbean."  
"Look, Fidel, confession is about truth. The truth is that your country is a wreck. Your buildings are falling down. Your people eat scraps. Nobody has ever ridden a flotilla from Miami to your shores."



Tom  
PURCELL

"What you getting at, pontiff?"  
"You, sir, are on the wrong side of truth and history. How many communist countries have to fall before you realize that central planning doesn't work?"  
"Pontiff, you speak words of American capitalist pigs!"  
"Hel-loooo! Anybody home? Fidel, the Soviet Union has unraveled. Your \$5 billion annual stipend is gone. Yet while your people live in squalor, you live in splendor, drinking wine and sleeping on silk sheets."  
"Dictator must keep up appearances."  
"But not only are your people poor economically, you have bankrupted them spiritually."  
"Spiritually?"  
"You discouraged the practice of religion, Fidel. You seized paintings of Jesus Christ from your people's homes. You shut down the Catholic schools, even though you received an excellent education in one. And only in the later years of your dictatorship did you begin allowing people to worship God openly."  
"With all due respect, pontiff, your mythical God is

not solution to any problem. All problems are economic. Only reason Cuba not richer is because of evil American embargo against my people!"  
"Fidel, I dislike the U.S. embargo because it hurts the poor worst of all. But the primary reason your people suffer is because of you. You have imposed a system on them that stifles freedom, creativity and spirituality."  
"But Fidel's revolution not complete! You will see, pontiff! Day will come when forces of history overturn your mythical God and Cuba's classless society be heaven on Earth!"  
"Look, Fidel. There is right and there is wrong, and each is measured by our God. Whether or not you believe in God, the only way to prosper and be at peace is to align ourselves with human truth."  
"Truth?"  
"America is far from perfect, but its political system is closer to truth than yours is, Fidel. Freedom is the only path to prosperity. And if you set your people free, great things will follow."  
"Fidel thanks pontiff for hearing confession, but Fidel can never agree with you."  
"And I cannot complete your confession if you are not contrite. All I can say is that it is good that you allow your people to hang pictures of Jesus Christ in their homes again."  
"Pictures of Jesus Christ? But Fidel thought they were pictures of Fidel!"  
Purcell is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc.

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.