

OPINION

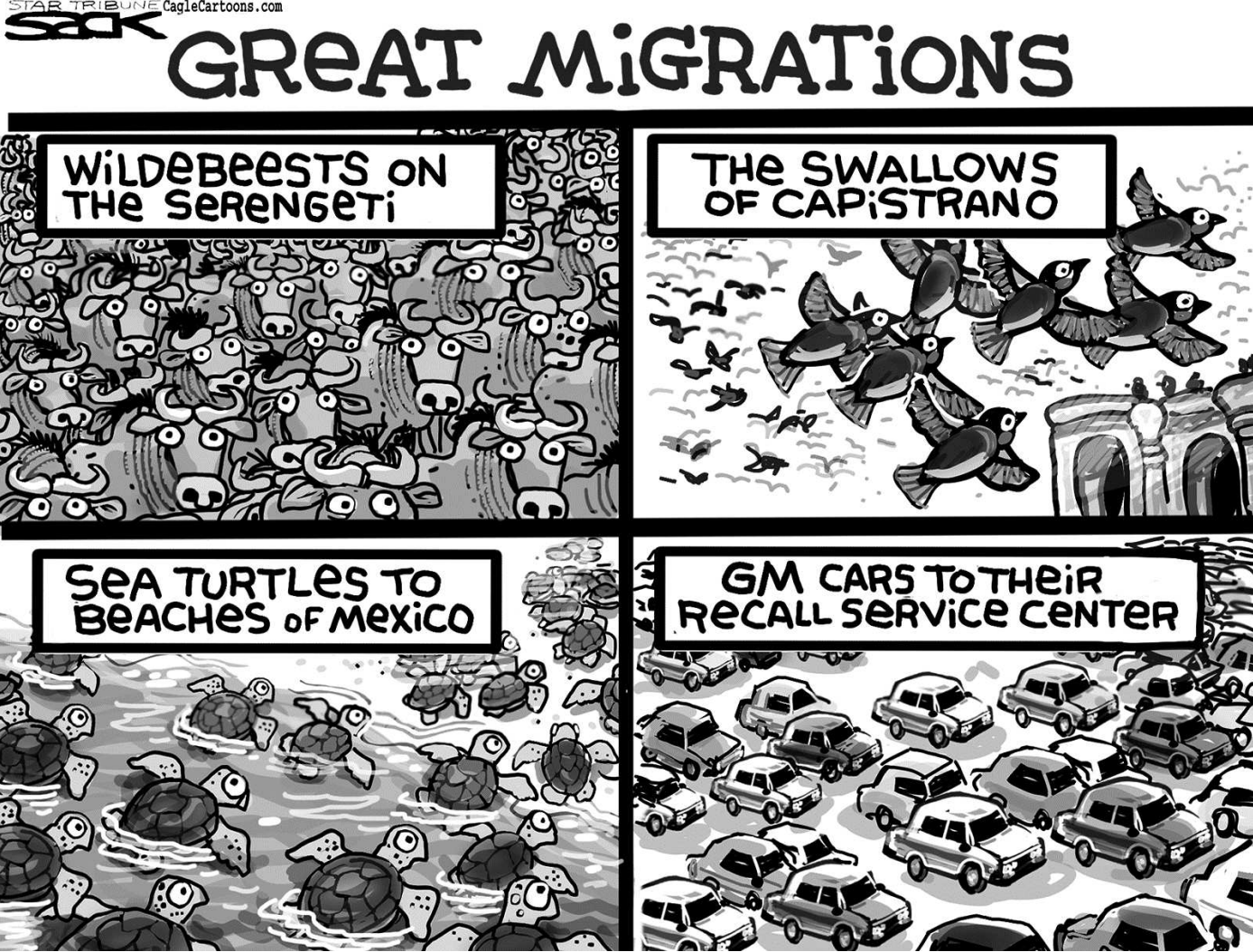
FIRST AMENDMENT “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

OUR VIEW

The future of Riverfest

There’s nothing to do here. It’s a common complaint from teenagers during the summer, and sadly we’ve heard it from some Borderland adults. Without support, there may be one less thing for the grown ups to do here in the summer. Saturday’s turnout for Riverfest was a disappointment to the two nonprofit organizations that put money, energy, time and sweat into planning the event. The idea was for Backus Community Center and the International Falls Rotary to sponsor Riverfest and generate money the two groups would reinvest in the community through youth scholarships and other youth-based programs. The first two events were sponsored by the International Falls Economic Development Authority. Then the two nonprofits took it over in a joint effort to pull some of the burden of organizing the huge event from city shoulders and to serve as a fundraiser for the groups. With each concert, attendance has decreased. After the third year brought cover bands, input from the public was sought by the joint planning committee about what kind of bands should be featured and when the event should be conducted. Organizers thought they had nailed it by bringing a big-name band in the Little River Band, and variety of performances in blues

band Lamont Cranston and country rock band Mike Ure Band. Saturday’s weather was warm, as compared to last year’s mid-60 temperatures. It was held the day after the community’s successful Fourth of July parade and celebration, and no rain had fallen during the day, despite threatening clouds. But still only abut 500 tickets were sold, compared to more than 2,500 sold for the first event. These two community-oriented organizations said they will seriously look at the event and how it impacts their ability to give to the community. Based on finances, it’s not likely they will be able to provide another similar concert offering. This community truly must consider whether it wants to play host to Riverfest in future years. These groups, and others that may have interest, ought to know. Perhaps a survey or a poll of the community would be helpful. Is it worth supporting an event drawing people from outside the area and offers an experience unique for our community? Or is this opportunity best left to another group or private business to consider? Or should the event be held periodically and not every year? We’ve got a few months to find the answers before a final decision about Riverfest 2015 ought to be made.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Poor decision made by parade organizer

To the editor, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the parade organizer, Kevin Adee, for not allowing me to display my float in the parade after it was registered by him two weeks earlier. After all, where else could a float with veteran design and background, and driven by a disabled American veteran displaying information for veterans, be removed from a parade on the Fourth of July, Independence Day by the way, but International Falls, Minn.? That’s right, Kevin inserted his own political agenda in making his determination. The float

involved no political verbiage. Apparently veterans have no place in Kevin’s lifestyle. Shame on you. You insulted hundreds of veterans locally and thousands nationally. These same veterans offered up their lives for your freedom, never once thinking you would deny them of that on their own holiday. Also, as a Koochiching County board member, you put unnecessary work on your fellow board members. These board members work very hard to bring home assets to your county from St. Paul every year. Their job has just been made harder by you. Perhaps if you want to

play politics, you learn the game first. I ask local veterans and constituents of Kevin Adee to remember the damage he did to your wonderful county. By the way Kevin, a report was filed with the International Falls Police Department. It might be needed in future proceedings. Oh! Oh! I just had a thought, maybe he didn’t like the music that was played on the float, “God Bless the USA” by Lee Greenwood, “Ballad of the Green Berets” by Sgt. Barry Sadler, “ the Marine Corps Hymn” by Clark Gault, and last but not least, the very offensive “National Anthem” by

the U.S. Army Band. Or maybe it was the large American and POW flags that offended you. Thanks again, Kevin. A lot of time and money went into that float. Keep your political affiliations to yourself when dealing with veterans. This identical float appeared in the Wadena parade on June 19, 7 p.m.; Little Falls Parade on June 21, 11 a.m.; Aurora parade on July 3, 6 p.m.; Gilbert parade on July 3, 7:30 p.m.; Pine River parade on June 28, 2 p.m.; but wasn’t good enough for International Falls. Your citizens deserve better than this. Charlie Makidon Backus, MN

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GUEST COLUMN

Our enduring partnership with Canada



Amy KLOBUCHAR US SENATOR

In addition to some cold winters, a passion for hockey, and a 547-mile border, Canada and Minnesota share a common cultural heritage and an inseparable economic future. We sometimes take for granted the impact this long-standing friendship has had on our economy and national interests. But as we compete with the rest of the world in an increasingly global economy, we must remember that any border that divides us is not nearly as critical as the economic North American future that unites us. Our pasts – and our futures – are inextricably tied. I like to joke with my friends in the Senate that “I can see Canada from my porch,” but in fact I have set the record as the first Senator in U.S. history to host a swearing-in party at the Canadian Embassy. I did that because I wanted to make a point that there is no other embassy in the U.S. that for years displayed gigantic banners that said “Friends. Neighbors. Partners. Allies.” I recently led a bipartisan delegation of Senators and House members to Ottawa to meet with our Canadian counterparts, the Transportation, Justice, and Revenue

ministers, and the new U.S. Ambassador to Canada. These important meetings provided a chance for U.S. and Canadian officials to discuss our strong international security partnership, opportunities and ideas to increase our energy independence and reduce carbon pollution, and strategies to create jobs, reduce regulatory barriers and further develop our interwoven economies. The economic relationship between Canada and the United States is deeply connected. Our countries share the largest bilateral commercial relationship in the world. In fact every single day, two-way cross-border trade between our nations amounts to nearly \$2 billion – more than our annual trade with many countries. About three-quarters of Canada’s goods are sold in the United States and

Canada is the number-one buyer for goods produced in 36 out of the 50 states. Here, in Minnesota, we have a particularly strong relationship with Canada. There are more than 160,000 jobs in our state that depend on trade with Canada and 18,800 Minnesotans employed by Canadian-owned companies. Every year we export \$5.8 billion in goods to Canada, which is more than our state’s next four largest foreign markets combined. Canada has also been one of our most critical allies in the global community. This has been evident as we continue to address the situation in Ukraine where Canada has stood alongside the United States and our European partners. We have maintained a unified position against Russian intervention and are working together to provide technical support to ensure Ukraine is not dependent on Russian energy supplies. As home to more than one million Ukrainians, the largest population outside Ukraine and Russia, Canada’s commitment to peace and stability in the region has been unwavering. The situation in Ukraine is another stark reminder of the importance of maintaining North American

energy independence. Depending on unfriendly or unstable regimes that dominate the world’s oil and energy supplies is not sustainable and a danger to our national security. Fortunately, our relationship with Canada has helped deliver our own energy independence and been a key component in cutting our imported fuels to 40 percent of our energy supply rather than 60 percent just a few years ago. The work to strengthen our partnership with Canada is never finished. We must streamline our border for commerce and tourism in places like International Falls, protect our water in the Great Lakes and other key waterways that our countries share, increase energy independence and combat climate change, and bolster our national security in the wake of the Ukraine crisis and new threats of cybersecurity. Fortunately, we have a working partner that knows the future success and competitiveness of our region — including Mexico — depends on our ability to work together to foster innovation and strengthen our national security. It is that partnership that will allow us to sustain North America as a global economic and security powerhouse for generations to come.

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