

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Stemming the tide

The drug of choice among local abusers has changed. Now, it appears that many people go to a medicine cabinet for their highs. An unfortunate statement not just on Borderland, but nationally, District Judge Charles LeDuc said he sees first hand how the abuse of prescription drugs can reek havoc in the lives of the abuser as well as their family and friends.

A community presentation and picnic from 4-6 p.m. Friday at Smokey Bear Park is part of an effort to raise awareness of and educate the public about prescription drug abuse. On that same day, from 1-6 p.m., Rainy Lake Medical Center hospital campus will serve as a drop off site for unused and/or outdated prescription drugs. The two-part event is being conducted in an effort by alumni of the Borderland Substance Abuse Court to give back to the community that has given them the opportunity to get clean and become productive members of society. Friday's picnic will feature a meal, face painting for kids, a presentation by LeDuc and personal testimonies about the impact of prescription drug abuse.

In addition, Kevin Evenson, director of alcohol and drug abuse division of the Department of Human Services, will talk about the prevalence and dangers of prescription drug abuse. Lisa Santee, problem solving court coordinator, said the Koochiching County court system is handling an increasing number of prescription drug cases. And LeDuc has said Friday's event should serve as a rallying cry for the community. "The guy dealing drugs isn't the creep on the streets," he said. "Instead, the dealer is your grandma and the kid down the street. If you're worried about drugs, take a look in your own medicine cabinet." And, if you need other proof, just take a look at the local police reports. Prescription drugs are commonly being reported stolen in burglaries of local homes. Clearly, there is a problem in Borderland. Friday's two-part event is a chance for members of this community to come together, find out how to stem the tide of the abuse, and get rid of any prescription drugs in their possession that may serve as a risk for abuse.

How to contact your lawmakers

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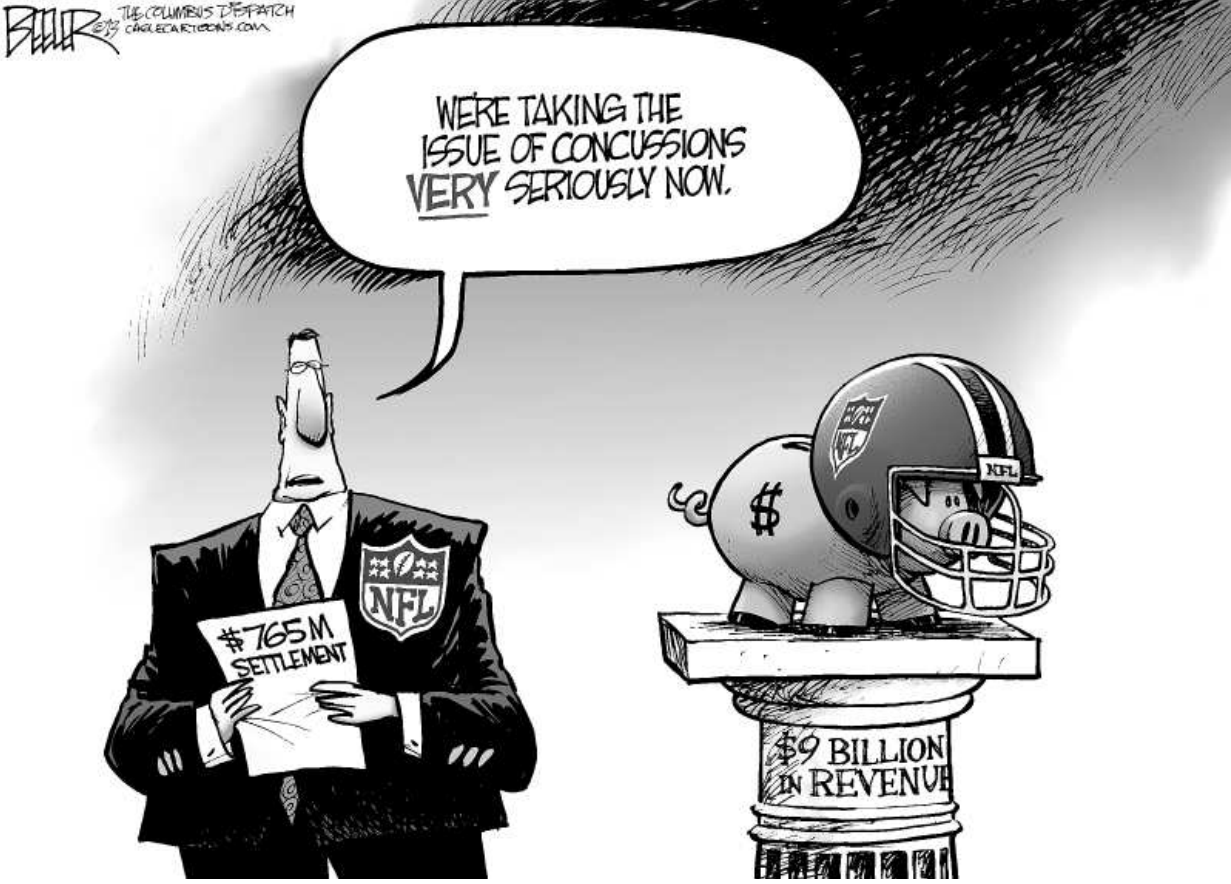
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Senseless war in Syria

To the editor,
(U.S. Sens. John) McCain and (Al) Franken want to go to yet another senseless war in Syria which will kill yet more innocent people to avenge the deaths of some murdered innocent people? There isn't much to say about warhawk McCain except that after a very distinguished military career spent in hostile captivity he apparently thinks other young Americans need to suffer the same fate or worse. There will be a new definition in the next Websters dictionary for the word "bizarre," it will read — "A U.S senator who plays video poker while demanding his war weary, \$20 trillion in debt country go fight a war on the other side of the world over dubious at best, claims. Meanwhile, in a neighboring country, Mexico, only hundreds of miles from his home, some 60,000 people including kids, local mayors and council members, police chiefs and more, have been beheaded in public squares, given acid baths, shot up

and generally terrorized to the point where many small towns along or near the border have been deserted. Not a word from the senator about sending in ships, planes, troops or drones." If they ever made a follow up to the movie "Animal House," the funny story of an inept, drunken college fraternity, it would be more than appropriate to cast Franken as the character Bluto who was played by the now deceased John Belushi. Franken has much in common with both, the character "Bluto" and the comedian/actor Belushi. Franken and Belushi were both stars on Saturday Night Live and really knew how to tickle our funny bone. Sadly, the comic genius Belushi died from a drug overdose before any sort of Senate run could be put together. Franken, however, would have made the character Bluto proud as he actually reached the Senate after writing such wordy books as "Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them:

A Fair and Balanced Look At the Right" and "The Best Democracy Money Can Buy: The Truth About Corporate Cons, Globalization and High Finance Fraudsters" (incidentally, Franken's son works as an investment banker for one of the largest privately held investment firms in the US, Robert W. Baird and Company, with \$84 billion in client assets). Franken, too, is all busted up about the innocent people dying in Syria but his Harvard education apparently precludes him from caring about innocent Mexicans and massive, un-payable US debt. The Democrat and Republican politicians have finally achieved unity. Yay. Now, if only the majority of the people under their rule would come to their senses and back another war we could kill our way to prosperity. P.S. Kudos to our 8th District Rep. Rick Nolan for adamantly saying no to this unneeded U.S. involvement in Syria. **Barry "Woody" Woods**
Ranier, MN

Let the mayor lead the city

To the editor,
Obviously our city councilors do not want to accept the outcome of the November 2012 election. The majority of the taxpayers of this city were tired of the way the last two mayors and the remaining old council members were conducting city business. The majority of citizens wanted "change" and that is what Mayor Anderson is attempting to do. Where are the 50 jobs that the former mayor and city councilors promised at the groundbreaking of the industrial site off County Highway 155 last August? Wouldn't the world be a wonderful place if we could all create the job we want as the former mayor did? Here is what the city council meeting minutes of July 16, 2012, say from the city

website: "Motion by Councilor Jaksa to approve offering Shawn Mason the position of Director of Economic and Community Development at a salary of \$46,750 with proposed equal steps at 6, 12, 24, and 36 months to bring the position to an annual salary of \$55,000. Motion seconded by Councilor Rognerud and carried unanimously with Mayor Mason abstaining." Automatic pay increases every six to 12 months. Where in the world do you get a job like that? Please Councilors (Paul) Eklund, (Gail) Rognerud, and (Cynthia) Jaksa, how do you justify such a job? That makes three economic developers for such a small area. Where are the jobs you people said were coming? It is apparent to me that you hide behind Shawn Mason's hand picked advisory

board every time you want to do something. The voters elected a mayor they wanted. He carried every precinct, including his competitor's own precinct. You would think with those results that the old council members would listen to the voters and embrace some change. It does not appear to be that way. Let the mayor that was elected lead the city. Citizens are tired of certain councilors fighting him at every turn. You should remember that in the past you have sued the city of Ranier, Koochiching County, and the Minnesota Commissioner of Transportation. Each time you lost and burned up a lot of money doing it. In a little more than a year, there is an election coming. **Dick Koeneman**
International Falls, 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.

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