

OPINION

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Friends in high places

We like Jamshed Merchant. We liked him when he took good-natured ribbing from Sen. Al Franken about being on the losing team of last year’s International Tug of War and we liked him for coming to our community to discuss border issues.

Merchant, Canada’s consul general to the United States, can play a valuable role in the effort to reduce bureaucracies that limit the sharing of resources between communities divided by the international boundary.

We urge International Falls City Councilor Cynthia Jaksa and Fort Frances Councilor Rick Wiedenhoeft to encourage Merchant to get involved in making a difference in this part of the world. And also to come have some more fun with us in July’s Pulling for Peace: International Tug of War.

Nearly 30 years ago, local officials on both sides of the border were attempting to reduce the barriers between the two countries. At one time, leaders discussed making crossing into Canada, and into the United States, as simple as crossing into another state. There may be questions asked, but those questions would surround agriculture or trade concerns.

Since 9/11, all that has changed. Now, people crossing the border are met with more questions and security than ever and that’s not likely to change soon, despite a

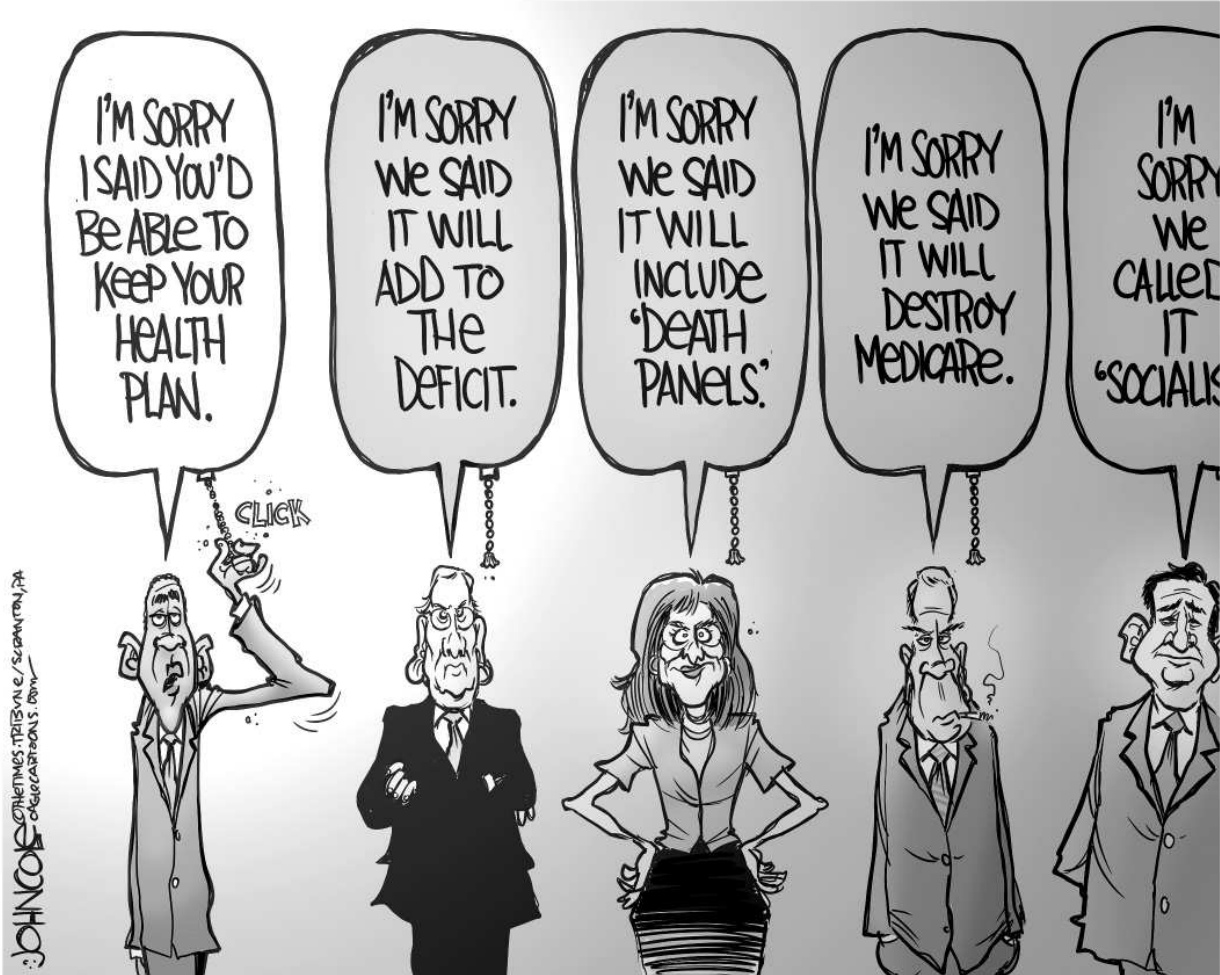
recently released book by Diane Francis, “Merger of the Century,” that reasons Canada and America should be one country.

But Jaksa and others pushing for the region to share resources regardless of the border are right to believe we can all benefit. After all, Canada and the United States are each other’s largest trade partner and it makes sense to work together.

Jaksa makes good sense in thinking we can use the federal Beyond the Border pact embraced by both nations. It’s a policy, she says, dedicated to increasing trade and other relationships between the two countries and we must make it work for the people of this area.

How the lives of family and friends who need dialysis would be changed if we could strike an agreement that would allow them to use the the dialysis services in Fort Frances. That could be just a start to gains that could be experienced. There are a plethora of resources on this side of the border we could offer Canadians under some sort of agreement.

It’s time to cut through the red tape and promote policies that boost economic development and allow businesses to grow and people to thrive on both sides of the border. And we think our old friend, Canada’s Consul General Merchant, can help in that effort.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

More input in decisions needed

To the editor,

I have wondered for quite some time about how committee, boards and such are set up — how a few people make up these groups. Oh I know it is not what you know, but who you know in this town that gets you somewhere.

But what right do these boards have to make decisions for the whole town?

In the case of the hospital board saying we don’t need a new hospital: Yes, I understand they have a lot of money, and they don’t want to lose control of it. But is it enough to build a new hospital or redo our old one?

And now that the nursing home is closed there is no kitchen to serve the hospital, so now they have to cook the food over at the Good Samaritan

Center, load it in heated carts and into vans and haul it over to the hospital. This is three times a day. And what is the hospital paying for this service? Does this include the van, the carts and the extra work for the employees?

I doubt that they still won’t ship you out by road for \$10,000 or by air at \$30,000. But if we keep the old hospital, can we afford to keep bringing in doctors from out of town? Whereas, with a new hospital, they will have new, up-to-date services.

I was in the hospital for a day and night and I got very good care; the nurses were great. But it seems to me that most of the building is taken up with offices and treatment centers.

I was surprised when I heard

a baby cry down the hall from me. I asked the nurse, she just smiled and said she (the mother) didn’t have time to drive 100 miles. And the one doctor that took care of me told me that he has a full-time job in the Cities and was just flown in for a week at a time to work in the hospital.

So that would mean airfare and motel room for a week. How long can we afford to do this? I feel that this should be the voice of the whole town and not just a few. Why can’t this be put to a vote?

Also, I understand that at the end of the hallway in the new center there is a sign that says “Entrance to hospital.” Oh wait, what is behind that door?

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GUEST COLUMN

Blown, burnt and compromised

In here. Psst. Don’t look. Okay. Sit down. Pretend you’re reading the International Herald Tribune. Order a coffee. Make it a decaf. Two Sweet and Lows. Pass them to me. Take this Splenda. Pay no attention to the man with the hearing aid. Give the waiter a five and leave through the kitchen. Don’t forget an extra twenty for me.

Talking about spying. Apparently, we’re doing quite a bit of it. And not just to ourselves, we’re spying on foreigners as well. And like us, the foreigners are none too happy about it. Not because they don’t spy on us, of course they do. Everybody spies on everybody. They’re not happy because we do it so much better than they do. Hey. We’re No. 1. USA! USA!

Sure, they’re jealous. Because we’re such superior spysers. Longer cloaks. Sharper daggers. Bugging the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel’s cell phone. Are you kidding me? That’s genius. Who does that? We do, that’s who. The Vatican? No. No. No. THE VATICAN. But seriously, how’s that supposed to help? Must be a training exercise. What kind of intel are you going to mine out of 125 gossipy old men prancing around in red dresses?

It’s a fact we have the best technology and the most money. We aren’t the ones handing out teddy bears filled with surveillance devices to participants of G- 20 meetings in



Will DURST
RAGING MODERATE

St. Petersburg. Teddy bears personally shot, stuffed and bugged by Vladimir Putin outside some swampy camp in the Siberian forest while not wearing a shirt. Ex-KGB my big, furry white butt. You’re never ex-KGB. You know what they call ex-KGB? That’s right. Dead.

Note the outcry with the gnashing and the keening and the wailing. Methinks our allies doth protest too much. “You betrayed our trust.” You’re playing the trust card? Show us the backs of your lily-white hands. Unh hunh. We’ll know how serious the blowback is when they stop accepting our foreign aid.

Courtesy of Edward Snowden. One NSA whistle-blowing temp. Traffic analysis operations — dead. Covers blown. Relationships burned. Compromises compromised. Covert becomes overt. Black ops now transparent. Whoever hired him has to be sweating bullets. Looking to experience

extraordinary rendition up close and personal. Headed straight for the Oppenheim Memorial Park water board slide.

Or... this whole thing... is a ruse. Because in espionage, fog and smoke and mirrors are assets. These revelations could be part of a complicated disinformation campaign. Yeah. Sure. It’s an old Gestapo trick. You sacrifice one of your own to gain the trust of the enemy. All’s fair when rooting out the tangles.

Down the rabbit hole, maybe Snowden is in deep cover playing some counter-counter-intelligence game. And that alleged activity of his: bona fides to build up the legend. A provocative provocateur. Defective defector. Sanitized sleeper. Mole boy. Dry-cleaned decoy. Triple cross. Lulling Putin into a false sense of security to get him alone. And then. Bam. Sodium pentothal.

Especially considering we’ve only lost a few obsolete tradecrafts. And the ability to appear offended when other countries are caught spying on us. But you can bet we’ll still look and sound and act just as grievously upset as they do right now. More so. Because we’re better at that too. Do you see what’s going down? Good. Now leave through the kitchen. Don’t forget the extra twenty for me.

Will Durst, distributed by the Cagle Cartoons Inc., newspaper syndicate.

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.

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