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Netlets for Friday, Dec. 29

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Annually only 5,000 employment visas are granted in the category that corresponds to low-wage, low-skill work. Consider that Swift alone employs 10,000 workers. Add in the restaurant, hotel and construction industries, and other sectors dependent on the labor of undocumented immigrants, and the need for reforming the immigration system becomes obvious.

In 2007 Congress must pass comprehensive immigration reform that allocates employment visas to meet the actual needs of the economy. Then workers will have no need to enter illegally or purchase Social Security numbers to work.

ANN THEISEN, ST. PAUL

Fix what is wrong in Mexico

We all feel sorry for the Hispanics whose family members were taken away in the Swift & Co. plant raids by the federal agents because of identity theft. We want to reach out and help these people. But we are looking at just one side of this.

We aren't looking at the other side, which is to help Mexicans fix what is wrong in Mexico, so their people do not have to cross the border and take our country as their own. Instead of running away from their problems, they need to stay and organize, and with our help, clean up their country so they can be proud of Mexico again, and have their own traditions and values, instead of taking ours.

You can help. Ask your U.S. senators to support Senate File 3622, to jump-start the Mexican economy. This bill avoids the sovereignty question by working with the Mexican government.

Ask your member of Congress to sponsor a bill to renegotiate the NAFTA agreement, which is very unfair to Mexican farmers and other businesses.

Desperate people do desperate things. If you really care about these people,

you can show it. Pity will accomplish absolutely nothing. Action can accomplish all that needs to be done.

ELMER OTTO, SHAKOPEE

More management layers won't help St. Paul schoolkids

St. Paul voters narrowly approved an increase in the levy to improve the education of St. Paul public school students. "Vote yes for Kids" was the slogan.

So what's the first thing Superintendent Meria Carstarphen does? Increase administrative costs and inefficiency by adding management layers. That's the diametric opposite of increasing organizational effectiveness.

The St. Paul school board has the responsibility to reject this awful plan. In fact, board members should also reconsider whether their confidence in her is misplaced as well. It is certainly a very poor first effort.

DAN PUHL, ST. PAUL

Common humanity can't be realized with religious war

How can President Bush be so supremely confident of his obsession for victory in Iraq in the face of so many reputable people who think he has taken us so far in the wrong direction, as Jonathan Chait observed (Opinion Exchange, Dec. 15)? Can it be that Bush thinks he is leading our nation in a war to win the world for God? If so, he has found adversaries who have the same war in mind, but a different version of God.

If this is the case, we should tell him that he and his fellow crusaders are in the wrong century. In 1776 our American ancestors declared that we share with all other people the essential rights and values of the human race. In our better times, we have sought a reasonable understanding of our common humanity and to share the values of this world with all people.

There is much progress to be made in achieving these human values, in America, Iraq and other nations of the world. War is the least likely way to do this. Our white, Anglo-Saxon, Judeo-Christian ancestors had much to learn about themselves and people whose humanity looks very different from theirs and ours. We need to continue this learning and sharing in our time as well.

We need to look again at the failures of our progressive democracy. While we have struggled with racial and gender injustice and made a beginning at economic opportunity for all, there is much yet to be accomplished. Our future leaders must be educated and inspired by the vision of the worth of every person, of whatever origin and language. And we can do it!

PHILLIP GRIFFIN, GOLDEN VALLEY

Second thoughts about the new coach

If Brad Childress was brought in to instill discipline in the Minnesota Vikings, why do they have the most penalties of any team in the National Football League? At least under Mike Tice the Vikings were less predictable and more fun to watch. Maybe Brad should spend less time covering his face with his play sheet and spend more time coaching.

PATRICK O'HALLORAN, HOPKINS

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