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Netlets for Wednesday, Dec. 20

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Earlier this month we were notified by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that my son-in-law, a Russian citizen, married to my daughter, a native-born citizen of the United States, was denied reentry to this country. This is a cruel injustice to our family.

They were married two years ago in Minneapolis and their marriage was certified as authentic by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (ICE's predecessor), before he was deported back to Russia. Lawyers were hired, reams of paperwork filed, and appeals made to our senator. At one point, the paperwork was lost in one of the offices for several months. I do not understand government policies that are so unjust.

My son-in-law is a good Christian man, a hard worker who paid his taxes in the United States in the 11 years he lived here. He needs permanent residency status so he can earn a living and make a good life here with my daughter. Our family has lived in Minnesota since 1854. At this point, my daughter's choices are to emigrate to another country to be with her husband, to divorce or wait for 10 years to file again for residency.

BONNIE BRIXIUS SHERMAN, HOPKINS

Message from Nov. 7 still stands

When President Bush was reelected in 2004 he called it a mandate, which was puzzling since his victory was one of smallest in history. In last month's election there was a true mandate: The American people do not agree with his policies in Iraq. I believe they also are unhappy with the national debt, prisoner abuse and corruption.

The citizens of this country need to demand that the president implement the bipartisan Study Group report on Iraq. Military might will not succeed in Iraq just as it did not succeed in Vietnam.

RICHARD F. CORNWELL, WINDOM, MINN.

Sit down with Iran

A Dec. 9 letter writer from Iraq points out that some of the IEDs that soldiers are dodging in Iraq are coming from Iran. Could it be that the leaders of Iran have taken a page out of President Bush's book?

Maybe they are fighting us in Iraq so that they don't have to fight us in Iran. After all, they are part of the Axis of Evil and we did invade the first country on that list. Given that argument, how can we *not* talk to Iran?

ELIZABETH T. CANTRELL, BURNSVILLE

Founders' ideals should inform Bush foreign policy

The Dec. 8 editorial, "Call for American unity in new Iraq approach," compelled me to reflect upon the birth of our nation. Strong and opinionated political figures (John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, etc.) debated the merits of taking on what at the time was clearly a "lost cause." They ultimately reached a consensus that produced the foundations for the freedoms we cherish today.

The struggle called for general participation of every class of citizen supporting the ideals articulated by those Founding Fathers. My great great great great grandfather, Peter Barrows, was one of those common citizens. Part of the Rhode Island Regiment (the regiment with the most African-American Revolutionary War soldiers serving in the Continental Army), he was a private from March 1777 until 1783 and fought in battles at Red Bank, Cowpens and Yorktown, where he took a bullet through the neck and jaw. It was a ragtag Continental Army, yet with help from its friend (France), defeated a most powerful adversary.

The strength of conviction to collaboratively achieve a distinct vision originated with those like Adams, Jefferson and Washington; it bound together a nation of heroes like Peter Barrows and the Rhode Island Regiment who were driven to action and hungry for independence.

Collaboration and union: This is the lesson. It requires each of us -- working as a people, in unison, supporting a common vision -- to restore Mideastern order if ever our Iraqi debacle is to be satisfactorily concluded.

RENA SEARL, BURNSVILLE

Holding ATV drivers accountable for damage

Tom Meersman's Dec. 10 article "Trouble on the Trails" hints at a gigantic problem counties throughout Minnesota are facing: what to do about recreational all-terrain vehicles.

While ATV registrations have unquestionably risen dramatically in the last 10 years, recreational use still remains at only about 30 percent of all

registrations; most of the vehicles are used for utilitarian purposes. The recreational group, however, is wreaking havoc not only with our trails but everywhere they are not totally restricted.

Currently in most northern counties like Cook where I am building my retirement home the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Forest Service approach is pretty much hands off, i.e. ATVs can be driven anywhere they are not restricted, a policy the DNR refers to as "managed. The picture of the flattened "no motorized vehicles" sign says it all, though: Restrictions seem to mean nothing to avid ATVers.

The only workable policy is a statewide restriction allowing ATVs only where permitted, a policy the DNR refers to as "limited." It is the only way to hold ATV drivers accountable for the damage they cause. While the Star Tribune covered some of the damage caused by ATV use in bogs, wetlands and other sensitive areas a couple of years back, little has changed in resource protection in the interim. Perhaps a new in-depth analysis by your newspaper would be timely.

JERRY HINIKER, BLAINE

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