

Refugees, immigrants, DACA and racism

Let's consider the impact of immigrants and refugees. Recently, Pope Francis pleaded for greater global support for immigrants and refugees, part of a long-standing tradition in the Catholic (and many other) churches. This admonition would have us shift the discussion toward human rights, rather than just civil rights. Clearly, there is a moral issue. And, there is considerable confusion about the economics of the issue.



DR. JACKIE BRUX
Columnist

1. Refugees
The White House announced the lowest allowable limit on the number of refugees to the U.S. at 45,000. This is down from 86,000 last year and is far lower than the 110,000 previously pledged. It is the lowest level since the Refugee Act was created in 1980. This is despite the rapid global growth in the number of refugees worldwide resulting from growing world conflicts.

Refugees to the U.S. are far different from refugees in Europe. Many European countries permitted vast numbers of refugees to enter almost immediately as crises occurred. The U.S. carefully vets its refugees for one to three years. It's a totally different situation. It is safe.

2. Immigration
The White House also cut the number of eligible immigrants to the U.S. in half. And, he has shifted away from family-based immigration. And, as you know, Trump previously banned refugees and other immigrants from his list of mostly-Muslim countries. While the third rumination of his ban is awaiting a judicial ruling, Trump now insists on a narrow group eligible for immigration, as well as "extreme vetting" of them. (Our vetting process is already considered among the toughest in the world.)

3. The DACA Program
Trump refused to support the broadly popular DACA program ("Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals"), which protects the children of immigrant parents who had entered the U.S. illegally. These young people did nothing illegal, made no choice to come here, and know no other home. They have been educated and trained within the U.S. Many of them are now entering our labor force with the skills and education that are needed to fill important roles within our economy. They truly benefit the U.S. economy.

Economists will tell you that immigrants and refugees to the U.S. are not only good workers; they are also consumers. When these newly arrived consumers buy U.S. goods, they increase the demand for these. This encourages

business firms to expand production to meet the new demand. Expanding production means economic growth, and along with it, growth in jobs.

Economic studies reveal a net gain in U.S. job opportunities from immigration. And, despite Trump's rhetoric, immigrants are less likely than native born citizens to be incarcerated. They

contribute to U.S. tax revenue; and, as many of them are young, they contribute to a Social Security program that sorely needs younger workers to support the large baby boom generation as they retire. Immigrants contribute to our churches, schools, and communities. Their hard work and entrepreneurship contribute to thriving cities and raise standards of living for all residents.

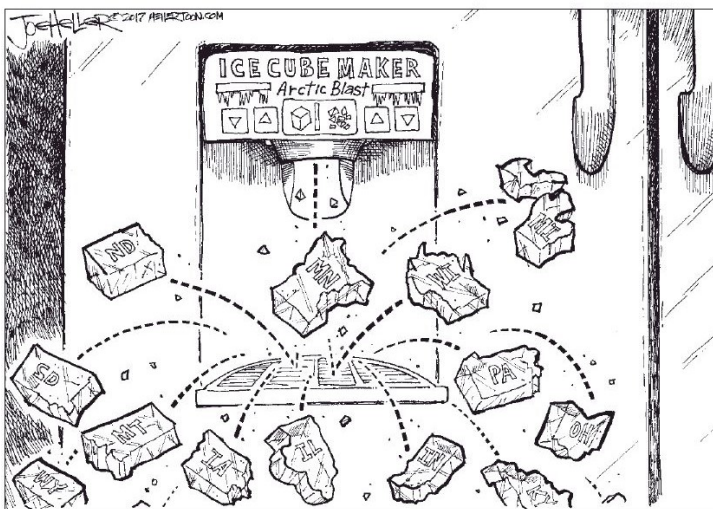
4. The Role of Racism
We know from his tweets that Trump dislikes Muslims and Mexicans. And, it was recently reported by the NY Times and other credible sources that Trump barged into a White House meeting, furious about certain (LEGAL) immigrants entering the U.S., stating that Haitians who received visas "all have AIDS" and that the Nigerian immigrants would never "go back to their huts" after seeing the U.S. He also trounced Afghan refugees. All feared violence or faced natural disaster.

How do you respond to racism? How do you respond to white supremacists chanting "Closed borders, white nation, now we start the deportation"? Let's finally get our facts straight.

How do you define your morality? From your church? From your heart and soul? There is no moral leadership from the White House; we need to undertake that leadership ourselves and advocate for human rights.

Advocates for immigrants meet the second Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at the local Methodist Church. They educate and advocate for immigrants, and provide a hotline for immigrants' questions and concerns at 612-999-5413 (se habla espanol). We can also contact our legislators (www.senate.gov and www.house.gov) and urge their support for immigrants, refugees, and DACA. Please contact me if you wish to become involved with local immigrant support groups, c/o snigbor@rivertownis.net.

This new column will address the economics of current policy issues. Writer Dr. Jackie Brux is an emeritus professor of economics and founder/director of the Center for International Development at UW-River Falls; and author of the college textbook, "Economic Issues and Policy."



LETTERS

Praise for Hudson Burger Battle

TO THE EDITOR
I meant to write this letter years ago when my sons were in hockey, and as tournament director, I was tasked with soliciting donations from businesses in town. The extended community of

Hudson would never disappoint and willingly provided water, treats for visiting teams, coffee, discount coupons, etc.

My boys are now long out of hockey, but the community continues to amaze in other ways. My husband and I purchased Burger Battle cards this year to support Bridge for Community Life. We visited one of five restaurants in town each week, and savored each burger. It provided a talking point between myself and my assistant as to what each of us liked best about the burgers, and maybe what we may not have enjoyed (very minor, as each sandwich was delicious). This also provided us an opportunity to try an establish-

ment we may not have gone into otherwise.

Wednesday or Thursday burger night was looked forward to each week. I thank the restaurants that provided a burger for this very wonderful cause (Stone Tap, Seasons, Big Guys, Dick's, Club 304), and I look forward to next year's Burger Battle.
Yeri Swinney
Hudson

A sincere thank you

TO THE EDITOR
A sincere thank you to the kind person(s) who secretly paid for our dinner on Friday, Dec. 15 at the Bungalow.

We were totally stunned and delighted that someone expressed Christmas spirit in such a generous way.

We shall certainly pass it on.
Bill and Sally Friedlander
Beth Polgreen
Hudson

A cause for hope

TO THE EDITOR
We stand at the end of a year in which our government's ideological

rejection of climate and environmental science has wrought long-term damage to public health and the earth, virtually guaranteeing that our children's and grandchildren's lives will be more difficult and dangerous than our own.

I watch the news and connect the dots.

In December the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued a report on the accelerated melting of Arctic ice. Emily Osborne, a NOAA researcher, says, "This data shows that the magnitude and the sustained rate of warming of the sea ice decline is unprecedented over the last 1,500 years and likely longer."

The melting of the Greenland ice cap alone adds about 270 billion tons of ice and water to the ocean each year, contributing to sea level rise that threatens coastal areas worldwide.

Also in December came the new United Nations estimate that around 258 million migrants are now living outside their birth

countries. This number includes the vast influx of refugees stressing the capacities of host countries to which they've fled. We can attribute a significant portion of these to geographical crises resulting from climate change such as the loss of coastal homeland and economic devastation of drought.

One bright light in this gloom is a New York Times report that German consumers are now sometimes being paid to use power instead of vice versa.

This is a dividend of Germany's far-sighted investment of \$200 billion in cleaner electricity sources over recent decades.

Here at least is cause for hope, even in the time of Trump and his regressive promotion of harmful dirty energy sources. There is a way out of the pit we've dug for ourselves. Let's muster the political will to extricate ourselves from this trap in the year ahead.
Thomas R. Smith
River Falls

A STEP BACK IN TIME

From the HSO archives

The Star-Observer dates back to 1854. From 1854 to 1864 it was known as the North Star; from 1864 to 1909 it was the Hudson Star and Times; and from 1909 it has been the Hudson Star-Observer.

75 years ago — Dec. 31, 1942

When the Johnson cousins of the Town of Kinnickinnick walked into the office of County Clerk S.N. Swanson recently, the boys as the court house really got a peep of an unusual lot of gray foxes, for Carl and Herbert Johnson brought in the carcasses of nine big foxes.

Grocery prices: Angel food loaf, 10 ounces for 25 cents.

Now playing: "Wings and the Woman" at The Hudson.

50 years ago — Jan. 4, 1967

While the temperature was dropping to far below zero the Hudson City council was haggling over whether to accept a police patrol car with or without air conditioning after it was delivered with it.

Grocery prices: Large round angel food, 49 cents.

Now playing: "Snow White and the Seven

Dwarfs" at the Hudson Theatre.

25 years ago — Dec. 31, 1992

There will be a new bridge over the St. Croix River, connecting Minnesota Highway 36 in Oak Park Heights, Minnesota with Wisconsin Highways 35/64 just east of the community of Houlton. Construction can begin in 1995. The new bridge is expected to be open to traffic sometime in 1998.

Grocery prices: Potato salad, 3 pounds for 99 cents.

Now playing: "Hoffa" at Cinema 4.

Vote for Patty Schachtner

To the Editor:
Adam Jarchow recently mailed a campaign piece claiming our rights to fly the American flag were at risk. This is similar to how he conducted himself in the primary campaign against Shannon Zimmerman. The mailer is not just over the top, it's insulting to voters. I'm sure he'll be flooding our mailboxes with similar ridiculous claims in his quest for office. I think we're all tired of that kind of rhetoric.

We need responsible, serious people representing us in the state Senate. Someone who won't use the flag and false patriotism to gin up votes. Someone who respects the people of Senate District 10, no matter their party. Someone who is thoughtful about the issues and how decisions made by our state representatives will affect the lives of the people in western Wisconsin. Patty Schachtner will get my vote for all these reasons and more.

We have real and serious issues that need to be addressed, and we should send a message to politicians like Jarchow who run a campaign by spending seemingly unlimited money on dishonest and outrageous mailers and messages. Please vote for Patty Schachtner on January 16th. She's the adult in the room.
Kristi Grimm
Somerset

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BUSINESS NOTEBOOK

Lakes Area Realty

Jeanette Kunz, broker at Lakes Area Realty in Hudson welcomes Lisa Dempsey of River Falls to the firm. Dempsey earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. Growing up, she was raised on a dairy farm in central Minnesota, and has lived in River Falls since 2015.

Dempsey's prior career has been in social work, human resources/office management and as a certified life coach

since 2006.

"I am excited to work with Lakes Area Realty! I love meeting new people and helping people connect to their true heart feelings about who they are and where they are going," Dempsey said. "I look forward to partnering with you as you experience a positive real estate service while we find your house with heart!"

Dempsey will work with both buyers and sellers in residential and commercial real estate



Lisa Dempsey

and is licensed in Wisconsin.