

TOM E. ROTTS' COLUMN

The Pedersen Family Border Debacle

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Nick Pedersen, an 80+ year old veteran lives in Canada, near the Russell Road in Ft. Fairfield. The Border Patrol's recent decision to require his family members who choose to visit or bring him meals to drive 5 miles out of their way to check in at the U.S. Customs' Port of Entry in order to "protect us from terrorists" is most intriguing.

I don't suppose that it is the most workable solution. If they enter the US at the port of entry I would think that technically they would be returning to Canada, by going to Mr. Pedersen 's house. Would they be required to report to Canadian Customs when they "re-enter" Canada? ... yeah... so how are they supposed to do that??!! It's interesting to note that the Canadians do not have the same level of concern for an unchecked entry into their country in the same area.

Then what are they supposed to do when they leave Pedersen's driveway (Canada) on the way home? Do they a) drive to the Four Falls crossing into Canada and report to Canada Customs (not if they arrive after hours) or do they b) drive into the US (after entering from Canada) and return that way? Do they report to US Customs on the way out? They should... they've entered from Canada. But can they go down through town to do it, or do they have to go back to Canada using the Russell Road crossing and then go around to US POE at Fort Fairfield... Ahhhh... this is starting to sound just like the movie where Tom Hanks is stuck in the airport without a country. I'm seeing the potential for a "feedback loop" there with them getting stuck running between ports of entry.

Now, if someone comes in ostensibly to visit the Pedersen house and then goes beyond, then the BP can have their way with them... This actually appears to be the way it's been done all along until the Border Patrol stuck their big foot in things and it worked just fine. It's still the simplest most reasonable solution to the problem. OOPS! I used the "R" word... something these folks seem to have a problem dealing with. Leave it to gummit (sic) to take something simple and make it complicated. A couple more points... if the Pedersen relatives come through the POE they've been ADMITTED to the US. So they can stop and buy things in town....beer, gas, milk, all sorts of stuff... what would Canada Customs have to say about that? They could fill the Pedersen house up with contraband cigarettes from the U.S., or bring all sorts of stuff for themselves. And.... say someone wants to visit them who has a record and is not ADMISSIBLE to the US under our immigration law... Can they visit their relatives in Canada or not?? I wonder if the Canadian authorities have any stated positions or opinions on any of this.

I think if they would have been left alone and a studious BP agent(s) placed there to monitor suspicious traffic (i.e. not the locals who in time he/they will get to know live and drive around" there anyway, also Christmas tree farm traffic) there would be a lot less resistance and animosity. How's that saying, "You can attract more flies with honey..." What seems to be happening is that" the Border Patrol is requiring entry at the port of entry when they feel like it – Pedersen friends coming to visit - and NOT requiring it when they don't, such as people entering the US from the golf course on

Canadian soil (which would be legally required if they didn't choose to ignore it), when Mr. Clark backs out of his driveway and enters Canada but then returns right away to the US, when the US snowplough drives into Canadian territory and comes back, and so forth. What's happening is that under the guise of law, everybody just seems to be cherry picking what to ignore, allow, or prohibit. And I don't ready understand the reasoning behind some of it..... the Pedersen situation being one case in point... happening is that under the guise of law, everybody just seems to be cherry picking what to ignore, allow, or prohibit. And I don't ready understand the reasoning behind some of it..... the Pedersen situation being one case in point.

Now my head is spinning.

This is extremely goofed-up reasoning. Remember, we "already have Border Patrol on the road 24/7 now. So wouldn't the simplest thing be just to have the Pedersen family come up the road from Canada (only a very few feet into the US) and turn into the Pedersen driveway, and then go home the same way? The Border Patrol can observe them "all they want to..... that's their job and they'd better be there to do it; that's what we're paying them for and that's what we expect. If they need a coffee or bathroom break, then another car can come and stand in for them while they're gone. You'd have three eight hour shifts (or swap them out at any number of intervals totalling 24 hours) to pay for rather than building a port of entry and staffing it: plus the monitoring would be "low impact" on the indigenous society - no public relations battles to fight. Perhaps they want PR battles so they can let the populace know "who's boss" and keep them scared of "the terrorists." At the recent public meeting held at the Fort V.F.W. the other night, the public wasn't really showing signs of being too scared of the ubiquitous "terrorists" -must be all the guns we still have in the community. Besides, I don't get the impression there is all that much traffic going down that road anyway, "terrorist" or otherwise.

As for "terrorists" coming into the U.S.; cheer up, they're already here.