

Good fences make good neighbors:

When Robert Frost wrote, "Good fences make good neighbors", he was speaking in the time honored Yankee tradition where New Englanders are expected to mind their own business and speak only when it adds something to the silence. You don't borrow tools and you don't make small talk.

It would be different if you first invited a neighbor to cross your property line so that he could work in your field, at a far reduced wage, and then built the fence to keep him out. That's what you call a mixed message. America is struggling with the logistics, and ethics, of maintaining a free flow of cheap labor, which is absolutely essential to American Agriculture, Manufacturing and Construction while presenting a front that says, "Jobs go to Americans first".

Throughout history fences or walls or lines or forts have been prominent, albeit largely ineffective. The Chinese built the Wall to keep out the barbarians who lived next door. The Soviet satellite in Germany built their wall to keep East Germans on the lousy side of the Curtain. The French built the Maginot Line to prevent an invasion from the east. My brother and I built a barricade of planks and cinder blocks to keep the kids from 59th street off 60th street. You know, all these great fences came to pretty much the same end.

The Mongols got around The Wall once they realized that any wall has two ends to it. It took a while but Mongols are persistent folks. Now they're part of China. Go figure. The Berlin Wall was effective to a point. Lots of people were detained, imprisoned, maimed and killed before it fell. There's a model for us. The Maginot Line looked great, cool forts with big guns, but the neighbors chose to 'immigrate' through Belgium. And that fence I built, well the kids from 59th street simply walked around the block instead. At first we put all kinds of restrictions on them but over time we realized they were pretty much like us. Besides, we needed a shortstop.

Have you been to any part of the border in Texas or Arizona? You know how it goes for miles and miles and miles and miles of baked terrain? If you have been down there, and only if you have, I would welcome suggestions as to the kind of fence we need. The types we use here in Minnesota aren't very effective against humans. I know this because every hunting season brings out a slew of creative fence-hopping solutions. Surely someone who is looking to feed his family (even if it's on the wrong side of the fence) is likely to be at least as

resourceful as the guy who is trying to retrieve the buck he just dropped.

If we electrify our fence should we set it on deter, stun or murder? There are a few screwballs running for President who would give a serious answer to that question. They would spend a brilliant three minutes debating whether the de facto punishment for border crossing should be to kill you, or just hurt.

It's a problem. How do you keep out a large number of motivated people who are invited (by American business) to be here in the first place, legal or not? I don't know if you can. You can say that you can because it plays well. But doing it is quite another matter.

I think there might be an answer.

Individual fences. Yup. A fence that surrounds one person at a time. A little three or four foot square that you could stand in the middle of. A fence that would protect even the most paranoid American from the threat posed by brown people. Think about it. It has everything going for it.

At the top of the list is the fact that it would be constitutional, non governmental and individually rightist at the same time. You'd be enclosed by your own personal fence, made to your own specs. And you'd pay for it. Not the Government and not your neighbors' tax dollars. You'd be truly free in your own little pen.

Just by wearing it you would be making a statement as to where you stand on immigration. Way better than a bumper sticker. As you walked, surrounded by your fence, past the hardware store on Saturday your neighbors would say, "There's Herb, he's against giving away American jobs."

You could pick the design from any number of options in the Fences R Us catalog. Fences could come clear or opaque. I would go for opaque but with a small peek hole like you find in apartment doors in Manhattan. That way I could maintain my isolationist position while viewing the world through a pinhole. Hiding but still vigilant. Appropriate.

Finally, your individual fence would help to start an entirely new, entrepreneurial, big bucks industry. Best of all, your personal anti-

immigration device would be made entirely by the labor of illegal immigrants. Just like a lot of the stuff we buy.