

STAR TRIBUNE
S&K

The SOUNDS of SPRING

2012:

CHIRP!
CHIRP!



2013:

CHIP!
CHIP!



So This Is Springtime?

BY KELLY HERTZ

kelly.hertz@yankton.net

So this is what spring simply HAS to look like this year.

That seems to be the case, so it only figures, then, that I've devoted more energy to scraping windshields this week than I did all winter. The frustration of this was driven home for me Tuesday night when I used up my remaining supply of de-icer spray helping a friend thaw out his car. I went to a convenience store on the way home to purchase more, and I really had to hunt to find it, since the product had been displaced on the shelves by sunscreen, insect repellent and other items that figure to be more popular in these warmer, sunnier days of spring [sic.] ...

Yes, I'm complaining too much, but mostly because — like the windshield scraping — I didn't have much opportunity to do that either over the winter months. It really wasn't a bad winter in the Yankton area, so this week's storm — designated by The Weather Channel as "Walda," which, according to one Website, is an Old German word for "ruler" — let me unleash a lot of pent-up crabbiness that really needed to come out sooner or later.

However, I'm also embracing the idea that this post-winter whiteness could be a good sign.

Last week Monday was the first day of April, and it was a brisk 37 degrees in Yankton.

On that same date last year, it was 91.

As you well remember, last year's very warm early spring set the stage for a hot, parched summer that saw much of the land shrivel up in brown surrender. I recall other dry years in my life when there would at least be some consolation of inconsequential rain in late summer to at least remind me of what the color green looked like. But that didn't happen last year. Nor did it happen in the fall or the winter, at least in the Yankton area.

I've heard the forecasts for the coming warm-weather months; I've encountered the worries. This year looks



Kelly

HERTZ

like an uncertain bet at best that the cycle of drought and broken plans can be broken.

That seems especially true in this area, where we've missed out on a lot of rain and snow. Precipitation seems to slide all around us, as winter particularly reminded me. I didn't have to go too far north — about 30 miles or so — before I started running into snowfields. Farther north, winter encased the land in snow and ice. To the south, there were also consistent shots of snow that served at least as a reminder that winter can sometimes behave the way it's supposed to, according to the calendar and the sun.

So this week's bad weather may be tempting us with the same promise.

For one thing, we've gotten a lot of moisture out the system, which hasn't happened here in a long time. This week's storm wasn't a drought-buster, but if that precipitation can show once, it can show up again. And that's a hopeful sign.

This week's spring storm is also a glimmer of promise because a snowstorm in April is not unheard of at all, which means it could arguably be viewed as normal — in an abnormal sort of way. At least it's more normal than a 91-degree day in April 1.

The thing I miss the most about the worst aspects of winter is the misery that wears you down to the point where you are humbled by that wrath. Thus, when spring finally comes, you literally feel reborn and renewed. It's a feeling you don't get — and certainly don't appreciate — after mild, dry winters in which very little pain was on the agenda.

This stormy week, which even featured some thunder-snow in the area Tuesday, was really just a small step toward making up for what we missed out on this past winter. But at least it has reminded me of the way things used to be here and, with a little bit of luck and perhaps a dose of prayer, can be again if the skies cooperate.

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz

There Are Guns But No Roses

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — The biggest obstacle to the Obama administration's push for tighter gun control may be its own best argument: Newtown.

This is because nothing proposed in the gun control debates would have prevented the mass killing of children at Sandy Hook Elementary School, and everybody knows it. At best, tighter gun laws will make us feel better.

Let's review: The Newtown killer was a mentally disturbed young man living with his mother. She had legally purchased her arsenal and had even taught her son how to responsibly handle firearms.

What she did not do was: (1) deal appropriately with her son's mental illness; (2) safely contain her guns so that her son could not access them.

As much as anyone, I am eager to do whatever will make a difference. But I'm unconvinced that what is being proposed will provide the solution we seek.

Universal background checks are a perfectly good idea, except that they won't stop the burglar who recently cleaned out our house of all our legally purchased rifles and shotguns, including an antique belonging to my great-grandfather, who, as sheriff of Barnwell County, S.C., confiscated the gun from the triple murderer he tracked for three days and finally killed. (I want that gun back, please.)

Those guns are now in circulation among an element of society that has no intention of submitting to a background check or any other well-intentioned effort to ensure that only good guys have guns.

Should we insist that buyers at gun shows submit to a quick background check as they would at any gun store? Sure. Why not? Federally licensed vendors at gun shows already have to conduct background checks, but everyday people who sell among themselves at the shows do not. Few beyond the gun lobby object to this step, but even this wouldn't have prevented Newtown.

Meanwhile, what about my neighbor, Mike, who, theoretically, wants to buy a shotgun I no longer use? Is it really practical to insist that he submit to a background check? Gun control proponents would have Mike and me run down to Dick's Sporting Goods (or some other "portal") and run through a quick background check. We could do that. Or, I could just give Mike the gun and he could hand me a couple



Kathleen

PARKER

hundred dollars one of these days.

If a law isn't enforceable, is it a good law? Does it prevent Newtown for neighbors to run through a little ritual that creates yet another level of government oversight for no real practical purpose other than to create a gun registry, which, whether one thinks this is a reasonable idea, gun control advocates insist they don't want?

But we have to do something, don't we?

Banning assault weapons and large magazines is appealing. But what, exactly, is an assault weapon, anyway? Most think of assault weapons as machine guns, but many popular firearms, from ranch rifles to handguns, are, like the AR-15 used at Newtown, semi-automatic. This means that they fire only one round each time the trigger is pulled and the gun automatically reloads. Do we ban all semi-automatic weapons?

Limiting the size of magazines also seems like a common-sense solution. Then again, maybe a killer would simply carry several small magazines and swap them out as Eric Harris did at Columbine High School in 1999 and Seung-Hui Cho did at Virginia Tech in 2007. Harris was armed with a Hi-Point 995 carbine with 13 magazines of 10 rounds each. His partner, Dylan Klebold, carried a semi-automatic handgun and a short-barrel shotgun, which gun experts will tell you is the most effective close-range weapon of all. And Cho used two handguns that are not considered "assault weapons."

In a country with an estimated 250 million to 300 million guns, imposing new laws on honest people is problematic and bureaucratically complicated. Add to the conundrum our politics of individual freedom combined with the exploitation of emotion to craft what is likely an impotent solution, it is little wonder our congressional leadership is bamboozled.

The fact is, crazy people who would commit a Newtown-type massacre constitute an infinitesimal percentage of the population. Criminals will always have guns, as the murderer on death row told me when I first wrote about this issue 30 years ago. And forcing law-abiding gun owners to submit to new regulations will not prevent another Newtown, or Aurora, or Columbine.

This is not to say we should do nothing. But, lest we delude ourselves, whatever we do, we will do because it makes us feel better. Perhaps that is enough.

Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleenparker@washpost.com.

We're both teachers in the Yankton Public Schools and know firsthand that these kinds of things are going on all the time in our schools; in the classroom, on the field or court, in the labs, and up on the stage. Perhaps we are getting sentimental as we prepare for our youngest child to graduate, but it's more than that. We are happy that many people in this community really care about our young people and that they care enough to give them their time. We are proud to be a part of a school system that provides endless opportunities for our young people to learn and grow to be global citizens. Most of all, we are encouraged as we think ahead to these young people and so many more like them going out into the world with their knowledge, optimism, conviction and confidence.

So, if you have the notion to say that this community doesn't care, our school system isn't good enough, or our young people are self-centered and unmotivated, we're happy to tell you that you might just be wrong. That's good news!

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN



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OPINION | WE SAY

All Clear



THUMBS UP to the crews and workers who have kept our roadways clear, restored the power and maintained essential services throughout this week's storms. They faced a strange combination of rain, freezing rain, sleet, snow and even thundershowers. The spring storm has thrown some unexpected challenges, particularly at this time of year, but we have been fortunate to have gotten through the worst without the massive problems disrupting thousands of daily lives in other parts of South Dakota and Nebraska.

Cleaning Up



THUMBS DOWN to what has seemingly become a tradition for Yankton: Inclement weather during the annual Citywide Cleanup. Once again, as residents were putting their discarded items along the curbs and as city crews were working to collect those items, Mother Nature threw a curveball into the mix, this time with an icy, sloppy spring storm that forced city officials to suspend pickup operations for a time. But with this being April, this figures to be only a brief delay in the serious and more practical business of cleaning up Yankton. Here's hoping for better weather to come in order to finish the cleanup effort.

Smooth Sailing



THUMBS UP to the smooth operation of Tuesday night's election in Yankton using the new voting center format. Yankton delved into this format last fall, which allows residents to vote at any of the designated voting centers in the town (or county). It was used again Tuesday for Yankton's joint municipal/school election, and from all reports, the process operated just fine. What we can tell you on our end is that the final results were available less than one hour after the polls closed. Secretary of State Jason Gant was on hand in Yankton to observe the procedure, and he was satisfied with what we saw. So are we.

Bird's The Word



THUMBS DOWN to some unwanted guests that have been hanging around in some areas of Yankton: turkey buzzards. These large birds have been spotted in several residential areas lately, which is rather unusual. The birds are not unknown in this area, but they became more conspicuous last year when several of them were often seen perched high up the cell phone tower near Larry's Heating and Cooling. This spring, they seem to have moved closer to the ground and have been spotted resting on porch railings, for instance. We've been told city animal control has received several calls about the visitors, but there is little that can be done on that end of things.

ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan's* Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Which nation do you think poses the bigger threat to world stability: North Korea or Iran?
North Korea 47%
Iran 45%
Not sure 8%
TOTAL VOTES CAST **399**

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you support the proposed bipartisan immigration reform package?

To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, April 12, the 102nd day of 2013. There are 263 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 12, 1963, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. was arrested and jailed in Birmingham, Ala., charged with contempt of court and parading without a permit. (During his time behind bars, King wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail"; he was released on bond on April 20.)

On this date: In 1606, England's King James I decreed the design of the original Union Flag, which combined the flags of England and Scotland.

In 1861, the American Civil War began as Confederate forces opened fire on Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

In 1862, Union volunteers stole a Confederate locomotive near Marietta, Ga., and headed toward Chattanooga, Tenn., on a mission to sabotage as much of the rail line as they could; the raiders were caught.

In 1877, the catcher's mask was first used in a baseball game by James Tyng of Harvard in a game against the Lynn Live Oaks.

In 1912, Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, died in Glen Echo, Md., at age 90.

In 1934, "Tender Is the Night," by F. Scott Fitzgerald, was first published in book form after being serialized in *Scribner's Magazine*.

In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Warm Springs, Ga., at age 63; he was succeeded by Vice President Harry S. Truman.

In 1955, the Salk vaccine against polio was declared safe and effective.

In 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to fly in space, orbiting the earth once before making a safe landing.

In 1981, the space shuttle Columbia blasted off from Cape Canaveral on its first test flight. Former world heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis died in Las Vegas, Nev., at age 66.

In 1983, Chicagoans went to the polls to elect Harold Washington the city's first black mayor.

In 1985, Sen. Jake Garn, R-Utah, became the first sitting member of Congress to fly in space as the shuttle Discovery lifted off.

Ten years ago: Finance officials from the seven richest industrial countries, meeting in Washington, agreed to support a new U.N. Security Council resolution as part of a global effort to rebuild Iraq and promised to begin talks on reducing Iraq's massive foreign debt burden. Rescued POW Jessica Lynch returned to the United

States after treatment at a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Women's activists took their fight against the all-male Augusta National as close as they could get to the Masters tournament.

Five years ago: Democrat Barack Obama conceded that comments he'd made privately during a fundraiser about bitter working class voters who "cling to guns or religion" were ill chosen. Boston College won the NCAA hockey championship, 4-1, over Notre Dame. The United States won its second women's world hockey championship, upsetting Canada 4-3 in Harbin, China.

One year ago: Florida neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, charged with second-degree murder, made his first courtroom appearance in the shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. Jury selection began in Greensboro, N.C., for the corruption trial of former presidential candidate John Edwards, charged with six counts of campaign finance fraud. (The jury ended up acquitting Edwards of accepting illegal campaign contributions but deadlocking on the other five counts.)

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Ned Miller is 88. Actress Jane Withers is 87. Opera singer Montserrat Caballe is 80. Playwright Alan Ayckbourn is 74. Jazz musician Herbie Hancock is 73. Actor Frank Bank ("Leave It to Beaver") is 71. Rock singer John Kay (Steppenwolf) is 69. Actor Ed O'Neill is 67. Author Tom Clancy is 66. Actor Dan Lauria is 66. Talk show host David Letterman is 66. Author Scott Turow is 64. Singer David Cassidy is 63. Actor-playwright Tom Noonan is 62. Rhythm-and-blues singer JD Nicholas (The Commodores) is 61. Singer Pat Travers is 59. Actor Andy Garcia is 57. Movie director Walter Salles is 57. Country singer Vince Gill is 56. Actress Suzanne Douglas is 56. Rock musician Will Sergeant (Echo & the Bunnymen) is 55. Rock singer Art Alexakis (Everclear) is 55. Country singer Deryl Dodd is 49. Folk-pop singer Amy Ray (Indigo Girls) is 49. Actress Alicia Coppola is 45. Rock singer Nicholas Hexum (311) is 43. Actor Nicholas Brendon is 42. Actress Shannan Doherty is 42. Actress Marley Shelton is 39. Actress Sarah Jane Morris is 36. Actress Jordana Spiro is 36. Rock musician Guy Berryman (Coldplay) is 35. Actress Claire Danes is 34. Actress Jennifer Morrison is 34. Contemporary Christian musician Joe Rickard (Red) is 26. Rock singer-musician Brendon Urie (Panic at the Disco) is 26. Actress Saoirse Ronan is 19.

Thought for Today: "Rules are not necessarily sacred, principles are." — President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945).

FROM THE BIBLE

Respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you ... esteem them very highly in love because of their work. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

CONTACT US

PHONE:
(605) 665-7811
(800) 743-2968
NEWS FAX:
(605) 665-1721
ADVERTISING FAX:
(605) 665-0288
WEBSITE:
www.yankton.net
EMAIL ADDRESS:
news@yankton.net

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