

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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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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OPINION | WE SAY

These Are The Days



THUMBS UP to Riverboat Days which kick off today (Friday). The annual event — one of the largest celebrations in the region — brings about 100,000 visitors to Yankton during its three-day run. Tonight features the opening ceremonies, a concert with the Troubadour Retrievers and fireworks. The big parade is set for Saturday morning, part of a full day of activities culminating with the rodeo and the Dweebes concert Saturday night. Riverboat Days wraps up Sunday, offering a wide variety of arts, food, entertainment and a midway. With a forecast of warm weather and no rain, we look for another outstanding festival.

Moving Into The Booth



THUMBS UP and congratulations to the hiring of University of South Dakota alum and former Vermilion football coach Gary Culver as an analyst for USD's football broadcasts. A coaching career that spanned 36 years and included five state championships shows that Culver knows the game, and he has more than proven his love of USD over the years. That, combined with the great working relationship he has with "Voice of the Coyotes" Joe Van Goor make him a perfect choice to fill that position. Also, a Thumbs Up to KVHT/KVTK Sports Director John Thayer, who will serve as the "Voice of the Coyotes" for women's basketball this season.

Benched



A big THUMBS DOWN to the Rapid City Angels amateur baseball team, who chose to forfeit their state tournament game with the Sioux Falls Saints on Thursday rather than play the scheduled tournament game in Sioux Falls. Every year, the West River qualifiers have a tough time putting together a team for state, and typically fall out in the opening weekend. But they successfully bid on and received the opening round games, dragging six teams west to Rapid City, forcing them to make overnight stays during the Sturgis Rally, when hotel costs are double. Having to drop out because of a rash of injuries is one thing, but making a conscience decision to forfeit just because they had to play on a Thursday is inexcusable.

Numbers Up



THUMBS DOWN to this year's increased incidence of West Nile in South Dakota and also its presence in Nebraska. State epidemiologist Lon Kightlinger noted that South Dakota leads the nation in total number of human West Nile cases and also the neuroinvasive cases. We have been fortunate that the cool, rainy summer hasn't brought more mosquitoes. Still, Yankton city and county officials are taking precautions with spraying efforts in Riverside Park during this weekend's Riverboat Days.

Falling Down?



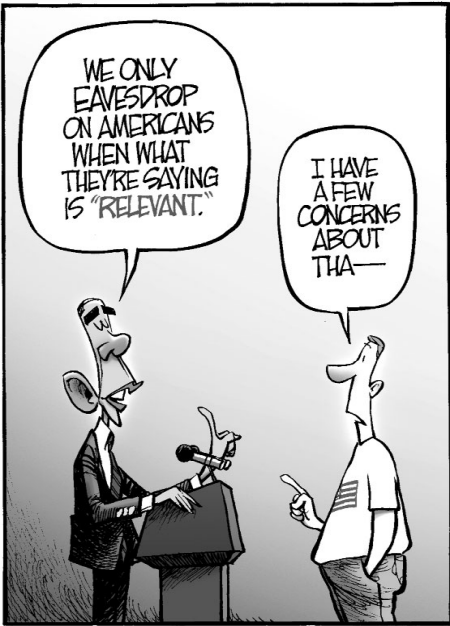
As we enjoy this very pleasant summer weather of late, we also offer a THUMBS DOWN to a downbeat fall forecast from Accuweather.com. In its report issued this week, the online weather service predicted that warm conditions should prevail until about the third week of September, when — coinciding with the official arrival of autumn — things could take a U-turn. Late September "could be marked by an early frost or freeze for the corn and soybean growing area, about two or three weeks earlier than usual," the service said. Accuweather also said cold weather could arrive again in late October and November, which could lead to early snowfall. A lot can change, of course, but it's something to bear in mind as we officially sail into what can now be called late summer.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press Today is Friday, Aug. 16, the 228th day of 2013. There are 137 days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On August 16, 1977, Elvis Presley died at his Graceland estate in Memphis, Tenn., at age 42. On this date: In 1777, American forces won the Revolutionary War Battle of Bennington. In 1812, Detroit fell to British and Indian forces in the War of 1812. In 1858, a telegraphed message from Britain's Queen Victoria to President James Buchanan was transmitted over the recently laid trans-Atlantic cable. In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln issued Proclamation 86, which prohibited the states of the Union from engaging in commercial trade with states in rebellion — i.e., the Confederacy. In 1913, future Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin was born in Brest in present-day Belarus. In 1937, the American Federation of Radio Artists was chartered. In 1948, baseball legend Babe Ruth died in New York at age 53. In 1954, Sports Illustrated was first published by Time Inc. In 1956, Adlai E. Stevenson was nominated for president at the Democratic national convention in Chicago. In 1962, The Beatles fired their original drummer, Pete Best, replacing him with Ringo Starr. In 1987, 156 people were killed when Northwest Airlines Flight 255 crashed while trying to take off from Detroit; the sole survivor was 4-year-old Cecelia Cichan. People worldwide began a two-day celebration of the "harmonic convergence," which heralded what believers called the start of a new, purer age of humankind. In 1993, New York police rescued business executive Harvey Weinstein from a covered 14-foot-deep pit, where he'd been held nearly two weeks for ransom. Actor Stewart Granger died in Santa Monica, Calif., at age 80. Ten years ago: The Midwest and Northeast were almost fully recovered from the worst power outage in U.S. history. A car driven by U.S. Rep. Bill Janklow ran a stop sign on a rural road in South Dakota and collided with motorcyclist Randy Scott, who died. Idi Amin, the former dictator of Uganda, died in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia; he was believed to have been about 80. Five years ago: At the Beijing Olympics, Michael Phelps touched the wall a hundredth of a second ahead of Serbia's Milorad Cavic to win the 100-meter butterfly, giving Phelps his seventh gold medal of the Games, tying Mark Spitz's performance in the 1972 Munich Games. Usain Bolt of Jamaica ran the 100-meter dash in a stunning world-record time of 9.69 seconds. Talk show host Ellen DeGeneres and actress Portia de Rossi were married at their Beverly Hills home. One year ago: Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney declared he had paid at least 13 percent of his income in federal taxes every year for the previous decade; President Barack Obama's campaign shot back in doubt: "Prove it." A U.S. military helicopter crashed during a fire-fight with insurgents in southern Afghanistan, killing seven Americans and four Afghans. Ecuador decided to identify WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange as a refugee and give him asylum in its London embassy. Character actor William Windom, 88, died in Woodacre, Calif. Today's Birthdays: Actress Anna Blyth is 85. Sportscaster Frank Gifford is 83. Actor Gary Clarke is 80. Actress Julie Newmar is 80. Actor John Standing is 79. College Football Hall of Famer and NFL player Bill Glass is 78. Actress Anita Gillette is 77. Actress Carole Shelley is 74. Country singer Billy Joe Shaver is 74. Movie director Bruce Beresford is 73. Actor Bob Balaban is 68. Ballerina Suzanne Farrell is 68. Actress Lesley Ann Warren is 67. Rock singer-musician Joey Spampinato is 63. Actor Reginald VelJohnson is 61. TV personality Kathie Lee Gifford is 60. Rhythm-and-blues singer J.T. Taylor is 60. Movie director James Cameron is 59. Actor Jeff Perry is 58. Rock musician Tim Farriss (INXS) is 56. Actress Laura Innes is 56. Singer Madonna is 55. Actress Angela Bassett is 55. Actor Timothy Hutton is 53. Actor Steve Carell is 51. Former tennis player Jimmy Arias is 49. Actor-singer Donovan Leitch is 46. Actor Andy Milder is 45. Actor Seth Peterson is 43. Country singer Emily Robison (The Dixie Chicks) is 41. Actor George Stults is 38. Singer Vanessa Carlton is 33. Actor Cam Gigandet is 31. Actress Agnes Bruckner is 28. Actress Cristin Milioti is 28. Actor Shawn Pyfrom is 27. Country singer Ashton Shepherd is 27. Actor Kevin G. Schmidt is 25. Actress Rumer Willis is 25. Singer-pianist Greyson Chance is 16. Thought for Today: "In politics people give you what they think you deserve and deny you what they think you want." — Cyril Northcote Parkinson, British historian and author.

FROM THE BIBLE

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. Colossians 1:15. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



Banking On Weather

BY KELLY HERTZ kelly.hertz@yankton.net

Yankton is entering its most important economic time frame of the year. It's hard to look at the period from mid-August through Labor Day in any other way. Consider what's in store the next two weeks. The annual Riverboat Days celebration opens tonight, and the three-day festival figures to draw at least 100,000 visitors again. Two weeks from now, Rockin' RibFest will take over the downtown district for a day, and that event has turned into a nice attraction for the community. It will take place on Labor Day weekend, which is also the final summertime hurrah for the Lewis and Clark Lake area. For Yankton, there's money to be made in the next 18 days or so.



Kelly HERTZ

And a lot will ride on the weather. That is an enduring fact of our life. We tend to imagine ourselves rather far evolved from the early pioneers who settled this land (or, if you will, priced the land away from the people who were here before — take your pick) and who were at the mercy of Mother Nature. We're beyond that now, we believe, and in many ways, it's true. But, as the last two years have harshly reminded us, the weather is still a major player in our lives.

So it will be during the next 2 1/2 weeks. Some Riverboat Days board members have told me that they worry about the weather every year. I can see why, owing as I do some memories of a couple of storm-marred celebrations. Weather impacted RibFest to the point that organizers moved the event to Labor Day weekend to steer clear of autumn's early impulses. And if it rains this weekend, the traffic out at the lake will be down. All these things will subsequently hit Yankton's bottom line.

Of course, the weather plays its biggest role of all in the biggest component of our local economy. For farmers, this is the homestretch of the growing season, and a little rain at the right time can make all the difference. So can a little carnage. That's what I was thinking last Saturday as I watched a dark, rumbling storm cell move toward me while I was out in the county. The reports on my phone and on the radio told of hail and high winds in western Hutchinson County, and that onslaught had me in its sights.

For farmers and non-farmers alike, this year has been a godsend. After last year's withering summer of lost crops and ruined opportunities, this summer has been a lush reprieve. It's made a lot of people quite happy.

"Now," they have said almost invariably since mid-July, "if only we can avoid the hail..." On Saturday, an entire season of hope was possibly riding on where that storm I was watching would go and what it would do when it got there. That's not a new feeling. The threat is as much a part of summer life here as sailboats, Roman candles and mayflies. But that anxious feeling was absent last year because it never stormed — or rained. A hailed-out crop a year ago would have been an act of mercy for many people.

The economic destiny of every growing season rides on every storm. Hail can strip a summer of its promise and cripple businesses that count on bountiful harvests to generate good cash flows. There's a shadow of uncertainty in every dark cloud. What if it doesn't rain? What if it hails? What if...? While last Saturday's storm did deliver some hail damage to a couple of area spots, it generally dropped an unmenacing rain elsewhere. For most of us, our good summer continued, which helps the Yankton economy — as well as the economies of every community in this region. Yankton is blessed to have events like Riverboat Days and RibFest, and attractions like the lake area, to bolster its coffers, but agriculture is still our top moneymaker. Good rains and hail-less storms surely add to our good fortunes. The local economy is looking to cash in these next few weeks, and to do that, we must hope the weather cooperates. So far this year, it has, wonderfully. Now I've been told that during this window of economic opportunity for Yankton, the area crops need a few days of very warm to borderline hot weather to really make the harvest. It could produce millions of dollars worth of difference across these immediate plains. What an irony that is, given what we endured last summer. But that's how unpredictable life can be when weather is an important economic driver, which it surely is for all of us.

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

5 Things The GOP Has Repealed

BY TINA DUPUY CagleCartoons.com

House Speaker John Boehner says Republicans should be judged not on what laws they've made but by what laws they've repealed. I'd like to offer a brief list of the fallout of the GOP's existential crisis: 1. "Hitler"

The first time I heard someone call the first black president of the United States "Hitler," I laughed. Who'd be more offended by the comparison? Hitler. But now the slur is ubiquitous. "Hitler-like." "Wants to be Hitler." "Dictators like Hitler and Obama." I was going to cite specific examples of Republicans calling Barack Obama a Nazi, but it's so widespread it's already a meme. The list of offenders is endless from Rep. Paul Broun (R-Ga.) and Louie Gohmert (R-Texas) to Judicial Watch founder Larry Klayman and self-satirist Rush Limbaugh. Here's the irony: Hitler was a conspiracy theorist. He used the rhetorical devices of appealing to fear, evidence denial and mystical reckoning to further his agenda. An example of that from this week would be the sputtering of Rep. Dana Rohrabacker (R-Calif.) who said: "Just so you know, global warming is a total fraud. At the federal government, they want to create global government to control all of our lives." Bingo.

Thanks to absurd overuse abuse-Republicans repealed Hitler. This lazy insult has become a sure-fire way of shutting down real debate about an actual (not Republican-imagined) evil tyrant coming to power. Spoiler alert: Paranoid conspiracy nonsense helps. 2. Racism Right-wingers calling black people racist and feigning to be the victims of "reverse racism" has pretty much killed the word racism. It's difficult to even talk about prejudice and discrimination based on your skin color when old white men claim they're the real victims. It's a Republican whataboutism or I'm rubber, you're glue. Just call the victims of racism racists and declare anyone who brings up racism a race-baiter. They've ended "racism." 3. Town Halls Where politicians meet the people! The bastion of democracy. The place where you can look your representative in the eye and tell them what you need from your country. A celebration of civics where people learn about their representative and their community. But the 2009 Summer AstroTurf Olympics (the GOP attempt to stop health care reform) turned the town hall into a sea of old people

screaming on YouTube, stricken by a death panel canard. Now, according to the New York Times, many congresspeople no longer host these events because they're concerned they'll be hijacked by moneyed-interests — like many groups named after tea.

4. Empathy On the Paleolithic plains of our ancestors, empathy kept us from pushing our own clan members in front of bear-size hyenas. In this way we increased our numbers to the current population of 7 billion or so. The one thing all major religions share in common — what is universal among those of faith — is the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you'd have done unto you. All of humankind agrees and owes its very existence to this premise. But when Obama said judges should have empathy and nominated the first Latina to the Supreme Court, Sonia Sotomayor, the right had to reflexively come out against empathy. The Wall Street Journal claimed empathy was the opposite of reason (pretty sure that's irrationality on both counts).

The then-chairman of the Republican Party, Michael Steele, waxed poetic: "Crazy nonsense empathetic! I'll give you empathy. Empathize right on your behind!"

Nix empathy and we no longer care about the less fortunate, the downtrodden, the disenfranchised or our neighbors. It's like if Ayn Rand were Jesus' virgin mother. Creepy. Republicans repealed empathy the same way they repealed compromise, by making it akin to treason — or possibly Hitler! 5. Congress If you have three pillars holding something up and you take away one pillar, the whole thing falls. It's simple physics. We have three branches of government and one makes dysfunction look bad. Republicans' self-fulfilling prophecy about government being inefficient is hurting the country the party claims the love. When did nihilism become patriotic? Coincidentally, it was around the time African-American Hitler tyrannically signed a bill mandating health insurance companies spend 80 percent of their premiums on health care. So judge House Republicans on what they've repealed.

Tina Dupuy is an award-winning writer and the editor-in-chief of TheContributor.com. Tina can be reached at tinadupuy@yahoo.com. This column has been edited by the author. Representations of fact and opinions are solely those of the author.

YOUR LETTERS

A Great Treat!

Maret Rempp, Yankton Yankton Dairy Queen We did it again! We broke our previous record for Miracle Treat Day sales. Thanks to all of the wonderful people that stopped by to

purchase a Blizzard and or Blizzard coupons. Yankton Dairy Queen would like to say a very special THANK YOU to all who participated in our annual Miracle Treat Day fundraiser. The total number of Blizzards sold on Miracle Treat Day was 2,436. Thanks a big bunch!