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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 | OTHER THOUGHTS

Gant Trashes Trust Placed By Voters

ARGUS LEADER, Sioux Falls (Aug. 10): Since he became secretary of state almost three years ago, Jason Gant has flirted with ethical boundaries, flexed his political muscle in a traditionally nonpartisan office and dodged public responsibility for every misstep.

His latest blunder — in effect denying an extension of voters' rights in the reservation communities of Wanblee, Eagle Butte and Fort Thompson — continues a pattern of conduct that has damaged the reputation of the office to which voters elected him overwhelmingly.

Šadly, it probably will take years — with or without Gant in his current role — to restore credibility to an office once considered well above the political fray.

Under the circumstances, it might be tempting to ask for his resignation. But the reality is, with little more than a year left on his term, the ramifications of pushing such an agenda would be nastier than our state can tolerate.

Besides, political insiders know that the GOP, deeply irritated over Gant's leadership of the office, already is taking steps to ensure that Gant does not get the nomination next year for a second term

Our recommendation: Grit our teeth until his term expires while urging him to not seek re-election, and watch him like a hawk.

Let the record show that Gant. in his short time in office. has: Hired noted political operator and ultra-conservative blogger Pat Powers, allowing him to continue to run his consulting business. Powers, finally, was forced to resign - but not because Gant acknowledged anything wrong with the practice.

- Endorsed Rep. Val Rausch in a primary election for a Senate seat and then claimed to see nothing wrong with such actions. Previous secretaries of state were widely known for bringing a neutral approach to that important constitutional office.

- Instituted a flawed process of campaign finance reporting that favored some candidates over others, slowed the system for public disclosure and hindered the public's ability to examine the influence of special interests in local races.

- Applied election laws unequally to Democrats and Republicans, favoring the latter and even, in one case, allowing one GOP legislative candidate — Brian Gosch of Rapid City — to notarize his own petitions.

South Dakota long has been blessed with leaders who put the public's interest before their own and who, while never perfect, tended to learn from their mistakes. And we watch with horror as other states suffer the consequences of officeholders more focused on their political fortunes than the efficient and transparent operation of the public's business.

It is hard to know how such people ever get in office in the first place

Now we know.

SPEAK UP! ■ Share your thoughts with us. Write to the PRESS & DAKOTAN on a topic of the day or in response to an editorial or story. Write us at: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press Today is Monday, Aug. 19, the 231st day of 2013. There are 134 days left in th Today's Highlight in History: On August 19, 1848, the New York Herald reported the discovery of gold in California. On this date: In 1807, Robert Fulton's North River Steamboat arrived in Albany, two days after leaving New York. In 1812, the USS Constitution defeated the British frigate HMS Guerriere off Nova Scotia during the War of 1812, earning the nickname "Old Ironsides In 1918, "Yip! Yip! Yaphank," a musical revue by Irving Berlin featuring Army recruits from Camp Upton in Yaphank, N.Y., opened on Broadway.

in a mountain ambush and then sent a squad of suicide bombers in a failed assault on a U.S. base near the Pakistan border. Russia and Georgia exchanged prisoners captured during their brief war. American Shawn Johnson won a gold medal on the balance beam at the Beijing games. LeRoi Moore, a versatile saxophonist with the Dave Matthews Band, died in Los Angeles of complications from an ATV accident: he was 46. One year ago: Missouri Congressman Todd Akin, the conservative Republican U.S. Senate candidate, said in a television interview that it was "really rare" for women to become pregnant when they were raped. Akin afterwards backed off his on-air comments, saying that he'd misspoken NATO said a man in an Afghan police uniform shot and killed an international service member, raising the death toll to 10 in such attacks in the space of just two weeks. Tony Scott, 68, director of such Hollywood hits as Top Gun" and "Davs of Thunder." died in Los Angeles after jumping from a suspension bridge. Today's Birthdays: Actor L.Q. Jones is 86. Actress Debra Paget is 80. USTA Eastern Tennis Hall of Famer Renee Richards is 79. Former MLB All-Star Bobby Richardson is 78. Actress Diana Muldaur is 75. Rock musician Ginger Baker (Cream, Blind Faith) is 74. Singer Johnny Nash is 73. Actress Jill St. John is 73. Actor and former U.S. Sen. Fred Thompson is 71. Singer Billy J. Kramer is 70. Country singer-songwriter Eddy Raven is 69. Rock singer Ian Gillan (Deep Purple) is 68. Former President Bill Clinton is 67. Tipper Gore, wife of former Vice President Al Gore, is 65. Actor Jim Carter is 65. Actor Gerald McRaney is 65. Rock musician John Deacon (Queen) is 62. Actor-director Jonathan Frakes is 61. Political consultant Mary Matalin is 60. Actor Peter Gallagher is 58. Actor Adam Arkin is 57. Singer-songwriter Gary Chapman is 56. Actor Martin Donovan is 56. Pro Football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz is 55. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ivan Neville is 54. Actor Eric Lutes is 51. Actor John Stamos is 50. Actress Kyra Sedgwick is 48. Actor Kevin Dillon is 48. Country singer Lee Ann Womack is 47. TV reporter Tabitha Soren is 46. Country singer-songwriter Mark McGuinn is 45. Actor Matthew Perry is Country singer Clay Walker is 44 Rapper Fat Joe is 43. Olympic gold medal tennis player Mary Joe Fernandez is 42. Actress Tracie Thoms is 38. Country singer Rissi Palmer is 32. Actress Érika Christensen is 31. Pop singer Missy Higgins is 30. Country singer Karli Osborn is 29. Olympic silver medal snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis is 28. Actor J. Evan Bonifant is 28. Rapper Romeo is 24. Thought for Today: "Being an intellectual creates a lot of questions and no answers." — Janis Joplin, American rock singer (1943-1970).



Capitol Notebook arson Is Back For More

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE - When Vern Larson was forced from statewide office, for a second time, by term limits, he needed something to do.

That's why the longest-serving constitutional officeholder in the history of South Dakota spent the past few summers working at the I-90 rest stop near his hometown of Vivian

He greeted tourists and helped with travel plans. He grew a soul patch, too, to commune with the motorcycle riders - "bikers" - rumbling through.

Such was retirement.

There are solid reasons for term limits. And, it's what a majority of South Dakota voters wanted in 1992.

Constitutional officers can't serve more than two consecutive four-year terms in the same office. Legislators can't serve more than four consecutive two-year terms in the same chamber

Then there is Vern Larson, who is an example of what's wrong about term limits.

Vern liked going to work daily at the state Capitol. Forced from office, he stayed his first winter in Arizona and didn't enjoy it. He turned 64 last Oct. 25 and went back for a second winter.

This time, he liked it. But he missed winter and legislative session at the Capitol.

When he ran for statewide office in 1978, as the Republican candidate for auditor, he grew a moustache to make him look more mature than his 30 years. He won, kept the moustache and kept winning.

Altogether Vern won election for auditor six consecutive times. The fifth came in the 1994 election, two years after voters adopted term limits. In his sixth run, in 1998, Democrats didn't run a candidate against him. That reportedly was the first time a constitutional officer went unchallenged on the South Dakota ballot.

Term-limited in 2002, Vern decided to try something new. He ran for state treasurer and won. He was re-elected in 2006, without an opponent again.

Last week, Vern Larson came back to the Capitol — this time, to a third constitutional office.

Earlier this year, Jarrod Johnson gave his resignation as state commissioner of school and public lands. That led to two phone calls to Vern.

The first came from Dusty Johnson, the governor's chief of staff, inquiring about Vern's interest and availability. The second came from Gov. Dennis Daugaard, offering the appointment effective Aug. 15 when Jarrod left

Vern happily accepted. He doesn't plan to run for election in 2014. Instead he'll serve until after a new commissioner is chosen by voters next November.

He said the office was left in "excellent" condition.

Vern took the oath of office Thursday morning in the state Supreme Court chamber from Chief Justice David Gilbertson, who called him "an old friend."

Among the various Cabinet and elected officials in the room was a fellow in the back: Rob Swanson, one of the first people the thennew auditor hired back in 1979.

Vern Larson publicly thanked the governor, mentioned Rob and said his office door is open. "I'm looking forward to the opportunities and the challenges," he said.

Fifteen minutes earlier, he chatted with some reporters.

"It's good to be back," he said.

Chilly Place For Obama **BY BILL O'REILLY** the majority of folks are happy not to be deal-

Creators Syndicate

ing with bureaucracies. The Alaska mentality is directly opposite the

JUNEAU, Alaska — Up here, many folks don't much like President Obama's vision of a big government colossus dictating health care, doling out entitlements and generally meddling in the affairs of the citizenry. Alaska voted against Obama by 14 percentage points in 2012, and if another election were held today, the anti-Obama vote would most likely be higher. This is a tough self-reliant state. The weather is harsh and expenses are high. But there is work. With a 6.1 percent unemployment rate, Alaska is doing much better than the nation **O'REILLY** as a whole (7.6 percent). The median household income in the 49th state is \$69,000 — \$16,000 higher than the national average.

Sally Whiting Brenda Willcuts Jackie Williams

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In 1934, a plebiscite in Germany approved the vesting of sole executive power in Adolf Hitler.

In 1936, the first of a series of show trials orchestrated by Soviet leader Josef Stalin began in Moscow as 16 defendants faced charges of conspiring against the government. All were convicted and executed.

In 1942, during World War II, about 6,000 Canadian and British soldiers launched a disastrous raid against the Germans at Dieppe, France, suffering more than 50 percent casualties.

In 1951, the owner of the St. Louis Browns, Bill Veeck, sent in 3-foot-7 Eddie Gaedel to pinch-hit in a game against Detroit. In his only major league at-bat, Gaedel walked on four pitches and was replaced at first base by a pinch-runner.

In 1960, a tribunal in Moscow convicted American U2 pilot Francis Garv Powers of espionage. Although sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, Powers was returned to the United States in 1962 as part of a prisoner

exchange. In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford won the Republican presidential nomination at the party's convention in

Kansas City. In 1980, 301 people aboard a Saudi Arabian L-1011 died as the jetliner made a fiery emergency return to the Riyadh airport.

In 1982, Soviet cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskava became the second woman to be launched into space.

In 1991, Soviet hard-liners made the stunning announcement that President Mikhail S. Gorbachev had been emoved from power, a coup attempt that collapsed two days later.

Ten years ago: A suicide truck bomb struck U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, killing 22, including the top U.N. envoy, Sergio Vieira de Mello. A suicide bombing of a bus in Jerusalem killed 22 people.

Five years ago: Tropical Storm Fay rolled ashore in Florida short of hurricane strength but mysteriously gained speed as it headed over land. Heavily armed insurgents in Afghanistan killed 10 French soldiers

FROM THE BIBLE

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

Historically, Alaska is a place that attracts those who are fed up with conventionality. On my trip here. I did not see one person dressed in a jacket and tie. The prevailing wisdom promotes individuality. Alaskans are basically "leave me alone" types who respect and embrace different strokes.

Maybe it's because nature is right on top of them that the folks don't seem to care much for trends. The weather changes dramatically and quickly, there are far more dirt than paved roads, and wild animals are everywhere. Nobody is really interested in the latest fashion when you can be snowed in for weeks at a time. I mean, who's gonna see you?

With a population of 731,000, Alaska is ranked 47th in size, only beating out North Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming. Of course, Alaska is the largest state in the union by far, so there is plenty of space to get away from the trappings of modern America. Most everybody has a gun — there are big bears around — and

federal intrusion that is being fostered by the Obama administration. Mention Obamacare,

and you'll likely get icy stares, even in the summer. And while poor people do receive entitlements, and the oil industry kicks in some money for the folks, few Alaskans are asking for handouts. This is an old-fashioned place that still embraces the Klondike mentality: Take chances, and maybe you'll hit it big. But if you don't, don't whine about it.

Alaska has some of the best scenery in North America, but it is the spirit of rugged individualism that I found most interesting. Capitalism is firmly embraced, and hard work is the order of the day. I visited a tourist dog-sledding site on top of a glacier where the young

employees stay for weeks at a time. No showers, no computers, no TV. They make some good money but pay the price. And they seem happy to be up there, far away from the BS that's floating around this nation.

There is something to be said for living life on your own terms. Many Americans simply don't want the pinheads in Washington or the various state capitals telling us how to live. But we are absolutely moving in that direction. Obama is hell-bent on imposing a bureaucracy that levels all playing fields at great expense to coin and freedom.

Visit Alaska if you get a chance. It's far away from everything but well worth the trip. This is America the way it used to be. And the way things are going in the Lower 48, the way it used to be is likely gone forever.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."

YOUR LETTERS

Don't Be Fuelish!

Orrie Swayze, Wilmot

Just because you live in Yankton, you probably foolishly think your car's emissions do not increase children's risks for cancers, birth defects, asthma etc. as happens in every urban area in the world

Skeptical? Simply Google "UCLA traffic emission's impacts on infants" or "traffic emissions, birth defects" to begin gaining an informed perspective on these predominantly children's health issues. Remember children are most vulnerable and these are not just big city children's health problems.

Gasoline's benzene-related emissions are like second-hand smoke because even low exposures can have these devastating health effects. Scientific consensus recognizes that cigarette smoke and traffic emissions contain a strikingly similar array of identical chemicals that cause the same health problems.

Yet, we let powerful petroleum interests mandate that our children endure these maiming, unnecessary health risks associated with their

preferred octane enhancers: First lead that damaged brain tissues, often referred to as "dumbing down America," and currently benzene-related octane enhancers that damage cell DNA. This leads to many health problems, especially for children, as consensus research documents traffic area's significantly increased rates of childhood cancers, autism, diabetes, learning disabilities, asthma, heart disease, birth defects, low birth weight babies, miscarriages, etc.

High-octane ethanol does not contain or produce these toxics thus E30 dilutes gasoline's toxics and importantly can replace gasoline's most difficult to fully combust and most toxic component: benzene related aromatic octane en hancers.

Your choosing high-octane E30 to replace benzene-related octane enhancers is any community's best opportunity to remove up to 80 percent of auto emission toxics making air safer for the most vulnerable: our children. Šelfishly, auto makers have not approved E30 for standard vehicles yet many, many standard auto owners know better and have used E30 successfully for years making their communities' air safer for children.



Bill