

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

US Going Nowhere On Nuclear Waste

THE DENVER POST (August 15): A federal court delivered a much-deserved rebuke of the Obama administration this week for its handling of the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump in Nevada.

It turns out the administration can't simply ignore a law it doesn't like — or at least couldn't in this case. If the law says the Nuclear Regulatory Commission must review Yucca's license application, then that's what the NRC must do.

But make no mistake: The court decision has not in any meaningful way revived the site as a potential depository for the nation's spent nuclear fuel. Indeed, we think it mainly highlights the dysfunctional state of civilian nuclear policy.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid got it right in his reaction. "The place is locked up, it's padlocked," he said. "Nothing is happening with Yucca Mountain."

As you might guess, the Nevada senator is delighted with this paralysis. But most Americans should be disturbed. Ideally, the U.S. should not be storing radioactive waste at nuclear plants scattered about the country. Spent fuel should be reprocessed, as it is in other countries, which would recycle more than 90 percent of it. And the remainder should be stored in a secure location, such as — you guessed it — Yucca Mountain.

But even with this court ruling, the U.S. is no closer today to a rational disposal policy. The obstacles to opening any depository, beginning with a state's effective veto and various congressional approvals, remain too high.

Although we have supported the Yucca Mountain site, it may be time for officials to rethink what to do about nuclear waste and adopt a less-than-ideal but workable fallback plan. Anyone serious about transitioning this nation off fossil fuels needs to recognize that nuclear energy will have a role — and that it is critical to solve the problem of nuclear waste.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Aug. 22, the 234th day of 2013. There are 131 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On August 22, 1485, England's King Richard III was killed in the Battle of Bosworth Field, effectively ending the War of the Roses.

On this date: In 1787, inventor John Fitch demonstrated his steamboat on the Delaware River to delegates from the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.

In 1846, Gen. Stephen W. Kearny proclaimed all of New Mexico a territory of the United States.

In 1851, the schooner *America* outraced more than a dozen British vessels off the English coast to win a trophy that came to be known as the America's Cup.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln responded to Horace Greeley's call for more drastic steps to abolish slavery; Lincoln replied that his priority was saving the Union, but he also repeated his personal wish "that all men everywhere could be free."

In 1910, Japan annexed Korea, which remained under Japanese control until the end of World War II.

In 1922, Irish revolutionary Michael Collins was shot to death, apparently by Irish Republican Army members opposed to the Anglo-Irish Treaty that Collins had co-signed.

In 1932, the British Broadcasting Corp. conducted its first experimental television broadcast, using a 30-line mechanical system.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon were nominated for second terms in office by the Republican National Convention in San Francisco.

In 1962, French President Charles de Gaulle survived an attempt on his life in suburban Paris.

In 1968, Pope Paul VI arrived in Bogota, Colombia, for the start of the first papal visit to South America.

In 1972, a hostage drama began at a Chase Manhattan Bank branch in Brooklyn, N.Y., as John Wojtowicz and Salvatore Naturile seized seven employees during a botched robbery; the siege, which ended with Wojtowicz's arrest and Naturile's killing by the FBI, inspired the 1975 movie "Dog Day Afternoon."

In 1989, Black Panthers co-founder Huey P. Newton was shot to death in Oakland, Calif. Gunman Tyrone Robinson was later sentenced to 32 years to life in prison.

Ten years ago: Alabama's chief justice, Roy Moore, was suspended for his refusal to obey a federal court order to remove his Ten Commandments monument from the rotunda of his courthouse. Texas Gov. Rick Perry pardoned 35 people arrested in the 1999 Tulia drug busts and convicted on the testimony of a lone undercover agent. (The agent, Tom Coleman, was later found

guilty of aggravated perjury and sentenced to 10 years' probation.) In Brazil, a rocket exploded on its launch pad during tests just days before liftoff, killing 21 workers.

Five years ago: Russia said it had pulled back forces from Georgia in accordance with an EU-brokered ceasefire agreement. Usain Bolt helped Jamaica win the 400-meter relay final in 37.10 seconds for his third gold medal and third world record of the Beijing Olympics. Bryan Clay won the decathlon. Phil Dalhausser and Todd Rogers beat Brazil in the men's beach volleyball championship game.

One year ago: Ousted Penn State president Graham Spanier and his lawyers attacked a university-backed report on the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal, calling it a "blundering and indefensible indictment." (Spanier was subsequently charged with covering up a complaint about Sandusky; he denies the allegation.) Nina Bowden, 87, a British author who wrote children's classics, including the World War II story "Carrie's War," died in London.

Today's Birthdays: Heart surgeon Dr. Denton Cooley is 93. Broadcast journalist Morton Dean is 78. Author Annie Proulx is 78. Baseball Hall of Famer Carl Yastrzemski is 74. Actress Valerie Harper is 74. Football coach Bill Parcells is 72. Writer-producer David Chase (TV: "The Sopranos") is 68. CBS newsmen Steve Kroft is 68. Actress Cindy Williams is 66. Pop musician David Marks is 65. International Swimming Hall of Famer Diana Nyad is 64. Baseball Hall of Famer Paul Molitor is 57. Country singer Holly Dunn is 56. Rock musician Vernon Reid is 55. Country singer Ricky Lynn Gregg is 54. Country singer Collin Raye is 53. Actress Regina Taylor is 53. Rock singer Roland Orzabal (Tears For Fears) is 52. Rock musician Debby Peterson (The Bangles) is 52. Rock musician Gary Lee Conner (Screaming Trees) is 51. Singer Tori Amos is 50. Rhythm-and-blues musician James DeBarge is 50. International Tennis Hall of Famer Mats Wilander is 49. Rapper GZA (JHIZ-ah)/The Genius is 47. Actor Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje is 46. Actor Ty Burrell is 46. Celebrity chef Giada DeLaurentiis is 43. Actress Melinda Page Hamilton (TV: "Devious Maids") is 42. Actor Rick Yune is 42. Rock musician Paul Doucette (Matchbox Twenty) is 41. Rap-reggae singer Beenie Man is 40. Singer Howie Dorough (Backstreet Boys) is 40. Comedian-actress Kristen Wiig is 40. Actress Jenna Leigh Green is 39. Rock musician Bo Koster is 39. Rock musician Dean Cain (Theory of a Deadman) is 38. Rock musician Jeff Stinco (Simple Plan) is 35. Actor Brandon Adams is 34. Actress Aya Sumika is 33.

Thought for Today: "Works of art make rules; rules do not make works of art." — Claude Debussy, French composer (born this date in 1862, died 1918).

FROM THE BIBLE

I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well. Psalm 139:14. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

A Modest Proposal

Bob Beard, Yankton YHS Teacher

Imagine my surprise when I read the *Press & Dakotan's* coverage of the Aug. 12 Yankton School Board meeting ("Board Tables Parade Changes," Aug. 13). I had attended the open meeting held at YHS on Wednesday, Aug. 7 but did not witness any "community members" expressing their concern about the changes proposed by the committee to discuss modifications to the homecoming parade. Who are these community members? Where were they during the public forum designed for discussion and questions?

So many issues and concerns encompass the homecoming parade. Foremost is the liability issue which school insurance agent Roger Smith clearly delineated during the open meeting. Without any liability coverage (no matter

how many waivers are signed), many of my colleagues will share my reluctance to drive a float during the parade. Even though School Board members have not found the money for a teacher raise in four years, will they find money to pay for personal liability if an unfortunate accident occurs?

My proposal is a modest one that circumvents all liability issues. Provide a homecoming parade online and streamline it to the community just like the school does for Grand March. Home-rooms could build a model of the float, and through use of Movie-Maker or i-Movie, the school could provide community members with a virtual parade. No liability issues whatsoever, no cost to the community, and YHS remembered as an innovator in Homecoming Parade history.

Certainly, this proposal will be popular with today's generation of online students.

STAR TRIBUNE CapleCartoons.com

SAK



My Chicken, Myself

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — In one of the early episodes of "Portlandia," the satirical show that makes fun of all things Portland, Ore., a couple dining out interviews the waitress about their potential chicken dinner.

Specifically, they want to know details of the chicken's diet (sheep's milk, soy and hazelnuts), his free-roaming privileges and roaming area (four acres), whether he had friends and was a happy chicken, and so on. Their server answers patiently, even producing Colin's papers. Colin, that is, the chicken.

So goes the joke on people who get a tad carried away about the quality of life of the animals whose slaughter they ultimately condone and whose flesh they consume. It was, if you'll pardon the expression, delicious.

But the reality side of the factory farm story isn't so tasty. Humane treatment of animals, whether being bred as pets or for display in grocery stores, is a work in progress, the relatively few successes of which are meager testament to our own humanity.

Inasmuch as the way people treat animals reveals their character, the way we mass produce animals for human consumption reveals much about our nation's character. That character is being tested even now on Capitol Hill.

While most eyes this summer have been riveted by human bloodshed from Syria to Egypt, a handful of animal rights advocates has been glued to the farm bill, which, you'll recall, became controversial when House Republicans severed a food stamp provision that customarily was attached.

What may have escaped much notice, however, is an amendment by Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, that would pre-empt state and local laws governing food production and other animal-related industries, including puppy mills, confinement of farm animals, animal fighting, shark finning, and the sale of meat from horses, dogs and cats.

Despite strong opposition from animal rights groups as well as more than 200 fellow House and Senate members, King has invoked the Commerce Clause to defend his amendment. He avers that having so many different laws in different places violates the federal government's authority to regulate interstate commerce. One of the problems, as he sees it, is that states such as California that have strong laws about how chickens must be raised (enough room in a cage to stand and spread their wings) can impose their stan-



Kathleen PARKER

dards on other states that sell their egg products in California.

"The impact of their large market would compel producers in every other state to invest billions to meet the California standard of 'means of production.'"

King, whose legislative history regarding animal welfare is poster material for cruelty (and under-headedness) — he thinks dog-fighting is fine and children ought to be able to watch — also promises that his amendment will put an end to "radical organizations" such as the Humane Society of the United States and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA.)

I probably should confess that I love anything with a heartbeat and there is no humane treatment I could imagine opposing. Do I think we

should play classical music for cows as they amble to the slaughter? Oh, why not, if it makes them less anxious?

More to the point, is making a hen's cage a little larger really so cost-prohibitive that we can't manage to make a miserable life a tiny bit less miserable? Is someone's taste for foie gras so worthy of protection that we condone force-feeding cruelly confined ducks until their livers bloat and become diseased?

The list of humans' cruelty to animals is too long and too horrible for this space. The fact that some states aim to protect animals seems to me cause for celebration rather than federal opposition. Here's a thought: Instead of trying to undo what some have done in the spirit of a more humane society, why not encourage other states to become part of the movement?

King, perhaps, represents a certain contingent that holds to a biblical view that animals don't deserve the same consideration as humans. As King said in his defense of dogfighting, there's something wrong when we outlaw dogfights but allow people to fight. The obvious difference is that people who step into the ring have a choice in the matter — and state-sanctioned torture of animals would seem to undermine the notion that humans are of greater value to the Divine.

The fate of King's amendment will be determined when Congress reconvenes in September. For now, dozens of animal rights organizations, as well as the head of the National Conference of State Legislators, are lobbying hard to kill it.

Humane, of course.

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'The Butler' And The Truth

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

This isn't your average summer movie crowd.

It's not just that they are largely African-American, skin in all the shades of buttermilk, caramel and creamless coffee that we call "black." It's not just that they are largely old, with raincloud hair and been-there eyes, some leaning on canes for support.

No, the thing you really notice is that they come with grandkids trailing behind them as a kite string does a kite, young people born of the digital age who've been told they will spend this afternoon watching a movie with Nana and Pop-Pop. What's more, it will be a movie in which no one pines for a hunky vampire or spouts quips while shooting bad guys.

No, they have come to see "Lee Daniels' The Butler," the fictionalized story of a White House servant whose tenure stretches from Eisenhower to Reagan. Watching them take their seats, you get the sense that, while these grandparents may have come for Oprah Winfrey and Forest Whitaker, what they have really come for, what they have brought their grandchildren to see, is The Truth. As in The Truth of How Things Were, and how that shades and shapes How Things Are.

That Truth has had a hard time of it in this country. It lives in books, yes, but given that so many of us regard reading as punishment and chore, that's like saying it lives on Mars. Nor has Hollywood ever had much interest in telling that Truth and on the rare occasions it does, it pretties it up with so many Disneyesque evasions, dulls its hard edges with so much buttery compromise, that it hardly looks like itself.

This absence of The Truth has filled the ether with lies, cowardly, face-saving fabrications that ignore How Things Were and allow some of us to pretend How Things Are sprang fully formed from the indolence of black mothers, the wantonness of black daughters, the fecklessness of black fathers, the thuggery of black sons, the blameless reactions of lawmakers, judges, employers, cops — and neighborhood watchmen. So what makes "The Butler" remarkable and



Leonard PITTS

necessary is simply this: It goes where we are seldom willing to go, shows what we are seldom willing to see, says what we are seldom willing to hear.

Black men hang from a tree like dead leaves. And that is The Truth.

A black man must watch his wife led away by a white man to be raped and there is nothing he can do about this act of psychological castration except endure it. And that is The Truth.

The butler sets out china and silverware for a glamorous state dinner, as, elsewhere, young men and women are being sprayed with ketchup and spit-ter, punched and kicked and called "n—r" for trying to buy a meal at a department store lunch counter. And that is The Truth.

America, someone says, turns a blind eye to what we do to our own people, yet has the nerve to look out on the rest of the world and judge. And that, too, is The Truth.

We are guilty of ignorance in this country. Worse, ignorance did not just happen. It was chosen as an alternative to dealing with what we did and do, acknowledging the crimes that made us great. We ought not say those things, a woman once said, because doing so is not "polite."

But when what happened to you is not allowed to be acknowledged, it invalidates you. It makes you as invisible as a butler standing in an Oval Office waiting to serve while other men debate your fate.

So the most significant thing about this movie is not its performances or its story, but the simple audacity of its Truth. This Truth is what the old ones have brought the young ones to see, what they need them to understand. How Things Are springs from How Things Were. You must know this, children, and respect it.

And use it to shape How Things Will Someday Be.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for *The Miami Herald*, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miami-herald.com.

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