

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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OPINION | WE SAY

Mudders



THUMBS UP to the return of mud volleyball to the Riverboat Days lineup. A tournament has been organized for this Sunday at the east end of Riverside Park, and the field is already full with 14 teams. Once upon a time, mud volleyball was one of the staple events of the new and growing Riverboat Days celebration, but some issues caused the event to be dropped. After many years, it's back in all its muddy glory. Check out the action this Sunday at Riverside Park.

Tops In The State



THUMBS UP to Vermillion school board president Chris Esping, who was named South Dakota Outstanding Board Member of the Year. Esping has served on the Vermillion board for 10 years, including the last three years as president. She received her award from Secretary of Education Melody Schopp at the recent Associated School Boards of South Dakota (ASBSD) convention in Sioux Falls. Congratulations to Esping and all the school board members for their service.

Namely



THUMBS UP to the Yankton City Commission for renaming Yankton Memorial Park to City of Yankton Fantle Memorial Park. The renaming recognizes the Fantle family who donated the 40 acres for the park. The signs around the park will now be changed accordingly. This is a nice step by the city to recognize those who have contributed to progress in Yankton.

Recalling Bacall



THUMBS DOWN to the passing of screen and stage legend Lauren Bacall this week at age 89. She was one of the living links to Hollywood's golden age of films in the 1930s and '40s; indeed, she was married to Humphrey Bogart, with whom she made her screen debut (in a lead role, no less) at the tender age of 19 in 1944's "To Have and Have Not." She was an atypical starlet: a tall (5-8 1/2, which was tall for leading ladies in the 1940s) actress with a distinctive, growling voice. But she radiated danger, elegance and a tough sophistication. When Hollywood roles became less attractive, she moved to television and then to the stage, where she won Tony Awards on Broadway. In fact, she was always in demand; she was even booked to do another movie when she passed away. Bacall is one of those people you just recognize when she turns up on Turner Classic Movies, even if you didn't know the name. And you certainly new that voice. She will be missed.

ONLINE OPINION

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you support renewing our military involvement in Iraq?
No 61%
Yes 30%
Not sure 9%
TOTAL VOTES CAST 259

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:

How closely are you following the rioting in Ferguson, Missouri?

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

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, August 15, the 227th day of 2014. There are 138 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On August 15, 1914, the Panama Canal officially opened as the SS Ancon crossed the just-completed waterway between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

On this date: In 1057, Macbeth, King of Scots, was killed in battle by Malcolm, the eldest son of King Duncan, whom Macbeth had slain.

In 1483, the Sistine Chapel was consecrated by Pope Sixtus IV.

In 1812, the Battle of Fort Dearborn took place as Potawatomi warriors attacked a U.S. military garrison of about 100 people. (Most of the garrison was killed, while the remainder were taken prisoner.)

In 1935, humorist Will Rogers and aviator Wiley Post were killed when their airplane crashed near Point Barrow in the Alaska Territory.

In 1939, the MGM musical "The Wizard of Oz" opened at the Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied forces landed in southern France in Operation Dragoon.

In 1945, in a radio address, Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced that his country had accepted terms of surrender for ending World War II.

In 1947, India became independent after about 200 years of British rule.

In 1967, a 50-foot-tall sculpture by Pablo Picasso was dedicated in Daley Plaza in Chicago by Mayor Richard J. Daley.

In 1969, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair opened in upstate New York.

In 1974, a gunman attempted to shoot South Korean President Park Chung-hee during a speech; although Park was unhurt, his wife, Yuk Young-soo, was struck and killed, along with a teenage girl. (The gunman was later executed.)

In 1989, F.W. de Klerk was sworn in as acting president of South Africa, one day after P.W. Botha resigned as the result of a power struggle within the National Party.

Ten years ago: Residents left homeless by Hurricane Charley dug through their ravaged homes, rescuing what they could as President George W. Bush promised rapid delivery of disaster aid. In Athens, the U.S. men's basketball team lost 92-73 to Puerto Rico, only the third Olympic defeat ever for the Americans and the

first since adding pros. Vijay Singh won the PGA Championship in Haven, Wisconsin.

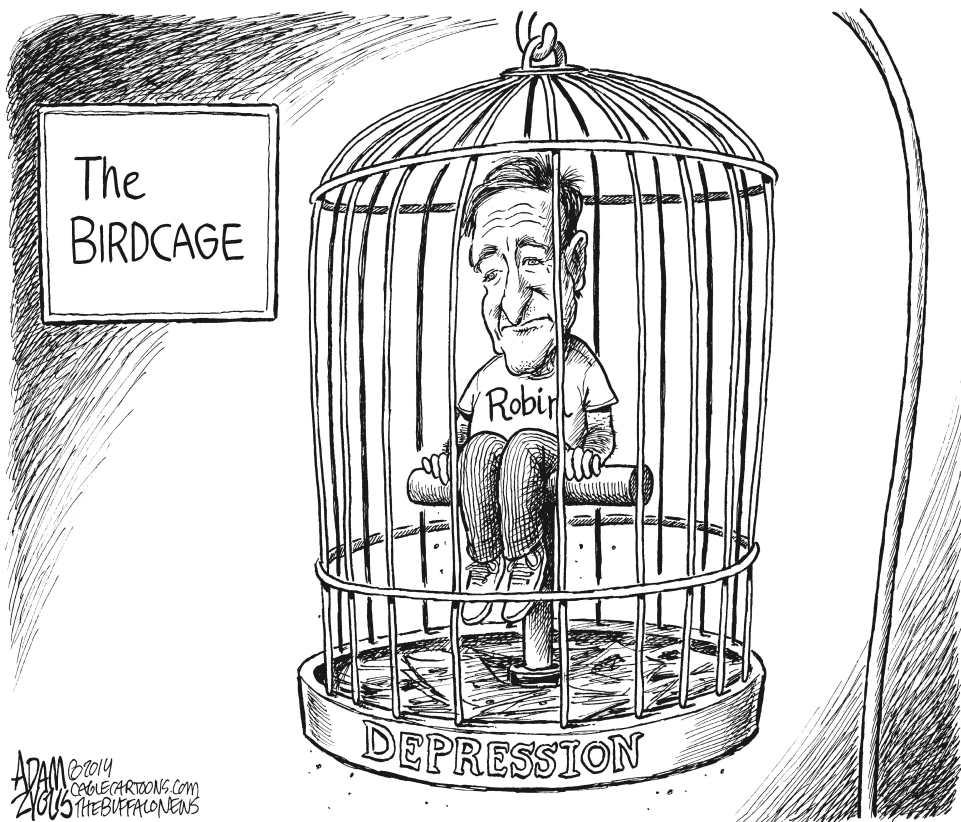
Five years ago: U.S. Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., visiting Myanmar, was able to secure the release of John Yettaw, an American imprisoned for swimming to the home of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. A wedding tent fire in Kuwait claimed the lives of 55 women and children. Virginia Davis, 90, who'd appeared in Walt Disney's pioneering "Alice" films in the 1920s, died in Corona, California.

One year ago: President Barack Obama scrapped plans for joint military exercises with Egypt, where spiraling violence in and around Cairo were claiming hundreds of lives. A powerful car bomb ripped through a crowded southern Beirut stronghold of Hezbollah, killing at least 27 people. Bert Lance, President Jimmy Carter's first budget director, died in Georgia at age 82.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Rose Marie is 91. Political activist Phyllis Schlafly is 90. Actor Mike Connors is 89. Actress Lori Nelson is 81. Civil rights activist Vernon Jordan is 79. Actor Jim Dale is 79. Actress Pat Priest is 78. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer is 76. U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., is 76. Musician Pete York (Spencer Davis Group) is 72. Author-journalist Linda Ellerbee is 70. Songwriter Jimmy Webb is 68. Rock singer-musician Tom Johnston (The Doobie Brothers) is 66. Actress Phyllis Smith is 65. Britain's Princess Anne is 64. Actress Tess Harper is 64. Actor Larry Mathews is 59. Actor Zeljko Ivanek is 57. Actor-comedian Rondell Sheridan is 56. Rock singer-musician Matt Johnson (The The) is 53. Movie director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu is 51. Philanthropist Melinda Gates is 50. Country singer Angela Rae (Wild Horses) is 48. Actor Peter Hermann is 47. Actress Debra Messing is 46. Actor Anthony Anderson is 44. Actor Ben Affleck is 42. Singer Mikey Graham (Boyzone) is 42. Actress Natasha Henstridge is 40. Actress Nicole Paggi is 37. Figure skater Jennifer Kirk is 30. Latin pop singer Belinda is 25. Rock singer Joe Jonas (The Jonas Brothers) is 25. Actor-singer Carlos Pena is 25. Actress Jennifer Lawrence is 24. Rap DJ Smoove da General (Cali Swag District) is 24. **Thought for Today:** "Forgiveness is the key to action and freedom." — Hannah Arendt, American author and philosopher (1906-1975).

FROM THE BIBLE

He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong.
Mark 12:27. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



BY KELLY HERTZ

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Robin Williams made me laugh too many times to count throughout the years, but I still recall the first time he didn't.

Long ago, in one of the episodes of "Mork and Mindy," Williams played two roles. He, of course, was Mork, the naive and frenetically hilarious space alien; and he also portrayed himself, the popular, "normal" celebrity who has a chance meeting with the loopy extraterrestrial. As Mork, Williams was typically funny. But playing himself — momentarily deprived of the masks he so gleefully wore — he seemed stilted, mumbling and terribly uncomfortable in his own skin.

I always saw this as a glimpse inside a manic star who, behind the mugging and riotous ad-libbing, may have been genuinely insecure. (Subsequent reports have tended to confirm this guess.) I've often wondered if we ever saw him when he wasn't wearing a mask or playing a role, on a stage or in life.

This week, we sadly learned much more about what lurked behind the mask. Williams was discovered dead Monday, having hanged himself. This brilliant comic had suffered from severe depression, and one must conclude that he had become lost in the darkest territories that can dwell within a mind.

I've seen numerous shocked reactions that touch on the terrible irony — that a man who made millions laugh should die amid unspeakable sadness.

I've also encountered a few harsh remarks criticizing Williams as supremely selfish for taking his life and leaving behind a grieving family. One cable TV news anchor was forced to apologize Tuesday for having labeled Williams a "coward" for his suicidal act.

But that coarse initial judgment may be a more typical response than some of us would care to think.

I've battled depression throughout my life, and although what I've had to fight has been nothing remotely near what Williams apparently endured, I can at least vaguely understand the terrain. I've sometimes fallen into some dark territories, too.

It's always a hard fight — a battle where illogic often has the upper hand. After all, what do you do when the one weapon you have to keep yourself on an even keel — your mind — is the very thing that turns on you?

Depression is a bastard. It can steal the world you know and replace it with a hopeless faux reality. It steals you from the world, from



Kelly HERTZ

your loved ones, from your life. It can blind you to everything and everyone but your own pain. But most of all, depression can be so suffocatingly lonely. Who do you talk to when you believe there's no one there to listen?

It doesn't help that there is still a lingering stigma in our society in regards to mental illness, whether it's mild or profound. Things like depression — which afflicts 1 in 10 adults in this country — can be so crippling, and yet largely misunderstood and ignored. It's often a mystery to those who have never endured it. Our own health care system was slow to recognize it: It wasn't until relatively recently, for example, that many insurance companies even acknowledged such conditions existed medically; how could the industry be expected to quantify and recognize something that only you could feel or describe?

Suicide is perhaps the greatest mystery. It's not a cry for help (although some half-hearted, failed attempts may well be) but rather a decision of capitulation. When an individual chooses suicide, I think it's because his/her perspective has become so distorted and the loneliness so overwhelming, there is no thought of what the act will do to others — or perhaps it's seen as removing the problem, not creating one. (A report Thursday that Williams had Parkinson's disease may have fit here, for all we know.) The act is simply an end.

I cannot pretend to know what was in Williams' tortured mind when he chose to die — I don't think I *want* to know — but it wasn't rational or clear, just as it wasn't cowardice. Rather, it had to be something nightmarish and monstrously lonely. The only vision I can conjure up is from one of Williams' own movies, "What Dreams May Come," a grim 1998 fantasy about life, death and the hereafter, with a terrifying depiction of what happens to souls who commit suicide. This film was the first thing that occurred to me Monday night when I read the details about Williams' death — and with that, I will continue to never want to see that movie again.

Robin Williams did indeed make me laugh. The first time I saw him, I knew he would be a star who would make the whole world laugh.

But the laughter has vanished. To the world now, he has become the new face of depression and suicide, a cautionary tale that will always mystify us — but may actually save some lives. It's his last mask and, for this mesmerizing comic, his unlikely swan song.

Follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz/. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

YOUR LETTERS

Take A Star!

Mark Wetmore, Vermillion

The *Press & Dakotan* deserves a star for the Tuesday, Aug. 5, front page. Two things to remind us how great summer and nature are: The photo of a summer sky (and yes, you could make out the Milky Way by looking closely) and Jordynne Hart's story about the missing cicadas. The quiet summer article was pleasant, informative journalism. Thanks! Take the star.

A Reason For HOPE

Karen Edler, Yankton

The third annual Team HOPE Cancer Benefit Poker Run is set for Aug. 30, 2014. Registration begins at noon at Kozy's Inn and will be ending in Lesterville. There will be a free will offering BBQ supper starting at 6:30-8:30 p.m. and a street dance to follow. For more information, please contact me.

I am asking for your consideration to helping Team HOPE fulfill its mission. I want to continue to provide to the families of this community and with your help this will be possible.

I am asking you to consider becoming a sponsor of Team HOPE. If not, you may make a

OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

donation to the Team HOPE Cancer Benefit fund, Karen Edler, 3018 N. Francis St., Yankton, or directly to a fund set up at the Services Center Federal Credit Union, 609 W. 21st, Yankton, S.D. 57078.

Your support of any kind is so graciously appreciated, not only by Team HOPE, but all individuals affected.

YOUR D.C. LAWMAKERS

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