

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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**OPINION**

## State Titles And State Locations

One of the little peculiarities of summertime in South Dakota turned up again the other day when a baseball team from Nebraska won a South Dakota state amateur baseball title. Wynot's victory over defending Class B champ Alexandria wasn't the first time an out-of-state team has taken top honors. Wynot also won the "B" title in 1999, while Crofton won crowns in 2011 and 1972. And Hartington won a South Dakota title back in 1976.

Nevertheless, for some baseball purists in this state, it's still an awkward, perhaps even galling, prospect whenever it happens.

Actually, history was nearly made this year when the South Dakota tournament almost saw an all-Nebraska final. Crofton came within one inning of also advancing to Sunday's championship game. That would have been an extraordinary development — one that would certainly have eclipsed the fact that it would have also made for an all-South Central League title fight.

And yes, some purists apparently scowled, or so we've heard. One anecdotal report noted that there were some media types who were rather loudly cheering for Crofton to lose in Saturday's semifinal game. We haven't heard how they must of felt about Sunday's result.

But why should anyone grumble? After all, out-of-state teams like Wynot and Crofton are in the South Dakota tournament because the rules allow it.

It's important to look at the South Dakota Amateur Baseball Association as a quaint reflection of baseball and summertime itself. There's something rather casual about the group, and the association has long included out-of-state teams that play in South Dakota-based leagues, such as the venerable South Central League. In that respect, the state borders are not uncrossable postseason gauntlets, as they are in high school sports. (Although there are a few high school sports cooperatives in South Dakota that pull in schools from Minnesota and North Dakota, but those could be seen as special circumstances.)

As an aside, this flexibility even drifts a bit beyond the amateur circles. When Yankton hosted the State VFW Teeners Class AA 13-14 Majors tournament here a few weeks ago, a couple of second-round games were played across the river in Crofton, even though the tournament was exclusive to South Dakota clubs.

So, how much of a problem is it when a Nebraska team wins a South Dakota state baseball title? The answer varies, although we again point to the rules that allow such teams to be eligible in the first place — that should be (but not always is) the last word on the matter.

If there are individuals who don't like the prospect of out-of-state teams winning South Dakota state tournaments, they may try to change the rules — which, as memory serves, has been talked and even tried before, apparently to little success.

Or they could take a simpler approach: Just beat those out-of-state teams on the field. That's the best way to make your case.

Short of that, all we can say today is congratulations to Wynot for its state baseball title. (Also, congrats to Crofton for its great run, and to the Vermillion Red Sox for finishing runner-up in Class A. There was clearly a lot of good amateur baseball played in the area this summer.) The Expos earned the championship, no matter where they are from. They won it on the very same field that every other team played on, and that's the bottom line.

knh

**ON THIS DATE**

Today is Wednesday, August 20, the 232nd day of 2014. There are 133 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlights in History:** On August 20, 1914, German forces occupied Brussels, Belgium, during World War I.

**On this date:** In 1833, Benjamin Harrison, 23rd president of the United States, was born in North Bend, Ohio.

In 1866, President Andrew Johnson formally declared the Civil War over, months after fighting had stopped.

In 1882, Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" had its premiere in Moscow.

In 1910, a series of forest fires swept through parts of Idaho, Montana and Washington, killing at least 85 people and burning some 3 million acres.

In 1940, during World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill paid tribute to the Royal Air Force before the House of Commons, saying, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

In 1953, the Soviet Union publicly acknowledged it had tested a hydrogen bomb.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act, a nearly \$1 billion anti-poverty measure.

In 1968, the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact nations began invading Czechoslovakia to crush the "Prague Spring" liberalization drive.

In 1972, the Wattstax concert took place at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

In 1977, the U.S. launched Voyager 2, an unmanned spacecraft carrying a 12-inch copper phonograph record containing greetings in dozens of languages, samples of music and sounds of nature.

In 1989, entertainment executive Jose Menendez and his wife, Kitty, were shot to death in their Beverly Hills mansion by their sons, Lyle and Erik. Fifty-one people died when a pleasure boat sank in the River Thames in London after colliding with a dredger. British conservationist George Adamson, 83, was shot and killed by bandits in Kenya. The situation comedy "Saved by the Bell" premiered on NBC-TV.

In 1994, Benjamin Chavis Jr. was fired as head of the NAACP after a turbulent 16-month tenure.

**Ten years ago:** Democrats labored to deflect attacks on presidential nominee John Kerry's war record with fresh television ads touting his fitness for national command. In Athens, Michael Phelps matched Mark Spitz's record of four individual gold medals in the Olympic pool with a stirring comeback in the 100-meter butterfly, then removed himself from further competition.

**Five years ago:** The only man convicted in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 returned home to Libya after his release on compassionate grounds from a Scottish prison. (Abdel Baset al-Megrahi, said to have only months to live because of prostate cancer, died nearly three years later, claiming his innocence.) Afghans voted for a president for the second time ever, but Taliban threats dampened turnout in the militant south. Ryan Alexander Jenkins, a contestant on the VH1 reality show "Megan Wants a Millionaire," was charged with murdering his wife, Jasmine Fiore, whose body was found in Buena Park, California (Jenkins was found dead three days later, an apparent suicide). One-time Super Bowl star Plaxico Burress accepted a plea bargain with a two-year prison sentence for accidentally shooting himself in the thigh at a Manhattan nightclub.

**One year ago:** A Pakistani court indicted former president and army chief Pervez Musharraf on murder charges stemming from the assassination of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Qatar-based Al-Jazeera Media Network launched its U.S. cable news outlet, Al-Jazeera America. Crime novelist Elmore Leonard, 87, died in Bloomfield Township, Michigan. Jazz pianist Marjorie McPartland, 95, died in Port Washington, New York, of natural causes.

**Today's Birthdays:** Writer-producer-director Walter Bernstein is 95. Boxing promoter Don King is 83. Former Sen. George Mitchell, D-Maine, is 81. U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, is 79. Former MLB All-Star Graig Nettles is 70. Broadcast journalist Connie Chung is 68. Musician Jimmy Pankow (Chicago) is 67. Actor John Noble is 66. Rock singer Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin) is 66. Country singer Rudy Gatlin is 62. Singer-songwriter John Hiatt is 62. Actor-director Peter Horton is 61. TV weatherman Al Roker is 60. Actor Jay Acovone is 59. Actress Joan Allen is 58. Movie director David O. Russell (Film: "American Hustle") is 56. TV personality Asha Blake is 53. Actor James Marsters is 52. Rapper KRS-One is 49. Actor Colin Cunningham is 48. Actor Billy Gardell is 45. Rock singer Fred Durst (Limp Bizkit) is 44. Rock musician Brad Avery is 43. Actor Jonathan Ke Quan is 43. Actor Misha Collins is 40. Rock singer Monique Powell (Save Ferris) is 39. Actor Ben Barnes is 33. Actress Meghan Ory is 32. Actor Andrew Garfield is 31. Actor Brant Daugherty (TV: "Pretty Little Liars") is 29. Actress-singer Demi Lovato is 22.

**Thought for Today:** "To the eye of failure success is an accident." — Ambrose Bierce, American author-journalist (1842-1914?)

**FROM THE BIBLE**

And what I say to you I shall say to all: Stay awake. Mark 13:37. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

**YOUR LETTERS**

**A Great Idea**

**Karin Ehlers, Yankton**  
As a farm owner, I was glad to see that Rick Weiland has come out in favor of E-30 and went as far to start using it in his van. I think that is a great idea and hope people start talking about E-30 more.

There is no reason we can't get E-30 at every pump in the country. It doesn't hurt your engine. It is cheaper. It burns cleaner.

It also helps South Dakota farmers with corn prices. I think this is a great move and hope other candidates follow his lead.

STAR TRIBUNE CagleCartoons.com



## The Disease Of American Democracy

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

Americans are sick of politics. Only 13 percent approve of the job Congress is doing, a near-record low. The president's approval ratings are also in the basement.

A large portion of the public doesn't even bother voting. Only 57.5 percent of eligible voters cast their ballots in the 2012 presidential election.

Put simply, most Americans feel powerless and assume the political game is fixed. So why bother?

A new study scheduled to be published in this fall by Princeton University's Martin Gilens and Northwestern University's Benjamin Page confirms our worst suspicions.

Gilens and Page analyzed 1,799 policy issues in detail, determining the relative influence that economic elites, business groups, mass-based interest groups and average citizens have on those issues.

Their conclusion: "The preferences of the average American appear to have only a miniscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy."

Instead, lawmakers respond to the policy demands of wealthy individuals and monied business interests — those with the most lobbying prowess and deepest pockets to bankroll campaigns.

Before you're tempted to say "duh," wait a moment. Gilens and Page's data come from the period covering 1981 to 2002. This was before the Supreme Court opened the floodgates to big money in the Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission decision, prior to Super PACs, and before the Wall Street bailout.

So it's likely to be even worse now.

But did the average citizen ever have much power? The eminent journalist and commentator Walter Lippmann argued in his 1922 book "Public Opinion" that the broad public didn't know or care about public policy. Its consent was "manufactured" by an elite that manipulated it. "It is no longer possible ... to believe in the original dogma of democracy," Lippmann concluded.

Yet American democracy seemed robust compared with other nations that in the first half of the 20th century succumbed to communism or totalitarianism.

Political scientists after World War II hypothesized that even though the voices of individual Americans counted for little, most people belonged to a variety of interest groups and membership organizations — clubs, associations, political parties, unions — to which politicians were responsive.

"Interest-group pluralism," as it was called, thereby channeled the views of individual citizens, and made American democracy function.

What's more, the political power of big corporations and Wall Street was offset by the power of labor unions, farm cooperatives, retailers and smaller banks.

Economist John Kenneth Galbraith approvingly



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dubbed it "countervailing power." These alternative power centers ensured that America's vast middle and working classes received a significant share of the gains from economic growth.

Starting in 1980, something profoundly changed. It wasn't just that big corporations and wealthy individuals became more politically potent, as Gilens and Page document. It was also that other interest groups began to wither.

Grass-roots membership organizations shrank because Americans had less time for them. As wages stagnated, most people had to devote more time to work in order to make ends meet. That included the time of wives and mothers who began streaming into the paid workforce to prop up family incomes.

At the same time, union membership plunged because corporations began sending jobs abroad and fighting attempts to unionize. (Ronald Reagan helped legitimize these moves when he fired striking air traffic controllers.)

Other centers of countervailing power — retailers, farm cooperatives and local and regional banks — also lost ground to national discount chains, big agribusiness and Wall Street. Deregulation sealed their fates.

Meanwhile, political parties stopped representing the views of most constituents. As the costs of campaigns escalated, parties morphed from state and local membership organizations into national fundraising machines.

We entered a vicious cycle in which political power became more concentrated in monied interests that used the power to their advantage — getting tax cuts, expanding tax loopholes, benefiting from corporate welfare and free-trade agreements, slicing safety nets, enacting anti-union legislation and reducing public investments.

These moves further concentrated economic gains at the top, while leaving out most of the rest of America.

No wonder Americans feel powerless. No surprise we're sick of politics, and many of us aren't even voting.

But if we give up on politics, we're done for. Powerlessness is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The only way back toward a democracy and economy that work for the majority is for most of us to get politically active once again, becoming organized and mobilized.

We have to establish a new countervailing power.

The monied interests are doing what they do best — making money. The rest of us need to do what we can do best — use our voices, our vigor and our votes.

Robert Reich is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and Senior Fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. His new film, "Inequality for All," is now out on iTunes, DVD and On Demand.

## What's Next In Ferguson? Let's Try A Little Education

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

What next? That's what should concern us now. When the nightly dance of angry protesters, opportunistic criminals and inept police clashing over the shooting of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown finally ends, what steps should civic-minded people take to address the ongoing abuse of African Americans by the criminal justice system? Not just in Ferguson, Missouri, but in America?

There will be no shortage of good ideas: dashboard cameras, community policing, the hiring of more black cops, the removal of military hardware from police arsenals, sensitivity training. To these, I would add a suggestion that is admittedly less "sexy" than any of those, but which I think has greater potential to make fundamental change in the long term. In a word: education.

Beginning as early as the latter elementary years, schools should offer — no, require — age-appropriate cross-cultural studies that would, in effect, introduce us to us. Meaning not some airy fairy curriculum of achievements and accomplishments designed to impart some vague intra-cultural pride, but a hard-headed, warts and all American history designed to impart understanding of who we are, where we're from and the forces that have made us — inner-city black, Appalachian white, barrio Mexican, whatever.

You might consider this a utopian idea. Maybe it is. But I've never been able to shake a conviction that if you walk the proverbial mile in another man's shoes, you inoculate yourself against your biases toward him. I believe empathy follows understanding.

Surely we could use some empathy just now. As America races toward a future in which no one race is numerically dominant, it remains largely a nation of cultural illiterates content to interpret various Others through lenses of stereotype and canard. If this has been a bonanza for certain politicians ("Elect me and I'll keep you safe from the



Leonard PITTS

gays/the Mexicans/the blacks!"), let us never forget that this ignorance, these unconscious biases for and against, have real world impact.

Michael Brown lying dead in the street is seemingly one image thereof. Here's another:

Last Thursday at 2:30 in the morning, seven teenagers, ages 18 and 19, broke into the home of basketball star Ray Allen. Allen, who played last season for the Miami Heat, was not home, but his wife was. Waking to find strangers in her bedroom, she screamed and they ran.

Police say the teenagers, who had been at a party at a house near Allen's in the tony South Florida suburb of Coral Gables, didn't think anybody was home and simply wanted to see what it looked like inside. The kids were questioned and released. Authorities have thus far declined to prosecute, saying — incredibly — that under Florida law, there was no crime with which the group could be charged.

It ought not surprise you to learn that these kids were white Hispanics. And I challenge you — I double-dog dare you — to tell me seven black kids who invaded a home in a wealthy neighborhood in the middle of the night would have likewise gotten off with a good talking to. Black kids are strangers to such lavish benefit of the doubt.

And we have been too sanguine for too long about such inequality of treatment in a nation whose birth certificate says, "all men are created equal." We have only the one country. And we can either tear it apart or figure out a way we can all live in it in justice and thus, in peace.

To do that, we must stop being moral cowards, stop embracing the idea that somehow, our racial and cultural challenges will resolve themselves if we just don't talk about them. Ignore it and it will go away. Take a good look at the carnage in Ferguson and ask yourself: How's that working out so far?

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