

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION

GOP Debates: A Flawed Format

Without question, calling the Republican field for the 2016 presidential nomination packed is a staggering understatement. There is, as of this writing, at least 17 announced candidates for the nomination, with the most recent jumping into this fray only last week.

This presents a huge problem for voters — and unfortunately, the solutions aren't doing them any favors.

In particular, the first GOP debate is set to be held this week, and Fox News, which is sponsoring the event, has decided to limit the stage to 10 candidates, based on the average results of a collection of polls.

This was designed as a way to bring order to the chaos.

But this move creates chaos in itself.

The rule has been vigorously criticized by some of the GOP hopefuls, particularly those who figure to miss the threshold for making it to the stage — which basically all but sinks their White House aspirations.

Their frustration is understandable, and their arguments — which, admittedly, are self-serving — are important.

The basic truth is, limiting the number of candidates who can participate in a debate effectively winnows down the field before a single vote is cast and before any issue is discussed and examined in open forum. It allows a media outlet to dictate, roughly, who the winners and losers are. That's not the media's job. It's one thing for the media to editorialize about issues and candidates, but to let a television network, for instance, dictate who will be heard and who will be ignored is giving too much power to those who are supposed to report the news, not shape it.

(We've tended to run into this situation here from time to time when independent candidates are running for statewide office. There is a temptation sometimes to ignore these candidates when they stop by, because the chances of them winning are very small. But that's not for us to decide, we believe, and we talk to them. The voters have the say from there.)

The current format for the Republican field gives far too much weight to mere name recognition, and it has led some candidates working to make some headway by saying things that grab big headlines. There is, for instance, Mike Huckabee, whose declarations that the Iran deal is leading Israel "closer to the ovens" and that he would consider using military force to halt abortions are over the top and reckless but quite potent, and they are getting him plenty of attention in the crowded field. And of course, there's Donald Trump, who daily utters things that speak to what some people may be thinking but often don't address practical reality. Nevertheless, he has sucked much of the oxygen out of the pre-debate media environment and it has put him at the top of most national polls.

The only fair approach to dealing with the congested field may be the most impractical in terms of television presentation: Have all the candidates on the stage to touch on the issues, and allot sufficient time for them all to do it.

That's a lot to ask, but it's the only fair way for voters to consider the offerings. It's the voters who are supposed to decide, not the media. And therein lies the problem the GOP faces as its elimination derby begins.

kmh

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, August 4, the 216th day of 2015. There are 149 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On August 4, 1790, the U.S. Coast Guard had its beginnings as President George Washington signed a measure authorizing a group of revenue cutters to enforce tariff and trade laws and prevent smuggling.

On this date: In 1735, a jury found John Peter Zenger of the *New York Weekly Journal* not guilty of committing seditious libel against the colonial governor of New York, William Cosby.

In 1830, plans for the city of Chicago were laid out.

In 1892, Andrew and Abby Borden were axed to death in their home in Fall River, Massachusetts. Lizzie Borden, Andrew's daughter from a previous marriage, was accused of the killings, but acquitted at trial.

In 1914, Britain declared war on Germany for invading Belgium; the United States proclaimed its neutrality in the mushrooming world conflict.

In 1915, English nurse Edith Cavell was arrested by German authorities in occupied Belgium; she was executed later that year.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the U.S. won the second of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he prevailed in the long jump over German Luz Long, who was the first to congratulate him.

In 1944, 15-year-old diarist Anne Frank was arrested with her sister, parents and four others by the Gestapo after hiding for two years inside a building in Amsterdam. (Anne and her sister, Margot, died at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.)

In 1964, the bodies of missing civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney were found buried in an earthen dam in Mississippi.

In 1975, the Swedish pop group ABBA began recording their hit single "Dancing Queen" at Glen Studio outside Stockholm (it was released a year later).

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed a measure establishing the Department of Energy.

In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission voted to abolish the Fairness Doctrine, which required radio and television stations to present balanced coverage of controversial issues.

In 1991, the Greek luxury liner *Oceanos* sank in heavy seas off South Africa's southeast coast; all the passengers and crew members survived.

Ten years ago: Al-Qaida's No. 2, Ayman al-Zawahiri, threatened more destruction in London in a videotape aired on Al-Jazeera. He also threatened the United States with tens of thousands of military dead if it did not withdraw from Iraq; President George W. Bush responded

by saying, "We will stay the course, we will complete the job." A 19-year-old Israeli soldier opened fire inside a bus, killing four Israeli Arabs; an angry crowd then killed the gunman. A mini-submarine carrying seven Russians became caught on an underwater antenna 600 feet below the surface of the Pacific Ocean; the men were rescued three days later with help from a British vessel.

Five years ago: BP PLC reported the broken well head at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico was plugged up with mud; President Barack Obama said the battle to contain one of the world's worst oil spills was "finally close to coming to an end." Eight days after turning 35, Alex Rodriguez hit his 600th home run, becoming the youngest player to attain the milestone. (A-Rod's two-run, first-inning drive off Toronto's Shaun Marcum put New York ahead, and the Yankees coasted to a 5-1 victory over the Blue Jays.)

One year ago: On the first day of a U.S.-Africa summit in Washington, President Barack Obama announced \$33 billion in commitments aimed at shifting U.S. ties with Africa beyond humanitarian aid and toward more equal economic partnerships. Israel and Hamas accepted an Egyptian cease-fire proposal meant to halt a bruising monthlong war that had claimed nearly 2,000 lives. James Brady, 73, the affable, witty press secretary who had survived a devastating head wound in the 1981 assassination attempt against President Ronald Reagan and undertook a personal campaign for gun control, died in Alexandria, Virginia.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Frankie Ford is 76. Actress-singer Tina Turner is 72. Actor-comedian Richard Belzer is 71. Football Hall-of-Famer John Riggins is 66. Former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales is 60. Actor-screenwriter Billy Bob Thornton is 60. Actress Kym Karath (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 57. Hall of Fame track star Mary Decker Slaney is 57. Actress Lauren Tom is 56. President Barack Obama is 54. Producer Michael Gelman (TV: "Live! With Kelly and Michael") is 54. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Roger Clemens is 53. Actress Crystal Chappell is 50. Author Dennis Lehane is 50. Rock musician Rob Ciekla (Boo Radleys) is 47. Actor Daniel Dae Kim is 47. Actor Michael DeLuise is 46. Actor Ron Lester is 45. Race car driver Jeff Gordon is 44. Rapper-actress Yo-Yo is 44. Country singer Jon Nicholson is 42. Rhythm-and-blues singer-actor Marques Houston is 34. Actress Meghan Markle is 34. Actress Greta Gerwig is 32. Country singer Crystal Bowersox (TV: "American Idol") is 30. Rock singer Tom Parker (The Wanted) is 27. Actors Dylan and Cole Sprouse are 23. Singer Jessica Sanchez (TV: "American Idol") is 20.

Thought for Today: "A man does not know what he is saying until he knows what he is not saying." — G.K. Chesterton, English poet-essayist (1874-1936).

FROM THE BIBLE

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize. Hebrews 4:15. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



The Rez of the Story

'Without Debate ... No Republic Can Survive'

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi,

John F. Kennedy once spoke these profound words and he added, "...without criticism no administration and no country can succeed..."

I agree with his basic premise but I would add, as long as the criticism offered is constructive and responsible. This requires some truth telling.

Brad Blanton, PhD, in his book entitled, "Telling the Truth," argues: "We all lie like hell. It wears us out. It is the major source of all human stress. Lying kills people."

"The kind of lying that is most deadly is withholding, or keeping back information from someone we think would be affected by it. Psychological illness of the severest kind is the result of this kind of lying. Psychological healing is possible only with the freedom that comes from not hiding anymore. Keeping secrets and hiding from other people is a trap. Adolescents spend most of their time playing this hide-and-seek game. The better you are at getting by with playing hide-and-seek during adolescents, the harder it is to grow up. "Important" secrets and all the plotting and cogitation [the act of thinking deeply about something] that go with them are all b——.

"The mind is a jail built out of b——. Withholding from other people, not telling them about what we feel or think, keeps us locked in the jail. The longer we remain in that jail, the quicker we decline. We either escape or we go dead. The way out is to get good at telling the truth."

Of course there are many versions of the "truth" and our individual and collective challenge is to sort out the truth from the b——. This sorting out is a process that can be likened to a journey and therefore never stops until our journey comes to its inevitable end. Is there, in fact, one truth fits all? When it comes to religion this is definitely the case is it not?

From his book, "God is Red," Vince Deloria Jr. tells us:

"To have differences, even among the species of life, does not require then that forces be



Vince TWO EAGLES

created to gain a sense of unity or homogeneity [of the same kind]. To exist in a creation means that living is more than tolerance for other life forms, it is recognition that in difference there is the strength of creation and that this strength is a deliberate desire of the creator."

Who or what culture can claim the know the ultimate "desire" of the creator (if in fact there is a creator). This does not mean that the diverse perspectives and perceptions of the many cultures represented around the planet necessarily put one perspective or perception above the other in the truth category.

Deloria continues: "Tribal religions find a great affinity among species of living creatures, and it is at this point that the brotherhood of life is a strong part of the Indian way. The Hopi, for example, revere not only the lands on which they live but the animals with which they have a particular relationship. ... Behind the apparent kinship between animals, reptiles, birds, and human beings in the Indian

way stands a great conception shared by a great majority of the tribes. Other living things are not regarded as insensitive species. Rather they are "peoples" in the same manner as the various tribes of men are peoples. ... In the same manner the Plains Indians considered the buffalo as a distinct people, the Northwest Coast Indians regarded the salmon as a people. Equality is thus not simply a human attribute but is a recognition of the creaturehood of all creation."

Understanding the ultimate relationship of all things give sustainability the oxygen it needs to be applied to the statement "we are all related" or "all my relations." But being related is only a part of the "understanding." *Sitomani ob washteya ipi ichiyi* means to be in good relationship with all things. Thus, in the perspective of many traditional thinking Indian people, having and being in a good relationship with other living things not only more deeply defines "equality" as opposed to having dominion over other living things, but also provides a prescription for a healthier (sustainable) way of living.

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Raising Taxes

Randy Gleich, Yankton

"Let's raise taxes" seems the mood of our politicians these days. The time is right and the public will not mind.

Raising taxes does nothing to help the economy. When the public sector has more money to spend (as in lower taxes), it boosts the economy. When the government has more money to spend (as in higher taxes), it has little effect on the economy and is very rarely spent in an efficient manner.

South Dakota just added a whopping \$136 million to the tax receipts while Yankton County just took out \$1.5 million plus out of taxpayers' pockets.

Is this a reality show with all the spin and theatrics of the politicians? All in the justification that our roads are in dire need and the infrastructure is just collapsing.

Yes, we would probably agree roads need to be maintained and some just replaced. Only logical. However, Yankton and Yankton County face two problems: One is maintaining the roads we have and the other is the new roads that will be necessary in the future to facilitate our growth.

There is no doubt in my mind that future increases in taxes will be proposed for this purpose.

And with that in mind, the only check and balance that are in place is to allow the taxpayer to have the ultimate decision on "how much," and that is via a public vote through

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