

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION

Sturgis And The Hard Numbers

There's little doubting the fact that the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally is one of South Dakota's premier festivals. That may feel like an odd word to use to describe this event, but it genuinely is festival, a community celebration and an extraordinary tourism magnet in every sense. That state takes pride in it and surely benefits from it.

Without question, the Sturgis rally is as much a part of South Dakota's identity as pheasant hunting, the Corn Palace, Czech Days and more.

As such, we must also contemplate the flip side of this extravaganza — the grim underbelly that is tied to this event every year, so much so that officials come to expect it.

As of Tuesday morning, eight people had already been killed in incidents that were directly tied to the Sturgis rally. While this compares

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more people here, more traffic, more motorcyclists.

The question is, can anything be done to bring more safety and more, let's say, civility to this showcase event?

That answer may be truly elusive. After all, it has been for a very long time.

All that we can do individually is take care when we are out on the roadways and keep our eyes peeled for motorcyclists passing through the area. Give them a wide berth and that provides a certain level of safety.

But it's not nearly enough. It never has been.

The Sturgis rally annually draws hundreds of thousands of people — and perhaps even a million this year — and with it always comes an atmosphere that generates more dangers and more errant behavior.

This does not apply to everyone who attends the rally; it's not even close to a majority. (If it were, there'd be nothing left of the Black Hills but a greasy spot.) But it does come with this piece of territory and the character of the rally.

Ultimately, this is South Dakota's event, and therefore it is South Dakota's issue.

No one wants to do away with the rally or diminish its broad and profitable appeal. But the secondary issues that ride into the state with the rally need to be addressed more vigorously, either through aggressive education or even greater vigilance. There is no way to completely remove the dangers and the issues, but working to curb them and control them is something that should be a higher priority, probably with discussions between lawmakers and law enforcement. It might even be worthy of a task force study.

Whether any of it could make an impact is unknown at this point. It all has become ritually problematic. But it's hard to watch this every year and wonder if something more could be done to make this attractive spotlight event safer for everyone.

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 Wednesday, August 5, the 217th day of 2015. There are 148 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On August 5, 1965, during the Vietnam War, "The CBS Evening News" sparked controversy as it aired a report by correspondent Morley Safer showing a group of U.S. Marines torching huts in the village of Cam Ne, considered a Viet Cong stronghold, using flamethrowers and Zippo cigarette lighters.

On this date: In 1864, during the Civil War, Union Adm. David G. Farragut led his fleet to victory in the Battle of Mobile Bay, Alabama.

In 1884, the cornerstone for the Statue of Liberty's pedestal was laid on Bedloe's Island in New York Harbor.

In 1914, what's believed to be the first electric traffic light system was installed in Cleveland, Ohio, at the intersection of East 105th Street and Euclid Avenue. Montenegro declared war on Austria-Hungary at the start of World War I.

In 1924, the comic strip "Little Orphan Annie" by Harold Gray made its debut.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the National Labor Board, which was later replaced with the National Labor Relations Board.

In 1953, Operation Big Switch began as remaining prisoners taken during the Korean War were exchanged at Panmunjom.

In 1957, the teenage dance show "American Bandstand," hosted by Dick Clark, made its network debut on ABC-TV.

In 1962, actress Marilyn Monroe, 36, was found dead in her Los Angeles home; her death was ruled a probable suicide from "acute barbiturate poisoning." South African anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela was arrested; it was the beginning of 27 years of imprisonment.

In 1969, the U.S. space probe Mariner 7 flew by Mars, sending back photographs and scientific data.

In 1974, the White House released transcripts of subpoenaed tape recordings showing that President Richard Nixon and his chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, had discussed a plan in June 1972 to use the CIA to thwart the FBI's Watergate investigation; revelation of the tape sparked Nixon's resignation.

In 1984, actor Richard Burton died in Geneva, Switzerland, at age 58.

In 1994, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington chose Kenneth W. Starr to take over the Whitewater investigation from Robert Fiske.

Ten years ago: British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced new deportation measures against people who fostered

hatred and advocated violence. The NCAA announced it would shut American Indian nicknames and images out of post-season tournaments. Hunter Kelly, whose battle with a nervous system disease inspired fundraising crusade by his father, Football Hall of Famer Jim Kelly, died in Orchard Park, New York, at age eight.

Five years ago: The Senate confirmed Elena Kagan, 63-37, as the Supreme Court's 112th justice and the fourth woman in its history. BP finished pumping cement into the blown Deepwater Horizon oil well in the Gulf of Mexico. Thirty-three workers were trapped in a copper mine in northern Chile after a tunnel caved in (all were rescued after being entombed for 69 days). Ten members of a Christian medical team from the International Assistance Mission were gunned down in Afghanistan by unknown attackers.

One year ago: U.S. Maj. Gen. Harold Greene was shot to death near Kabul in one of the bloodiest insider attacks in the long Afghanistan war; the gunman, dressed as an Afghan soldier, turned on allied troops, wounding about 15, including a German general and two Afghan generals. American aid worker Nancy Writebol, infected with Ebola while in Liberia, arrived in Atlanta, joining Dr. Kent Brantley, a fellow patient being given an experimental treatment. (Both recovered.) Actress Marilyn Burns, 65, best known as the heroine of the 1974 horror classic "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre," was found dead at her home in Houston. Former U.S. Surgeon General Jesse Steinfeld, 87, died in Pomona, California. The San Antonio Spurs hired WNBA star Becky Hammon as an assistant coach, making her the first woman to join an NBA coaching staff.

Today's Birthdays: Actor John Saxon is 79. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player Roman Gabriel is 75. Country songwriter Bobby Braddock is 75. Actress Loni Anderson is 70. Actress Erika Slezak is 69. Rock singer Rick Derringer is 68. Actress Holly Palance is 65. Singer Samantha Sang is 62. Actress-singer Maureen McCormick is 59. Rock musician Pat Smear is 56. Author David Baldacci is 55. Actress Tawney Kitaen is 54. Actress Janet McTeer is 54. Country musician Mark O'Connor is 54. Basketball Hall-of-Famer Patrick Ewing is 53. Actor Jonathan Silverman is 49. Country singer Terri Clark is 47. Retired MLB All-Star John Olerud is 47. Rock musician Eicca Toppinen (Apocalyptica) is 40. Actor Jesse Williams (TV: "Grey's Anatomy") is 35. Actor Brendon Ryan Barrett is 29.

Thought for Today: "If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking." — Gen. George S. Patton (1885-1945).

FROM THE BIBLE

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



The Revolt Against The Ruling Class

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

"He can't possibly win the nomination," is the phrase heard most often when Washington insiders mention either Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders.

Yet as enthusiasm for the bombastic billionaire and the socialist senior continues to build within each party, the political establishment is mystified.

Political insiders don't see that the biggest political phenomenon in America today is a revolt against the "ruling class" of insiders who have dominated Washington for more than three decades.

In two very different ways, Trump and Sanders are agents of this revolt. I'll explain the two ways in a moment.

Don't confuse this for the public's typical attraction to candidates posing as political outsiders who'll clean up the mess, even when they're really insiders who contributed to the mess.

What's new is the degree of anger now focused on those who have had power over our economic and political system since the start of the 1980s. Included are presidents and congressional leaders from both parties, along with their retinues of policy advisors, political strategists and spin doctors. Most have remained in Washington even when not in power, as lobbyists, campaign consultants, go-to lawyers, financial bundlers and power brokers.

The other half of the ruling class comprises the corporate executives, Wall Street chiefs and multimillionaires who have assisted and enabled these political leaders — and for whom the politicians have provided political favors in return.

America has long had a ruling class, but the public was willing to tolerate it during the three decades after World War II, when prosperity was widely shared and when the Soviet Union posed a palpable threat. Then, the ruling class seemed benevolent and wise.

Yet in the last three decades — when almost all of the nation's economic gains have gone to the top while the wages of most people have gone nowhere — the ruling class has seemed to pad its own pockets at the expense of the rest of America.

We've witnessed self-dealing on a monumental scale — starting with the junk-bond takeovers of the 1980s, followed by the Savings and Loan crisis, the corporate scandals of the early 2000s (Enron, Adelphia, Global Crossing, Tyco, WorldCom), and culminating in the near meltdown of Wall Street in 2008 and the taxpayer-financed bailout.

Along the way, millions of Americans lost their jobs, their savings and their homes.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has opened the floodgates to big money in politics wider than ever. Taxes have been cut on top incomes, tax loopholes have widened, government debt has grown, public services have been cut. And not a single Wall Street execu-

tive has gone to jail.

The game seems rigged — riddled with abuses of power, crony capitalism and corporate welfare.

In 1964, Americans agreed by a margin of 64 percent to 29 percent that government was run for the benefit of all the people. By 2012, the response had reversed, with 79 percent of voters saying that government was "run by a few big interests looking after themselves," according to American National Election Studies.

Which has made it harder for ordinary people to get ahead. In 2001, a Gallup poll found 77 percent of Americans satisfied with opportunities to get ahead by working hard and 22 percent dissatisfied. By 2014, only 54 percent were satisfied and 45 percent dissatisfied.

The resulting fury at the ruling class has taken two quite different forms.

On the right are the wreckers. The Tea Party, which emerged soon after the Wall Street bailout, has been intent on stopping government in its tracks and overthrowing a ruling class it sees as rotten to the core.

Its Republican proteges in Congress and state legislatures have attacked the Republican establishment. And they've wielded the wrecking balls of government shutdowns, threats to default on public debt, gerrymandering, voter suppression through strict ID laws, and outright appeals to racism.

Donald Trump is their human wrecking ball. The more outrageous his rants and put-downs of other politicians, the more popular he becomes among this segment of the public that's thrilled by a bombastic, racist billionaire who sticks it to the ruling class.

On the left are the rebuilders. The Occupy movement, which also emerged from the Wall Street bailout, was intent on displacing the ruling class and rebuilding our political-economic system from the ground up.

Occupy didn't last, but it put inequality on map. And the sentiments that fueled Occupy are still boiling.

Bernie Sanders personifies this group. The more he advocates a fundamental retooling of our economy and democracy in favor of average working people, the more popular he becomes among those who no longer trust the ruling class to bring about necessary change.

Yet despite the growing revolt against the ruling class, it seems likely that the presidential nominees in 2016 will be Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton. After all, the ruling class still controls America.

But the revolt against the ruling class won't end with the 2016 election, regardless.

Which means the ruling class will have to change the way it rules America. Or it won't rule too much longer.

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 Netflix, iTunes and Amazon.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Monstrous Good Time!

Rich Wright, Yankton

Cast member, "Young Frankenstein"

I would like to take this opportunity to invite everyone come and see The Lewis and Clark Theater Company's performance of "Young Frankenstein." The final weekend's shows are Aug. 6-8 at 7:30 p.m., and Aug. 9 at 2 p.m.

All shows are at the Dakota Theater in historic downtown Yankton. "Young Frankenstein" is a dazzling combination of singing, dancing

and comedy that is guaranteed to entertain.

The Yankton community is very fortunate to have the Lewis and Clark Theater Company. While many communities, our size, have maybe one live show a year, Yankton is blessed with a year round schedule. Please consider live theater among your entertainment options. The price of the show is a bargain, for what you get. The concessions prices are also very reasonable.

We hope to see you, this weekend for a performance of "Young Frankenstein."

P&D LETTER POLICY

The PRESS & DAKOTAN invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask 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 us at kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.

DESTINY: "Our republic and its press will rise or fall together."

— Joseph Pulitzer

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: It's Your Right To Know!