

The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861
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**Published Daily
Monday-Saturday**
Periodicals postage
paid at Yankton, South
Dakota, under the act of
March 3, 1979.
Weekly Dakotian
established June 6, 1861.
Yankton Daily Press and
Dakotian established April
26, 1875.
Postmaster: Send
address changes to Yankton
Daily Press & Dakotan,
319 Walnut, Yankton, SD
57078.

MEMBERSHIPS
The Yankton Daily
Press & Dakotan is a
member of the Associ-
ated Press, the Inland
Daily Press Association and
the South Dakota
Newspaper Association.
The Associated Press is
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3 months.....\$36.27
6 months.....\$72.53
1-year.....\$133.09
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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Still Reasons To Avoid Home Schooling

(By Dan K. Thomasson Tribune News Service) WASHINGTON — I asked a friend where she had gone to school. "I didn't" she replied. Then she hastily explained. "People came in."

"So you were home-schooled," I said, adding since I realized her age, that she was well ahead of the trend. "Well, not exactly," she tolerantly said. "The people were tutors, not my mother and father."

"Oh," I muttered, finally understanding. The education she was talking about came from a social order that most Americans don't experience. It was a time of enormous industrial wealth for few — even during the Great Depression, when she was born — and her Detroit upbringing was a throwback to an insular society that lived and learned among its own, especially where young ladies were concerned.

Her maiden name is that of a famous automobile. While it is no longer in existence, the family that built it is still prominent in other areas of commercial success.

This, of course, is miles away from what we now call "home schooling," which is based on any number of beliefs that the public school system is contaminated by Godlessness, incompetence and danger, among other things. The do-it-yourself approach is basically unregulated, with only a few states even requiring that those who teach — usually parents — have even a high school diploma.

Actually, just 13 states and the District of Columbia demand home instructors have some minimum requirements. The other 37 states, according to the Education Commission of the States as reported by the Washington Post recently, have no such requirements. Furthermore, only 20 states require an assessment of academic progress for the home-schooled, and only 12 states subject these "students" to standardized tests. Oh, yes. Attendance is required in just 23 states and the District.

Thus, it is possible for pupils whose parents disavow the public system in the interest of protecting them from "life its own self," as a famous writer once quipped, to never have to face a standard test, a report card, or expulsion for skipping class. Such a deal! I know at least 10 kids, all of them my grandchildren, who would shout, "sign me up now," if they had the chance.

Those who support this concept of education will point out endless statistics about how well home-schooled students perform as compared to their peers who climb aboard school buses at an early hour each morning. The movement is growing and nearly 2 million children nationally are now being home-schooled, up from 1.1 million in 2003, according to the Post.

But if these claims are correct, and they're difficult to determine, the entire concept of public learning that is based on well-educated, trained teachers is not only faulty but beyond repair. If high school dropouts can teach as well as professional educators, taxpayers have been wasting their money, big time.

Both my parents were college educated at a time when that percentage was far below what it is now. But they would not have even suggested that my three siblings and I should be home-schooled even though they were qualified and quite capable of teaching. Why? They believed in the benefit of social interaction in the development of young men and women. Learning to survive equitably with those from every social and economic strata, they believed, was important to their children's future success.

That didn't mean they weren't on top of our studies on a daily basis. They checked our homework, assiduously demanded proper grammar at home and away. Dinnertime discussions were broad and lively on a number of subjects from history to mathematics to current events and school activities. But home involvement, missing in so many young lives today, is far different than the burden of actually teaching.

For me personally, being home-schooled would have meant missing a host of learning opportunities, including athletics, participation in social and academic clubs and certainly the chance to forge good friendships in a common experience. Those friendships still exist today.

Apparently the Internet has allowed many home-schoolers to develop some of these skills, but there can be no replacement for the day-to-day, face-to-face, interplay with your peers. Learning who can be counted on and who can't is key to a productive later life.

"I think I missed some things," my friend who had been tutored said. "The instruction was professional but learning to deal with life was absent."

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, August 11, the 223rd day of 2015. There are 142 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On August 11, 1965, rioting and looting that claimed 34 lives broke out in the predominantly black Watts section of Los Angeles.

On this date: In 1876, Capt. Francis Light arrived in Penang to claim the Malaysian island for Britain.

In 1860, the nation's first successful silver mill began operation near Virginia City, Nevada.

In 1909, the steamship SS Arapahoe became the first ship in North America to issue an S.O.S. distress signal, off North Carolina's Cape Hatteras.

In 1934, the first federal prisoners arrived at Alcatraz Island (a former military prison) in San Francisco Bay.

In 1942, during World War II, Pierre Laval, prime minister of Vichy France, publicly declared that the hour of liberation for France is the hour when Germany wins the war.

In 1954, a formal peace took hold in Indochina, ending more than seven years of fighting between the French and Communist Viet Minh.

In 1956, abstract painter Jackson Pollock, 44, died in an automobile accident on Long Island, New York.

In 1964, the Beatles movie "A Hard Day's Night" had its U.S. premiere in New York.

In 1975, the United States vetoed the proposed admission of North and South Vietnam to the United Nations, following the Security Council's refusal to consider South Korea's application.

In 1984, during a voice test for a paid political radio address, President Ronald Reagan joked that he had "signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes." At the Los Angeles Olympics, American runner Mary Decker fell after colliding with South African-born British competitor Zola Budd in the 3,000-meter final; Budd finished seventh.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton named Army Gen. John Shalikashvili to be the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, succeeding the retiring Gen. Colin Powell.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton made the first use of the historic line-item veto, rejecting three items in spending and tax bills. (However, the U.S. Supreme Court later struck down the veto as unconstitutional.)

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush expressed sympathy for war protesters like Cindy Sheehan, the mother camped outside his Texas ranch demanding more answers for her soldier-son Casey's death in Iraq, but said he believed it would be a mistake to bring U.S. troops home immediately. A one-day strike by British Airways baggage handlers and other ground staff forced the cancellation of hundreds of flights to and from Heathrow Airport.

Five years ago: In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, police and FBI agents captured Michael Francis Mara, suspected of being the so-called "Granddaddy Bandit" who'd held up two dozen banks in 13 states for about two years. (Mara later pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 25 years in prison.) Dan Rostenkowski, a former Illinois congressman who'd wielded enormous power on Capitol Hill for more than 30 years, died at his Wisconsin summer home at age 82.

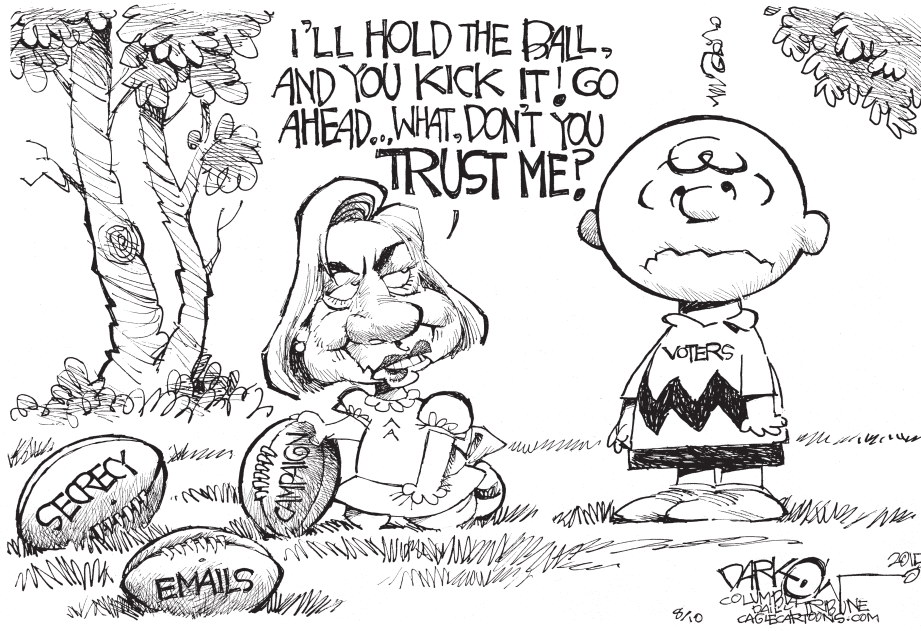
One year ago: Robin Williams, 63, a brilliant shape-shifter who could channel his frenetic energy into delightful comic characters like "Mrs. Doubtfire" or harness it into richly nuanced work like his Oscar-winning turn in "Good Will Hunting," died in Tiburon, California, a suicide.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Arlene Dahl is 90. Songwriter-producer Kenny Gamble is 72. Rock musician Jim Kale (Guess Who) is 72. Magazine columnist Marilyn Vos Savant is 69. Country singer John Conlee is 69. Singer Eric Carmen is 66. Computer scientist and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak is 65. Wrestler-actor Hulk Hogan is 62. Singer Joe Jackson is 61. Playwright David Henry Hwang is 58. Actor Miguel A. Nunez Jr. is 51. Actress Viola Davis is 50. Actor Duane Martin is 50. Actor-host Joe Rogan is 48. Rhythm-and-blues musician Chris Dave is 47. Actress Anna Gunn is 47. Actress Ashley Jensen is 47. Actress Sophie Okonedo is 47. Rock guitarist Charlie Sexton is 47. Hip-hop artist Ali Shaheed Muhammad is 45. Actor Nigel Harman is 42. Actor Will Friedle is 39. Actor Rob Kerkovich (TV: "NCIS: New Orleans") is 36. Actress Merritt Wever is 35. Actor Chris Hemsworth is 32. Rock musician Heath Foggs (Alabama Shakes) is 31. Singer J-Boog is 30. Rapper Asher Roth is 30. Actress Alyson Stoner is 22.

Thought for Today: "You will have bad times, but they will always wake you up to the stuff you weren't paying attention to." — Robin Williams (1951-2014).

FROM THE BIBLE

Those who are wise shall shine ... and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars. Daniel 12:3. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



Rez of the Story

Independence Is Far Better Than Dependence

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),

The famous or infamous (depending on your point of view) Dennis Banks from the American Indian Movement (AIM) days (as are commonly referred to these days in Indian country) is quoted to have stated that "When AIM was founded on July 28, 1968, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the living conditions we found ourselves in were deplorable. It wasn't that we didn't know there was racism in the cities. It was how racism forced us into squalid slum tenement buildings, closed doors to job opportunities, and fostered racist laws, jails, courts, and prisons. Beginning with our founding meeting, we immediately set out to bring about change in those institutions of public concern: housing, education, employment, welfare, and the courts."

David E. Wilkins, American Indian Politics, informs us that "Political scientists Paula McCain and Joe Stewart note that 'interest groups that focus on issues of importance to blacks, Latinos, Asians, and American Indians have been essential to the progress made toward the incorporation of these groups into the American political system.' While this statement is broadly accurate for most of the groups, the situation of indigenous nations is much more complicated ... For much of this nation's history, the general thrust of most racial and ethnic groups and their members has been to seek inclusion (to become constitutionally incorporated) into the American social contract; by contrast, the general thrust of most indigenous nations and their citizens (notwithstanding their American citizenship) has been to retain their political and cultural exclusion from absorption or incorporation in the American polity."

"Of course, the focus of American colonialism—including the imposition of Western religious beliefs, Western values, and Western political arrangements—have unabashedly [undiminished] sought to incorporate Indian lands, resources, and citizens, while sometimes exhibiting a measure of respect for Indian treaty rights, attempting to restore some tribal lands, and providing some protection for Indian religious beliefs and sacred sites. "These forces combined with individual Indian free will, high out-marriage rates, the



Vince TWO EAGLES

urbanization of Indians, and the near hegemony [domination] of the media and the corporate world, contribute mightily to the character of an indigenous America which is more diversified than ever before. Notwithstanding this increasing and seemingly inexorable

[inevitable] diversification among indigenous peoples, the evidence still shows that maintaining and reaffirming Indian political, economic, and cultural identity is a central issue for most indigenous peoples most of the time. And this is true regardless of whether they are reservation based or urban based, full blood or mixed blood, recognized or non-recognized, exercising treaty rights or treaty-less, practicing traditional spiritual beliefs or members of Christian sects. In a recent survey of Indian youth, more than 96 percent of those surveyed identified themselves solely with their Indian nationality and more than 40 percent identified themselves solely with their Indian nationality. Only a little more than half of the youth identified themselves as American citizens."

Tribes interested in what are called "reformative goals do not seek fundamental change in the structure of intergovernmental relations. Their preference, rather, is for redistribution of services, resources, or rewards with in that structure." For example these [tribes] would support Indian preference in the Indian Bureau.

"[Tribes] pursuing transformative goals, on the other hand, seek a basic restructuring of intergovernmental relations. For example, they would most likely support the revival of the treaty relationship and the termination of the Congress's presumed plenary power over tribes. Second, regarding orientation to institutions of the larger society, there is a dichotomy [contradiction] of integration and segregative goals." Some natives support the acceptance of federal appropriations but would maintain as separate tribal government while other question the appropriateness of having anything to do with the dominant government or culture.

Bottom line; non-Indians would do well to support local Native initiatives to be independent. Independence is far better than dependence in my opinion.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Optics" and OnWard Yankton

Dave Lyons, Lago Vista, Texas

Dear Editor:
I am writing in regard to the Voting Process involved in the Onward Yankton "Big Idea" Contest that is currently underway in the community.

I was a Top 15 Semifinalist and one of 9 eliminated by a vote of the committee on Thursday, July 30th, according to an August 4th report in the *Press and Dakotan*. Six finalists were chosen to advance including entrants who are either on the committee or have direct connections to the voting members, themselves.

The next day Friday, July 31st, mine was the last of the Top 15 "Big Idea" Semifinalists to be presented to the public for feedback on the Onward Yankton Facebook page.

As on July 23rd, Onward Yankton requested that, "Over the next week, when we post an idea you like, be sure to let us know why! We will be taking this community feedback into consideration as we pick our top five contenders."

My questions is this: Why did the Onward Yankton Committee choose to post my "Big Idea" for consideration and solicit public feedback when it had already been eliminated the day before?

Is this not a misrepresentation to myself and those respondents who engaged with 143 comments, likes and shares that my submission was, indeed, in fair competition at all?

By your own admission, the community feedback you directly solicited from the public was NOT factored in for your decision. It had the most comments and feedback of any of the 508 "Big Ideas". Yet, by the time your decision was made for the Final Six, my "Big Idea" was the only one of the Top 15 Semifinalists yet to be posted.

In addition, what are the "Optics" on continuing to forward on "Big Ideas" from committee members who stand to potentially gain financial reward from the very organization they represent?

Lastly, since I recently posted to my Facebook page a questioning of this process, a small but powerful unselected clique of community members has gone online to label those of us who raise legitimate questions as "Whiny", "Crybabies", "Glass Half Empties" or "Anti-Community Growth".

To those who have quietly and respectfully reached out to me stating they wish they could support me publicly but are in fear of losing their jobs or social status in the community, I understand and appreciate your fears. I am sorry that this "behind the scenes" campaign to mute or silence anyone who raises legitimate questions in Yankton is occurring. Fear and intimidation tactics should have no place in this community.

How do these behaviors build trust, fairness and goodwill in the community? Is this the lasting legacy of "Optics" that Onward Yankton wishes?

In Response To Mr. Lyons

Bernie Hunhoff

The Onward Yankton committee

First of all, Mr. Lyons, we're sorry your idea was not posted on Facebook until after we trimmed the finalists to six on July 30. But your fine idea was posted on our Website on July 16, and was discussed with the public on many occasions. Facebook is a good medium, but it's not the only way to get feedback.

Secondly, all the Onward volunteers love your concept of a grand "neighborhood market" downtown, which is why it made the top 15. Many of the original 508 submissions related to downtown development, and two others did make the final 6. After much discussion, we regretfully set yours aside because it proposes a "neighborhood market" for produce and crafts along with a brew pub, restaurants, coffee shops, specialty shops and residential for young professionals. We're for all of that, but the consensus of the group was that entrepreneurs are working to provide those amenities in our city and neighboring cities, so those can be accomplished by free enterprise. Our "Big Idea" should be something that creates an environment in which those types of endeavors and others can succeed here in Yankton.

Thirdly, we feel very badly if anyone feels they aren't being heard. Onward is hardly a power clique — just a bunch of volunteers trying to balance family and work and make Yankton a better place. Thanks for being involved, and please stay involved. We need good thinkers and doers like you if anything good is to happen.