

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | WE SAY

Moving Ahead



THUMBS UP to the Board of Regents' final approval of several major construction projects, with an estimated total cost of \$66.2 million, that will benefit the University of South Dakota's athletic programs. The regents gave the go-ahead this week for a 6,000-seat arena for basketball and volleyball with an estimated cost of \$46.3 million; an outdoor facility for soccer and track with an estimated cost of \$7.3 million; and a science, health and research laboratory with an estimated cost of \$12.6 million. Hopefully, the final approval will also fast-track any final fund-raising needs to make the projects a reality.

Icy Conditions



THUMBS DOWN to this week's snowy, icy conditions that have made traveling treacherous. The conditions in and of itself aren't out of the ordinary for this time of year. However, the impact was seen this week with a collision of a pick-up and semi-trailer south of Yankton that closed U.S. Highway 81 for an extended time. A number of trucks coming from the south were diverted to the Corps of Discovery Welcome Center's parking lot while authorities and emergency workers responded to the accident scene. A number of other accidents also occurred around the same time, showing the urgent need to exercise caution as we receive our first significant snow of the season.

A Boost In Aid



THUMBS UP to Gov. Dennis Daugaard's call to boost aid for public schools by 3 percent next year. This is more than the law technically requires, since it calls for an annual increase of 3 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower. The boost comes thanks to an unexpected windfall of nearly \$70 million from the state's unclaimed property fund. While this boost does not cover the ground schools lost a few years ago in the wake of the Great Recession, it does allow some school districts to begin filling in the holes. Hopefully, as economic conditions improve, more help will be on the way.

The Defining Issue



THUMBS UP to the spotlight on economic inequality driven by recent statements from both President Barack Obama and Pope Francis. The pope wrote in a recent papal exhortation: "While the earnings of the minority are growing exponentially, so, too, is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. The imbalance is the result of ideologies which defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation ... A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules." Meanwhile, Obama this week called wealth disparity "the defining issue of our time," and later warned of the "dangerous and growing" gap not only in income but also in opportunity for many Americans. This gives us hope that it is being acknowledged by leaders on a global scale. The question is, what will they advocate to be done about it? Inequality continues to grow worse, as do the problems associated with it ...

ONLINE OPINION

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Table with 2 columns: Question, Percentage. 'Do you do volunteer work for any group or organization?' Yes: 62%, No: 38%. TOTAL VOTES CAST: 197

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:

What are your spending plans for the holiday season? 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

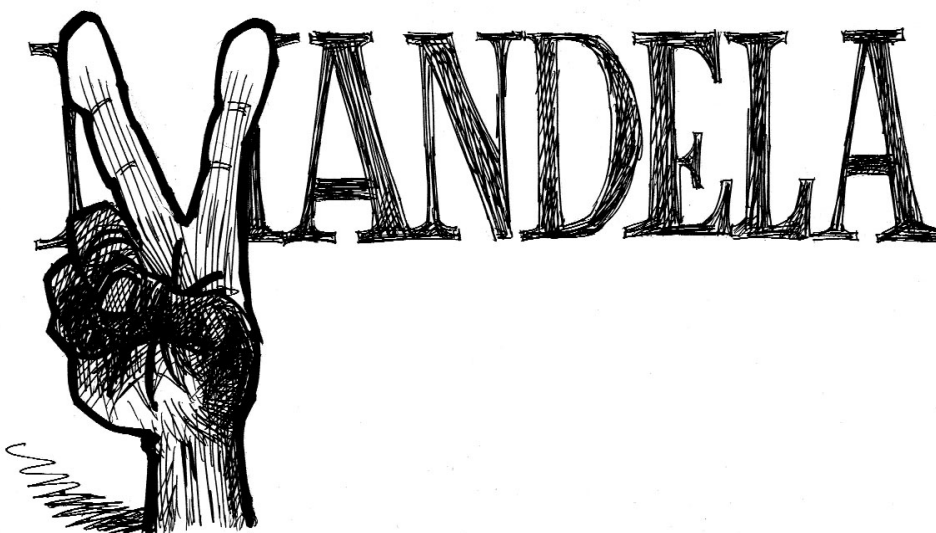
Today is Friday, Dec. 6, the 340th day of 2013. There are 25 days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 6, 1957, America's first attempt at putting a satellite into orbit failed as Vanguard TV3 rose only about four feet off a Cape Canaveral launch pad before crashing back down and exploding. On this date: In 1790, Congress moved to Philadelphia from New York. In 1884, Army engineers completed construction of the Washington Monument by setting an aluminum capstone atop the obelisk. In 1889, Jefferson Davis, the first and only president of the Confederate States of America, died in New Orleans. In 1907, the worst mining disaster in U.S. history occurred as 362 men and boys died in a coal mine explosion in Monongah, West Virginia. In 1917, some 2,000 people died when an explosives-laden French cargo ship collided with a Norwegian vessel at the harbor in Halifax, Nova Scotia, setting off a blast that devastated the city. In 1922, the Irish Free State came into being under terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. In 1947, Everglades National Park in Florida was dedicated by President Harry S. Truman. In 1962, 37 coal miners were killed in an explosion at the Robena No. 3 Mine operated by U.S. Steel in Carmichaels, Pa. In 1969, a free concert by The Rolling Stones at the Altamont Speedway in Alameda County, Calif., was marred by the deaths of four people, including one who was stabbed by a Hell's Angel. In 1973, House minority leader Gerald R. Ford was sworn in as vice president, succeeding Spiro T. Agnew. In 1989, 14 women were shot to death at the University of Montreal's school of engineering by a man who then took his own life. Ten years ago: A U.S. warplane in pursuit of a "known terrorist" attacked a village in eastern Afghanistan, mistakenly killing nine children. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld met with senior American commanders in Iraq, and was assured that a recent switch to more aggressive anti-insurgency tactics had begun to pay off. Army became the first team to finish 0-13 in major college history after a 34-6 loss to Navy. Ireland's Rosanna Davison was crowned Miss World at the southern Chinese tropi-

cal resort of Sanya. Five years ago: President-elect Barack Obama said in a Saturday radio and Internet address that he'd asked his economic team for a recovery plan that would save or create more than 2 million jobs. Indicted Democratic U.S. Rep. William Jefferson was ousted from his New Orleans area district in a special election won by Republican attorney Anh "Joseph" Cao, who became the first Vietnamese-American in Congress. A Greek youth, 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoriopoulos, was shot to death during a confrontation with police in Athens, sparking two weeks of riots. Heiress Martha "Sunny" von Bulow, who'd spent the last 28 years of her life in a coma, died in New York City at age 76. One year ago: Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi remained defiant after a night of clashes involving thousands of his supporters and opponents outside his palace in Cairo that left six people dead and hundreds injured; Morsi refused to call off a referendum on a disputed constitution. Republicans pushed right-to-work legislation through the Michigan state House and Senate amid raucous protests from throngs of union supporters. Today's Birthdays: Comedy performer David Ossman is 77. Actor Patrick Bauchau is 75. Country singer Helen Cornelius is 72. Actor James Naughton is 68. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood is 68. Rhythm-and-blues singer Frankie Beverly (Maze) is 67. Former Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla., is 65. Actress JoBeth Williams is 65. Actor Tom Hulce is 60. Actor Kin Shriner is 60. Actor Wil Shriner is 60. Actor Miles Chapin is 59. Rock musician Rick Buckler (The Jam) is 58. Comedian Steven Wright is 58. Country singer Bill Lloyd is 58. Singer Tish Hinojosa is 58. Rock musician Peter Buck (R.E.M.) is 57. Rock musician David Lovering (Pixies) is 52. Actress Janine Turner is 51. Rock musician Ben Watt (Everything But The Girl) is 51. Writer-director Judd Apatow is 46. Rock musician Ulf "Buddha" Ekberg (Ace of Base) is 43. Writer-director Craig Brewer is 42. Actress Colleen Haskell is 37. Actress Lindsay Price is 37. Actress Ashley Madekwe is 32. Christian rock musician Jacob Chesnut (Rush of Fools) is 24. Thought for Today: "Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot; but make it hot by striking." --William Butler Yeats, Irish Nobel Prize-winning poet (1865-1939).

FROM THE BIBLE

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. John 3:17. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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1918-NELSON MANDELA-2013

Takin' It To The Streets

BY KELLY HERTZ kelly.hertz@yankton.net



Kelly HERTZ

There's a whole lot of love, Catholic and otherwise, in the air these days for Pope Francis, the relatively new pontiff (I guess he's still in his honeymoon period, if that's the proper term) who has been busy capturing imaginations with a series of statements and action that have appealed to many souls. I mean, the guy drives a used Ford; how much more humble can he be?

He scored another round of philosophical points last week when he took aim at supply-side economic theories while bemoaning the hungry lust for money that is creating a vast economic divide in our society. It was a blunt stand that might be able to do what the Occupy movement has so far failed to achieve: actually initiate change. Unless you're Rush Limbaugh, how do you argue with a pope?

While doing research for an editorial on the pope's pronouncement on poverty and wealth disparity — which he issued in a vast 50,000-word document called the "Evangelii Gaudium," or "The Joy of the Gospel" — I came across another intriguing statement.

In his document, Francis also referred to the state of the Catholic Church and the need of its hierarchy to "hear the call to pastoral conversion."

He declared, "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security."

While that comment was aimed at the Catholic Church, the pope's words could be broadly applied to all churches, all charities, all governments and all people — anyone who has a vested interest in the welfare of mankind. It was a demand to make a difference where differences truly need to be made.

The metaphorical street in the pope's writing is the place where humanity resides — a place littered with traps and temptations, a battlefield teeming with souls aching to be saved — or just aching in general. It's a place far removed from the towers of isolation that, we often discover, house some powerful churches, great companies and corporate charities that claim to work for us

or have our best interests on their radars. Too often, we find out that these entities have no more connection to the rest of us than night has to day or summer to winter. And if they are that detached and apart, how much good can they really do?

That question applies to each of us. How much good can any of us genuinely do without ever becoming involved?

This is where one can really appreciate the volunteers within our communities. They go where the need is and fill it. They serve food to the hungry; they build shelters for the homeless; they build fires to warm the cold and shivering; they befriend the desperately lonely; they make a difference when that difference is what a person really needs at any given moment.

Without these givers, our society would be a hard, ruthless place. Without them, people would certainly die, in some cases.

That's the street for you. The pope's words arguably comprise an idealized vision of what a church — or a charity or a government — should be, and if his statement had been issued by any other individual on this planet, it would probably be dismissed as naive.

It wouldn't alter the fact that the words are absolutely true.

Ultimately, this comment is a plea to do unto others, to embrace our better angels and to make a difference. If nothing else, it's simply about noticing that there's a problem and acting upon it.

To do good, we must act upon our compassion and put actions behind our words and intentions. We may not need to be "bruised, hurting and dirty" from the effort, but we can at least seek out the satisfaction that comes with lending a helping hand.

This particular statement by Pope Francis, a small comment in a treatise about poverty and disparity, was specifically an observation about his Church; but generally, it was a reminder to all of us that our actions count. And in the street, our actions are the only currency that matters.

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

It's A Matter Of Trust

BY MICHAEL REAGAN

CagleCartoons.com



Michael REAGAN

Trust ain't what it used to be in America. Back in 1972, when the folks conducting the General Social Survey first asked a sampling of Americans if they trusted their countrymen, about half said they did.

Last year, when the same research outfit asked the same set of questions, only a third of our fellow Americans said they trusted one another.

The GSS folks found that Americans — black and white, rich or poor — are more leery, suspicious and mistrustful of others than ever before.

As long as the General Social Survey itself can be trusted, it both confirms and contradicts what my eyes and ears have been telling me for years.

On one hand, the survey found that about two-thirds of Americans believe "you can't be too careful" dealing with others. The Associated Press followed up this year with a poll on some specifics.

Americans say they don't trust other drivers not to crash into them. They say they don't trust the retail clerks who swipe their credit cards.

They say they don't trust the people they meet when they are traveling.

The GSS didn't bother to ask if we trusted the government or Wall Street or the mainstream news media. The AP found that 81 percent of Americans seldom trust the government in Washington.

No one needs a survey to discover that most of us believe those big American institutions can't be trusted.

It's also understandable why so many Americans, especially the young, don't trust our leaders and social institutions like marriage, the church and the family.

A lot of young people have fallen out of trust with President Obama lately, for good reason. Ditto for churches.

And after seeing so many marriages break up, why would a young person trust her own marriage

to last? Better to not get married in the first place. Despite the survey results, however, the real problem might be that too many Americans — especially young ones — are actually too trusting in some ways.

Too many people of all ages still blindly trust that what they see on TV and the Internet is true. But when it comes to social media, kids — and too many of their parents — are incredibly trusting and naive.

By the millions, they post their personal data and deepest thoughts on Facebook. They email each other. They sext love notes to each other. They send out compromising selfies on their smart phones.

These over-trusting souls tell the whole world where they live, what they own and when they're going away on vacation — and then they're shocked to come home to a robbed and ransacked house.

In the Smart Phone Age, when everyone with an iPhone thinks he's a news reporter, trusting everyone in the room or on the street with your secret or your politically incorrect opinion is a dumb idea.

Ask Mitt Romney. Ask Prince Harry. Ask Alec Baldwin.

It's pretty clear that technology and social media have outrun our ability to handle them. Until we get a grip on them, until we learn to use them maturely, we shouldn't trust them so much.

So who do we trust? We trust the people and institutions who earn our trust. And if no one is earning it, we have to learn to trust ourselves. I hope we still know how to do that.

Michael Reagan is the son of President Ronald Reagan, a political consultant, and the author of "The New Reagan Revolution" (St. Martin's Press). He is the founder of the email service reagan.com and president of The Reagan Legacy Foundation. Visit his websites at www.reagan.com and www.michaelreagan.com. Send comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com. Follow @reaganworld on Twitter.

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