

# 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 & Dakotian, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078.

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The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotian is a member of the Associated Press, the Inland Daily Press Association and the South Dakota Newspaper Association. The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to use of all the local news printed in this newspaper.

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**OPINION | OUR VIEW**

## Death Penalty: We Must Keep Asking

South Dakota lawmakers are considering legislation this session that would get rid of the death penalty in this state. We'll predict right now: The effort will fail and South Dakota will continue to keep capital punishment on the books.

However, asking questions about the merits of the death penalty should not stop with any one bill or this particular session. In fact, it should be a never-ending process.

The current effort to do away with capital punishment is being spearheaded by Republican State Rep. Steve Hickey of Sioux Falls. He is a one-time proponent of the death penalty who now says he has had a change of heart after studying the Bible on this subject.

That seems apt. As Yankton Rep. Bernie Hunhoff noted Saturday during a District 18 legislative forum, discussion of the topic spurs the citing of Bible passages by advocates on both sides of the issue. Attorney General Marty Jackley has announced his opposition to the repeal, noting how sparingly the penalty has been used in his state.

During the Saturday forum in Yankton, District 18 Rep. Mike Stevens, who is an attorney, said that the prospect of the death penalty also serves as leverage for cutting deals that accused murderers. This saves the state time and money in the prosecutorial process. This is a point few people probably consider in this issue, but it is an insightful one.

Stevens also noted that the prisoners who are currently on South Dakota's death row are the kind of individuals who, if given the chance, would kill again. While we can't confirm that statement, we can imagine the plausibility in those words.

Nevertheless, the merits of the death penalty must always be discussed and assessed, if for no other reason, because of one haunting question:

What if we get it wrong?

What if someone who is convicted on fairly solid DNA evidence, for example, turns out to have been falsely convicted once DNA testing methods have improved?

Since 1992, 18 death row inmates have been exonerated because of improved testing techniques, according to the Innocence Project, an anti-death penalty organization. (Another 16 individuals convicted of murder but were not on death row have also been exonerated.) Those numbers may seem low in a relative relation to all convictions, but in terms of a capital case, one wrongful execution is one too many — it is an irreparable mistake. It's a burden that the state — as well as the people of that state — must bear.

According to a study conducted by Northwest University's School of Law, there have been at least 39 executions in the U.S. since the mid-1970s that were carried out "in face of compelling evidence of innocence or serious doubt about guilt." That is a sobering loose thread, to say the least.

That's why the issue must be debated, and that debate must never go away. As long as we bestow upon ourselves the power to legally dispense death as a tool of justice, we must constantly examine the process, its merits and its certainties. In this arena, being right MOST of the time is not good enough.

kmh

**ONLINE OPINION**

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

**LATEST RESULTS:**

Should the U.S. curtail or end the use of drones in military operations?  
No . . . . . 89%  
Yes . . . . . 6%  
Not sure . . . . . 5%  
**TOTAL VOTES CAST . . . . . 220**

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:**

Who closely will you be following the Winter Olympic Games in Russia?  
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 Tuesday, Feb. 4, the 35th day of 2014. There are 330 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Feb. 4, 1974, newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst, 19, was kidnapped in Berkeley, Calif., by the radical Symbionese Liberation Army. (Two months later, Hearst declared that she had joined her captors; she helped the SLA rob a bank, was captured in 1975, convicted for her role in the robbery and sentenced to seven years in prison. Hearst, who has maintained she was a victim of brainwashing, served nearly two years before President Jimmy Carter commuted her sentence; she was pardoned in 2001 by President Bill Clinton.)

**On this date:** In 1783, Britain's King George III proclaimed a formal cessation of hostilities in the American Revolutionary War.

In 1789, electors chose George Washington to be the first president of the United States.

In 1861, delegates from six southern states that had recently seceded from the Union met in Montgomery, Ala., to form the Confederate States of America.

In 1919, Congress established the U.S. Navy Distinguished Service Medal and the Navy Cross.

In 1932, New York Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt opened the Winter Olympic Games at Lake Placid.

In 1941, the United Service Organizations (USO) came into existence.

In 1944, the Bronze Star Medal, honoring "heroic or meritorious achievement or service," was authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1962, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital was founded in Memphis, Tenn., by entertainer Danny Thomas.

In 1976, more than 23,000 people died when a severe earthquake struck Guatemala with a magnitude of 7.5, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1983, pop singer-musician Karen Carpenter died in Downey, Calif., at age 32.

In 1987, pianist Liberace died at his Palm Springs, Calif., home at age 67.

In 1999, Amadou Diallo, an unarmed West African immigrant, was shot and killed in front of his Bronx home by four plainclothes New York City police officers. (The officers were acquitted at trial.)

**Ten years ago:** The Massachusetts high court declared that gay couples were entitled to nothing less than mar-

riage and that Vermont-style civil unions would not suffice. A Senate rattled by a ricin attack began returning to regular business with no illnesses reported. The social networking website Facebook had its beginnings as Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg launched "Thefacebook."

**Five years ago:** President Barack Obama imposed a \$500,000 cap on executive pay for companies receiving federal bailout money; the president also signed a bill extending health coverage to 4 million uninsured children. Lux Interior, co-founder and lead singer of the horror-punk band The Cramps, died in Glendale, Calif., at age 62.

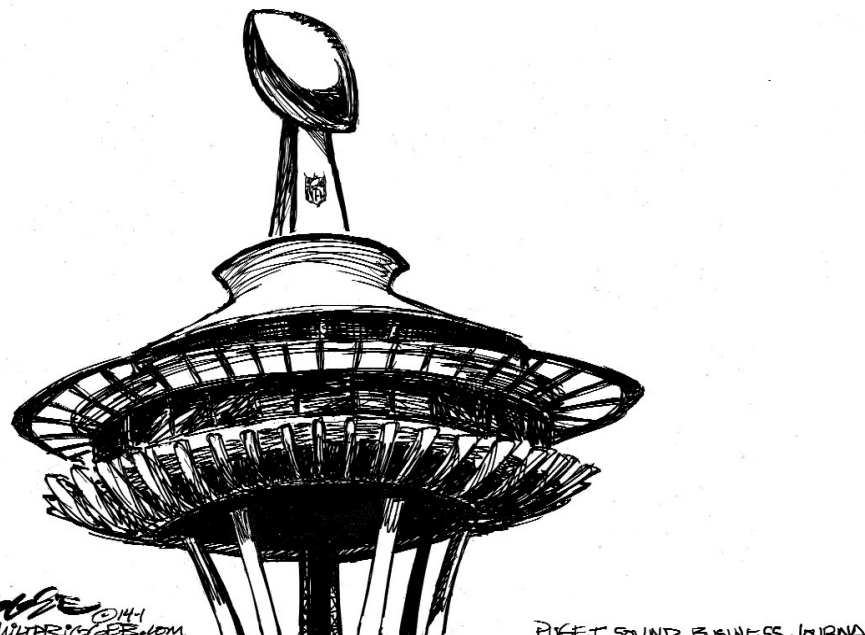
**One year ago:** President Barack Obama signed into law a bill raising the government's borrowing limit, averting a default. Authorities stormed an underground bunker in Alabama, freeing a 5-year-old boy who'd been held hostage for nearly a week and killing his abductor, Jimmy Lee Dykes. British scientists announced they had rescued the skeletal remains of King Richard III from the anonymity of a drab municipal parking lot. For the fifth straight week there was a new No. 1 in The Associated Press' men's college basketball poll: Indiana. Reg Presley, 71, lead singer for the Troops on "Wild Thing," died in Andover, England.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor William Phipps is 92. Former Argentinian President Isabel Peron is 83. Comedian David Brenner is 78. Actor Gary Conway is 78. Movie director George A. Romero is 74. Rock musician John Steel (The Animals) is 73. Singer Florence LaRue (The Fifth Dimension) is 70. Former Vice President Dan Quayle is 67. Rock singer Alice Cooper is 66. Actor Michael Beck is 65. Actress Lisa Eichhorn is 62. Football Hall-of-Famer Lawrence Taylor is 55. Rock singer Tim Booth is 53. Country singer Henry Bogdan is 53. Country singer Clint Black is 52. Rock musician Noodles (The Offspring) is 51. Country musician Dave Buchanan (Yankee Grey) is 48. Actress Gabrielle Anwar is 44. Actor Rob Corddry is 43. Singer David Garza is 43. Actor Michael Gorrigan is 43. Olympic gold medal boxer Oscar De La Hoya is 41. Rock musician Rick Burch (Jimmy Eat World) is 39. Singer Natalie Imbruglia is 39. Rapper Cam'ron is 38. Rock singer Gavin DeGraw is 37. Olympic gold medal gymnast-turned-singer Carly Patterson is 26.

**Thought for Today:** "Character consists of what you do on the third and fourth tries." — James Michener, American author (1907-1997).

**FROM THE BIBLE**

Whoever winks the eye causes trouble. Proverbs 10:10. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



PIRETT SOUND BUSINESS JOURNAL

**The Rez Of The Story**

## The Tales Of Textbooks

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives). Last week, we were treated to excerpts from the national bestseller, "Lies My Teacher Told Me," by James W. Loewen. Here then, is the conclusion of "Textbooks."

We ended with the author's question, "What has gone wrong?" with respect to the teaching of history and the reception of history by student's and how folks of color are treated as subjects of history.

"We begin to get a handle on this question by noting that the teaching of history, more than any other discipline, is dominated by textbooks. And students are right: the books are boring. The stories that history textbooks tell are predictable; every problem has already been solved or is about to be solved. Textbooks exclude conflict or real suspense. They leave out anything that might reflect badly upon our national character. ... When they try for drama, they achieve only melodrama, because readers know that everything will turn out fine in the end. Despite setbacks, the United States overcame these challenges," in the words of one textbook.

"Textbooks almost never use the present to illuminate the past. They might ask students to consider gender roles in contemporary society as means of prompting students to think about what women did and did not achieve in the suffrage movement or in the more recent women's movement. They might ask students to prepare household budgets for the families of a janitor and a stockbroker as a means of prompting thinking about labor unions and social classes in the past and in the present they might, but they don't. The present is not a source of information for writers of history textbooks.

"Conversely, textbooks seldom use the past to illuminate the present. They present the past as a simple-minded morality play. 'Be a good citizen' is the message that textbooks extract from the past. 'You have a proud heritage. Be all that you can be. After all, look at what the United States has accomplished.' While there's nothing wrong with optimism, it can become something of a burden for students of color, children of working-class parents, girls who notice the dearth of female historical figures or members of any group that has not achieved socioeconomic success. The optimistic approach prevents any understanding of failure other than blaming the victim. No wonder children of color are alienated. Even



Vince TWO EAGLES

for male children from affluent white families, bland optimism gets pretty boring after 800 pages.

"Textbooks in American history stand in sharp contrast to other teaching materials. Why are history textbooks so bad? Nationalism is one of the culprits. Textbooks are often muddled by the conflicting desires to promote inquiry and to indoctrinate blind patriotism.

"History can be imagined as a pyramid. At its base are the millions of primary sources — the plantation records, city directories, speeches, songs, photographs, newspaper articles, diaries and letters that document times past. Based on these primary materials, historians write secondary works — books and articles on subjects ranging from deafness on Martha's Vineyard to Grant's tactics at Vicksburg. Historians produce hundreds of these works every year, many of them splendid. In theory, a few historians, working individually or in teams—textbooks covering all phases of U.S. history.

"In practice, however, it doesn't happen that way. Instead, history textbooks are clones of each other. The first thing editors do when recruiting new authors is to send them a half-dozen examples of the competition.

"The result is not happy for textbook scholarship. Many history textbooks list up-to-the-minute secondary sources in the bibliographies, yet the narratives remain totally traditional—unaffected by recent research.

"Textbooks also keep students in the dark about the nature of history. History is a furious debate informed by evidence and reason. Textbooks encourage students to believe that history is facts to be learned. ... In retrospect I ask myself, why didn't I think to ask, for example, who were the original inhabitants of the Americas, what was their life like, and how did it change when Columbus arrived ...?"

These are just a teaser of what unfolds in the pages of "Lies My Teacher Told Me." The work is rich with examples of how "history" gets slanted and why we Native people feel alienated when we are exposed to a Eurocentric version of American history. We have much to discuss with each other as we move in to the future. It too can be rich or poor with opportunity to "Be all that we can be," together by including in our mutual conversation the full story of our convergent histories as Indian and non-Indian people.

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

**Pierre Report | Tom Jones**

## Social Services And The Budget

BY SEN. TOM JONES

D-District 17 (Viborg)



Jones

Last week, the Joint Appropriations Committee met with the Department of Social Services for three days and heard testimony from their department. The requested budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year was \$1.1 billion. This included a \$24 million increase from the prior year. Approximately \$452 million is state General Fund and \$643 million is federal money. The DSS part of state government employs 1,656 full time staff. Of the South Dakotans they serve, 69 percent are children.

Before I go any further, I should apologize for all the numbers that will follow. Numbers can be boring and that is not my intent.

The Division of Economic Assistance controls about \$84 million: \$60 million is Federal and \$24 million is State Funds. The major players in this area are: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and others.

The Division of Medical Services handles the Medicaid state plan. This division serves low income children, pregnant women, adults, elderly, disabled, children in foster care, etc. It is a huge part of our budget. A total of \$585 million is mainly spent on four areas: health care services, physician services, inpatient hospital, outpatient and prescription drugs.

**YOUR LETTERS**

**Plaza Puzzler**

Randy Gleich, Yankton

In regards to the Meridian Plaza development:

For the people that know me I'm a gardening nut. The fountain is to provide seating but (the rendition in the Press & Dakotan [Jan. 14]) did not show people sitting around it. I can't envision youth finding this as a great destination point.

Furthermore, how much is this costing per square foot? If this is a quarter of an acre (10,890 square feet), that would equate to \$112 a square foot to develop.

The picture I saw was just ugly. It looks like something in a Garden of Memories in a cemetery. There was one old man tucked away in the background. This picture showed no families that I could see.

A landscaping cost calculator found on the Web shows a top cost of around \$2.84 a square

The Division of Adult Services and Aging serves adults 60 years of age and older, adults with disabilities and victims of crime. Its total budget is \$180 million.

The Division of Child Support Services provides services for almost 60,000 families who need help collecting child support. Its budget is between \$7 million-\$8 million.

We spent a long time discussing the State Employees Health Insurance Plan with the Human Services Department. How to ease the ever-increasing rise of these costs was the main portion of this important area. We listened to an actuarial report suggesting three methods to address this issue. In the actuarial firm's opinion, the best method for South Dakota was to set up a reserve fund and we should determine at what level of confidence we could basically self-insure ourselves. This discussion has been centered on the fact that a very few claimants, through no fault of their own, are a large amount of dollars spent. The top 5 percent of Medicaid recipients represent 57 percent of all costs.

Bills passed by the House of Representatives are beginning to cross over to the Senate side.

Again, if you have questions or concerns please contact me at: sen.jones@state.sd.us.

foot (albeit residential). So why would this cost 30 times more? The purchase of the Stern property to be made into a green space (a lawn) — does that fall into the square foot calculation? That would be a pretty expensive lawn.

Do these folks even know what a rain garden is? Don't be fooled by that fancy term.

How does the cost of this project compare to those already done? Furthermore, Second Street is not and will not ever be a greatly traveled route since the bridge has been moved. Where would I park to go see this?

If you're going to spend this kind of money, there should be sizzle and a wow factor. A red carpet on the bridge would be a WOW factor. A dancing fountain with lights at night like in Las Vegas would be a WOW factor. At this point, I don't see either.

Further serious input should be made on this project. Do it right or don't do it at all.