

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.

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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 entitled exclusively to
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news printed in this
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1-month.....\$12.09
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6 months.....\$72.53
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OPINION

Is It 'Daylight Saving Time' Time?

Should South Dakota see the light and adopt Daylight Saving Time (DST) year-round? That question is bouncing around our state Legislature this winter. While the matter will in all likelihood not see the light of day, it does touch on an interesting and long-running discussion on the subject.

At issue is whether South Dakota should keep its "summer hours," when the sun stays up later — in Yankton, setting at approximately 9:12 p.m. on the summer solstice — and generates more light for after-work activities. If we didn't switch to standard time in November, when the clock "falls back" one hour back, there would be more sunlight late in the afternoon through winter, and more light during the afternoon commuter period. A lot of people are attracted to this bright idea (so to speak), and that's giving the matter its current push in Pierre.

Some researchers support the case for year-round Daylight Saving Time, noting that the extra light late in the day would create more visibility and help cut down on automobile accidents.

However, there are a lot of drawbacks that have to be considered and will, probably, doom this effort.

Obviously, putting more daylight in the afternoon and early-evening hours means you are stealing the sunlight from the morning hours. For Yankton, that would mean that the sun wouldn't rise until about 9 a.m. on New Year's Day. (It's curious to note that, because the earth isn't perfectly round, the sunrise continues to arrive later in the morning for more than a week after the winter solstice, even though the sunset starts setting later, too.) That would certainly not bode well for children on their way to school, which is why the National PTA has opposed efforts to impose year-round DST.

Also, darker mornings would certainly create more traffic dangers during the morning commutes rather than the evening drive times.

There is some history to study as a guide on this. Back during the OPEC oil embargo in the 1970s, the U.S. went to year-round Daylight Saving Time in 1974-1975 as a means of conserving energy. In fact, this move did save the country an estimated 100,000 barrels of oil a day. But we also recall numerous accounts of dangers to children, particularly in municipal areas, who were going to school in darkness. That shift was ultimately scrapped in 1976 when the pains of the energy crisis finally subsided.

Another drawback to the plan would be that it would put South Dakota out of sync with its neighbors for at least part of the year. In a border community like Yankton, which relies a lot on business and workers from Nebraska (one recent report noted that about a third of Yankton's workforce hails from south of the river), it would likely generate some very difficult adjustments and general confusion and disorientation for several months.

As we said, it's unlikely this bill will succeed, although stranger things have happened. But this is one idea that would need a lot more study and contemplation before a switch can be made.

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**. Bynlined 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.

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.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Wednesday, Feb. 4, the 35th day of 2015. There are 330 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:
On Feb. 4, 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin began a wartime conference at Yalta.

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, Alabama, 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 1962, a rare conjunction of the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn occurred.

In 1974, newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst, 19, was kidnapped in Berkeley, California, by the radical Symbionese Liberation Army.

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

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

In 1997, a civil jury in Santa Monica, California, found O.J. Simpson liable for the deaths of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

In 2004, the Massachusetts high court declared that gay couples were entitled to nothing less than marriage, and that Vermont-style civil unions would not suffice. The social networking website Facebook had its beginnings as Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg launched "Thefacebook."
Ten years ago: Gunmen kidnapped

Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena in Baghdad. (Sgrena was freed a month later; however, an Italian agent who'd secured her release was killed by U.S. gunfire at a checkpoint.) Actor and civil rights activist Ossie Davis died in Miami Beach, Florida, at age 87.

Five years ago: Republican Scott Brown took over the seat of the late Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy as he was sworn in by Vice President Joe Biden at a Capitol Hill ceremony. The first National Tea Party Convention opened in Nashville.

One year ago: The Congressional Budget Office said several million American workers would reduce their hours on the job or leave the workforce entirely because of incentives built into President Barack Obama's health care overhaul.

Today's Birthdays: Actor William Phipps is 93. Former Argentinian President Isabel Peron is 84. Actor Gary Conway is 79. Movie director George A. Romero is 75. Actor John Schuck is 75. Rock musician John Steel (The Animals) is 74. Singer Florence LaRue (The Fifth Dimension) is 73. Former Vice President Dan Quayle is 68. Rock singer Alice Cooper is 67. Actor Michael Beck is 66. Actress Lisa Eichhorn is 63. Football Hall-of-Famer Lawrence Taylor is 56. Actress Pamela Lynn Ferdin is 56. Rock singer Tim Booth is 55. Rock musician Henry Bogdan is 54. Country singer Clint Black is 53. Rock musician Noodles (The Offspring) is 52. Country musician Dave Buchanan (Yankee Grey) is 49. Actress Gabrielle Anwar is 45. Actor Rob Corddry is 44. Singer David Garza is 44. Actor Michael Goorjian is 44. TV personality Nicole Wallace (TV: "The View") is 43. Olympic gold medal boxer Oscar De La Hoya is 42. Rock musician Rick Burch (Jimmy Eat World) is 40. Singer Natalie Imbruglia is 40. Rapper Cam'ron is 39. Rock singer Gavin DeGraw is 38. Olympic gold medal gymnast-turned-singer Carly Patterson is 27.

Thought for Today: "Habit is necessary; it is the habit of having habits, of turning a trail into a rut, that must be necessarily fought against if one is to remain alive." — Edith Wharton, American author (1862-1937).

FROM THE BIBLE

He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison. 1 Peter 3:19. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



Robert Reich

Sharing The Scraps: Our Economic Future?

BY ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune Content Agency



Robert B. REICH

How would you like to live in an economy where robots do everything that can be predictably programmed in advance, and almost all profits go to the robots' owners?

Meanwhile, human beings do the work that's unpredictable — odd jobs, on-call projects, fetching and fixing, driving and delivering, tiny tasks needed at any and all hours — and patch together barely enough to live on.

Brace yourself. This is the economy we're now barreling toward.

They're Uber drivers, Instacart shoppers and Airbnb hosts. They include TaskRabbit jobbers, UpCounsel's on-demand attorneys and HealthTap's online doctors. And they're Mechanical Turks.

The euphemism is the "share" economy. A more accurate term would be the "share-the-scraps" economy.

New software technologies are allowing almost any job to be divided up into discrete tasks that can be parceled out to workers when they're needed, with pay determined by demand for that particular job at that particular moment.

Customers and workers are matched online. Workers are rated on quality and reliability. The big money goes to the corporations that own the software. The scraps go to the on-demand workers.

Consider Amazon's "Mechanical Turk." Amazon calls it "a marketplace for work that requires human intelligence."

In reality, it's an Internet job board offering minimal pay for mindlessly boring bite-sized chores. Computers can't do them because they require some minimal judgment, so human beings do them for peanuts — say, writing a product description for \$3, or choosing the best of several photographs for 30 cents, or deciphering handwriting for 50 cents. Amazon takes a healthy cut of every transaction.

This is the logical culmination of a process that began 30 years ago, when corporations began turning over full-time jobs to temporary workers, independent contractors, freelancers and consultants.

It was a way to shift risks and uncertainties onto the workers — work that might entail more hours than planned for, or was more stressful than expected.

And a way to circumvent labor laws that set minimal standards for wages, hours and working conditions. And that enabled employees to join together to bargain for better pay and benefits.

The new on-demand work shifts risks entirely onto workers, and eliminates minimal standards completely.

In effect, on-demand work is a reversion to the piece work of the 19th century — when workers had no power and no legal rights,

took all the risks and worked all hours for almost nothing.

Uber drivers use their own cars, take out their own insurance, work as many hours as they want or can — and pay Uber a fat percentage. Worker safety? Social Security? Uber says it's not the employer so it's not responsible.

Amazon's Mechanical Turks work for pennies, literally. Minimum wage? Time-and-a-half for overtime? Amazon says it just connects buyers and sellers so it's not responsible.

Defenders of on-demand work emphasize its flexibility. Workers can put in whatever time they want, work around their schedules, fill in the downtime on their calendars.

"People are monetizing their own downtime," Arun Sundararajan, a professor at New York University's business school, told the *New York Times*.

But this argument confuses "downtime" with the time people normally reserve for the rest of their lives.

There are still only 24 hours in a day. When "downtime" is turned into work time, and that work time is unpredictable and low-paid, what happens to personal relationships? Family? One's own health?

Other proponents of on-demand work point to studies, such as one recently commissioned by Uber, showing Uber's on-demand workers to be "happy."

But how many of them would be happier with a good-paying job offering regular hours?

An opportunity to make some extra bucks can seem mighty attractive in an economy whose median wage has been stagnant for 30 years and almost all of whose economic gains have been going to the top.

That doesn't make the opportunity a great deal. It only shows how bad a deal most working people have otherwise been getting.

Defenders also point out that as on-demand work continues to grow, on-demand workers are joining together in guild-like groups to buy insurance and other benefits.

But, notably, they aren't using their bargaining power to get a larger share of the income they pull in, or steadier hours. That would be a union — something that Uber, Amazon and other on-demand companies don't want.

Some economists laud on-demand work as a means of utilizing people more efficiently.

But the biggest economic challenge we face isn't using people more efficiently. It's allocating work and the gains from work more decently.

On this measure, the share-the-scraps economy is hurtling us backwards.

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 iTunes, DVD and On Demand.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hostile Legislation

Theresa Stehly, Sioux Falls

I'm writing with grave concerns about Senate Bill 166 (dealing with petition signatures) being proposed by Sen. Corey Brown.

Having been involved in several grassroots petition drives in past years, I can say from experience that the citizens of this state hold their right to petition with great appreciation and reverence. Those of us who volunteer to bring issues to a public vote put our blood, sweat and tears into this process. We passionately want to let the citizens have a voice in what is happening in our government. It's not an easy task.

The Brown bill would double the number of signatures needed to put an issue on the ballot by moving the present number from 13,871 to 26,530. This bill would create an additional burden for South Dakotans to address issues that concern them.

The founders of our Constitution had a high regard for the rights of our citizens to participation in the initiative and referen-

dum process. And they had a respect for the intelligence of the voters of this state to make good decisions. For more than 100 years, the state has used the list of active voters from the previous gubernatorial race to determine the number of signatures needed to place an issue on the ballot. This interpretation of the constitution has been reviewed and affirmed by the courts.

Citizens have used the initiative / referendum process for issues in the past like eliminating the death tax (inheritance tax).

Now Senator Brown wants to change the rules of the road and double the load that the public needs to carry to bring something to a vote. I have lived in Sen. Brown's district in the past, and have many dear friends who reside there now. Whether Democrat or Republican, they are all people who are intelligent voters, independent thinkers and fiercely patriotic.

I encourage you to contact Sen. Brown and all your representatives. Let them know that you would like to preserve our rights and to have them protected and revered by our elected officials.

DISSIDENCE: "Acceptance by government of a dissident press is a measure of the maturity of a nation." — William O. Douglas

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