

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 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.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES*
(Payable in advance)
CARRIER DELIVERY
1-month.....\$12.09
3 months.....\$36.27
6 months.....\$72.53
1-year.....\$133.09

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Be Wary Of Balanced Budget Amendment

CAPITAL JOURNAL, Pierre (Jan. 29): What doesn't add up here? We have a South Dakota Legislature mulling whether to throw its support behind a proposal for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution requiring a balanced budget by the federal government. And at this very same time, we have one of our own state officials, South Dakota Secretary of Transportation Darin Bergquist, telling the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee how desperately our state needs federal cash to keep its roads in shape. Speaking Wednesday in Washington, D.C., Bergquist reminded the panel that South Dakota faces special circumstances, including fewer taxpayers per mile than many states and a shorter construction season. "States cannot do it alone," Bergquist said. "We need a strong federal program."

Does anyone see a connection here between the health of our state's roads and federal spending? Now what about other sectors? Do South Dakota farmers want the federal government to cut off disaster payments in the name of a balanced budget? Does the crop insurance industry want the feds to stop subsidizing farmers' crop insurance? What about federal grants to college students? Federal grants to rural hospitals? How much would the feds save by closing Ellsworth Air Force Base? How much could we hack from Social Security payments, Medicaid, Medicare?

Our opinion at the *Capital Journal* is that we should by all means support responsible budgeting and push for a balanced federal budget. It would be great if we could all be less dependent on the federal government. But we should not amend our U.S. Constitution to require a balanced budget without giving careful consideration to what we get from the federal government's spending.

Our main reason for that is one we haven't even touched on yet. We think it would be foolish to bind the hands of our federal government to address crises. We should not add a balanced budget amendment unless we have the genius to also end recessions, depressions, wars and Dust Bowls. In any of those situations, we need a federal government that will take the necessary action, whatever the cost. Second, as we've already hinted at above, we think the coffee shop clamor to pass a balanced budget amendment is exactly that — coffee shop talk that ought to stay right there, where it's harmless.

As some members of our editorial board are telling us this week, South Dakotans who think a balanced budget amendment is common sense fail to realize both the complexity of a national economy and the dependence small states have on the federal government. We cannot know when there is going to be a hurricane or a winter storm Atlas that hits some state unusually hard and throws federal spending out of balance in any given area.

As the economist John Kenneth Galbraith noted, ideas do not have to be deeply right to be deeply influential. This idea of a balanced budget amendment is deeply flawed.

Let's think twice before we second-guess the Founding Fathers on this one. There was a reason they didn't include this amendment.

On this issue, it's time to get out of the coffee shop and take a drive to clear your mind, South Dakota. Keep your eyes on the road.

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 Monday, Feb. 9, the 40th day of 2015. There are 325 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Feb. 9, 1870, the U.S. Weather Bureau was established.

On this date: In 1773, the ninth president of the United States, William Henry Harrison, was born in Charles City County, Virginia.

In 1825, the House of Representatives elected John Quincy Adams president after no candidate received a majority of electoral votes.

In 1861, Jefferson Davis was elected provisional president of the Confederate States of America at a congress held in Montgomery, Alabama.

In 1942, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff held its first formal meeting to coordinate military strategy during World War II. Daylight-saving "War Time" went into effect in the United States, with clocks turned one hour forward.

In 1943, the World War II battle of Guadalcanal in the southwest Pacific ended with an Allied victory over Japanese forces.

In 1950, in a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, Sen. Joseph McCarthy, R-Wis., charged the State Department was riddled with Communists.

In 1960, Adolph Coors Co. chairman Adolph Coors III, 44, was shot to death in suburban Denver during a botched kidnapping attempt. (The man who killed him, Joseph Corbett, Jr., served 19 years in prison.)

In 1964, The Beatles made their first live American television appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show," broadcast from New York by CBS.

In 1971, a magnitude 6.6 earthquake in California's San Fernando Valley claimed 65 lives. The crew of Apollo 14 returned to Earth after man's third landing on the moon.

In 1984, Soviet leader Yuri V. Andropov, 69, died 15 months after succeeding Leonid Brezhnev; he was followed by Konstantin U. Chernenko.

In 1995, former Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., died in Washington at age 89.

In 2002, Britain's Princess Margaret, sister of Queen Elizabeth II, died in London at age 71.

Ten years ago: Hewlett-Packard Co. chief executive Carly Fiorina was forced out by board members, ending her nearly six-year reign. A new postage stamp honoring President Ronald Reagan was issued in ceremonies across the country.

Five years ago: Appealing for bipartisanship, President Barack Obama sat down with Democrats and Republicans to spur cooperation on job creation, deficit reduction and health care overhaul. First lady Michelle Obama launched her "Let's Move!" campaign against childhood obesity. Iran began enriching uranium to a higher level over the vociferous objections of the U.S. and its allies. Fred Morrison, credited with inventing the Frisbee, died in Monroe, Utah, at age 90.

One year ago: Despite a wave of online protests, Copenhagen Zoo in Denmark killed a healthy male giraffe named "Marius" because of rules imposed by a European zoo association to deter inbreeding. Host country Russia won its first gold medal of the Sochi Olympics, winning the team figure skating event; Matthias Mayer of Austria won the men's downhill. Missouri All-American Michael Sam came out to the nation as an openly gay player in published interviews with ESPN, The New York Times and Outsports. Danish movie director Gabriel Axel ("Babettes Feast") died in Copenhagen at age 95.

Today's Birthdays: Television journalist Roger Mudd is 87. Actress Janet Suzman is 76. Nobel Prize-winning author J.M. Coetzee is 75. Actress-politician Sheila James Kuehl ("The Many Loves of Doble Gillis") is 74. Singer-songwriter Carole King is 73. Actor Joe Pesci is 72. Singer Barbara Lewis is 72. Author Alice Walker is 71. Actress Mia Farrow is 70. Former Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., is 69. Singer Joe Ely is 68. Actress Judith Light is 66. Rhythm-and-blues musician Dennis "DT" Thomas (Kool & the Gang) is 64. Actor Charles Shaughnessy is 60. Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe is 58. Jazz musician Steve Wilson is 54. Country singer Travis Tritt is 52. Actress Julie Warner is 50. Country singer Danni Leigh is 45. Actress Sharon Case (TV: "The Young and the Restless") is 44. Actor Jason George is 43. Actor-producer Charlie Day is 39. Rock singer Chad Wolf (Carolina Liar) is 39. Actor A.J. Buckley is 38. Rock musician Richard On (O.A.R.) is 36. Actress Ziyi Zhang is 36. Olympic silver and bronze medal figure skater Irina Slutskaya is 36. Actor David Gallagher is 30. Actor Michael B. Jordan is 28. Actress Rose Leslie is 28. Actress Marina Malota is 27. Actress Camille Winbush is 25. Actor Jimmy Bennett is 19.

Thought for Today: "The man who has eaten enough will never believe a hungry one." — Albanian proverb.

FROM THE BIBLE

He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. Mark 16:9. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Great Tournament

Yankton Area Ice Association
Yankton was host to the 2015 Squirt Hockey Tournament Jan. 31-Feb.1. The Yankton Area Ice Association would like to thank the generous businesses that supported our tournament: Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home, Coca-Cola, Hy-Vee, Steiner's Locker,

Walmart, Conkling Distributing, Ace Hardware, Avera, Dairy Queen, Culvers, Dunhams, Army National Guard and Dominos.

We would also like to thank the great businesses who put "Welcome Hockey Players" on their signs. The 140 players and their families found out what a great community Yankton is to visit!

Capitol Notebook

Dems' Real Problem Isn't In Legislature

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Republicans decisively won legislative elections last November. Now comes their political reward.

They are decisively exerting their will, offering changes in South Dakota's election laws, to further hamper Democrats.

On Wednesday afternoon, Republican senators unanimously added rigid restrictions to SB 69 that will make candidate withdrawals from ballots more difficult.

Democrats have frequently used placeholder candidates for legislative seats.

The common practice has been that the placeholders drop out. Sometimes there are replacements. Often the slots go vacant.

This is a practice Republicans such as Sen. Corey Brown, R-Gettysburg, want curtailed.

Eighteen of the 35 Senate seats were uncontested in the Nov. 4 elections: Thirteen Republicans and five Democrats ran unopposed.

Five Democratic candidates for Senate withdrew, giving those Republicans a free path.

In the House of Representatives contests, eight Democrats and one independent withdrew after filing their candidacy petitions. One Republican withdrew so as to avoid a primary.

Republicans didn't contest 10 of the 70 House seats. Democrats didn't contest 27 of the 70.

Democratic Sen. Bernie Hunhoff of Yankton said the accelerated petition-carrying period for candidates that is proposed in SB 69 wouldn't help and could damage candidate recruitment.

The proposal would allow candidates to start gathering signatures on their nominating petitions on Dec. 1 prior to the election year, rather than current law's Jan. 1 of the election year.

The deadline for submitting the petitions would come one month earlier as well. Hunhoff's argument, based on years of talking to prospects,

is people aren't ready to commit so early.

The period for gathering signatures is under discussion, to allow more time for signature challenges before the deadline for preparing ballots.

The ballot-preparation deadline is based on providing adequate time for military and overseas voting.

The tight window saw a challenge last spring that was started but then dropped, regarding the petition signatures for Annette Bosworth, who was running for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate.

Bosworth remained on the June primary election ballot. Shortly after the primary, state Attorney General Marty Jackley obtained grand-jury indictments against Bosworth regarding the signatures. The case is pending.

The legislative contests in November strongly favored Republicans. Of the 70 state House seats, Republicans won 58 and Democrats 12. Of the 35

Senate seats, Republicans won 27 and Democrats eight.

With two-thirds majorities in both chambers, Republicans again hold enough power to place an emergency clause on any legislation. That prevents citizens from using their constitutional power of referendum to force it to a statewide vote.

Republican legislators also have plenty of power to place constitutional amendments on the statewide ballot. Democrats need the help of at least 10 Republicans in the Senate and at least 24 Republicans in the House.

The latest voter registration numbers show the parties continuing in opposite directions.

From Nov. 3 to Feb. 3, Republicans grew from 240,545 to 241,350. Democrats meanwhile declined from 176,169 to 175,688.

Independents meanwhile grew from 102,392 to 104,376.

Right now, Republicans already have 65,000 more registered voters who can be recruited to run. There is the real challenge for Democrats, not the changes in Senate Bill 69.



Bob MERCER

Michelle Malkin

The Fallon-ization Of Dunham And Williams

BY MICHELLE MALKIN
Creators.com

Comedian Jimmy Fallon is a celebrity fraud's best friend. He's an answer to normal America's question: How do creepy stars get away with their grotesqueries?

If you're lucky enough to sit by his late-night throne and join his cool-kid games, all your troubles will melt away. Funnyman Jimmy is not just a bread-and-circuses buffoon. He's the keeper of the pop culture immunity necklace.

A few weeks ago, "The Tonight Show" host bestowed his boob-tube shield upon grotesque actress Lena Dunham — a favorite repeat guest who famously declared an "obsessive crush" on Fallon. This time, they played "perverted Pictionary." The main gag involved foot-long hot dogs.

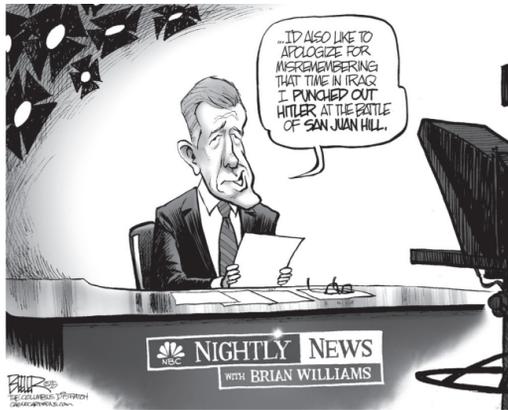
Entertainment reporters and women's magazines dutifully gushed about Dunham's "fierce" doodling skills and "perfectly blended smoky eyes," but not a peep from any of them about Dunham's real-world lying game.

Behind the canned laughter and caked-on makeup lies the ugly truth: Dunham is a freaky-deaky fabulist and Hollywood deviant. After signing a hefty \$3.5 million book deal with Random House, the hipster creator of HBO's "Girls" and her publisher were forced late last year to walk back bogus allegations about a "rape" attack by an "Oberlin College Republican" that she neglected to disclose for nearly a decade ... until she needed to generate book publicity.

Random House is now paying the falsely accused non-rapist college Republican's legal fees. Instead of making amends, Dunham continues to make a martyr of herself, publishing a self-pitying diatribe on Buzzfeed and posting a prominent Twitter selfie with runny mascara mimicking two black eyes.

How twisted is she? Her bestselling memoir also contained disturbing accounts of Dunham forcing her younger sister to kiss her, masturbating in bed next to her, joking about acting like a "sexual predator," and examining her genitals. When bona fide sexual abuse victims started expressing their disgust with Dunham's cavalier attitude, she naturally blamed "conservative white men." Dunham also bitterly attacked conservatives after critics questioned her soft-porn photo shoot with skeezy fashion photographer and accused serial sexual harasser Terry Richardson.

Whatever. Dunham's smoky eyes were "A+!" And



did you see her Saint Laurent polka-dot dress?

This mindless pop culture cachet is an invaluable commodity to scandal-plagued celebrities of all kinds. It's why President "Slow Jam" Obama and first lady Michelle "Evolution of Mom Dancing" Obama have made Fallon's show a frequent pit stop.

Crisis management step one: Get thee to a late-night couch. It's a safe space for "progressive" prevaricators. Lefty comedians don't just serve as useful damage-control tools. They provide preemptive protection to their politically like-minded friends in the industry.

Take Brian Williams. For the past year, Fallon has inflated the NBC News anchor's hipster points by setting his newscasts to popular rap tunes ("Rapper's Delight," "Baby's Got Back," and "Gin and Juice," for example). The videos have all gone viral, vaulting Williams to pop icon status.

Small world: Williams is close family friends with Freaky Deaky Dunham, whom he affectionately calls "Leens." His daughter, last seen engaging onscreen in graphic anal sex, is a co-star on Dunham's TV show.

Mainstream media outlets have elbowed each other like One Direction concert fans in the VIP section to show their love for Williams. On Tuesday, Time magazine breathlessly urged readers to "Watch Brian Williams 'Rap' Snoop Dogg's 'Who Am I (What's My Name)'" Esquire magazine gushed over the running gag, praising the anchorman's "flow." E Online exulted: "B. Dubs is just a cool dude!"

Outside the entertainment industry bubble, however, reality bites. American troops who were fed up with long-lin' Williams busted his tall tale of being "fired on and forced down" in a military helicopter in Iraq in 2003. Williams has smoothly spread the "harrowing" bullcrap story far and wide multiple times over

the years — from NBC News to the "Late Show with David Letterman" to rageball actor Alec Baldwin's radio show. But when he repeated the lie at a New York Rangers hockey game this week in front of veterans who knew the truth, it was the last straw.

On Wednesday, Stars and Stripes quoted surviving crewmembers who were there. They said Williams had been flying in the back of a completely different copter and arrived on scene an hour after the damaged Chinooks had landed. Door gunner Mike O'Keeffe, who survived the RPG attack, told the military newspaper: "I can't believe he is still telling this false narrative."

Believe it. In his televised "apology" Wednesday night, the \$10 million-a-year news anchor was still clinging to falsehoods. He cast his "mistake" of "misremembering" the incident as an innocently "bungled" attempt to "thank one special veteran" he had befriended — neglecting to mention that he had cunningly embellished the self-aggrandizing story over the past 12 years.

But cool kids in the bizarre land of make-believe gotta stick together. As with Dunham, the infotainment establishment has invested too much in Williams to throw him under the bus.

Prediction: The bloviator NBC calls "one of the most trusted journalists of our time" will be back in Hollywood's good graces soon enough, getting his Fallon-ized cultural absolutism through inane rap/news mash-ups.

Or perhaps a round of "perverted Pictionary" with "Leens."

Michelle Malkin is the author of "Culture of Corruption: Obama and his Team of Tax Cheats, Crooks and Cronies" (Regnery 2010). Her e-mail address is malkinblog@gmail.com.