

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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## OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# President Must Rein In The NSA

**SEATTLE TIMES (Dec. 27):** President Barack Obama has a clearly defined mission in 2014. Protect Americans from the wretched excesses of the National Security Agency.

The NSA ostensibly was created to keep U.S. citizens from harm. Recently a panel of security and surveillance experts made it clear Americans must be shielded from unchecked invasions of privacy by the NSA.

The Affordable Care Act was cursed with all manner of computer glitches, but the machinery to eavesdrop on millions of Americans hums along without credible judicial scrutiny or congressional oversight.

No one is paying attention as the NSA vacuums up stunning amounts of telephone and online data every 90 days and stores it for five years, *The New York Times* reported.

How the information is used and who has access to it is not well understood. Tensions are even surfacing with foreign allies who have varying security links.

The phone companies, and other data sources, turn over the information on the broadest of directions from the NSA's lap dog surveillance court. Is anyone acting on the basis of probable cause or some level of suspicion? No.

The panel of experts briefed Obama. One can hope he will address the concerns of a former national security adviser in Democrat and Republican administrations, privacy and constitutional specialists, and a former deputy director of the CIA.

The panel recommends more than 40 changes, including a separation of leadership roles between civilian and military cyber authorities. The president has already turned that down.

The federal courts are of two minds. On Friday, a federal judge in New York found NSA data gathering to be legal and a valuable tool against terrorism. Earlier this month, a federal judge in Washington, D.C., described the collection of telephone data as "almost Orwellian."

The trauma of 9/11 prepared Americans to accept some new, intensive level of security surveillance in dangerous times. The nation naively expected the newly created Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to scrutinize government requests to monitor telephone and online traffic.

Apparently the FISA court plays an essentially rigged and weighted role that only serves the government.

Obama must protect the country from internal security abuses. Congress has legislative powers of executive oversight and the budget. Use both to rein in the NSA.

The NSA has a mission, but the agency cannot be allowed to ignore basic rights and freedoms.

## ON THIS DATE

### By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Jan. 2, the second day of 2014. There are 363 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlights in History:** On Jan. 2, 1974, President Richard Nixon signed legislation requiring states to limit highway speeds to 55 miles an hour as a way of conserving gasoline in the face of an OPEC oil embargo. (The 55 mph limit was effectively phased out in 1987; federal speed limits were abolished in 1995.) "Singing cowboy" star Tex Ritter died in Nashville at age 68.

**On this date:** In 1492, Muhammad XII, the sultan of Granada, the last Arab stronghold in Spain, surrendered to Spanish forces.

In 1788, Georgia became the fourth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1893, the U.S. Postal Service issued its first commemorative stamp to honor the World's Columbian Expedition and the quadricentennial of Christopher Columbus' voyage.

In 1900, Secretary of State John Hay announced the "Open Door Policy" to facilitate trade with China.

In 1921, the play that coined the term "robot," "R.U.R." (Rossum's Universal Robots) by Karel Capek, was first performed in Czechoslovakia.

In 1935, Bruno Hauptmann went on trial in Flemington, N.J., on charges of kidnapping and murdering the 20-month-old son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh. (Hauptmann was found guilty, and executed.)

In 1942, the Philippine capital of Manila was captured by Japanese forces during World War II.

In 1959, the Soviet Union launched its space probe Luna 1, the first manmade object to fly past the moon, its apparent intended target.

In 1960, Sen. John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts launched his successful bid for the presidency.

In 1971, 66 people were killed in a pileup of spectators leaving a soccer match at Ibrox Stadium in Glasgow, Scotland.

In 1981, police in Sheffield, England, arrested Peter Sutcliffe, who confessed to being the "Yorkshire Ripper," the serial killer of 13 women.

In 2006, 12 miners died in a methane gas explosion at the Sago Mine in West Virginia, but one miner, Randal McCloy Jr., was eventually rescued.

**Ten years ago:** Insurgents shot down a U.S. helicopter west of Bagh-

dad, killing one soldier. British flights to Washington and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, were canceled as a security precaution. The NASA spacecraft Stardust flew through the halo of the distant comet Wild 2.

**Five years ago:** President George W. Bush branded Hamas rocket attacks on Israel an "act of terror" and outlined his own condition for a cease-fire in Gaza. President-elect Barack Obama and his family arrived in Chicago after a holiday vacation in Hawaii. AirTran Airways apologized to nine Muslims kicked off a New Year's Day flight to Florida. Actor John Travolta's 16-year-old son, Jett, died at the family's vacation home in the Bahamas. Peyton Manning won a record-tying third Associated Press NFL Most Valuable Player award. No. 7 Utah finished a perfect season with a 31-17 upset of No. 4 Alabama in the Sugar Bowl.

**One year ago:** The United Nations gave a grim new count of the human cost of Syria's civil war, saying the death toll had exceeded 60,000 in 21 months. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton left a New York hospital, three days after doctors discovered a blood clot in her head. No. 22 Louisville topped No. 4 Florida, 33-23, in the Sugar Bowl.

**Today's Birthdays:** Country musician Harold Bradley is 88. Former House Speaker Dennis Hastert is 72. TV host Jack Hanna is 67. Actress Wendy Phillips is 62. Actress Gabrielle Carteris is 53. Movie director Todd Haynes is 53. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher David Cone is 51. Actress Tia Carrere is 47. Actor Cuba Gooding Jr. is 46. Model Christy Turlington is 45. Actor Taye Diggs is 43. Rock musician Scott Underwood (Train) is 43. Rock singer Doug Robb (Hoobastank) is 39. Actor Dax Shepard is 39. Actress Paz Vega is 38. Country musician Chris Hartman is 36. Ballroom dancer Karina Smirnoff (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 36. Rock musician Jerry DePizzo Jr. (O.A.R.) is 35. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kelton Kessee (IMX) is 33. Actress Kate Bosworth is 31. Actor Peter Gadiot (TV: "Once Upon a Time in Wonderland") is 29. Jazz singer-musician Trombone Shorty is 28.

**Thought for Today:** "It is good to have an end to journey towards; but it is the journey that matters, in the end." — Ursula K. Le Guin, American author.

## FROM THE BIBLE

*Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? Isaiah 43:19. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*

## YOUR LETTERS

### Big Goals

#### Randy Gleich, Yankton

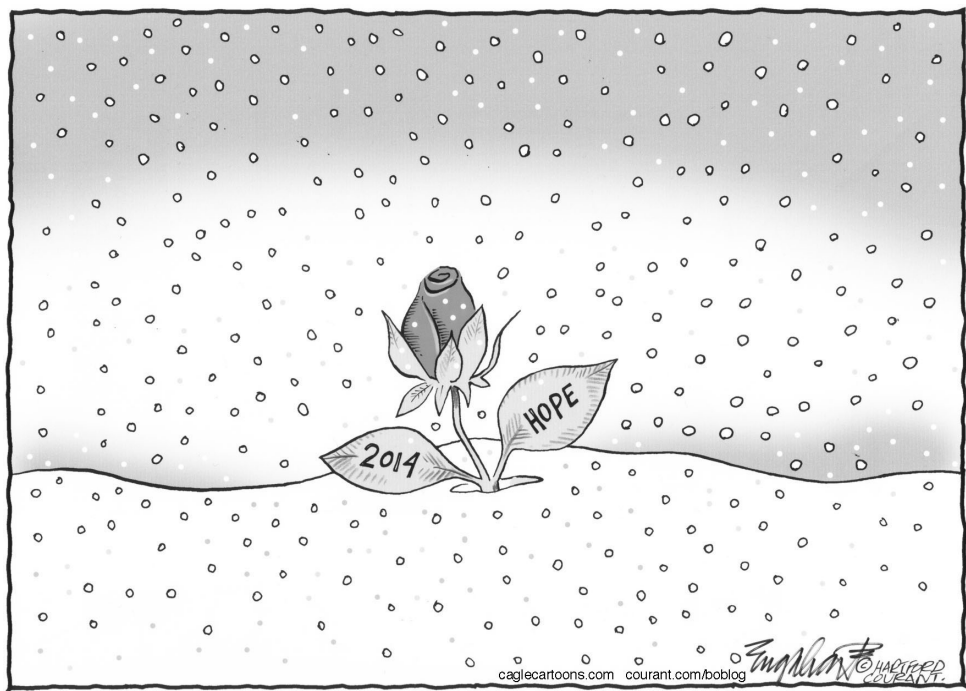
Like many, I start the New Year with a "Big Goal." I'm going to stop this or start that — and soon quickly forget about it.

I have found that smaller achievable goals build self-confidence and soon a much higher goal can be achieved. Think about it, your cell phone is a combination of a lot of little goals: Better screen, keypad, the network and satellites, a camera feature and of course the aps. Each one was a little goal accomplished by hundreds of people, that when combined made a great product.

We are no different. Little goals

that can be achievable today, help us to be successful and become a great package; I'm going to cut back on smoking, watch what I eat, tell someone that I love them, pay off a bill, save a dollar for my vacation, wash a load of clothes, etc. Over time, these little achievable goals, will add up to making a better, self-confident, positive, productive and successful person.

Ending next year, hopefully I will have achieved 365 of these daily goals. Even if I achieve only half of them, it is far better than striking out on just one Big Goal. I should have a good batting average and of course will have a few home runs — that's what makes life so great.



## The Rez Of The Story

# A Life-Altering Movie

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), The very popular British poet Alfred Tennyson, who lived between 1809 and 1892, once wrote: "Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean, tears from the depths of some divine despair rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes, in looking on the happy autumn fields, and thinking of the days that are no more."

Days that are no more can haunt one or free on from the prison of the past if we are able to let them go emotionally. Memories are all that we truly have but they mean nothing if they can't be shared.

Memories inform the present and give perspective to the future I think.

When I was in third grade I was taken out of boarding school at Marty Mission by my grandfather Fred Zephier Sr. Even though I was there for only four short years, the damage had already been done by the constant attention being paid to the dogma of the Catholic Church. The damage done was that I didn't even identify myself as a Native person. I didn't know what that was to say "I'm an Indian" or what any of that even meant until I moved to Pierre to live with my mother, my brothers and sisters, and my step-father.

Being an Indian was not such a cool thing to be then and neither was being poor — I was both. Being Indian was to be ashamed of who you were. Shame was a constant, chronic condition marked by low self-esteem, anger and resentment. Being afraid of the unpredictable, violent white man was also included in this scenario but began to change after I was invited to go to see a movie with some relatives.

This movie proved to be life changing for me and I suspect many other Native people. It ignited the imagination, lifted up fallen spirits, gave permission to embrace the notion of freedom from racist attitudes and resulting ill-treatment of Native people. It changed the conversation from neglect and ignorance of Native issues to some thoughtful discourse and



Vince  
**TWO EAGLES**

some possible solutions. Unfortunately the movie stimulated the more radical, fringe reactionaries to violent encounters with authority and distracted participants who were seeking more reasonable paths to justice at the time.

Folks like me who were young and somewhat naive got caught up in the storm of anger and a call to action without a clear understanding of the history that was unfolding. We blindly followed who we perceived to be leading Native people down a path of escape from the oppression of the white-man's colonization. More on this in columns to come.

About two weeks ago, on Dec. 12 as a matter of fact, a man born in Minneapolis on Aug. 10, 1931, educated at the U of Wisconsin, Marquette University and finished up his studies at The U of South Dakota produced, directed and acted in his now famous 1971 classic movie began his journey to the other world.

Tom Laughlin died of complications from pneumonia at Los Robles Hospital and Medical Center in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

I wanted folks to not forget this man's passing and the fact that — in his own pitiful and maybe not fully informed way — nevertheless told the story, Hollywood style, of a returning Vietnam veteran who was having difficulty adjusting to civilian life as were many veterans of that war were. The main scene many people remember, as I certainly do, was when the principle character was able to display his martial arts prowess by dispatching a dozen or more "bad guys" in the city park. What young Native male didn't have that as a fantasy for handling racism in their respective community after that?

It opened the door to a life of activism, albeit misguided initially, but the movie did its job in that respect. Standing up for one's self is not always an easy thing to do. It inspired young white people as well. In fact Tom Laughlin is quoted as saying in 1975 that "young people in this country have only two heroes, Ralph Nader and" — Laughlin's classic 1971 movie — "Billy Jack."

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

# ACA: Patience, Not Defeatism

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

Whatever happened to American can-do optimism? Even before the Affordable Care Act covers its first beneficiary, the nattering nabobs of negativism are out in full force.

"Tens of millions more Americans will lose their coverage and find that new Obamacare plans have higher premiums, larger deductibles and fewer doctors," predicts Republican operative Karl Rove. "Enrollment numbers will be smaller than projected and budget outlays will be higher."

Rove is joined by a chorus of conservative Cassandras, from Fox News to the editorial pages of the Wall Street Journal, all warning that the new law will be a disaster.

Robert Laszewski, president of Health Policy and Strategy Associates, anticipates a shortage of doctors: "There just aren't going to be enough of them."

Professor John Cochrane of the University of Chicago predicts the individual mandate will "unravel" when "we see how sick the people are who signed up on exchanges, and if our government really is going to penalize voters for not buying health insurance."

The round-the-clock naysaying is having an effect. Support for the law has plummeted to 35 percent of those questioned in a recent CNN poll, a five-point drop in less than a month. Sixty-two percent now say they oppose the law — a four-point increase since November.

Even liberal-leaning commentators are openly worrying. On ABC's "This Week," Cokie Roberts responded to my view that the law eventually would prove popular by warning of "a whole other wave of reaction against it" if employers start dropping their insurance.

Some congressional Democrats are getting cold feet. West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin recently fretted that, "If it's so much more expensive than what we anticipated and if the coverage is not as good as what we had, you've got a complete meltdown."

Get a grip. If the past is any guide, some fixes will probably be necessary — but so what? Our current health-care system is the real disaster — the most expensive and least effective among all developed countries, according to Bloomberg's recent ranking. We'd be collectively insane if we didn't try to overhaul it.

But we won't get it perfect immediately. What needs fixing can be fixed. And over time we can learn how to do it better.

If enrollments are lower than anticipated, the proper response is to keep at it until larger numbers are enrolled. CHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program, got off to a slow start in 1998. The Congressional Research Service reported "general disappointment ... with low enrollment



Robert  
**REICH**

rates early in the program." CHIP didn't reach its target level of enrollment for five years. Now it enrolls nearly 90 percent of all eligible children.

Richard Nixon's Supplemental Security Income program of 1974 — designed to standardize welfare benefits to the poor — was widely scorned at the time, and many states were reluctant to sign up. Even two years after its launch, only about half of eligible recipients had enrolled. Today, more than 8 million Americans are covered.

If mistakes are made implementing the Affordable Care Act, the appropriate response is to fix them. When George W. Bush's Medicare Part D drug benefit was launched, large numbers of low-income seniors had to be switched from Medicaid. Many needed their prescriptions filled before the switch had been completed, causing loud complaints. The website for the plan initially malfunctioned. Pharmacists got the wrong information. Other complications led even Republican

Rep. John Boehner to call it "horrendous." But the transition was managed, and Medicare Part D is now a fixture in the Medicare firmament.

If young people don't sign up for the Affordable Care Act in sufficient numbers and costs rise too fast, other ways can be found to encourage their enrollment and control costs. If there aren't enough doctors initially, medical staffs can be utilized more efficiently. If employers begin to drop their own insurance, incentives can be altered so they don't.

Why be defeatist before we begin? Even Social Security — the most popular of all government programs — had problems when it was launched in 1935. A full year later, Alf Landon, the Republican presidential candidate, called it "a fraud on the workingman." Former President Herbert Hoover said it would imprison the elderly in the equivalent of "a national zoo." Americans were slow to sign up. Not until the 1970s did Social Security cover most working-age Americans.

As Alexis de Tocqueville recognized as early as the 1830s, what distinguishes America is our pragmatism, resilience and optimism. We invent, experiment and fix what has to be fixed.

Of course there will be problems implementing the Affordable Care Act. But if we're determined to create a system that's cheaper and more effective at keeping Americans healthy than the one we have now — and, in truth, we have no choice — we have every chance of succeeding.

*Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of*