

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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OPINION | WE SAY

Citizens Of The Year



THUMBS UP to Don and Pam Kettering, who were announced this week as Yankton's 2013 Citizens of the Year. We can tell you that there was a stellar group of nominees for this year's award, and the final decision could have gone several different ways. But it's also hard to argue that anyone is better than the Ketterings, who have long been very active in the communities with their volunteer work. In fact, Pam, as the longtime head of the local United Way chapter, made a living working with and coordinating volunteers. And although both are now retired, neither Don nor Pam show any inclination to become disengaged with their adopted hometown. Congratulations to both of them. A reception honoring the couple will be announced soon.

Flu Bug



THUMBS DOWN to the presence of the flu bug which has hit Yankton hard in recent days. State epidemiologist Lon Kightlinger has asked the public to get their flu shots and practice good hygiene. The H1N1 flu has also returned to the region. Health officials speculate the flu will move from Yankton to Vermillion, Sioux Falls, Mitchell and to the rest of the state. But the flu bug knows no boundaries, particularly with the number of Nebraska commuters and visitors to Yankton, so we suspect the Cornhusker State's residents will need to also practice vigilance.

Bowled Over!



THUMBS UP to the University of Nebraska Cornhuskers for their wild New Year's Day win over the University of Georgia in the Gator Bowl. The two squads met last year, with Georgia coming out on top. The Huskers exacted revenge this year thanks to a 99-yard touchdown play. It's been a wild ride for Coach Bo Pelini and Big Red, but the end result was a 9-4 record and a bowl victory, which always provides a good start to the new year.

Holidays' End



Finally, a bittersweet **THUMBS UP** to the end of the holiday season. It's an odd call, because we all look forward to the holidays and the special magic that seems to permeate the air. There's nothing like it, to be sure. But at some point, you begin to think "enough is enough," and you begin looking for a sense of normalcy to return. After all, with normalcy comes an escape from the pressing demands of finding presents, fixing snacks for the family, screwed-up television schedules and a lot of downtime that can turn to tedium in a hurry. So, as fond as we are of Christmas and New Year's and the marvelous break that give to us, we look forward for a little straight highway for a while. (Sure, it will wear off in about two weeks, but enjoy the normalcy while it still feels somehow "fresh.")

OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks 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 to views@yankton.net.

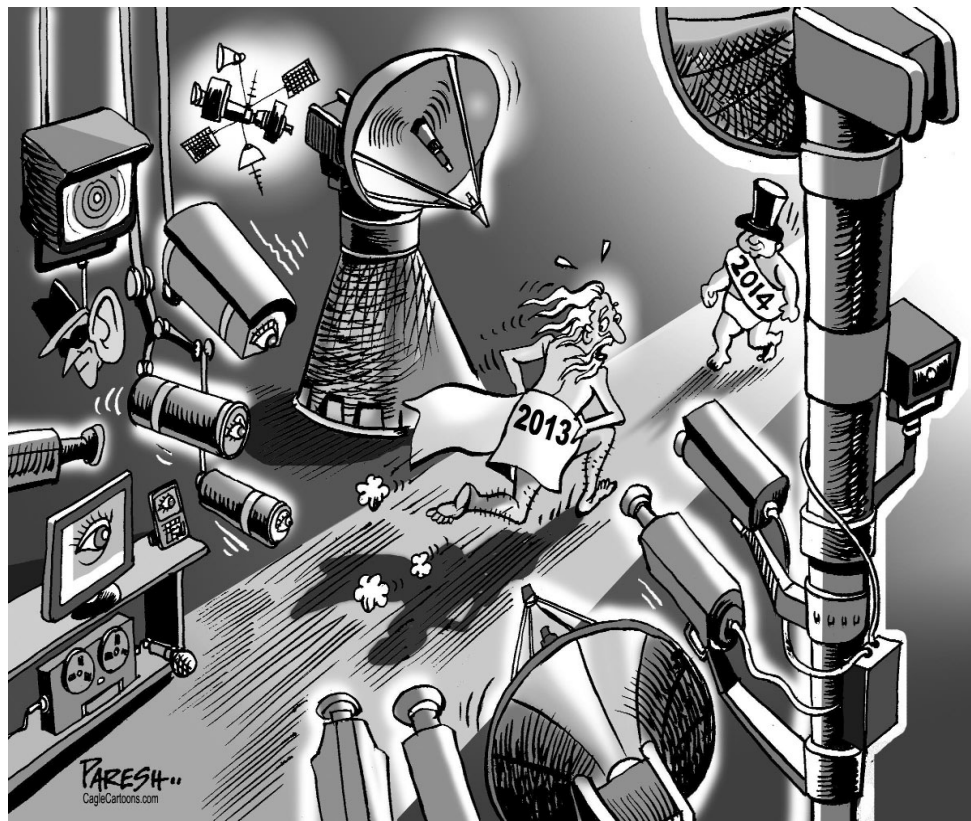
ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Friday, Jan. 3, the third day of 2014. There are 362 days left in the year.
Today's Highlight in History: On Jan. 3, 1959, Alaska became the 49th state as President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation.
On this date: In 1521, Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Leo X.
In 1777, Gen. George Washington's army routed the British in the Battle of Princeton, N.J.
In 1861, more than two weeks before Georgia seceded from the Union, the state militia seized Fort Pulaski at the order of Gov. Joseph E. Brown. The Delaware House and Senate voted to oppose secession from the Union.
In 1870, groundbreaking took place for the Brooklyn Bridge.
In 1911, the first postal savings banks were opened by the U.S. Post Office. (The banks were abolished in 1966.)
In 1938, the March of Dimes campaign to fight polio was established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who himself had been afflicted with the crippling disease.
In 1949, in a pair of rulings, the U.S. Supreme Court said that states had the right to ban closed shops.
In 1958, the first six members of the newly formed U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held their first meeting at the White House.
In 1967, Jack Ruby, the man who shot and killed accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, died in a Dallas hospital.
In 1977, Apple Computer was incorporated in Cupertino, Calif., by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Mike Markkula Jr.
In 1980, conservationist Joy Adamson, author of "Born Free," was killed in northern Kenya by a former employee.
In 1990, ousted Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega surrendered to U.S. forces, 10 days after taking refuge in the Vatican's diplomatic mission.
Ten years ago: A Boeing 737

owned by Egyptian charter tour operator Flash Airlines crashed into the Red Sea, killing all 148 people aboard, most of them French tourists. NASA's Mars rover, Spirit, touched down on Mars.
Five years ago: After seven days of pummeling the Gaza Strip from the air, Israel launched a ground offensive; Hamas vowed that Gaza would be a "graveyard" for the Israelis. Veteran actor Pat Hingle died in Carolina Beach, N.C., at age 84.
One year ago: Students attending Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., convened at a different building in the town of Monroe about three weeks after the massacre that had claimed the lives of 20 first-graders and six educators. The new 113th Congress opened for business, with House Speaker John Boehner re-elected to his post despite a mini-revolt in Republican ranks. No. 5 Oregon beat No. 7 Kansas State, 35-17, in the Fiesta Bowl.
Today's Birthdays: Record producer Sir George Martin is 88. Actor Robert Loggia is 84. Actor Dabney Coleman is 82. Journalist-author Betty Rollin is 78. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Bobby Hull is 75. Singer-songwriter-producer Van Dyke Parks is 71. Musician Stephen Stills is 69. Rock musician John Paul Jones (Led Zepelin) is 68. Actress Victoria Principal is 64. Actor-director Mel Gibson is 58. Actress Shannon Sturges is 46. Jazz musician James Carter is 45. Contemporary Christian singer Nichole Nordeman is 42. Musician Thomas Bangalter (Daft Punk) is 39. Actor Jason Marsden is 39. Actress Danica McKellar is 39. Actor Nicholas Gonzalez is 38. Singer Kimberley Locke ("American Idol") is 36. NFL quarterback Eli Manning is 33. Actress Nicole Beharie (TV: "Sleepy Hollow" Film: "42") is 29. Pop musician Mark Pontius (Foster the People) is 29. Rhythm-and-blues singer Lloyd is 28. Pop-rock musician Nash Overstreet (Hot Chelle Rae) is 28. Actor Alex D. Linz is 25.
Thought for Today: "No one asked you to be happy. Get to work." — Colette, French author (1873-1954).

FROM THE BIBLE

And Jesus, looking at him, loved him. Mark 10:21. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



Keeping Hope Alive?

BY KATHLEEN PARKER
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WASHINGTON — America's capacity for optimism and hope has been boundless through much of our short history. The tangible returns of hard work; the ordered liberty sustained through community consent; and opportunity honed over time to apply equally to all men and women — these were the currency of what we called the American Dream. Essential to these achievements was courage. The Founding Fathers were above all courageous as they challenged a king, fought and died for freedom, and created a country from scratch with little more than mettle and intellectual vigor. If this isn't exceptional, then we have lost the meaning of words. As we begin yet another new year, it is less easy to summon the dream. Instead of hope, a word that brought us a new president, we have entered an era of envy and doubt — envy for those who have more, and doubt that we can ever dig ourselves out of debilitating debt. What happens when even our debtors no longer want our dollars anymore, as China recently declared? A country that no longer wants our money likely doesn't want our debt, either. Depending on whose prognostications one believes, we are either rebounding, by dribs and drabs, or perched on the precipice of economic ruin. Let's figure we're somewhere in between, which falls short of inspiring. What is certain is that our economic standing in the world is damaged, our credit and credibility are weak, and business confidence is still in limbo. Do weak economies and moral decay go hand in hand? We certainly seem poised to find out. From Miley Cyrus' naked cavorting on a wrecking ball — well, one can at least admire her metaphorical succulence — to Anthony Weiner's Twitter projections of His Very Own Self, we have lost all sense of decorum, that voluntary commitment to behavior that combines a willingness to consider others first (at minimum keeping our clothes on), enforced through the exercise of self-restraint. Note the term self-restraint. No one's arguing for a new Puritanism, heaven forbid, but a pivot toward responsible adulthood would be helpful in re-creating a culture that doesn't pinch our faces with revulsion. How do we expect children to navigate through this tawdry muck to become the sort of people most of us would like to know? Part of the problem is our sense of helplessness before the overwhelming power of technology, which has erased the physical boundaries of community. With so many liberated ids running around, it's hard to find a safe place to grow children. Figure it out we must. Does shame have a place in the American Dream? Why aren't irresponsible parenting and behavior as abhorrent to society as, say, smoking? I suppose what I'm lamenting is the loss of our national imperative to do and be better. Where once we fashioned ourselves according to best behaviors, we now accommodate ourselves to the least. Take a look around a mall, if you can bear to enter. Valium recommended. So, yep, we're a mess, but, in the spirit of American optimism, not doomed. To preserve the dream, two resolutions come to mind: Denounce envy and resurrect the community standard. Envy is the core emotion driving the current debate about income inequality and the notion that the poor are poor because the rich are rich. Nonsense. The economy is not, in fact, a pie. When one gets a bigger slice, others do not ipso facto get a smaller one. Instead of redistributing wealth to spread misery around, the goal should be to make the poor richer, which means jobs, education and tax/regulation relief for employers. Fundamental to all else is allegiance to community standards — the tacit agreement among adults that our communities be as physically secure and psychologically safe as possible for the well-being of children, who, let's do put a fine point on it, someday soon will be in charge. For guidance, the correct answer to nearly any question is another question: What is best for children? Perhaps I am naive, but cynicism isn't allowed today. And besides, I am in good company when I propose that America's strength and well-being come from her goodness. Our lack of attention to our goodness, combined with our craving for instant gratification and near-toxic stimulation, has led us far afield from our Founders' intentions. Don't worry, my angel wings are in sorry shape. We may have been created with a universal yearning for freedom, but we have learned through experience that freedom is earned rather than bestowed. To keep it, one must be vigilant. All it takes is courage.



Kathleen PARKER

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Kelly Hertz

Charge Of The Tiny Gadgets

BY KELLY HERTZ
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Appropriately, this story shocked me at first. The Associated Press reported earlier this week that home electrical consumption in this country has fallen by impressive amounts in recent years, almost to levels seen at the turn of (this) century. The AP story reported that U.S. home electrical consumption has been reduced significantly the past decade largely because of an increased emphasis on energy efficiency in our homes. Home appliances — including former energy hogs such as air conditioners and refrigerators — have become much more efficient, using in some cases 20 percent less electricity than they did back in 2000. In part due to tighter federal standards, our homes are becoming more efficient in their construction, with an emphasis on insulated windows and better heating and cooling systems. (Remember, energy efficiency was one of the targeted items in the stimulus plan; this points to why.) Even light bulbs are becoming brighter ideas, with the new compact fluorescent bulbs using up to 80 percent less electricity than the old incandescent bulbs. Also, some mid-size LED televisions now use up to 80 percent less power than the cathode ray tube televisions, which are quickly becoming dinosaurs. And many people are replacing their desktop computers with laptops or tablets, which all use less energy. When I initially read this, however, it all seemed like staggering contradiction. Based on my observations and my own experience with mobile devices that now seem so ubiquitous, I had assumed that we were turning into a society of energy junkies, addicted to battery chargers and battery packs. I dwelled so much on what I saw as the negatives of all these mobile devices — chiefly, the ability to detach yourself from those around you, not to mention the ways that such technology can be abused — that I overlooked some of the tangible positives. We carry so many mobile devices now that we have literally become a world on the go. In particular, mobile phones have changed the way we communicate, as almost everyone seems to have such a phone at their side or in their clutches. But these devices need energy, and the more sophisticated your phone is, the more you need to plug it in to charge it back up. When I had a

basic cell phone, I could usually go about three weeks between charges. When I got my first smartphone, which was a relatively entry-level device, those three weeks were whittled down to perhaps six days between charges. My much better phone now can, with careful monitoring and the aggressive use of energy-saving apps, go up to three days sometimes before I need to charge it. A lot of times, however, it's only two days. And many people I know, who are continually using their phones for any number of tasks, often barely get a day out of it — meaning their phones are constantly hooked up to their chargers, which are tethered to any available outlets. In effect, we have become slaves to our power sources. We cannot communicate, we cannot photograph, we cannot listen to music unless we have souped-up batteries at our disposal. And I figured these things were gobbling up electricity. It turns out they only nibble at it. And to be honest, that seems logical. The proliferation of compact, portable technologies has created an immense popularity in devices that don't use much energy in the broader scheme of things. One of the attractive selling points for a smartphone now is its battery life — it's essential for a lot of consumers. This has promoted better technology for these power sources. And there's sure nothing wrong with that. The AP story stated that the decrease in electrical usage would be even greater if it wasn't for the explosion in popularity of the various little gadgets that have become useful tools in our lives. I see that point, but on the other hand, the growing popularity of all those energy-efficient gadgets may be one big reason why the usage has gone down as much as it has. (The issue of laptops and tablets replacing desktop computers is a compelling example.) So, I must rethink how I look at the tsunami of electronic gadgets that has flooded our society. I used to see these things only as double-edged, techno-social swords that enslaved us to rechargers and fresh power sources. But this subjugation has a quantifiable upside, reflecting an energy-saving mindset that has taken hold — even if we don't realize it. That's power of another kind, and I like it. You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz/. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.