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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Gun Control And The Proper Path

THE PARIS (Tenn.) POST-INTELLIGENCER (Jan. 13): Didn't we fight the Civil War over whether federal law prevails over states' rights?

Now, conservative lawmakers in several states are attempting to organize defiance of certain federal laws, beginning with gun control. Their idea is that if enough states band together, they can overwhelm Uncle Sam's enforcement power.

A measure introduced last week in the Missouri Legislature seeks to prevent some federal gun control regulations from being enforced. State law enforcement officers who attempt to enforce the federal rules would be subject to civil and criminal penalties.

That body came within one vote of passing a similar measure last year. This year's proposal, The Associated Press reported, delays the effective date of the rebellious rules to give other states time to join the cause.

Sounding for all the world like a Confederate organizer, one Missouri senator said, "We continue to see the federal government overreach their rightful bounds, and if we can create a situation where we have some unity among states, then I think it puts us in a better position to make that argument."

Courts have consistently ruled that states do not have the power to nullify federal laws, but that doesn't keep the restless from trying.

Last year, for example, a federal appeals court struck down a 2009 Montana law that would bar federal regulation of guns that are made in that state and which remain within its borders.

Open defiance is not the right path. The proper arena for this struggle is neither Fort Sumter nor the Supreme Court, but Congress. Obviously, many Americans sympathize with the objection to gun control laws, so let their elected representatives sort this out, using the procedure spelled out in the U.S. Constitution.

SPEAK UP!

■ Share your thoughts with us. Write to the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** on a topic of the day or in response to an editorial or story. Write us at: 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 Thursday, Jan. 16, the 16th day of 2014. There are 349 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Jan. 16, 1944, during World War II, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower formally assumed command of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in London.

On this date: In 1547, Ivan IV of Russia (popularly known as "Ivan the Terrible") was crowned Czar.

In 1883, the U.S. Civil Service Commission was established.

In 1920, Prohibition began in the United States as the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution took effect, one year to the day after its ratification. (It was later repealed by the 21st Amendment.)

In 1935, fugitive gangster Fred Barker and his mother, Kate "Ma" Barker, were killed in a shootout with the FBI at Lake Weir, Fla.

In 1942, actress Carole Lombard, 33, her mother Elizabeth and 20 other people were killed when their plane crashed near Las Vegas, Nev., while en route to California from a war-bond promotion tour.

In 1957, three B-52's took off from Castle Air Force Base in California on the first non-stop, round-the-world flight by jet planes, which lasted 45 hours and 19 minutes.

In 1964, the musical "Hello, Dolly!" opened on Broadway, beginning a run of 2,844 performances.

In 1969, two manned Soviet Soyuz spaceships became the first vehicles to dock in space and transfer personnel.

In 1978, NASA named 35 candidates to fly on the space shuttle, including Sally K. Ride, who became America's first woman in space, and Guion S. Bluford Jr., who became America's first black astronaut in space.

In 1989, three days of rioting began in Miami when a police officer fatally shot Clement Lloyd, a black motorcyclist, causing a crash that also claimed the life of Lloyd's passenger, Allan Blanchard. (The officer, William Lozano, was convicted of manslaughter, but then was acquitted in a retrial.)

In 1991, the White House announced the start of Operation Desert Storm to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

In 2003, the space shuttle Columbia blasted off for what turned out to be its last flight; on board was Israel's first astronaut, Ilan Ramon. (The mission ended in tragedy on Feb. 1, when the shuttle broke up during its return descent, killing all seven crew members.)

Ten years ago: Pop star Michael Jackson pleaded not guilty to child molestation charges during a court appearance in Santa Maria, Calif.; the judge scolded Jackson for being 21 minutes late. (Jackson was eventually acquitted.) NASA announced that the orbiting Hubble Space Telescope would be allowed to degrade and eventually become useless. Freddy Adu, the 14-year-old phenom, was selected by D.C. United as the first pick in the Major League Soccer draft.

Five years ago: President-elect Barack Obama made a pitch for his massive economic stimulus plan at a factory in Bedford Heights, Ohio, saying his proposal would make smart investments in the country's future and create solid jobs in up-and-coming industries. Painter Andrew Wyeth died in Chadds Ford, Pa., at age 91. John Mortimer, the British lawyer-writer who'd created the curmudgeonly criminal lawyer Rumpole of the Bailey, died in the Chiltern Hills, England, at age 85.

One year ago: Braced for a fight, President Barack Obama unveiled the most sweeping proposals for curbing gun violence in two decades, pressing a reluctant Congress to pass universal background checks and bans on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines like the ones used in the Newtown, Conn., school shooting. The federal government grounded Boeing's newest and most technologically advanced jetliner, declaring that U.S. airlines could not fly the 787 again until the risk of battery fires was addressed. Pauline Friedman Phillips, better known as advice columnist Dear Abby, died in Minneapolis at age 94.

Today's Birthdays: Author William Kennedy is 86. Author-editor Norman Podhoretz is 84. Opera singer Marilyn Horne is 80. Hall of Fame auto racer A.J. Foyt is 79. Singer Barbara Lynn is 72. Country singer Ronnie Milsap is 71. Country singer Jim Stafford is 70. Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger is 67. Movie director John Carpenter is 66. Actress-dancer-choreographer Debbie Allen is 64. Singer Sade is 55. Rock musician Paul Webb (Talk Talk) is 52. Rhythm-and-blues singer Maxine Jones (En Vogue) is 48. Actor David Chokachi is 46. Actor Richard T. Jones is 42. Actress Josie Davis is 41. Model Kate Moss is 40. Rock musician Nick Valensi (The Strokes) is 33. Actress Renee Felice Smith (TV: "NCIS: Los Angeles") is 29. NFL quarterback Joe Flacco is 29. Actress Yvonne Zima is 25.

Thought for Today: "Goodwill is the only asset that competition cannot undersell or destroy." — Marshall Field, department store founder (1834-1906).

FROM THE BIBLE

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

Center Support

Christy Hauer, Yankton, and The Center Board of Directors
The Center would like to thank the Yankton Catholic Community for their recent generous donation. A special thanks to Father Mark and Father Ken for their leadership. Thank you parishioners for your commitment to serve the poor, the homeless, the hungry and those with the greatest needs.

The mission of The Center and the Catholic Community are very much in alignment. Annually, The Center serves 40,000 nutritious, home cooked meals to seniors, providing 430 free meals per month to seniors who are well below the poverty level.

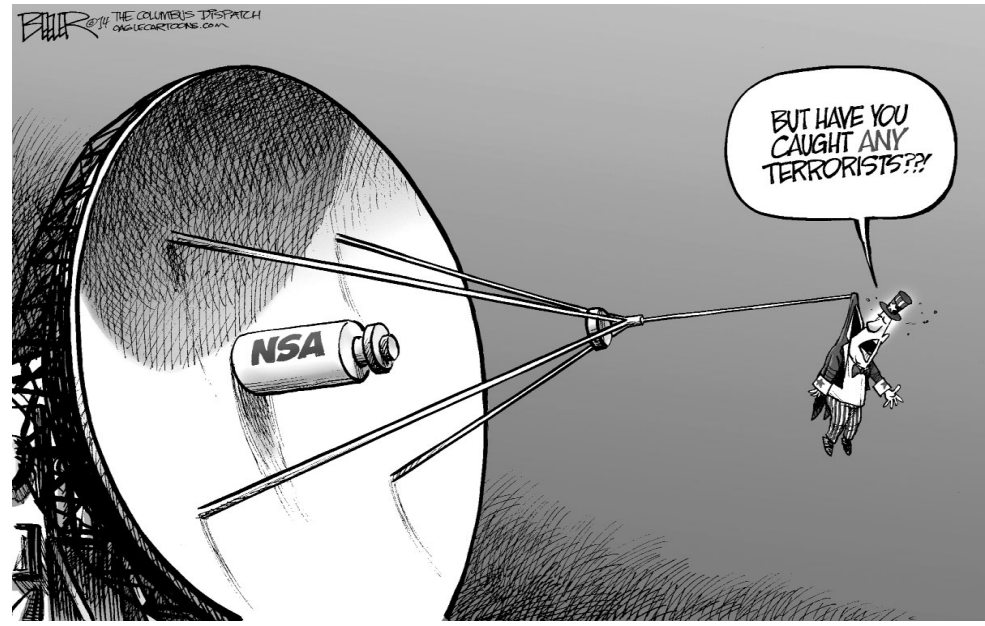
There are 196 seniors who receive supplemental food boxes each month.

The Center also provides Medicare Part D assistance to 600 seniors, saving them thousands of dollars in medical expenses.

More than 400 individuals in the community benefit from our tax assistance program. Tax returns are filed for anyone, of any age who are in need. The Center offers recreation and socialization opportunities for people of all ages.

We feel blessed to have the support of the Catholic Community so we can continue to serve the needs of others.

Thank you and God bless You.



Writer's Block

China's Bubble Trouble

BY WILLIAM KERR

For the Press & Dakotan

I first heard of China as a place where starving children would relish the bits of food I had left on my plate. During my school years, that picture was reinforced.

But now China is different. China's government seems intent on becoming the leading country in the world, supplanting the United States from that perch. A while back, they put on a campaign to replace the dollar with their money base, the yuan.

For some time now, they have been "urbanizing" many citizens in the process of creating a substantial middle class. What has made this possible is the increasing international business they have been doing by creating products from natural resources at costs below that of most countries of the world. This has created more exports, more jobs and higher wages. For the same reason, they have been creating a much larger military than they would ever need to defend their country. In the past 10 years, they have "urbanized" 15 percent of their citizens and they seem to be still working at full speed to "urbanize" another 12 percent by 2026 on that project.

Countries are judged by other countries on their power to help in hard times and in controlling other countries causing trouble in the world. The size of a country's middle class is an indicator of their financial power (and we have lost a bunch lately), and the size of their military indicates they are capable of being the world's policeman.

A big part of "urbanizing" is building living quarters near manufacturing areas to house these new middle class members. In the process, they have created the largest percentage of empty living quarters in the world — 24 percent! And they haven't reduced the construction target for 2014 even though they are already creating new living quarters faster than the creation of new families (marriages).

Some other statistics that show how different China is today than most of us are aware:

1. China has the largest percent of home ownership in the world: 92.6 percent in rural areas and 85.4 percent in urban areas.
2. The average household saves more than 50 percent of its income.
3. China has the fastest growing economy in the world.
4. China's annual new car sales this year is expected to be 20.1 million compared to our 16.3 million in 2013.
5. China's home ownership costs seem to be the highest in the world. For example: the highest are in Shenzhen, a coastal industrial city, at 35 times the average income! That would mean that a family with a \$50,000 income could arrange financing for up to a \$1.75 million home. (Remember their saving rate!) By comparison in New York City, the average



William KERR

cost is only 9 times income. A family with a \$50,000 income could only finance a home costing at most \$450,000!

(On the other hand, a recent investigation by *The New York Times* indicated that the working class in China might not be any better off than in the past. "It found near-slave labor conditions, including apparently forced labor by student 'interns' and 'exposure to poisonous chemicals,' and 'the occasional factory explosion' and violation of China's own child labor laws.")

In a city in the center of China, Ordos, near mining country, they have constructed living quarters for a million people and have only 70,000 residents (93 percent vacancy).

So, what is the meaning of all of these statistics? They are the background for the belief that China is in the greatest housing bubble ever, and when and if it breaks it will mean worldwide economic woes of which we, the U. S., will be as hard hit as anyone. Why? Because we are one of the biggest traders with China.

There are other indicators that this bubble will break:

- For the first time in recorded history, China's 2012 employment figures failed to rise, and even dropped just a bit.
 - China's foreign reserves dropped to near zero in 2012. That means few if any U.S. Treasury Bonds will be purchased by China, and they are probably our biggest customer. Fewer bond sales means less money for balancing the budget. That means more pressure on our Congress, which will probably try to reduce programs which help workers, the poor, children, the elderly and the handicapped, as they have been doing for years. If fewer Treasury Bonds are sold, their price will likely fall and interest rates will rise. Banks will likely follow raising interest and we will likely lose what gains we have made since the recession began, according to *The Economist*.
 - Commodity prices are starting to go down and China exports commodities to emerging market countries (51 percent of their export business) who will then be providing less toward China's budget. How will they make up the difference? Probably by laying off workers and reducing benefits, which could lead to defaulted mortgages, more home vacancies and falling home prices. Sound familiar? A recession in China would likely mean (hold on to your hat) that "the U.S. will be a major casualty, according to *Boom or Bust* (May 2013).
- Also, this new increase in the middle classes has not yet seemed to "trickle down" to the working class (slaves), so there are probably still starving children in China, let alone plenty of them in our country (2,480 in Yankton County), who are not sure where their next meal is coming from.

And, while pondering all of this information remember that they have more than three times the population of our United States.

Kathleen Parker

Poverty: In Luck We Trust

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — As we evaluate the efficacy of the War on Poverty, a single, unquantifiable factor stubbornly demands attention: luck.

When it comes to the fortunes of the rich and the misfortunes of the poor, we recognize the role that luck plays. Some are born lucky — either through natural gifts of appearance, athleticism, intelligence or musical talent. The really lucky ones are also born into stable, educated families with financial security and grown-up parents.

Then there are the unlucky, who, whatever their relative talents, are born into broken families, often to single mothers, in neighborhoods where systemic poverty, inferior educational opportunities and perhaps even crime constitute the culture in which they marinate.

How we level the playing field between these two opposing narratives — how we weave the social safety net — is the challenge for a society that wants to help those in need without perpetuating that need. Is the solution greater government intervention, as Democrats prefer? Or, is the answer temporary taxpayer assistance tied to personal responsibility, as Republicans insist?

The simple answer is both, but simple doesn't cut it in Washington. You'd think these guys were being paid by the hour.

Both perspectives received fresh airings recently at the Brookings Institution. As reported by Melinda Henneberger in *The Washington Post*, Republican Paul Ryan offered that welfare should be a ramp up, not a way station. Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand focused on greater mobility for women through pay equity, universal pre-kindergarten funding, more affordable child care and an increased minimum wage.

In other words, they each offered more or less the same arguments their respective parties have made for the past several decades. No new ideas, Henneberger concluded.

If I may, this is not a new idea but recently has fallen into disrepair if not disrepute, though it would help in the War on Poverty: Marriage. Or, as some of us prefer, maowidge.

Democrats avoid the M-word for fear of trespassing on important constituent turfs, especially women's. For many women, the push for marriage is seen as subterfuge for reversing their hard-won gains.

All but evangelicalistic Republicans such as Sen. Marco Rubio, who recently "went there," shy away from the M-word for fear of being tagged Ne-

anderthals who are wedded to old-fashioned gender paradigms and nurse secret desires to keep women pregnant, subjugated and in the kitchen where they belong (speaking as alleged, not as is). Or, God forbid, that they be accused of waging war against women.

Then again, perhaps it is the way some Republican men talk about women that is so off-putting, rather than what they are trying to say about the value of marriage. It is not helpful when, for example, they insinuate that single mothers are using welfare to avoid marriage. Or when some of the more nostalgic members of the GOP latch onto the idea of "welfare queens."

See what I mean? It's hard to separate the value of marriage from the maowidge of loaded rhetoric and demeaning insinuation.

But marriage, besides being the best arrangement for children, has the added benefit of being good for grown-ups. Half the pain, twice the joy. What's not to love?

More to the point, we know that being unmarried is one of the highest risk factors for poverty. And no, splitting expenses between unmarried people isn't the same. This is because marriage creates a tiny economy fueled by a magical concoction of love, selflessness, and a permanent commitment that holds spirits aloft during tough times.

In the absence of marriage, single parents (usually mothers) are left holding the baby and all the commensurate challenges and financial burdens. As a practical matter, how is a woman supposed to care for little ones and/or pay for child care, while working for a minimum wage that is significantly less than what most fair-minded, lucky people would consider paying the house cleaner? Not very well.

Setting aside the issue of choice in reproductive matters, one easily observes that we live in a culture that devalues and mocks marriage, reducing the institution to a buffet item. The lucky can hire a pedigreed baby sitter en route to the next dinner party, dropping a buck in the beggar's cup, while the unlucky are strapped to a welfare check or low-paying job and a no-hope future.

Obviously, marriage won't cure all ills. Every single parent could marry tomorrow and she still wouldn't have a job. But in the War on Poverty, rebuilding a culture that encourages marriage should be part of the arsenal. The luck of the draw isn't nearly enough — and sometimes old ideas are the best new ideas.

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