

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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**OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS** 

## **Seat Belts, Cellphones Each Factor Into Safety**

KEARNEY (Neb.) HUB (Jan. 11): This week's edition of AAA's Nebraska Highway Safety Issues carries a photo of what appears to be a brand-new red pickup with its driver's side door swung wide open. The caption says the pickup drifted off a Nebraska highway, went airborne when it struck a culvert, and by the time the pickup came to a rest, the driver had been inflicted with fatal

Unrestricted by a seat-belt, he was flung about the cab violently and died of his injuries.

The accident photo is unusual because unrestricted drivers usually are tossed outside their vehicle, which then rolls over them and crushes them.

The lesson: Drivers and passengers who are buckled up are much more likely to survive crashes than those who don't use seat belts. As much sense as it makes to buckle up, Nebraska statute doesn't actually require seat belt usage. Refusing to use them only becomes a crime when motorists break other traffic laws

This year, state lawmakers aim to change that and really mandate seat belts. Just as motorcyclists and their passengers are required to wear helmets, motorists and their passengers would be required to wear seat belts under the Nebraska Roadway Safety Act. Other features of the Safety Act deal with cellphone usage, in-

cluding calling and texting by motorists and bus drivers. Today using cellphones for calls or texts while driving is a secondary offense, but the Safety Act would make such usage a primary offense. Motorists could use their phones if their vehicles are stopped, but not when they're in motion.

While the calling and texting measures are meant to prevent accidents, the seat belt measure is aimed to boost survivability in the event of accidents.

Thirty-three states — including Kansas and Iowa — deem seat belt use as a primary law.

Today, voluntary usage among Nebraskans is about 80 percent, but even with that high rate, during the past decade more than 1,400 unbelted vehicle occupants have lost their lives on Nebraska highways. Of the 1,400 people who were killed, seat belts would have saved about 600 of them, according to safety experts.

Nebraska lawmakers will be wise to seriously consider the Nebraska Roadway Safety Act. If the act is passed and seat belt use becomes mandatory, it is estimated that usage will increase by 12 percent to 15 percent. That increase translates into 50-60 fewer deaths annually, along with fewer serious injuries and reduced health care costs.

Drivers and passengers, don't wait for Nebraska's lawmakers to act. If you're not in the habit of buckling up, get in the habit and insist that all of your passengers also buckle up.

#### ON THIS DATE

**Bv The Associated Press** 

Today is Monday, Jan. 20, the 20th day of 2014. There are 345 days left in the year. This is the Martin Luther

Today's Highlight in History: On Jan. 20, 1981, Iran released 52 Americans it had held hostage for 444 days, minutes after the presidency had passed from Jimmy Carter to Ronald

On this date: In 1265, England's first representative Parliament met for

In 1649, King Charles I of England went on trial, accused of high treason (he was found guilty and executed by

In 1887, the U.S. Senate approved an agreement to lease Pearl Harbor in Hawaii as a naval base. In 1936, Britain's King George V

died; he was succeeded by Edward In 1942. Nazi officials held the notorious Wannsee conference, during which they arrived at their "final solu-

tion" that called for exterminating In 1954, "The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial," a play by Herman Wouk based on part of his novel "The Caine Mutiny," opened on Broadway. The National Negro Network, America's first black-owned radio network,

began broadcasting over 20 stations (however, it folded the following year). In 1961, John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as the 35th President of the

United States. In 1964, Capitol Records released the album "Meet the Beatles!" In 1986, the United States ob-

served the first federal holiday in honor of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. In 1989, George H.W. Bush was

sworn in as the 41st president of the United States; Dan Quayle was sworn in as vice president. In 1994, Shannon Faulkner became the first woman to attend classes at The Citadel in South Car-

olina. (Faulkner joined the cadet corps in Aug. 1995 under court order but soon dropped out, citing isolation and stress from the legal battle.) In 2001, George Walker Bush became America's 43rd president after

one of the most turbulent elections in U.S. history. Ten years ago: President George

dress, asserted that America was strengthening its economy and successfully combatting terrorism. Dick Gephardt quit the Democratic presidential race. Martha Stewart's stocktrading trial formally began in New York (Stewart ended up serving a fivemonth prison sentence for lying about a stock sale). The Salvation Army announced a donation likely to exceed \$1.5 billion from the estate of Joan Kroc, the late widow of McDonald's founder. Ray Kroc.

Five years ago: Barack Obama was sworn in as the nation's 44th, as well as first African-American, president. Russian natural gas began flowing into Ukraine after a nearly two-week cutoff that had left large parts of Europe cold and dark.

One year ago: President Barack Obama was sworn in for four more years in a simple Sunday ceremony at the White House. The San Francisco 49ers rebounded from a 17-0 deficit to beat the Atlanta Falcons 28-24 in the NFC championship game. The Baltimore Ravens earned their first Super Bowl appearance in 12 years with a 28-13 victory over the New England Patriots for the AFC championship.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian Arte Johnson is 85. Former astronaut Buzz Aldrin is 84. Olympic gold medal figure skater Carol Heiss is 74. Singer Eric Stewart is 69. Movie director David Lynch is 68. Country-rock musician George Grantham (Poco) is 67. Actor Daniel Benzali is 64. Rock musician Paul Stanley (KISS) is 62. Rock musician Ian Hill (Judas Priest) is 62 Comedian Bill Maher (MAR) is 58. Actor Lorenzo Lamas is 56. Actor James Denton is 51. Rock musician Greg K. (The Offspring) is 49. Country singer John Michael Montgomery is Sophie, Countess of Wessex, is 49. Actor Rainn Wilson is 48. Actress Stacey Dash is 47. TV personality Melissa Rivers is 46. Singer Xavier is 46. Actor Reno Wilson is 45. Singer Edwin McCain is 44. Actor Skeet Ulrich is 44. Rap musician ?uestlove (The Roots) is 43. Rock musician Rob Bourdon (Linkin Park) is 35. Singer/songwriter Bonnie McKee is 30. Country singer Brantley Gilbert is 29. Rock singer Kevin Parker (Tame Impala) is 28. Actor Evan Peters is 27.

Thought for Today: "Know yourself, and your neighbor will not mistake you." — Scottish proverb.

#### FROM THE BIBLE

Teacher, in saying these things, You insult us all. Luke 11:45. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

### YOUR LETTERS

### What Benefits?

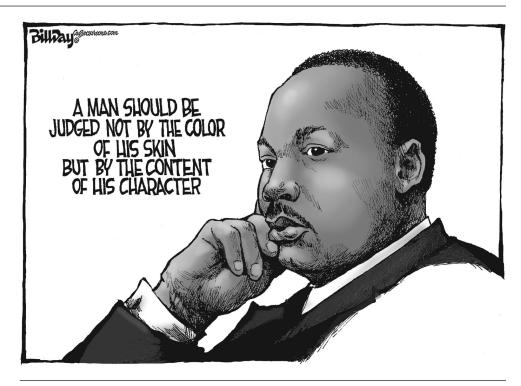
**Randy Gleich, Yankton** In regards to extending unemployment benefits:

I just don't get it. I constantly read the benefit of around \$250 a week is what they will lose. If a person makes around \$10 per hour even at 32 hours per week, that is \$320 a week. If I were to live in a big city with normal expenses of housing and transportation, I am having a hard

time figuring out how I would live on this amount of money. Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop states: "Americans rely on their unemployment benefits to pay for the mortgage or rent, food and other critical bills. They need our assistance in these difficult times, and we cannot let them down." I don't know what planet Mr. Fulop lives on, but \$250 per week is not going to pay all these bills he just mentioned.

The real solution? Tell these people to get a job. So they were making \$30 an hour and now have to but will not accept a job at, let's say, \$20 an hour, because they will not work for less? I think that would be more than the \$250 an week in unemployment benefits, don't you?

And besides that, for two years unemployed, they must be making money under the table to make ends meet. The system must be fraught with fraud. The numbers just don't add up. I just think they don't want to work.



**Capitol Notebook** 

# **Open Government Also Needs Vigilant Journalists**

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Open meeting laws and public records laws help our local and state government officials maintain integrity and trust. Oftentimes citizens depend on news reporters to serve as a conduit.

Unfortunately, I haven't consistently fulfilled that responsibility. Rarely have I or any other reporter attended a meeting of the South Dakota High School Activities Association. The association's meetings and records aren't definitely covered by South Dakota's laws. They should be.

Regardless of the law, I need to be there on a regular basis.

More than 25 years ago, Gov. George S. Mickelson brought a new era of state government financial assistance to economic development. A few reporters went to the meetings of those new

The meetings were conducted almost entirely in executive session behind closed doors. We waited outside and eventually witnessed a few actions in open session that confirmed decisions reached while the doors were shut.
In those days, the Governor's Office of Eco-

nomic Development also issued news releases about the decisions, such as low-interest loans made by the Board of Economic Development to assist job-creation.

We stopped going. Later the news releases stopped too. The GOED boards operated in seclusion, other than their annual reports and

Then Northern Beef Packers came along. We weren't paying attention. The Rounds administration sent six- and seven-figure amounts of grant money to aid the Aberdeen project. The GOED boards committed many millions of dol-

Fortunately or unfortunately — we can't second-guess the past and the present — Northern Beef wasn't able to fulfill the commitments set by those state boards and didn't receive the loan

South Dakotans consequently didn't have those many more millions of dollars at risk when Northern Beef shut down and declared bank-

ruptcy last year. Northern Beef came on the heels of the Ridgefield Farms fiasco that occurred earlier in the Rounds administration.

We, the news reporters of South Dakota, weren't on top of the Northern Beef financial story as it took shape starting in 2010. We didn't

learn from Ridgefield. In recent months, after the November revelations about former state official Richard Benda and the immigrant-investor program known by its federal designation of EB5, I realized the colossal mistake. I returned to covering the

GOED boards. It still requires sitting elsewhere for most of the meeting while the executive session is held. But at least we are getting nuggets of key information again.

The Daugaard administration has been more transparent than the previous administration. GOED annual reports are now posted on the GOED web site. The meeting agendas and minutes are there too.

This session the Legislature will look at reforms. The activities association is under scrutiny from lawmakers. Some of them will bring legislation to make clear the association is subject to open-meeting and public-record laws including meeting materials and contracts.

Also look for lawmakers to seek oversight of Future Fund grants, which have been exclusively under the governor's control since Mickelson

The South Dakota Newspaper Association will ask legislators to designate police logs as public

These are important steps for integrity and trust. It's likewise important reporters keep our eyes open every day too.

## **Kerry Coddles The Jihadists**

Michelle

**MALKIN** 

BY MICHELLE MALKIN

Creators Syndicate

The myth of the poor, oppressed jihadist never dies. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is the latest Obama administration official to peddle this odious narrative. Cue John Lennon's cloying "Imagine," don your plaid pajamas, and curl up with a warm cup of deadly naivete.

While meeting with Catholic Church officials at the Vatican in Rome on Monday, Kerry expounded on their "huge common interest in dealing with this issue of poverty, which in many cases is the root cause of terrorism or even the root cause of the disenfranchisement of millions of people on this planet." In other words: If only every al-Qaida and Taliban recruit had a fraction of Kerry's \$200 million fortune. they'd all be frolicking peacefully with infidels on jet skis sporting "Coexist" bumper

This wasn't a one-off. Kerry delivered a similar Kumbaya-style discourse at the Global Counterterrorism Forum last fall: "Getting this right isn't just about taking terrorists off the street. It's about providing more economic opportunities for marginalized youth at risk of recruitment. Naturally, the Foggy Bottom apple doesn't fall far from the Pennsylvania Avenue terror-excusing tree. President Obama subscribes to the very same "midnight basketball" theory of counterterrorism. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Obama asserted that jihad "grows out of a climate of poverty and ignorance, helplessness and

The chronic cluelessness of the root-cause apologists of jihad never ceases to amaze. Britain's MI5 reported in 2011 that two-thirds of the U.K's jihad suspects were from middle-class backgrounds, "showing there is no simplistic relationship between poverty and involvement in Islamist extremism." Thorough reviews of the empirical evidence shows, as the RAND Corporation reported, that "(t)errorists are not particularly impoverished, uneducated or afflicted by mental disease. Demographically, their most important characteristic is normalcy (within their environment). Terrorist leaders actually tend to come from relatively privileged backgrounds."

Here's a refresher cheat sheet: • 9/11 lead hijacker Mohammed Atta went to

Hamburg University to study urban planning. • Convicted al-Qaida scientist Aafia Siddiqui is a Pakistani who studied microbiology at MIT

and did graduate work in neurology at Brandeis. Osama bin Laden did a summer school stint at Oxford.

• Christmas Day underwear bomb operative Abdul Farouk Abdulmutallab was an elite Nigerian engineering student who studied at one of Britain's leading universities and "lived a gilded • Jihadist Samantha Lewthwaite, the notori-

ous "White Widow" British Muslim convert

linked to last year's Westgate mall massacre in

Nairobi, was the daughter of a soldier and a for-

mer University of London student.

• British-born Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a London School of Economics student, was convicted of abducting and murdering American journalist Daniel Pearl.

> • Seven upper-middle-class jihadi doctors were implicated in the 2007 London/Glasgow bombings.

• Al-Qaida chief Ayman al-Zawahiri didn't need more education or wealth to steer him away from Islamic imperialism. He had a medical degree. So did former Hamas biggie Abdel al-Rantissi.

• Al-Qaida mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed attended Chowan College in Murfreesboro, N.C., and then transferred to North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, where he earned his degree in mechanical engineering along with 30 other Muslims. Mohammed applied his Western learning to oversee the 1993 World Trade Center bombing plot (six Ameri-

cans dead), the U.S.S. Cole attack (17 American soldiers dead) and the September 11 attacks (3,000 dead). He also has been linked to the 1998 African embassy bombings (212 dead, including 12 Americans), the plot to kill the pope, the murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl and the Bali nightclub bomb blast that killed nearly 200 tourists, including two more Americans.

Osama bin Laden, of course, was dedicated to spending every last penny of his inherited Saudi fortune — estimated at between \$50 million and \$300 million — to wage war on the West. Al-Shabaab jihadists have amassed their own terror campaign chest through the illegal ivory trade.

Privileged jihad funders from Qatar and other Gulf states heap their petro-dollars on al-Qaida. The Taliban raised \$400 million in one year, according to a 2012 U.N. report, not just from opium, but largely from "donations, taxing local economies and extorting money from such targets as drug dealers, cellphone operators and aid projects." Indeed, since 2006, "the Taliban have managed to finance an ever-increasing number of attacks, reflecting a year-on-year increase in income," the U.N. report said.

Memo to stupidly rich elitist John Kerry, richly stupid progressive Barack Obama and the administration's bleeding-heart bureaucrats in a bubble: Financial bankruptcy is not, and has never been, the "root cause" of Koran-inspired hatred and violence against nonbelievers. Lack of intellectual stimulation is not, and has never been, the "root cause" of radical Islam's centuries-old and never-ceasing imperative to establish a worldwide caliphate and conquer the West. The root cause of civilizational jihad is unmitigated evil and arrogance, not lack of compassion, understanding or social justice.

Islamic terrorism never had such dutiful tools as the American fools who rationalize it.

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.