

# The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861  
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## WE SAY

### Mass Transit



**THUMBS UP** to this week's gathering of approximately 4,000 Catholic school students and staff — including Yankton and Vermillion — at the Sioux Falls Arena. The Mass and other activities were part of the 125th anniversary observance for the Diocese of Sioux Falls, which covers South Dakota east of the Missouri River. The gathering not only celebrated

Catholic education but also promoted unity as the students and staff shared their faith.

### Delegating Responsibility



**THUMBS UP** to the Yankton County Commission for taking steps to invest more confidence in the county department heads. As Commissioner Don Kettering noted during a discussion of streamlining the travel request process: "I want them to feel empowered to do their job." This is a good move that makes sense. Kettering went on to mention that the commission

too often gets bogged down in operational discussions, and it leaves little time to have more visionary discussions about the direction of Yankton County. We could not agree more. By trusting its department heads to do their jobs, the County Commission will have more time to do what we feel is its job.

### Happy Birthday



**THUMBS UP** — and a big "Happy Birthday!" — to Ability Building Services (ABS) of Yankton, which hits the big 4-0 this month. The private not-for-profit community agency has served people with disabilities in this community since 1975, and is celebrating next Thursday with an open house at the facility at 909 W. 23rd St. The agency has gone under a

few different names — most notably, the Yankton Area Adjustment Training Center (YAATC) — through the years, and its mission has also changed through the decades. It is now much more concerned with providing quality life experiences for its clients. ABS provides a terrific service that sometimes goes unnoticed, but should never be underappreciated.

### What Time Is it?



If you are a child of the Cold War era, you probably remember the "Doomsday Clock," a metaphorical barometer overseen by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists Science and Security Board that measured the "minutes" until midnight — an apocalyptic moment you *never* wanted to reach in the nuclear age — based on the prevailing conditions of the world.

The Cold War is over but the clock is still around: **THUMBS DOWN** to the news issued Thursday that the time is being moved ahead to three minutes to midnight by the board. It's the first change in three years. While modernized nuclear weapons technology and large arsenals were cited, the big culprit, according to a press release, is "unchecked climate change" which is making "the probability of global catastrophe ... very high." It serves as another reminder of the urgency of this situation, a matter slated to be championed shortly by Pope Francis. The message: It's time to act.

## ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

### LATEST RESULTS:

How many hour a week do you spend driving a motor vehicle?	
0-2 hours .....	32%
3-5 hours .....	28%
9 or more hours .....	25%
6-8 hours .....	15%
<b>TOTAL VOTES CAST .....</b>	<b>252</b>

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

### CURRENT QUESTION:

**Who would you vote for in a hypothetical 2016 president matchup between Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton?**

To cast your vote in the **PRESS & DAKOTAN'S** Internet poll, log on to our website at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

## IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Friday, Jan. 23, the 23rd day of 2015. There are 342 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Jan. 23, 1968, North Korea seized the Navy intelligence ship USS Pueblo, charging its crew with being on a spying mission. (The crew was released 11 months later.)

**On this date:** In 1789, Georgetown University was established in present-day Washington D.C.

In 1845, Congress decided all national elections would be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

In 1915, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart was born in Jackson, Michigan.

In 1933, the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the so-called "Lame Duck Amendment," was ratified as Missouri approved it.

In 1937, 17 people went on trial in Moscow during Josef Stalin's "Great Purge." (All were convicted of conspiracy; all but four were executed.)

In 1944, Norwegian painter Edvard Munch ("The Scream") died near Oslo at age 80.

In 1950, the Israeli Knesset approved a resolution affirming Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

In 1960, the U.S. Navy-operated bathyscaphe Trieste carried two men to the deepest known point in the Pacific Ocean, reaching a depth of more than 35,000 feet.

In 1964, the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution, eliminating the poll tax in federal elections, was ratified as South Dakota became the 38th state to endorse it.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon announced an accord had been reached to end the Vietnam War, and would be formally signed four days later in Paris.

In 1985, debate in Britain's House of Lords was carried on live television for the first time.

In 1995, the Supreme Court, in *McKennon vs. Nashville Banner Publishing Co.*, ruled that companies accused of firing employees illegally could not escape liability by later finding a lawful reason to justify the dismissal.

**Ten years ago:** Former "Tonight Show" host Johnny Carson died in Los

Angeles at age 79. Viktor Yushchenko was sworn in as president of Ukraine. The Philadelphia Eagles defeated the Atlanta Falcons 27-10 to win the NFC championship game; the New England Patriots won the AFC championship by beating the Pittsburgh Steelers, 41-27.

**Five years ago:** Abby Sunderland, 16, left Marina del Rey, California, on her first attempt to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. (The voyage ended a week and a-half later because the boat experienced power problems; Sunderland then made a second attempt, but that, too, fell short.) Rachael Flatt won her first title at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Spokane, Washington, finishing more than 10 points ahead of Mirai Nagasu.

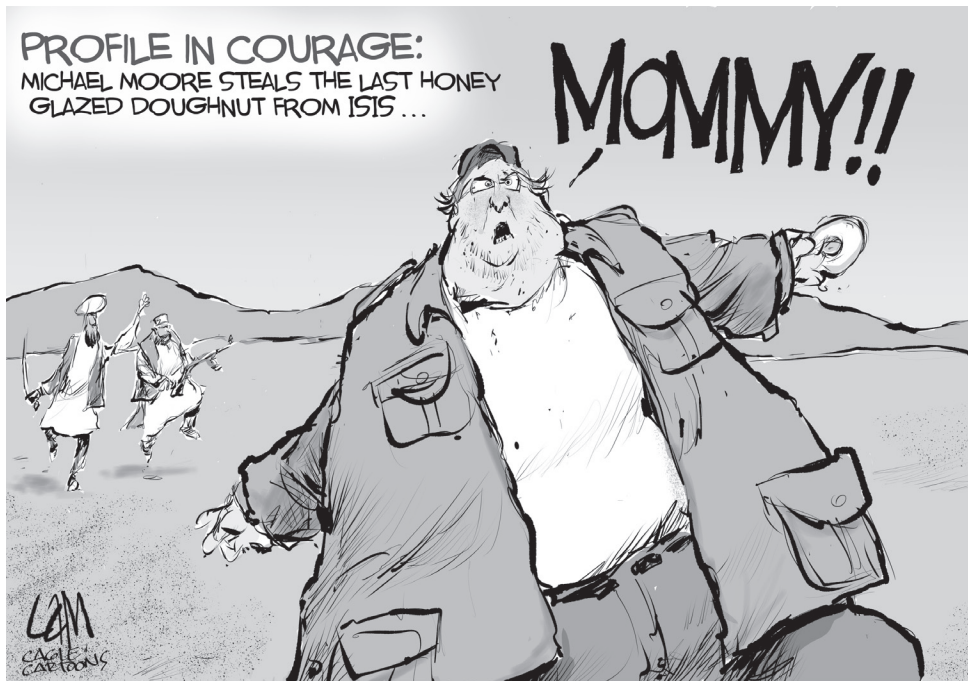
**One year ago:** Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered immediate actions to define the depth of trouble inside the nation's nuclear force, which had been rocked by disclosures about security lapses, poor discipline, weak morale and other problems. A fire at a seniors' home in Lisle-Verte, Quebec, Canada, killed 32 people. Pop star Justin Bieber was arrested in Miami Beach, Florida, on charges of driving under the influence, resisting arrest and driving with an expired license. (Bieber later pleaded guilty to careless driving and resisting arrest under a deal that spared him jail time.)

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Jeanne Moreau is 87. Actress Chita Rivera is 82. Actor-director Lou Antonio is 81. Actor Gil Gerard is 72. Actor Rutger Hauer is 71. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jerry Lawson (The Persuasions) is 71. Sen. Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., is 68. Singer Anita Pointer is 67. Actor Richard Dean Anderson is 65. Rock musician Bill Cunningham is 65. Rock singer Robin Zander (Cheap Trick) is 62. Former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa is 62. Princess Caroline of Monaco is 58. Singer Anita Baker is 57. Reggae musician Earl Falconer (UB40) is 56. Actress Gail O'Grady is 52. Actress Mariska Hargitay is 51. Rhythm-and-blues singer Marc Nelson is 44. Actress Tiffany Thiessen is 41. Rock musician Nick Harmer (Death Cab for Cutie) is 40. Christian rock musician Nick DePatie (Kutless) is 30. Singer-actress Rachel Crow is 17.

**Thought for Today:** "The trouble is that hardly anybody in America goes to bed angry at night." — George J. Stigler, American economist (1911-1991)

## FROM THE BIBLE

*He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. Psalm 91:11.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



## Kelly Hertz

# Theatrics And The State Of The Union

BY KELLY HERTZ

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No, I didn't watch President Obama's State of the Union address Tuesday night.

I didn't have to, as it turned out. A copy of the speech materialized in my email in-box late Tuesday afternoon. Granted, it didn't have the ad libs or spontaneous remarks he might have made, but unless the president suddenly blurts out something like, "Hey! Let's attack Canada," I probably wasn't going to miss much in terms of substance.

Nor did I pay real close attention to the reactions and the rebuttals of other politicians across the country. All you generally had to know in regards to what they were going to say was whether they had a "D" or an "R" behind their names.

The State of the Union address is really American democracy at its best and worst.

It's the best of times because it summons our D.C. lawmakers into joint session to listen to the president, who is given a canvas upon which to verbally paint grand images of the republic's future. It represents America coming together and weighing the gravity of the nation's well-being.

It's the worst of times because it's mostly calculated political theater. Many of the proposals offered by the president probably won't endure, but they do establish the boundaries for political debates and entrapments. The lawmakers in turn stand and cheer or sit on their hands in stony disapproval with each pronouncement. What we are seeing, then, really is a play, with the actors performing their roles according to their political affiliations.

This is a reflection of modern sensibilities and opportunism.

For more than a century, this annual speech was usually hand-delivered to Congress and read before the joint body by a clerk during the course of daytime business. It wasn't until 1934 that Franklin Roosevelt chose to deliver the speech in person (and he coined the term "State of the Union" to describe the address). In 1936, he gave the address at night for the first time. A big reason for these changes was the advent of radio, which allowed this speech to be directly delivered, not just to Congress, but to the entire nation. Here, the theatrical possibilities came into focus.

All this, one might conclude, has been done for our "benefit" — although what benefit we could possibly get from such theater isn't quite clear.

# When The Pope Talks ...

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — Forget E.F. Hutton. It's P.F. (Pope Francis) these days who, when he talks, people listen.

And then they get busy trying to figure out what he was *really* saying. Even non-Catholics are keen to study his words, so surprised and delighted are they to hear a pope say things that suggest to them a more enlightened view of the world, even if those views are attitudinal rather than tangible.

Each time Francis speaks, his words are as shiny objects on a desert floor. We scramble to examine them, turning them over, looking for hidden meanings, holding them up to the light in search of codes and encryptions.

Perhaps Francis finds this amusing. Then again, perhaps he is as shrewd as he seems to be guileless. He says what he means to say, and if people want to argue over the implications of what he says, well, so be it. Once he has said something, the light he sheds travels with the speed of a meme.

Many examples come to mind, but the most recent was about women, always treacherous territory for a pope — or any man. Speaking to a crowd of students at the University of Santo Tomas during his recent visit to the Philippines, Francis noted with gentle disapproval that there weren't many women in attendance.

Then he said a series of things so simple and true that they were at once obvious and sublime.

"Women have much to tell us in today's society. Sometimes we're too macho, and we don't leave enough room for women." And, "Women are able to see things with different eyes than we. Women are able to ask questions that men can't understand."

Well, now, that's a mouthful. But what was he *really* saying?

On MSNBC's "Morning Joe," co-anchor Mika Brzezinski postulated that Francis was hinting at changes in the church that might allow women to become priests. Many people, including Catholics, think it's time, but it's not likely to happen under Francis' watch. The pope has said that the issue is settled and "that door is closed."

But, wait, what does *that* mean? Didn't he say "door"? See how fertile the pope's words are? Robert McClory, Northwestern University

Still, the State of the Union address does, one night each winter, briefly nurture within us a modicum of hope that maybe our elected representatives could work together and pursue some great goals for the greater good.

But by the next day, we know better.

This is not to say the State of the Union address has always been mostly stagecraft. Some lofty intentions have come forth from these speeches. James Monroe laid out the Monroe Doctrine in his 1823 address, while Lyndon Johnson introduced legislation for his "War on Poverty" in 1964. And Roosevelt defined his historic Four Freedoms in his 1941 speech. So, this can be a platform for the launching of important and defining ideas.

Alas, these are exceptions, for the play's usually the thing.

So, for 2015, we took in the words from President Obama knowing that he faces a Republican Congress filled with people who, I've subsequently learned, refused to applaud when he called for such things as equal pay for women and raising the wages of the poorest Americans. We know (just as well as he knows) that much of what was proposed Tuesday night will face an uphill grind. We can suspect that what the president said and how his opponents responded will both be used as ammunition in the next election cycle. The reactions to Obama's speech appeared to fall along those aforementioned partisan lines, as South Dakota's Republican congressional delegation displayed. For instance, Rep. Kristi Noem dismissed the address by saying that, "unfortunately, most of (Tuesday's) speech was about politics," while Sen. Mike Rounds added that Obama "must do more than pay lip service to bipartisanship in order to move our country forward." Such comments work both ways, of course, but politicians always seem proudly tone deaf to that bit of irony.

And that's how the theater works.

However, it occurs to me that if these lawmakers would put as much energy into the actual issues being addressed — and into finding compromises and solutions on those matters — as they did in grandstanding for or against a State of the Union speech, we would all, to a person, be much better off.

But they won't. And we aren't.

And that is the real state of the union.

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at [twitter.com/kelly\\_hertz/](http://twitter.com/kelly_hertz/). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net/](http://www.yankton.net/).

journalism professor and author of "As It Was in the Beginning: The Coming Democratization of the Catholic Church," explored the door as metaphor in an article for the National Catholic Reporter. Francis didn't say the issue is behind a wall or a barbed-wire fence, McClory wrote. A door can be opened.

Might Francis have been hinting as much?

In the same vein, writer Lorena O'Neil said in her article "Catholicism, Women and the Winds of Change" that Francis is "touching the doorknob to see how hot the fire is on the other side."†

Perhaps they are right. But while we're speculating, there's yet another possibility. Maybe he was signaling to followers of Islamic fundamentalism, which subjugates and dehumanizes women. I doubt he was, but I like this idea. Does the Taliban pay attention to what the leader of the Catholic Church has to say?

To those who would suggest that the church also dehumanizes women by keeping them in subordinate positions, there's the problem of Mary. She wasn't just the mother of Jesus but the mother of God, no secondary role. In the church, Mary is the mediator of all grace and in the hierarchy of heaven, she is higher than all men.

Even non-believers believe this, or so goes the joke (wit unknown) beloved by Catholics: "There is no God and Mary is His Mother."

This is to say, Mary holds an exalted position in the church that can never be compromised. Herein lies the conflict for modern feminists, who long ago renounced women's status as the revered object on a pedestal and traded the favors of chivalry for the mundane privilege of full participation in the machinations of "mankind," for lack of a better word.

And, though Francis wishes to soften the language of the church and welcome all to the pew, he isn't likely to budge that door. Whatever his intent in Manila, which, someone has to say, may have been only an observation intended for his immediate audience, Francis got people thinking and talking about a subject the larger world still needs to hear: Women have much to say.

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