

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

CONTACT US

PHONE:
(605) 665-7811
(800) 743-2968
NEWS FAX:
(605) 665-1721
ADVERTISING FAX:
(605) 665-0288
WEBSITE:
www.yankton.net
EMAIL ADDRESS:
news@yankton.net

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Keystone: Both Sides See Hope

THE GRAND ISLAND INDEPENDENT (June 28): In these politically toxic days that we now live in, it is rare when two opposite leaning groups celebrate a political speech. Such was the case Tuesday when President Obama said his rejection or approval of the Keystone XL pipeline project will depend on whether the project would mean a large increase in greenhouse emissions. Ne-braskans are well aware of the proposed project, which would cut across the state on its path from the tar-sand region of Alberta, Canada, to refineries on the Texas Gulf.

Both sides of the emotionally charged issue took time to celebrate the statement as a victory for their camp.

Pipeline proponents said the goal established by the president has been met in studies conducted by the State Department. TransCanada, the petroleum giant behind the project, said those State Department studies show that the Keystone XL project would have a negligible net effect on emissions and climate change. The studies say the oil sands will eventually be developed and that transporting the product in the pipeline will release less carbon pollutants than if the heavy tar-sand petroleum is delivered to the refineries by rail or truck. TransCanada is seeking to pump 800,000 barrels per day through the pipeline.

Opponents are shouting the opposite, saying the refining of the tar sands will release huge volumes of greenhouse gas emissions. According to anti-pipeline groups, the president's new standard that he outlined Tuesday means the project cannot be approved.

The project is near the end of a five-year review process. Since it crosses an international border, it must be approved by the president. The review process is handled by the State Department.

Pipeline advocates insist that Obama's introduction of global climate change into the Keystone XL debate effectively moves the goal line as they try to meet the challenges in the State Department's review. Obama outlined his energy and climate change strategy Tuesday in a speech at Georgetown University in Washington.

Given the enormous scrutiny of the project over the past half-decade, this seems to be an odd time for the president to bring up carbon emissions as a deal breaker.

Obama has in effect drawn a line in the tar-sands by saying the project won't be approved if it generates more carbon emissions. That is good news for somebody. It could mean the issue has been dealt with by the State Department studies and it will receive the president's approval. Or it could mean that the president sees more harmful carbon emissions being released into the atmosphere, meaning the project will not be allowed to move forward. So who's right? Only time will tell.

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 Monday, July 8, the 189th day of 2013. There are 176 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On July 8, 1776, Col. John Nixon gave the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, outside the State House (now Independence Hall) in Philadelphia.

On this date: In 1663, King Charles II of England granted a Royal Charter to Rhode Island.

In 1853, an expedition led by Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Yedo Bay, Japan, on a mission to seek diplomatic and trade relations with the Japanese.

In 1889, *The Wall Street Journal* was first published.

In 1907, Florenz Ziegfeld staged his first "Follies," on the roof of the New York Theater.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson received a tumultuous welcome in New York City after his return from the Versailles Peace Conference in France.

In 1947, demolition work began in New York City to make way for the new permanent headquarters of the United Nations.

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman named Gen. Douglas MacArthur commander-in-chief of United Nations forces in Korea. (Truman ended up sacking MacArthur for insubordination nine months later.)

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower began a visit to Canada, where he conferred with Prime Minister John Diefenbaker and addressed the Canadian Parliament.

In 1962, just after midnight local time, Alitalia Flight 771, a DC-8, crashed as it was approaching Bombay (Mumbai), India, killing all 94 people on board.

In 1972, the Nixon administration announced a deal to sell \$750 million in grain to the Soviet Union. (However, the Soviets were also engaged in secretly buying subsidized American grain, resulting in what critics dubbed "The Great Grain Robbery.")

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford announced he would seek a second term of office.

In 1994, Kim Il Sung, North Korea's communist leader since 1948, died at age 82.

Ten years ago: In Senegal at the start of a five-nation tour of Africa, President George W. Bush called American slavery one of history's greatest crimes as he stood at the very spot where hundreds of thousands of Africans had been bought and sold like cargo. A factory worker opened fire at a Lockheed Martin plant in Meridian, Miss., leaving five

dead before committing suicide. Twenty-nine-year-old Iranian twins joined at the head died following surgery in Singapore to separate them. A triple-deck ferry capsized in Bangladesh; more than 500 people drowned. A Sudanese Boeing 737 crashed on the northeastern Red Sea coast, killing 117 people.

Five years ago: A bipartisan group chaired by former secretaries of state James Baker III and Warren Christopher released a study saying the next time the president goes to war, Congress should be consulted and vote on whether it agrees. A well-organized assault by gunmen on horseback on a United Nations-African Union patrol in Darfur left seven peacekeepers dead and 22 wounded.

One year ago: A bomb in eastern Afghanistan killed six NATO service members on a day where a total of 29 people died from roadside bombs and insurgent attacks. In a show of force, Syria began large-scale military exercises to simulate defending the country against outside "aggression." Roger Federer equaled Pete Sampras' record of seven men's singles titles at the All England Club and won his 17th Grand Slam title overall, beating Andy Murray 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-4. Na Yeon Choi of South Korea won the U.S. Women's Open at Blackwolf Run in Kohler, Wis. Academy Award-winning actor Ernest Borgnine, 95, died in Los Angeles.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Jerry Vale is 83. Singer Steve Lawrence is 78. Actor Jeffrey Tambor is 69. Ballerina Cynthia Gregory is 67. Actress Kim Darby is 66. Children's performer Raffi is 65. Actress Anjelica Huston is 62. Writer Anna Quindlen is 61. Actor Kevin Bacon is 55. Actor Robert Knepner is 54. Rock musician Andy Fletcher (Depeche Mode) is 52. Country singer Toby Keith is 52. Rock musician Graham Jones (Haircut 100) is 52. Rock singer Joan Osborne is 51. Writer-producer Rob Burnett is 51. Actor Rocky Carroll is 50. Actor Corey Parker is 48. Actor Billy Crudup is 45. Actor Michael Weatherly is 45. Singer Beck is 43. Country singer Drew Womack (Sons of the Desert) is 43. Christian rock musician Stephen Mason (Jars of Clay) is 38. Actor Milo Ventimiglia is 36. Rock musician Tavis Werts is 36. Singer Ben Jelen is 34. Actor Lance Gross is 32. Actress Sophia Bush is 31. Rock musician Jamie Cook (Arctic Monkeys) is 28. Actor Jake McDormand is 27. Actor Jaden Smith is 15.

Thought for Today: "Fools are more to be feared than the wicked." — Queen Christina of Sweden (1626-1689).

FROM THE BIBLE

But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages of our glory. 1 Corinthians 2:7. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

The NEW big man on campus.



The Alien Plight

BY BILL O'REILLY

Creators Syndicate

GALWAY, Ireland — The intense debate over immigration reform in the USA has riveted many in this bucolic area in the west of Ireland. That's because in addition to millions of Hispanic aliens, a significant number of Irish would benefit from immigration clarity. Just ask anyone in the Woodside section of Queens, New York.

The census estimates that there are nearly 35 million Americans of Irish descent living in America, and many of them had ancestors who fled to the United States to save their lives. The vicious Irish famine reached its height in 1847 as hundreds of thousands of starving people boarded so-called "coffin ships" to come to the USA. Many died on those ships — victims of disease on the long voyage. Their bodies were often thrown overboard into the sea.

In Ireland itself, more than a million people died from hunger and disease during the famine years. The British controlled the country and, incredibly, exported grain to London even as Irish children were dying in the streets. British soldiers actually had to guard the grain stores, killing the Irish who stormed the storage facilities.

Thus, there are still deep wounds in this country of fewer than 5 million. More than a few Irish noticed a visiting American news commentator and asked about the proposed immigration reform. All favored it because of the sensitivity to the suffering of poor people.

The United States today is a far different place from what it was in the mid-19th century, when our vast land needed folks to settle and expand into the west. Then, there was no such thing as an "illegal alien." If you physi-



Bill O'REILLY

cally made it here, you were an American. Simply showing up entitled you to pursue the dream of prosperity.

But today our country is fragile. The economy is stagnant, and social problems dominate the landscape. Back when my people arrived from Galway, in the 1840s, there was little in the way of social welfare and entitlements. You either earned your way or wound up in the street. America did not support immigrants; it simply gave them a chance.

What has not changed is the humanity of most Americans. People without an agenda realize that most illegal aliens are here to feed their families, not to cause trouble. But we also realize that our federal government has allowed and sometimes encouraged immigration chaos, which has damaged the fabric of the nation.

You simply cannot allow more than 10 million people to occupy your territory without any accountability. And that's what has happened.

I told the good people in western Ireland who approached me that I hope a fair but tough immigration bill passes this year — one that will put an end to the porous southern border and make undocumented aliens earn their citizenship over an extended period of time.

The most powerful nation on earth should be able to pass a fair, effective immigration law that combines compassion with responsibility and does not injure hardworking Americans who are taxed up to here.

We SHOULD be able to do that. It will be shameful if we don't.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."

A Chat With A Universal Spirit

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Media Services

I was standing in line with God, buying tickets to see "Monsters University." He's a big Billy Crystal fan.

"So," I said, "have you heard about these religious atheists?"

God gave me a look. "Is this a joke?" He asked.

"No," I said. "It's a story that ran in the *Washington Post* recently about religion in America. It was fascinating. Turns out 12 percent of those who say they don't believe in you nevertheless pray. Some of them pray to something they call a 'universal spirit.' It also said 18 percent of atheists say religion has some importance in their lives."

"Really?" said God as the line edged forward. "So where's this coming from?"

"It was from a Pew study that came out in October. For some reason, the study didn't get much traction, but the Post story has been making noise all over the Internet. People are blogging about it, tweeting about it."

"I hadn't heard," said God. "My Internet's been down."

"So anyway," I said, "about these religious atheists .??"

"What about them?"

"You don't think it's weird? They don't believe in you, but they pray?"

"To this 'universal spirit'?" said God.

"Yeah." We edged forward again.

"Why should that bother me?" asked God.

"I am a universal spirit."

"But it's hypocritical," I insisted. "The story even talks about atheists who mimic religious practices, who gather in so-called 'godless congregations' on Sundays to, I don't know, meditate and reflect."

"This annoys you?" God wagged His fingers at a toddler who was staring at Him.

"A little," I conceded. "Just seems like they're trying to have it both ways. Heck, some of them throw hissy fits at any passing mention of you. If I write some innocuous line — 'Lord, have mercy,' let's say — suddenly, I've got atheists out the wazoo."

"Sounds painful," He said.

"I'm just saying: If you believe, believe. If



Leonard PITTS

you don't, don't. Make up your mind."

"You think it's that simple? It's not. Faith and doubt do not oppose each other. They define each other, like light and shadow."

"Wow," I said, "that's deep."

"I have my moments," said God.

We got to the window. "Two for 'Monsters,'" I said. God showed his AARP card and got the senior discount.

"Here's the thing," said God as we lined up at the snack counter. "I designed you to seek me, to feel a need for me. Some people — that 12 percent you're so fired up about — maybe they don't find me in what you call 'religion.' Maybe that means they're missing something. Or maybe religion is."

"What if they don't find you at all?"

"Finding is important," said God.

"But seeking is important, too. Seeking teaches patience, opens your mind, shows you your own limitations. That's where wisdom begins."

"But come on," I said, "'universal spirit'? Doesn't that sound cheesy?"

God shrugged. "I've been called worse. Besides, have you seen the things some religious people do, supposedly in my name? They blow things up in the name of God. They stone women in the name of God. They fight in the name of God. They hate in the name of God."

He looked sad. "I wish, more often, they would hug in the name of God. Serve in the name of God. Heal in the name of God. Make peace in the name of God. I would like that very much."

We got to the snack counter. I ordered popcorn and a cherry liqueur. "He'll have water," said God and when I looked at him, He said, "I gave you good, strong teeth. Why do you want to rot them?"

The kid behind the counter handed the water bottle to God, who handed it to me. "Don't forget to recycle," He said. "My oceans are not garbage dumps."

I sighed. "Yes, universal spirit," I said.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for The Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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YOUR LETTERS

Helping Hand

Dale Dawson, Yankton

To the kind gentleman that helped me on Fourth and Broadway on Tuesday, July 2, after noon when my trailer receiver pin fell out and

the trailer came unhooked. Thank you for stopping and assisting me. I never thought to get your name. If you will call 665-6629 and leave your name and address, I would like to return the pin you loaned me. Thank You.