

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

River Confluence Must Be A Priority

The land was flat, sandy and overrun by small shoots of trees. There was water nearby but no discernible shoreline. There was an island about 100 yards away, and apparently the water was so shallow that one could probably walk to the island with water perhaps coming up to your waist at most.

This was the mouth of the James River, as shown to a group of visiting officials, members of the public and the media last week. It was supposed to be the confluence of two rivers, one of which being among the largest in the nation, another a slow-moving beast that has been running high of late. But that wasn't evident last week. The place where the contingent stood was actually the bottom of the Missouri River and should have been 6-10 feet underwater.

But that was before the flood of 2011 changed things. As it turned out, it changed not one river, but two.

We are gradually coming to grips with how much the Missouri River was in fact changed by the flood two years ago. The event altered the channel in many places, a fact to which the City of Yankton can attest as it struggles with its water issues. Another of those places is at the mouth of the James, and officials from the James River Water Development District (JRWD) inspected the area last week to fully appreciate how much the confluence has been altered.

The shift of sand has effectively created a dam at the mouth of the James, which may have an impact on the rate at which that river can drain into the Missouri. Since the James is already one of the slowest-flowing rivers in the world, the impact could have a domino effect upstream. Slower discharge during wetter years (like this one) could eventually result in more flooding in a valley that has already endured a surge of high-water woes in recent years.

The problem is clear — but the solution remains elusive. JRWD Executive Director Dave Bartel said that efforts have been made to contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about the situation, but the response, he said, hasn't been promising. The Corps apparently "has bigger fish to fry," he said.

Nevertheless, the Corps needs to be involved in any solution that is to be found for cleaning up the confluence region. It needs to be there not only as a matter of practicality, but also as a matter of obligation.

The James touches a lot of lives in this area — and indeed, throughout eastern South Dakota. It is a major drainage basin that stretches from North Dakota to Yankton. Many components impact it, from dam discharges in North Dakota to rural water drainage to urban runoff. As such, it has a lot of issues that are sticky topics up and down the basin.

Addressing the siltation issue at the mouth of the river should be one of the priorities. It may not impact all the issues that the river has faced or is likely to face. (For instance, the valley is going to have to deal with an epidemic of dead trees caused by recent flooding, with one observer noting in a conversation last week that it might take 20 years to address the matter.) But it can have an impact down here, at the bottom of the system and the receiving point of all the water and all the decisions made upstream.

Keeping the river flowing and cleanly connected to the Missouri is an essential component of the health of the James. And it must remain that way.

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ONLINE OPINION

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

LATEST RESULTS:

How closely have you followed the George Zimmerman murder trial?
Not too much 39%
Off and on 33%
Very closely 15%
Not at all/never heard of it 13%
TOTAL VOTES CAST 251

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:

Do you agree with the verdict in the George Zimmerman murder trial?
To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, July 16, the 197th day of 2013. There are 168 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On July 16, 1973, during the Senate Water-gate hearings, former White House aide Alexander P. Butterfield publicly revealed the existence of President Richard Nixon's secret taping system.

On this date: In 1790, a site along the Potomac River was designated the permanent seat of the United States government; the area became Washington, D.C.

In 1862, Flag Officer David G. Farragut became the first rear admiral in the United States Navy.

In 1912, New York gambler Herman Rosenthal, set to testify before a grand jury about police corruption, was gunned down by members of the Lennox Avenue Gang.

In 1935, the first parking meters were installed in Oklahoma City.

In 1945, the United States exploded its first experimental atomic bomb in the desert of Alamogordo, N.M.

In 1951, the novel "The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger was first published by Little, Brown and Co.

In 1964, as he accepted the Republican presidential nomination in San Francisco, Barry M. Goldwater said "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice" and that "moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

In 1969, Apollo 11 blasted off from Cape Kennedy on the first manned mission to the surface of the moon.

In 1979, Saddam Hussein became president of Iraq.

In 1980, former California Gov. Ronald Reagan won the Republican presidential nomination at the party's convention in Detroit.

In 1981, singer Harry Chapin was killed when his car was struck by a tractor-trailer on New York's Long Island Expressway.

In 1999, John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife, Carolyn, and her sister, Lauren Bessette, died when their single-engine plane, piloted by Kennedy, plunged into the Atlantic Ocean near Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

Ten years ago: The Environmental Protection Agency announced it was starting big-money, long-term cleanups at ten Superfund toxic waste sites and putting ten other sites aside for later. A car driven by 87-year-old George Russell Weller plowed through a farmers market in Santa Monica, Calif., killing 10 people and injuring more than 70.

(Weller was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to five years of probation.) Cuban-born "Queen of Salsa" Celia Cruz died in Fort Lee, N.J., at age 77.

Five years ago: Republican John McCain addressed the annual convention of the NAACP, telling the civil rights group in Cincinnati he would expand education opportunities, partly through vouchers for low-income children to attend private schools. Israel freed notorious Lebanese militant Samir Kantar and four others after Hezbollah guerrillas handed over the bodies of two Israeli soldiers. Florida resident Casey Anthony, whose 2-year-old daughter, Caylee, had been missing a month, was arrested on charges of child neglect, making false official statements and obstructing a criminal investigation. (Casey Anthony was later acquitted at trial of murdering Caylee, whose skeletal remains were found in December 2008; she was convicted of lying to police.) Pop singer Jo Stafford died in Century City, Calif., at age 90.

One year ago: North Korea reshuffled its military, dismissing its army chief — a key mentor to young ruler Kim Jong Un — and promoting a little-known general to an important position in the million-man force. Singer Kitty Wells, whose hits such as "Making Believe" and "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels" made her the first female superstar of country music, died at age 92.

Today's Birthdays: Former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh is 81. Soul singer Denise LaSalle is 79. Soul singer William Bell is 74. International Tennis Hall of Famer Margaret Court is 71. Violinist Pinchas Zukerman is 65. Actor-singer Ruben Blades is 65. Rock composer-musician Stewart Copeland is 61. Playwright Tony Kushner is 57. Dancer Michael Flatley is 55. Actress Phoebe Cates is 50. Actor Daryl "Chill" Mitchell is 48. Actor-comedian Will Ferrell is 46. Actor Jonathan Adams is 46. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Barry Sanders is 45. Actress Rain Pryor is 44. Actor Corey Feldman is 42. Rock musician Ed Kowalczyk (Live) is 42. Rock singer Ryan McCombs (Drowning Pool) is 39. Actress Jayma Mays is 34. Actress AnnaLynne McCord is 26. Actor-singer James Maslow is 23. Actor Mark Indelicato is 19.

Thought for Today: "What was most significant about the lunar voyage was not that man set foot on the moon but that they set eye on the earth." — Norman Cousins, American author and journalist (1915-1990).

FROM THE BIBLE

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Romans 12:10. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



GOP: Principled Suicide

BY KATHLEEN PARKER
© 2013, Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — Republicans seem to be adopting the self-immolation tactics of principled martyrs.

Of course, principled or not, you're still dead in the end.

At this stage in the second term of the president they couldn't defeat, Republicans seem more like stubborn children refusing to come out of their rooms for supper, even though the alternative is going to bed hungry.

This simile is unavoidable in light of the House's recent passage of a farm bill without any provision for food stamps — the first time in 40 years. The move prompted fantastic outrage from Democrats, notably Florida Rep. Corrine Brown, who shrieked: "Mitt Romney was right: You all do not care about the 47 percent. Shame on you!"

Histrionics aside, whether the fact that something has been done a certain way for 40 years is an argument for repeating the same bears a bit of scrutiny. Republicans argued that they'd prefer to deal with agricultural issues in one bill without the leverage of a welfare program.

These two programs historically were tied together in the spirit of — watch out now — compromise. And, though food stamps certainly will be funded, probably at current levels, through some other vehicle, Republicans managed to create yet another partisan problem where none existed and opened themselves up for gratuitous criticism.

Was this really the right fight at the right time?

The wrong time would be in the midst of the politically life-altering debate on immigration reform. Again, congressional Republicans want to parse reform in pieces, excluding the 11 million or so immigrants here illegally, instead of dealing with reform comprehensively, as the Senate has done — and as most Americans think necessary.

Republicans do have a point, in theory. Comprehensive bills are cumbersome and difficult to enforce. Democrats love great, big lumbering programs because they (a) often do great good, at least in the short term; (b) create great big, self-sustaining bureaucracies that are by nature self-propagating, and attract large constituencies of voters. This latter is Republicans' chief objection.

But 90 percent of life is picking your battles and congressional Republicans keep picking the wrong ones. This is not true of all. Former Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan, R-Wis., has joined Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., to push comprehensive immigration reform.



Kathleen PARKER

This is also not to say that Democrats have it all right. Both sides are often dishonest and usually self-serving. Democrats are maddeningly disingenuous when they say Republicans are anti-immigrant — and then lecture us about how this country was built by immigrants.

True, because the entire planet was "built" by immigrants. But why do immigrants want to come specifically to the United States? Not only for jobs, education and opportunity but because we are a nation of laws. Playing by the rules and waiting one's turn are also part of our immigrant legacy.

Likewise, Republicans are not shooting straight when they insist that the Senate bill's path to citizenship is de facto amnesty. As paths go, it's a 13-year pilgrimage along a precipice lined with bramble bushes — taxes, fines and various fire-burning hoops through which one must leap in order to stand in line. Hardly rose-petal strewn.

To the real point, many Republicans fear that allowing 11 million immigrants to become citizens essentially means 11 million more Democrats. This outcome wasn't pre-ordained, but given the tenor of recent debate, their fears are probably justified.

Republican intransigence is further compounded by the echo chamber of the Tinker Bell Coalition — The Weekly Standard's Bill Kristol and National Review's Rich Lowry, who recently co-authored an editorial urging Republicans to drive a stake through the heart of immigration reform.

These are the same two who also thought Sarah Palin would be the perfect running mate for John McCain. Kristol was the first to advance her name and Lowry famously reported seeing starbursts ricocheting around the living room as he watched Palin wink during her vice presidential debate — and imagined that she was winking at him.

One lapse in judgment doesn't condemn a man to a lifetime of errancy — and a winking Alaskan beauty is perhaps a test too far — but fairy dust has a way of contaminating the Republican Way of Thinking. Before you can govern, you have to win. And before you can win, you have to offer something people want to buy.

What Republicans are selling appeals to an ever-diminishing market that doesn't even include their erstwhile allies in the business community. And their self-immolation may prove to have been nothing more than a bonfire of vanities.

Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleenparker@washpost.com.

Congress Needs To Renew The McGovern-Dole Farm Bill Deal

By The San Jose Mercury News

One of the most unlikely political pairings in U.S. history has kept farms profitable and poverty-stricken families from being hungry for the past four decades.

It's too bad liberal Sen. George McGovern and conservative Sen. Bob Dole aren't patrolling the halls of the Capitol in Washington to fix the mess that is the current farm bill. Thanks to a partnership the pair struck in the 1970s, urban legislators for decades have agreed to support ag subsidy programs in exchange for rural legislators' support for food stamp and nutrition programs.

Sensible cuts to food stamps and particularly to some farm subsidy programs are in order. The Senate has agreed to a compromise that would remove \$4 billion from nutrition programs and reduce ag subsidies by nearly the same amount, a reasonable compromise. Tea party Republicans in the House are determined to break up what they call McGovern and Dole's "unholy alliance." On Thursday House Republicans passed an alternative bill that stripped out food stamps entirely but they have no hope of passing it in the Senate.

The main five-year, \$500 billion farm bill hangs in the balance. Farm subsidies will end Sept. 30 if no agreement is struck. Expect the price of milk and other dairy products to rise substantially if nothing is done.

Food stamp programs would continue for now. But without a farm bill agreement, about 50 million Americans who rely on the various nutrition programs to keep from going hungry

will be at risk of losing them eventually.

Conservatives were different in Dole's day. Dole cared deeply about helping the poor. McGovern found a willing partner in 1977 to help establish the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Few remember today that severe malnutrition was common in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, especially among children. Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon took steps toward ending what was regarded as a widespread, national embarrassment. But until McGovern and Dole forged their compromise, malnutrition in this generally wealthy nation persisted.

Congress extended the old farm bill last year when it couldn't come up with enough votes to pass a new five-year deal. Senate and House leaders thought they had reached an agreement earlier this month, but it fell apart after a last-minute, draconian amendment from Rep. Steve Southerland, R-Fla., demanding food stamp recipients meet more stringent requirements. Essentially, those who couldn't find a job or enter a worker training program would go hungry.

The philosophical divide initiated by House Republicans will eventually hurt all Americans. Congress needs leaders such as Dole and McGovern today — not only to forge a compromise on a new farm bill, but that would be a good place to start.

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YOUR LETTERS

A Fine Tour

Betts Pulkrabek, Yankton
Sincere thanks to home owners Don and Janet Marker, Tim and Rita Butler, Steve and Linda Frick, Chad and Lisa Newland, Jack and

Pam Frick, Chris and Cindy Nelson for sharing their time, talent and gardens. The sixth annual Tour of Lawns and Gardens sponsored by Missouri Valley Master Gardeners was a great success.