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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

SUBSCRIPTIONS/ CIRCULATION: Extension 104
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BUSINESS OFFICE: Extension 119
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OPINION

A Name Tag And Online Rumors

An ugly little incident in Yankton last week wound up making national headlines and apparently threw some light onto a denigrating mindset that some people harbor toward those who are different from themselves. But there could also have been a sidebar tied to this matter that bears understanding. First things first: The allegation that an openly gay male employee at a Taco John's restaurant in Yankton was made or coerced into wearing a name tag with the word "Gaytard" on it touched a very raw nerve in this community and, apparently, around the country. The situation, if true, was incredibly insensitive and idiotic, an act not only of workplace bullying but also homophobic persecution. In the Press & Dakotan's story, the store's management asked the public not to judge the incident until all the facts are known, which is certainly wise advice in any case. But the fact that it was also admitted that this name tag was created by the business — as opposed to by someone looking to smear the business — is damning in and of itself. Honestly, just from a sterile human-resources angle, it's an utterly incomprehensible act, and there is no excuse that can forgive it, no explanation to justify it.

The claim that the employee was in effect OK with wearing such a name tag doesn't make a lot of sense. Why would anyone invite such stigmatizing abuse upon himself or herself? The claim just seems weak — although not entirely impossible, one can conclude. However, the angry response of the community (and the area, for that matter) was quite clear. Even if you aren't a supporter of LGBT issues, you probably saw this alleged matter as juvenile, callous and completely unprofessional. Gay rights issues are making great, even breathtaking, strides in this nation. But incidents such as this — if there is any measure of truth to them — also point out that there are some truly dark, hateful corners in this country that still must be confronted on the road to acceptance.

There was another issue tied to this episode that is very much worth discussing. Our news staff struggled with this story for a time. The matter was spreading across social media like wildfire Wednesday, and we were getting calls and emails on it. But in fact, all we really had to work with for much of the day was a second-hand account posted on Facebook by an individual who was only told about it (this was the wildfire's spark), and the claim of an employee who possessed a name tag that the store may or may not have given to him. We were made aware of only one other person who allegedly saw this incident of shaming first-hand, but that individual, we were told, didn't want to get involved. The matter took on a very vigorous life of its own, and we prepared to do a story that focused more on the controversy and the uproar it was generating. When it was subsequently confirmed that the name tag was from the business and not concocted to slam the employer, our story's angle changed somewhat, but we still went ahead as we planned.

Without verification, social media rumors aren't really news, but that's not how many people digest such posts. That's a dangerous practice, especially in this age when anything can go online and quickly damage a reputation with just a few keystrokes. We'd like to think that people treat such rumors and allegations with caution until more facts are known or confirmed. But the web is a tricky universe filled with minefields of fact and fiction. The latter can be so much more tantalizing sometimes, and it can be irresistible to ignore or disbelieve. While that doesn't appear to be the case last week, there are no guarantees moving forward. And we would all do well to remember that.

kmh

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, July 1, the 182nd day of 2014. There are 183 days left in the year. This is Canada Day.
Today's Highlight in History: On July 1, 1944, delegates from 44 countries began meeting at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, where they agreed to establish the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
On this date: In 1535, Sir Thomas More went on trial in England, charged with high treason for rejecting the Oath of Supremacy. (More was convicted, and executed.)
In 1863, the pivotal, three-day Civil War Battle of Gettysburg, resulting in a Union victory, began in Pennsylvania.
In 1867, Canada became a self-governing dominion of Great Britain as the British North America Act took effect.
In 1912, aviator Harriet Quimby, 37, was killed along with her passenger, William Willard, when they were thrown out of Quimby's monoplane at the Third Annual Boston Aviation Meet.
In 1934, Hollywood began enforcing its Production Code subjecting motion pictures to censorship review.
In 1946, the United States exploded a 20-kiloton atomic bomb near Bikini Atoll in the Pacific.
In 1963, the U.S. Post Office inaugurated its five-digit ZIP codes.
In 1973, the Drug Enforcement Administration was established.
In 1974, the president of Argentina, Juan Peron, died; he was succeeded by his wife, Isabel Martinez de Peron.
In 1980, "O Canada" was proclaimed the national anthem of Canada.
In 1984, the Motion Picture Association of America established the "PG-13" rating.
In 1994, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat returned to Palestinian land after 27 years in exile as he drove from Egypt into Gaza.
Ten years ago: Legendary film and stage actor Marlon Brando died in Los Angeles at age 80. Saddam Hussein scooped at charges of war crimes and mass killings, making a defiant first public appearance in an Iraqi court since being hunted down seven months earlier. Hundreds of thousands of people marched in Hong Kong to demand democratic rights from China. The Cassini spacecraft sent back photographs of Saturn's shimmering rings.
Five years ago: President Barack Obama held an hour-long town hall forum on health care reform in Annandale, Virginia, where, in an emotional

moment, he hugged cancer patient Debby Smith, a volunteer for Obama's political operation, Organizing for America. Academy Award-winning actor Karl Malden, 97, died in Brentwood, California.
One year ago: President Barack Obama, during a visit to Tanzania, brushed aside sharp European criticism, suggesting that all nations spy on each other as the French and Germans expressed outrage over allegations of U.S. eavesdropping on European Union diplomats. President Obama joined his predecessor, former President George W. Bush, at a wreath-laying ceremony honoring victims of the 1998 embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya. Serena Williams joined a growing list of marquee names eliminated early at a wild and unpredictable Wimbledon, losing to Sabine Lisicki of Germany 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 in the fourth round. "Twister" game inventor Charles "Chuck" Foley, 82, died in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.
Today's Birthdays: Actress Olivia de Havilland is 98. Actress-dancer Leslie Caron is 83. Actress Jean Marsh is 80. Actor Jamie Farr is 80. Bluesman James Cotton is 79. Actor David Prowse is 79. Cookiemaker Wally Amos is 78. Dancer-choreographer Twyla Tharp is 73. Actress Genevieve Bujold is 72. Gospel singer Andrea Crouch is 72. Rock singer-acress Deborah Harry is 69. Movie-TV producer-director Michael Pressman is 64. Actor Daryl Anderson is 63. Actor Trevor Eve is 63. Actor Terrence Mann is 63. Rock singer Fred Schneider (B-52's) is 63. Pop singer Victor Willis (Village People) is 63. Actor-comedian Dan Aykroyd is 62. Actress Lorna Patterson is 58. Actor Alan Ruck is 58. Rhythm-and-blues singer Evelyn "Champagne" King is 54. Olympic gold medal track star Carl Lewis is 53. Country singer Michelle Wright is 53. Actor Andre Braugher is 52. Actor Dominic Keating is 52. Actress Pamela Anderson is 47. Rock musician Mark Pirro is 44. Rock musician Franny Griffiths (Space) is 44. Actor Henry Simmons is 44. Hip-hop artist Missy Elliott is 43. Actress Julianne Nicholson is 43. Actress Melissa Peterman is 43. Rock musician Bryan Devendorf (The National) is 39. Actress Liv Tyler is 37. Bluegrass musician Adam Haynes (Dailley & Vincent) is 35. Actress Hilarie Burton is 32. Actress Lynsey Bartilson is 31. Actress Ley Seydoux is 29. Actor Evan Ellingson is 26. Actors Steven and Andrew Cavarro are 22.
Thought for Today: "Competition brings out the best in products and the worst in people." — David Sarnoff, American broadcasting pioneer (1891-1971).

FROM THE BIBLE

But the one who looks into ... the law of liberty, and perseveres ... he will be blessed in his doing. James 1:25. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



The Rez of the Story

The 'Indian' Label

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), John F. Kennedy once said, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." All people of the vast amount of diverse cultures on Mother Earth are faced with the exact same prospect. We all face the ever changing landscapes of geopolitical thought, economic struggles and social development. Some will fare better than others primarily because of a sound approach to providing education opportunity to all. Ignorance is at the root of the majority of the problems we have always faced in the past, the present and the future. It is with this in mind that I submit the following as a matter of FYI as a hedge against not knowing.



Vince TWO EAGLES

Dr. Herman J. Viola is a curator emeritus at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and has been since joining the staff there in 1972. He writes:

"When Christopher Columbus reached the Americas in 1492, he met people unknown to the Europeans. Thinking he had reached the Indies, he called them Indians. This is only one of many mistakes, misunderstandings and misconceptions that continue to plague American Native peoples. A fundamental mistake that persists to this day is to speak about "the American Indians" as though they were one people. The Indian peoples of North America were as dissimilar from each other as were the people of Europe. In terms of language, cloths, lifestyles, militancy and religion, the tribes in different parts of North America differed greatly from each other. These differences are called cultural.

"Some tribes, especially those living along the Atlantic coast, suffered tremendous loss of life from their initial contact with Europeans because of the introduced diseases such as smallpox, measles and influenza. [Native people also] suffered from the expansionists ideas of Manifest Destiny as pioneers and Presidents conspired to take Indian lands, while well-intentioned but misguided reformers and missionaries mounted crusades to assimilate Indians into the mainstream Christian culture. "Despite the dramatic and often detrimental impact of the newcomers, Indians have not only survived but also reassessed their deepest values and gained renewed pride in themselves and their traditions. Nonetheless,

Indians today straddle two societies, as this rapidly growing minority increases its landholdings, builds a professional class and experiences a cultural resurgence that has caught the attention of the American public. As we enter the 21st century, certain concerns are evident.

"One is the future of reservations, which are home to less than one-fourth of all Indians. Have reservations outlived their usefulness? How long will the federal government continue to offer them special status, when they serve so few Indian people — even though reservations are usually guaranteed by treaty obligations? For Indians, however, it is not a question of economic efficiency. To them, it is immaterial how many people live on the reservation permanently. What is important is simply that a reservation exists at all, a haven from the

stress of the dominant society. As one Indian friend remarked: "When I hit the dirt road, I fell like I have come home. I am surrounded by friends and relatives, by people who speak my language, by people who could care less who or what I am in the white world."

"Another concern is the ability of these rich and vibrant cultures to survive in the modern world. Gordon McLester of the Wisconsin Oneida is not worried. "Indians will always be part of the America because of the people themselves," he promises. "They believe in their tribal governments; they believe in their tribal ways. It's not the amount of your Indian blood, it's not of your dance, it's not if you talk an Indian language. It's that you believe in what you are. No legislation can take that away. We are still here, and we will always be here."

It is important that we get it that when one talks about Indians, you have to qualify what you mean so that folks know which Indian you are referring to. The fact that we are all called Indians has nothing to do with us but is all about the European need to categorize or label all those they came into contact with here in the Western hemisphere.

We who are from here — South Dakota are either from the Dakota, Nakota or Lakota Nations. We don't like to be referred to as tribes as though we were a herd of buffalo or a gaggle of geese. We are not "minorities." We have a special relationship with the U.S. government because of our sovereignty as separate independent Nations who have entered into treaties with the federal government and its people.

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...

YOUR LETTERS

On The Middle East

Doug Sall, Yankton
As the situation in the Middle East continues to unravel, I found myself reflecting on earlier attempts by Westerners to deal with these people in a positive and effective manner.

Doing so, I turned to the efforts of T.E. Lawrence who, almost 100 years ago, found himself involved with the tribes of "Arabia." Some of you will no doubt remember the 1962 wide-screen portrayal of his exploits, in the epic film, "Lawrence of Arabia." Lawrence, or as he was known by the Arabs, "El-orens," knew the language, adopted the culture (including dress) and generally blended in as best he could. English military authorities dispatched him to help the war effort by convincing the Arabs that it was in their self-interest to take on the Turks (then the enemy of the Triple Entente) and to ensure that the Suez Canal remained open. All this, of course, is laid out in gory detail in Lawrence's mammoth work, "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom" and in the subsequent abridgment, "Revolt in the Desert" (1926).

So, what's the point? It's instructive to recall that "El-orens" barely managed to steer the bickering "tribes" in the direction he wanted them to go — this after immersing himself in the society for almost two years. It's clear that very little has changed over the past 98 years other than to note that we here in the United States do not fully grasp or understand the centuries-old tribal system that is found there.

Let's remember, too, that these so-called "countries" largely came about as a result of World War I. Artificial "political" boundaries that mark most of the globe do little to change the true character and thinking of the people that occupy these lands.

Somehow, Lawrence did a pretty good job of unifying many, if not most, of the tribes and directed their energies toward a common foe. That leads me to conclude that it's far more

Online Opinion

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

LATEST RESULTS:

How closely are you following the World Cup soccer tournament?	
Not at all	..47%
Very little	..21%
Sometimes	..19%
Very closely	..13%
TOTAL VOTES CAST	..333

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 do you support in the South Dakota governor's race?
To vote in the Press & Dakotan's Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

difficult to do this today, especially when the enemy is as amorphous as a "terrorist."

Royal Gratitude!

Liz Kubal, Lesterville
Czech Days Queen 2014
I would like to write a sincere thank you to everyone who participated and helped with Czech Days. I would like to give an extended thank you to the Tabor Chamber of Commerce for their generous donations and for making the queen candidates feel so special. I would also like to thank Kathy Kortan for preparing the queen candidates in the weeks leading up to Czech days. A very special thank you to Ed and Connie Kniffen of Embroidery Plus for helping to sew and completing the embroidery on my beautiful dress. Most importantly, I would like to thank my family for always encouraging and supporting me in everything I do.