

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

What If Children Don't Want To Learn?

CHICAGO TRIBUNE (July 29): The landmark 2002 No Child Left Behind law was built on compelling principles: All children can learn. Every school should be held responsible for students' academic growth. NCLB, however, proved to be too inflexible. It set up even successful schools to be labeled as failures. So the Obama administration waived many onerous NCLB requirements for most states and ... waited for Congress to pass a desperately needed update to make the law more practical and effective. Years passed. This month, though, the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly passed a sweeping NCLB overhaul called Every Child Achieves, just days after the House narrowly passed its version, the Student Success Act. Mission accomplished? No. More like mission averted. Both House and Senate would wisely continue statewide testing regimens that break out results among students by race, income and special needs. However, both bills rate a big red I for "incomplete" in one vital measure: accountability for schools, to assure that they're actually helping students progress. These bills are an excuse-maker's dream: There isn't any accountability. Both bills would let state and local officials create their own performance standards and goals for schools. And if those schools fell short? Under these bills, the states wouldn't have to do anything. And the federal government wouldn't have the authority to challenge them to enforce those standards. With such lax oversight, we imagine that every school in America will soon be rated ... excellent! We've long supported the principles of testing and accountability behind No Child Left Behind. We've also supported the Obama administration's waivers of some NCLB requirements as a smart trade-off: In exchange for more flexibility, states pledged to undertake significant reforms to boost student achievement and teacher accountability. Illinois was freed under its waiver, for example, to focus more resources on its worst-performing schools. But Illinois and those other states weren't freed of federal oversight. Washington state, for instance, had its waiver yanked when it failed to follow through on promised reforms. Significant differences in the House and Senate bills must now be reconciled in conference committee. An amendment offered by Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois and a handful of other Democrats would have required states to do something if a school consistently fails to meet state standards. Though it failed, 54-43, its modestly strong showing should give Democrats leverage to push for an accountability measure in conference, Deborah Veney of The Education Trust tells us. Here's more leverage: President Barack Obama has promised a veto if the final bill doesn't include strong accountability measures. Good. States have to set standards and be clear about the consequences of a school's failure. State education officials can't be let off the hook with a wink and a nod from the feds if students don't learn. NCLB created a furious backlash among educators, parents and politicians of both parties against overreaching federal intervention in schools. But the answer isn't to revert back to pre-NCLB days, when schools could easily shrug off their failures to educate students. This federal law ought to enshrine a principle that is taught to every schoolchild: Failure has consequences.

P&D LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask 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 us at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Thursday, July 30, the 211th day of 2015. There are 154 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On July 30, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a measure creating Medicare, which began operating the following year.

On this date: In 1729, Baltimore, Maryland, was founded.

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union forces tried to take Petersburg, Virginia, by exploding a gunpowder-laden mine shaft beneath Confederate defense lines; the attack failed.

In 1918, poet Joyce Kilmer, a sergeant in the 165th U.S. Infantry Regiment, was killed during the Second Battle of the Marne in World War I. (Kilmer is remembered for his poem "Trees.")

In 1932, the Summer Olympic Games opened in Los Angeles.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a bill creating a women's auxiliary agency in the Navy known as "Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service" — WAVES for short.

In 1945, the Portland class heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis, having just delivered components of the atomic bomb to Tinian in the Mariana Islands, was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine; only 317 out of nearly 1,200 men survived.

In 1953, the Small Business Administration was founded.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a measure making "In God We Trust" the national motto, replacing "E Pluribus Unum" ("Out of many, one").

In 1963, the Soviet Union announced it had granted political asylum to Harold "Kim" Philby, the "third man" of a British spy ring.

In 1975, former Teamsters union president Jimmy Hoffa disappeared in suburban Detroit; although presumed dead, his remains have never been found.

In 1980, Israel's Knesset passed a law reaffirming all of Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state.

In 1990, British Conservative Party lawmaker Ian Gow was killed in a bombing claimed by the Irish Republican Army.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush was pronounced "fit for duty" after a checkup that showed that the 59-year-old commander-in-chief, an avid mountain bike rider, had lost 8 pounds since his last physical exam in December 2004.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama toured Chrysler and General Motors assembly plants, where he offered

an upbeat assessment of the U.S. auto industry a year after the big government bailouts. A 12-year-old Florida girl was seriously injured when she plunged about 100 feet to the ground from an amusement park free-fall ride in Lake Delton, Wisconsin, (Nets and air bags that were supposed to catch Teagan Marti had not been deployed.)

One year ago: The House overwhelmingly approved, 420-5, a landmark bill to refurbish the Veterans Affairs Department and improve veterans' health care. Three Israeli artillery shells slammed into a United Nations school in Gaza crowded with some 3,300 people; the shells, which Israel said came in response to mortar fire nearby, killed 17 people.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Edd (correct "Kookie" Byrnes is 82. Former Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig is 81. Blues musician Buddy Guy is 79. Movie director Peter Bogdanovich is 76. Feminist activist Eleanor Smeal is 76. Former U.S. Rep. Patricia Schroeder is 75. Singer Paul Anka is 74. Jazz musician David Sanborn is 70. Former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is 68. Actor William Atherton is 68. Actor Jean Reno is 67. Blues singer-musician Otis Taylor is 67. Actor Frank Stallone is 65. Actor Ken Olin is 61. Actress Delta Burke is 59. Law professor Anita Hill is 59. Singer-songwriter Kate Bush is 57. Country singer Neal McCoy is 57. Actor Richard Burgi is 57. Movie director Richard Linklater is 55. Actor Laurence Fishburne is 54. Actress Lisa Kudrow is 52. Bluegrass musician Danny Roberts (The Grascals) is 52. Country musician Dwayne O'Brien is 51. Actress Vivica A. Fox is 51. Actor Terry Crews is 47. Actor Simon Baker is 46. Actor Donnie Keshawarz is 46. Movie director Christopher Nolan is 45. Actor Tom Green is 44. Rock musician Brad Hargreaves (Third Eye Blind) is 44. Actress Christine Taylor is 44. Actor-comedian Dean Edwards is 42. Actress Hilary Swank is 41. Olympic gold medal beach volleyball player Misty May-Treanor is 38. Actress Jaime Pressly is 38. Alt-country singer-musician Seth Avett is 35. Actress April Bowlby is 35. Actress Yvonne Strahovski is 33. Actress Gina Rodriguez is 31. Actor Nico Tortorella is 27. Actress Joey King is 16.

Thought for Today: "Individualism is rather like innocence; there must be something unconscious about it." — Louis Kronenberger, American drama critic (1904-1980).

FROM THE BIBLE

When these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads. Luke 21:28. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

STAR TRIBUNE
S&K



Writer's Block

Hits And Misses At Achievement Days

BY JIM VAN OSDEL

For the Press & Dakotan

After celebrating the Fourth of July, many farm families begin in earnest to urge the kids to complete their projects for 4-H Achievement Days. Many of these are livestock projects. Our family, seven miles east of Yankton, fell into this schedule.

My first 4-H projects were hogs which require a great deal of patience and practice. Hogs do not like to be herded and I had problems with my first pig project.

The second year, I began working with my three pigs early in June. Taking guidance (for a change) from my mother, Frannie, I took a pail of warm water and a stiff bristled brush and got into the pen.

After a couple days, the pigs learned to enjoy the warm bath and scrubbing. Our Dad, Lyle, always said pigs were intelligent animals, that given the opportunity, they would always choose to roll in clean mud.

When showing those three pigs at Achievement Days, I just guided them around the show ring with that stiff brush. They liked to be scratched with it. But my "best" pig was a failure, only a blue ribbon Hampshire. The judge said the white on the hind leg extended too far up onto the ham. Back to the ranch.

Fed up with pigs, I wanted to have a calf. But I did not try the warm water and brush. I failed to try much of anything and that Angus calf would rather choke than break to lead with the green and white 4-H motif leather halter.

All winter long, I talked about better practice methods in leading with another calf, and Dad said, "one more time."

Dad and I drove to the east edge of Tabor where a prominent Hereford farmer had a feed yard full of red and whites. He told me that of the 400 or so calves in the yard, there were some \$400 calves and some \$100 calves. He said I could pick one out of the entire herd and he would sell it to me for \$100.

Having attended a few 4-H judging classes, I looked for a calf with deep red body and white face with socks that did not go too far up on the leg. I made my pick and we went home.

We put the 4-H halter on my calf and I led

him to the artesian tank for a drink. That was a standard practice all summer. As the calf matured, I found some horn weights in our old barn and Dad applied them to the ends of the horns to make them turn down.

A broken Coke bottle and sand paper were used to shine horns and hooves. One afternoon, I was giving the calf a soapy bath in the house yard and Mom invited us into the house for ice tea. The calf had his head turned to allow the horns into the front door before Mom changed her mind and brought ice tea out to the yard.

Achievement Days at Pine Acres arrived. I slept in the barn with my calf, as did some of the other guys. The next day, I washed and curried my calf and prepared for the show. A couple of guys showed up in pressed jeans and accepted the lead rope for their calves from their hired man who had slept in the barn with us the night before.

We walked our calves around the show ring. The guys in pressed jeans received purple ribbons and I accepted a blue for my calf. Nothing was said about marking.

We took the calf home and the summer was progressing toward the start of school and my senior year at Yankton High School. I was so short, at 4 foot, 4 inches, the photographer wanted me to stand in the front row with the girls when taking the YHS chorus picture when I was a junior the year before. Roger Huntley brought a concrete block to school, stood it on end and I was in the back with the guys. It is visible in the yearbook picture.

Dad said we should sell the calf and bank the money. Ole Rockne, the trucker from Mission Hill, backed his truck up to the loading chute and, as I morosely walked the calf toward his last roundup, the trucker blurted out, "That damn calf is a dwarf, ain't it?"

Of all the Hereford feed yards in all the world ...

My folks watched me work with that calf all summer long and knew what was in store. That was the end of my 4-H career. I used the calf money and the pig money and bought a light blue 1949 Ford coupe, which is clearly not the end of the story. Quite a few fledgling guardian angels earned their wings due to that '49 Ford.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Wrong Thing To DO

JAY WILLIAMS, YANKTON

In 1977, the American Nazi party wanted to don storm trooper uniforms complete with swastikas and march through the city of Skokie, Illinois, a community in which one in six residents was a Holocaust survivor. The ACLU went to court to defend the American Nazi party's first amendment right to do so, and the US Supreme Court along with the Illinois Supreme Court upheld the Nazi's right.

While we in the US have a broad right to free speech which makes it legal for people to display items that clearly depict racist, hateful ideas, that does not make doing so the right thing. Here in Yankton, we had such a display of a symbol of racism in the form of a Confederate "Stars and Bars" flag flown prominently in front of a business in downtown Yankton last Saturday during "crazy days". While some may claim the Confederate flag is simply a display of an historical event, it should be clear that this symbol is distasteful to a large portion of our country and is viewed as a symbol of racism. Sure, whoever put up this flag has the right to do so, but it is not the right thing to do.

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