

The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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Published Daily Monday-Saturday

Periodicals postage paid at Yankton, South Dakota, under the act of March 3, 1979.

Weekly Dakotian established June 6, 1861. Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan established April 26, 1875.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078.

MEMBERSHIPS

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan is a member of the Associated Press, the Inland Daily Press Association and the South Dakota Newspaper Association. The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to use of all the local news printed in this newspaper.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES*

(Payable in advance)

CARRIER DELIVERY

1-month.....\$12.09

3 months.....\$36.27

6 months.....\$72.53

1-year.....\$133.09

MOTOR ROUTE

(where available)

1 month.....\$14.51

3 months.....\$43.53

6 months.....\$87.05

1 year.....\$139.14

MAIL IN RETAIL

Trade Zone

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

What Obama Gets Right About ISIS

LOS ANGELES TIMES (June 16): President Barack Obama insists that he has no plans to deploy U.S. combat forces in Iraq, even as he has promised to “degrade and eventually destroy” Islamic State. The White House sees no contradiction between these two commitments, but Americans are understandably anxious given the incremental escalation of U.S. involvement in the war against the group.

Last week Obama announced that he was sending an additional 450 military personnel to “train, advise and assist” Iraqi forces at a military base in eastern Anbar province. That deployment will increase the U.S. military presence to 3,550.

“This decision does not represent a change in mission,” Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter said. That’s true if one dates the U.S. mission to Obama’s announcement in September that he was launching a “comprehensive and sustained” effort to defeat Islamic State. Earlier, however, Obama had portrayed airstrikes in Iraq as a temporary measure designed to protect U.S. personnel and alleviate a humanitarian crisis.

The *Los Angeles Times* has supported the administration’s more assertive policy with two provisos: that Obama abide by his promise not to deploy U.S. ground troops, and that he secure explicit congressional authorization. Obama has asked for such authority, but he has undermined the urgency of that request by insisting that he can legally prosecute a war against Islamic State under the congressional resolutions passed more than a decade ago to authorize force against the planners of 9/11 and the regime of Saddam Hussein. It’s vital that Congress enact a new Authorization for Use of Military Force tailored to Islamic State, one that explicitly rules out the deployment of U.S. ground forces.

If defeating Islamic State is such a high priority, some might ask, why should the U.S. refuse to commit ground troops and instead rely on dispirited and disorganized Iraqi forces? The best answer to that is a sobering statistic: the nearly 4,500 Americans who lost their lives in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the protracted conflict that followed George W. Bush’s disastrous decision to invade Iraq in 2003. The American people are understandably disinclined to see more fatalities on that scale in a conflict in which the interests of the U.S. are not directly threatened and in a region where our previous efforts have been so disappointing.

Obama is right both to try to defeat Islamic State and to do it without putting U.S. troops on the front lines. As he said in September: “This is not our fight alone. American power can make a decisive difference, but we cannot do for Iraqis what they must do for themselves, nor can we take the place of Arab partners in securing their region.” Nothing that has happened since then has changed that fundamental reality.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, June 18, the 169th day of 2015. There are 196 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On June 18, 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte met his Waterloo as British and Prussian troops defeated the French in Belgium.

On this date: In 1778, American forces entered Philadelphia as the British withdrew during the Revolutionary War.

In 1812, the War of 1812 began as the United States Congress approved, and President James Madison signed, a declaration of war against Britain.

In 1873, suffragist Susan B. Anthony was found guilty by a judge in Canandaigua, New York, of breaking the law by casting a vote in the 1872 presidential election. (The judge fined Anthony \$100, but she never paid the penalty.)

In 1908, William Howard Taft was nominated for president by the Republican National Convention in Chicago.

In 1940, during World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill urged his countrymen to conduct themselves in a manner that would prompt future generations to say, “This was their finest hour.” Charles de Gaulle delivered a speech on the BBC in which he rallied his countrymen after the fall of France to Nazi Germany.

In 1945, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower received a tumultuous welcome in Washington D.C., where he addressed a joint session of Congress. William Joyce, known as “Lord Haw-Haw,” was charged in London with high treason for his English-language wartime broadcasts on German radio. (He was hanged in January 1946.)

In 1975, a U.S. Air Force Douglas C-124 Globemaster II crashed near Tokyo, killing all 129 people on board. Egypt’s 148-year-old Muhammad Ali Dynasty came to an end with the overthrow of the monarchy and the proclamation of a republic.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson and Japanese Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda spoke to each other by telephone as they inaugurated the first trans-Pacific cable completed by AT&T between Japan and Hawaii.

In 1975, NBC launched its News and Information Service, an all-news radio network. (NIS lasted until May 1977.)

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter and Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev signed the SALT II strategic arms limitation treaty in Vienna.

In 1983, astronaut Sally K. Ride became America’s first woman in space as she and four colleagues blasted off aboard the space shuttle Challenger on a six-day mission.

In 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Georgia v. McCollum*, ruled that criminal

defendants could not use race as a basis for excluding potential jurors from their trials. Entertainer Peter Allen died in San Diego County, California, at age 48.

Ten years ago: U.S. Marines and Iraqi forces battled insurgents in a restive western Iraqi province, killing about 50 militants in the military’s latest campaign to stop foreign fighters who were infiltrating from neighboring Syria. In his Saturday radio address, President George W. Bush said pulling out of Iraq immediately was not an option. Former Texas Congressman J.J. “Jake” Pickle died in Austin at age 91.

Five years ago: Death row inmate Ronnie Lee Gardner died in a barrage of bullets as Utah carried out its first firing squad execution in 14 years. (Gardner had been sentenced to death for fatally shooting attorney Michael Burdell during a failed escape attempt from a Salt Lake City courthouse.)

One year ago: President Barack Obama met with senior lawmakers in the Oval Office for over an hour to discuss options for responding to the crumbling security situation in Iraq; afterward, congressional leaders said the president believed he did not need authorization from Congress for some steps he might take to quell the al-Qaida-inspired insurgency. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ruled that the Washington Redskins’ name was “disparaging of Native Americans” and should be stripped of trademark protection. Clayton Kershaw pitched his first no-hitter as the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the Colorado Rockies 8-0.

Today’s Birthdays: Former Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., is 78. Baseball Hall of Famer Lou Brock is 76. Rock singer-composer-musician Sir Paul McCartney is 73. Actress Constance McCashin is 68. Actress Linda Thorson is 68. Rock musician John Evans is 67. Former Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., is 65. Actress Isabella Rossellini is 63. Actress Carol Kane is 63. Actor Brian Benben is 59. Actress Andrea Evans is 58. Rock singer Alison Moyet is 54. Rock musician Dizzy Reed (Guns N’ Roses) is 52. Figure skater Kurt Browning is 49. Country singer-musician Tim Hunt is 48. Rock singer-musician Sice (The Boo Radleys) is 46. Rhythm-and-blues singer Nathan Morris (Boyz II Men) is 44. Actress Mara Hobel is 44. Singer-songwriter Ray LaMontagne is 42. Rapper Silk the Shocker is 40. Actress Alana de la Garza is 39. Country singer Blake Shelton is 39. Rock musician Steven Chen (Airborne Toxic Event) is 37. Actor David Giuntoli is 35. Actress Renee Olstead is 26. Actor Jacob Anderson (TV: “Game of Thrones”) is 25. Actress Willa Holland is 24.

Thought for Today: “Fraility, thy name is no longer woman.” — Victor Riesel, American labor journalist (1913-1995).

FROM THE BIBLE

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him. James 1:12. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An Egg Shortage?

Randy Gleich, Yankton

According to USDA, May 2015, prices of eggs increased by more than 100 percent. Is there an egg shortage in the U.S.?

Some quick Facts: Of the top 10 producing states, Iowa ranks number one, Minnesota number eight and Nebraska number 10. South Dakota is surrounded by major egg-producing states.

According to the American Egg Board, egg production was up 1 percent to about 7.5 billion eggs for the month of March 2015. According to Purdue University, 50 billion eggs are produced and consumed each year in the U.S.

Egg inventory in the U.S., according to USDA, in May 2015 actually increased by 2.6 percent ... so, where is the shortage?

Apparently, the perceived notion by the public that there is an egg shortage allows producers and retailers to command higher prices for this item — and that is exactly what they are doing: sticking it to the public.

So really folks, a million or two drop in egg production in South Dakota hardly makes a dent in the U.S. market. The costs of shipping a semi-load of eggs from one of our neighboring

states is insignificant. Are we being fooled into believing and by whom that there is a shortage? Is this another Wall Street Scam?

Sounds to me like we have few rotten egg producers that are laughing all the way to the bank and are making a fortune off the latest bird flu scare.

STAR TRIBUNE
SACK



IT’S THE SAME OLD SCRIPT—HUBRIS FOLLOWED BY MAYHEM FOLLOWED BY BUCKETS OF BLOOD. THESE SEQUELS PRACTICALLY WRITE THEMSELVES!

Writer’s Block

What Is Courage?

BY ROB NIELSEN

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One thing that has transcended societies, old and new, is that everything from new technologies, to new ideas to new concepts of the world are always met with a mixture of emotions — curiosity, fear, joy, frustration, hope, anger and more than I could list.

One concept that many people have been getting their initial introduction to of late is the concept that some people don’t feel they’re quite the gender they were born into — and they’re more than willing to go through the process of correcting their gender.

Two weeks ago this education came in the form of *Vanity Fair*’s cover story featuring Ms. Caitlyn Jenner. Up until last week, we knew Ms. Jenner as Bruce Jenner — retired Olympian and, well, a man. Admittedly, despite the fact that this is the most exposure I’ve ever seen Jenner get (Being 25, I didn’t have the pleasure of watching the 1976 Summer Olympics), it’s a little bit of an odd transition for me too. In the few conversations I’ve had on the subject, I still find myself referring to her as Bruce and using “him” over “her” in many cases. But, as with many new concepts that I’ve been introduced to in an ever-changing world, I anticipate I’m going to adapt just fine and life will go on.

And I have to say, it was rather courageous of Ms. Jenner — someone still in the public eye — to tell the story of her transition and be honest about her identity at a time when gender reassignment is beginning to be discussed openly.

However, there’s a vocal group of people that have a problem with Ms. Jenner’s actions being described as courageous. For the last week, I’ve seen my social media feeds filled with a slew of condescending chain posts about how Ms. Jenner isn’t courageous and that (seemingly) the only people deserving of this distinction are those have served in the military. It’s as if this were a contest. I’m not transgender. I don’t personally know anyone in Jenner’s position and I don’t have a problem in the slightest with



Rob
NIELSEN

members of the military that serve/have served honorably — but I was seriously embarrassed and offended by this display. It really got me thinking about what makes a person courageous.

When I think of someone who’s exhibited great bravery, I always think of a friend of mine. During her time in college, she was sexually assaulted, and she faced her attacker down in court. I’ve always admired her courage in doing this — and yet, as far as I know, she’s never picked up a firearm stronger than a water gun and I don’t believe she wears camouflage of any kind. But she is courageous.

Writers who know they may risk alienating some by putting the truth to paper are courageous. People who are truthful about who they are, even if it may not fit the definition of “normal” to others, are courageous. Anyone who has a disagreement with the content of this column and is willing to speak up in a professional manner and put their name to it is courageous. There’s literally too many examples to list here.

Cowardice is a different story. Cowardice is exactly what those who feel the need to tear Ms. Jenner down, spreading falsehoods about her or being generally rude about the situation are exhibiting.

I think when it comes to who demonstrates courage, the aforementioned friend said it better than I ever could when she and I discussed this issue:

“... Why does it have to be a competition? Why can’t Caitlyn Jenner be brave? Why do we as people feel the need to tear others down in order to build others up? Caitlyn Jenner is brave. Kids who are battling for their lives against cancer are brave. People who wake up and get out of bed and keep living even though their mental illness is taking it out of them are brave. Rape victims who leave the house, walk to their cars alone, trust people to be around them are brave. Just because they aren’t in the military doesn’t mean these people aren’t strong.”

The 21st century is going to be a century of forward progress. It’s time to move in that direction.

Race Isn’t An Objective Fact

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

Of the 60 people who co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909, only seven were, in fact, “colored.” Most of the organization’s founders were white liberals like Mary White Ovington. Its highest honor, the Spingarn Medal, is named for Joel Spingarn, who was Jewish and white.

Point being, white people have been intricately involved in the NAACP struggle for racial justice from day one. So Rachel Dolezal did not need to be black to be president of the organization’s Spokane chapter. That she chose to present herself as such anyway, adopting a frizzy “natural” hairstyle and apparently somehow darkening her skin, has put her in the bull’s-eye of the most irresistible water cooler story of the year. This will be on “Blackish” next season; just wait and see.

As you doubtless know, the 37-year-old Dolezal was ousted last week by her estranged parents. In response, they say, to a reporter’s inquiry, they told the world her heritage includes Czech, Swedish and German roots, but not a scintilla of black. In the resulting mushroom cloud of controversy, Dolezal was forced to resign her leadership of the Spokane office. Interviewed Tuesday by Matt Lauer on “Today,” she made an awkward attempt to explain and/or justify herself. “I identify as black,” she said, like she thinks she’s “the Caitlyn Jenner of race. It was painful to watch.

Given that Dolezal sued historically black Howard University in 2002 for allegedly discriminating against her because she is white, it’s hard not to see a certain opportunism in her masquerade. Most people who, ahem, “identify as black” don’t have the option of trying on another identity when it’s convenient.

That said, it’s hard to be too exercised over this. Dolezal doesn’t appear to have done any harm, save to her own dignity and reputation. One suspects there are deep emotional issues at play, meaning the kindest thing we can do is give her space and time to work them out.

Besides, this story’s most pointed moral has

less to do with Dolezal and her delusions than with us and ours. Meaning America’s founding myth, the one that tells us race is a fixed and objective fact.

It isn’t. Indeed, in 2000, after mapping the genetic codes of five people — African-American, Caucasian, Asian and Hispanic — researchers announced they could find no difference among them. “The concept of race,” one of them said, “has no scientific basis.”

The point isn’t that race is not real; the jobless rate, the mass incarceration phenomenon and the ghosts of murdered boys from Emmett Till to Tamir Rice argue too persuasively otherwise.

Rather, it’s that it’s not real in the way we conceive it in America where, as historian Matt Wray once put it, the average 19-year-old regards it as a “set of facts about who people are and

which is somehow tied to blood and biology and ancestry.” In recent years, Wray and scholars like David Roediger and Nell Irvin Painter have done path-breaking work exploding that view. To read their research is to understand that what we call race is actually a set of cultural likenesses, shared experiences and implicit assumptions, i.e., that white men can’t jump and black ones can’t conjugate.