

The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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**SUBSCRIPTIONS/****CIRCULATION**

Extension 104

jim.gevens@yankton.net**CLASSIFIED ADS**

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tera.schmidt@yankton.net**NEWS DEPT.**

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news@yankton.net**SPORTS DEPT.**

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ar@yankton.net**NEW MEDIA:**

Extension 136

beth.rye@yankton.net**COMPOSING DEPT.**

Extension 129

kathy.larson@yankton.net

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An Amazingly Rapid Journey

Upon relatively short-term reflection, Friday's U.S. Supreme Court ruling that all same-sex marriage bans — including those in South Dakota and Nebraska — are unconstitutional really wasn't a major surprise, although the effect was certainly seismic.

However, looking back across the long history of this issue and the attitudes of our culture, it's shocking to realize just how quickly this matter accelerated to reach this judicial point. It's been nothing short of breathtaking.

Friday's 5-4 judicial decision in the case Obergefell vs. Hodges somehow felt almost inevitable. In 2013, the Supreme Court (arguably telegraphing last week's decision) declared in the case United States vs. Windsor that it was unconstitutional to restrict federal interpretation of marriage to heterosexual unions (mostly in regards to benefits and other spousal ties), thus tearing apart the Defense of Marriage Act that was passed under President Bill Clinton in 1996. After the Windsor case, district courts in 27 states found that bans on same-sex marriages violated the Constitution, leading to an avalanche of states permitting such unions. Prior to Friday's ruling, same-sex marriages were legal in varying degrees in 37 states. This was a judicial tsunami headed toward the high court, and its decision reflected that cascade of opinion.

However, anyone with a memory of this issue from 20 years ago couldn't be blamed these days for feelings of disorientation. Back then, it was easy to conclude that this issue would take generations to evolve.

Even a decade ago, there were strong doubts about any substantial speed on the matter. Gay marriage was used as a handy wedge issue in the 2004 elections, and President George W. Bush talked about a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

But then, a paradigm shift took place. Public opinion on the issue evolved quickly, and starting about two years ago, polls began showing consistently that a majority of Americans supported same-sex marriage. Politicians, a notable lagging indicator on such cultural matters, slowly began to embrace the issue; in 2012, President Barack Obama (due to the influence of Vice President Joe Biden) reversed himself and became the first sitting president to openly support same-sex marriages. The presence of LGBT couples and individuals in our own communities, once a deeply held secret, seemed to turn into something that was more widely known and generally accepted — a transition that put real faces on this cultural issue.

So, America changed, and the prospect of a generational transition turned out instead to be something that took place in just a few short years.

With that being said, however, the transition is going to take a lot longer in other avenues.

There are people who will not acknowledge that such relationships are legal or moral or acceptable. A few states are resisting efforts to license same-sex marriages. Plans are formulating to try to exempt some religious organizations from being penalized for not recognizing the new law of the land. Several Republican presidential candidates are railing against the court and are implying that the justices should be held accountable via an election. (Preserving America's system of checks and balances doesn't seem to be a compelling argument here.) There's also a renewed call for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage; as we've stated in this space before, this would be an extraordinary effort to place exceptions into the Constitution in regards to the rights and freedoms of Americans. And there will no doubt be other efforts on the way.

So, there remains opposition and even defiance across the landscape. One court ruling on one Friday in June isn't going to change that so quickly. It will likely take many years.

But advocates of genuine constitutional freedom for every man and woman can rejoice at this moment. For the first time, the law is on their side. Friday was a tremendous leap forward in what has been an amazingly rapid journey.

kmh

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 Tuesday, June 30, the 181st day of 2015. There are 184 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On June 30, 1865, eight people, including Mary Surratt and Dr. Samuel Mudd, were convicted by a military commission of conspiring with John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln. (Four defendants, including Surratt, were executed; Mudd was sentenced to life in prison, but was pardoned by President Andrew Johnson in 1869.)

On this date: In 1859, French acrobat Charles Blondin walked back and forth on a tightrope above the gorge of Niagara Falls as thousands of spectators watched.

In 1908, the Tunguska Event took place in Russia as an asteroid exploded above Siberia, leaving 800 square miles of scorched or blown-down trees.

In 1912, Canada's deadliest tornado on record occurred as a cyclone struck Regina, the provincial capital of Saskatchewan, killing 28 people.

In 1921, President Warren G. Harding nominated former President William Howard Taft to be chief justice of the United States, succeeding the late Edward Douglas White.

In 1933, the Screen Actors Guild was established.

In 1934, Adolf Hitler launched his "blood purge" of political and military rivals in Germany in what came to be known as "The Night of the Long Knives."

In 1949, "The Missouri Waltz" became the official state song of Missouri.

In 1958, the U.S. Senate passed the Alaska statehood bill by a vote of 64-20.

In 1963, Pope Paul VI was crowned the 262nd head of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1972, for the first time, a leap-second was added to Coordinated Universal Time to account for the slowing rotation of the Earth.

In 1985, 39 American hostages from a hijacked TWA jetliner were freed in Beirut after being held 17 days.

In 1994, an Airbus A330 passenger plane crashed after takeoff from Toulouse, France, on a test flight, killing all seven occupants. The Supreme Court ruled, 6-3, that judges can bar even peaceful demonstrators from getting too close to abortion clinics. The U.S. Figure Skating Association stripped Tonya Harding of the national championship and banned her for life for her role in the attack on rival Nancy Kerrigan.

Ten years ago: Federal Reserve policymakers boosted the federal funds rate by one-quarter percentage point to 3.25 percent, the ninth such increase since the Fed began to tighten credit in June 2004 in an effort to keep inflation under control. Spain became the third country (after the Netherlands and Belgium) to legalize same-sex marriage.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama talked about the economy at a town hall in Racine, Wisconsin, saying, "We got it moving again," and that he intended to get "our debt and our deficits under control," but warned he wouldn't slash spending at the expense of the economic rebound. Benigno Aquino III was sworn in as the Philippines' 15th president.

One year ago: A sharply divided Supreme Court ruled that some companies with religious objections could avoid the contraceptives requirement in President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, the first time the high court declared that businesses can hold religious views under federal law. President Obama tapped former Procter & Gamble CEO Robert McDonald to take over the troubled Veterans Affairs Department. The Israeli military found the bodies of three missing teenagers just over two weeks after they were abducted in the occupied West Bank, allegedly by Hamas militants. Writer, actor, producer and director Paul Mazursky, 84, died in Los Angeles. Actor Bob Hastings, 89, died in Burbank, California.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Lea Massari is 82. Actress Nancy Dussault is 79. Songwriter Tony Hatch is 76. Singer Glenn Shorrock is 71. Actor Leonard Whiting (Film: "Romeo and Juliet") is 65. Jazz musician Stanley Clarke is 64. Actor David Garrison is 63. Rock musician Hal Lindes (Dire Straits) is 62. Actor-comedian David Alan Grier is 59. Actor Vincent D'Onofrio is 56. Actress Deirdre Lovejoy is 53. Actor Rupert Graves is 52. Boxer Mike Tyson is 49. Actor Peter Outerbridge is 49. Rock musician Tom Drummond (Better Than Ezra) is 46. Actor Brian Bloom is 45. Actor Brian Vincent is 45. Actress Monica Potter is 44. Actor Rick Gonzalez is 36. Actress Lizzy Caplan is 33. Rock musician James Adam Shelley (American Authors) is 32. Rhythm-and-blues singer Fantasia is 31. Olympic gold medal swimmer Michael Phelps is 30.

Thought for Today: "In order to go on living one must try to escape the death involved in perfectionism." — Hannah Arendt, German-born American philosopher and historian (1906-1975).

FROM THE BIBLE

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Psalm 46:1. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.*

**The Rez Of The Story**

A Look At 'Divine Law'

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in a series of articles on the Requerimiento, as discussed in Steven T. Newcomb's book, "Pagans in the Promised Land."

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

The Requerimiento was to be accepted by all indigenous people as Divine law. "The document goes on to say that the indigenous people have a clear choice to make. ... [and] what would happen if they decide to accept:

"If you do, you will do well, and that which you are obliged to do their Highnesses [acknowledge yourselves as their subjects and vassals], and we in their name shall receive you in all love and charity, and shall leave you your wives, and your children, and your lands, free without servitude, that you may do with them and yourselves freely that which you like and think best, and they shall not compel you to turn Christians, unless you yourselves, when informed of the truth, should wish to be converted to our Holy Catholic Faith, as almost all inhabitants of the rest of the islands have done. And, besides this, their Highnesses award you many privileges and exemptions and will grant you many benefits.

"But, if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord [dominus, subduer], and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which we shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us."

The Requerimiento helped set the stage for what would amount to centuries of genocide and the on-going suffering of millions of innocent indigenous peoples throughout the western hemisphere. The most devastating result of this sectarian approach to colonization is the assumption by the monarchies that



Vince
TWO EAGLES

they had divine authority to "take" whatever they wanted from other people without giving a second thought to the consequences to be endured by their victims. This is obviously criminal (taking with out asking/stealing) behavior of the highest order — not to mention rape, murder, aggravated assault and to commit physical, emotional and psychological harm. To seek to justify this kind of criminal behavior by ascribing it to divine instruction is absolute madness.

Newcomb continues, "Despite the presence of millions of indigenous peoples already living in this hemisphere, we are told that the monarchies of Western Christendom assumed that they had the right to rule the lands of the continent from "on high". [Chief Judge Marshall of the U.S. Supreme Court] said that the Europeans had used the Indian "character" ("savage") and "religion" ("pagan" or "heathen") to justify their claims of ascendancy (dominion) over the continent.

But he also referred to Europe as having a "superior genius." This is a claim that the Europeans were higher in intelligence than the Indians, and also suggests that the European, by virtue of a "superior" intelligence, possessed a higher position of power in relation to the lands of the continent and in relation to the indigenous peoples living there.

"Marshall next claimed that the monarchs of Europe had convinced themselves that they were justified in assuming "ultimate dominion" over newly "discovered" lands of the continent because the Indians would be adequately compensated with European civilization and Christianity. As Marshall put it, the Indian would be given civilization and Christianity "in exchange for unlimited independence."

Thankfully there has been progress of sorts that moves humanity away from the Requerimiento mentality of yesteryear, at least at the UN level today, when one considers the truth of Preambular Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples passed by the UN Human Rights Council on June 29, 2006: "Affirming further that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin, racial, religious, ethnic, or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust."

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**Helping Delmont****Lois and Bill Kerr, Yankton**

A great big thank you from the Delmont folks who received the bath towels, wash cloths, dish towels, Band Aids, new small kitchen appliances, new pillows, bed sized quilts, adult men's blue jeans and table ware donated by 10 Yankton families and Picker's Paradise that filled our Dodge Van when we arrived in Delmont last Saturday afternoon. It took 4 adults and 2 children a fair amount of time to unload all of the boxes and bags of donations and carry them into the huge American Legion Hall. The donations were then laid out on tables with other donations where the local people came in and used super market carts to pick up what they needed.

There were several other vehicles with donations that arrived while we were unloading, so it looks like they are getting a lot of help.

We saw a lot of destruction in the town, and at first thought it wasn't as much as we expected, but then we began to look closer and realized that we were overlooking the many empty lots where homes used to be and only blank tan colored dirt rectangles were left where houses used to stand. And on those lots few low bushes and no trees were left. Whole blocks would have only one or two partial surviving homes being repaired. So the damage was monstrous!

One local family had called us before we

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.

Poll Results

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you agree with the U.S. Supreme Court decision that essentially upholds the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)?

No	53%
Yes	43%
Not sure	4%
TOTAL VOTES CAST	352

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 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalizes same-sex marriages nationwide?
To cast your vote in the **PRESS & DAKOTAN'S** Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

left Yankton offering some furniture, but when we mentioned that to the locals, they told us they are not ready yet for a few months to re-supply the homes that are being repaired with furniture. We will call your attention to that need when they let us know they are ready.

Once again, many thanks to those of you who sent donations.