

Writer's Block

# A Look At Guns In The Home

BY WILLIAM KERR  
For the Press & Dakotan

There is a lot of talk now and a lot of legislation being developed for presentation to state legislatures about the role of gun ownership both in the home and on the street. Many are promoting the idea of carrying concealed weapons for protection,



William KERR

Texas is one of those states. Well, of course, Texas! Who else would you expect to lead that parade?

So, lets take a look at both sides of the question through what has been said by both sides that can be based on fact. On the surface owning a handgun to protect one's family, home, or person seems to make sense. But do the facts bear this out.

Sen. Rick Santorum on "This Week" (Jan. 20) said, "There are more people who protect themselves and stop violence happening to them with the ownership of a gun than people who commit crimes with a gun." On CBS's "Face the Nation" (Dec. 16, 2012), Bob Schieffer said, "Of course there are legitimate reasons for both pleasure and protection to own guns." In the 1995 article, "Armed resistance to Crime: The Prevalence and Nature of Self Defense With a Gun," Gary Kleck and Marc Gertz reported that guns were used defensively about 2.5 million times annually in the U.S., or about 7,000 times a day. Researcher John Lott in his 1998 book, "More Guns, Less Crime," claimed that increasing the number of permits to carry guns would reduce crime.

Both of these latter two articles have been challenged by the scientific community. Kleck says that guns defended households against 845,000 burglaries in 1992. David Hemenway (Harvard School of Public Health) says that the National Crime Victimization Survey reports that someone was in the home when it was burglarized in less than 1,300,000 of these burglaries and that since in the U.S. less than half of our households even own a gun, that means it is unlikely that more than 650,000 households burglarized even owned a gun, let alone were the ones burgled. A National Crime Victimization Survey extra report controlled for problems caused by Kleck's methods found only 65,000 defensive gun uses per year. A far cry from Kleck's 845,000.

The FBI's report "Crime in the United States 1998" reported that for every time a civilian used a hand gun to kill in self defense, 50 other civilians lost their lives in hand gun homicides.

Our country has a gun murder rate about 20 times the average gun murder rate of other industrialized countries (*Washington Post*, Dec. 14, 2012), which itself makes it hard to side with those who say that more guns in the hands of civilians (including teachers) would tend to reduce crime and easier to support David Hemenway's conclusion (Harvard Injury Control Research Center, "Homicide") that "Where there are more guns, there is more homicide."

You might well wonder why most of these reports are dated in the 1990s.

In 1996, our Congress, driven by the NRA, put an almost total ban on approving funds for studies of guns and public health. "Scientific inquiry in this field has been systematically starved, and as a result almost no one does it." (California-Davis Professor Garen Wintemute)

One additional consideration in allowing any ordinary citizens to own or carry handguns is the lack of adequate training for them to have an even chance, let alone prevail, against an armed criminal. On the program "20/20," Firearms Instructor Glen Dorney told Diane Sawyer "Even (with) police officers through extensive training, if you don't continue with your training, ongoing training, it's a perishable skill. You'll lose it." Sawyer asked, "How long before you're going to lose it?" Dorney answered, "If you go for a month to two months without training, you lose it."

Conclusion: "Guns as they are bought and sold and regulated in U.S. society, do far more harm than good."

Material for this column is from the article "The Self-Defense Self-Delusion" in *EXTRA!* (March 2013), the magazine of FAIR, the media watch group.



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## Memo From The Mayor

# How Would You Describe Yankton?

BY NANCY WENANDE  
Mayor of Yankton

"What is Yankton?" Sounds like a silly question, doesn't it?

As commissioners we are posed with a variety of choices and opportunities. Having the ability to influence the future of a community is a huge responsibility, which none of us have taken lightly.

What becomes the crux of the issue is, what type of community are we now and what type of community do we want to be?

Taking an honest, hard look at our community is not an easy task:

- What will it take to engage people to get involved?
- Are we a retirement community?
- Are we a family-friendly community?
- What do we need to do to attract new people to move here?
- How do we attract more developers to build affordable housing?
- Rentals?
- What types of businesses should we be trying to attract? Retail? Manufacturing?
- Whose job is it to search out retail opportunities?
- Where are the additional employees coming from since unemployment rates are so low?
- What will it take to raise the wages for Yankton?
- Why can't we keep a coffee shop in downtown Yankton?
- What do we want our downtown to look like? Historic?
- What are we doing to draw new



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businesses into downtown?

- How important are youth to the future of Yankton?
- What should we be doing to ensure they have a quality education?
- What is the value to the citizens regarding a new water plant? New library?
- What are the long-term ramifications on the Missouri from the flood?
- What can be done to attract more campers into Yankton when they are staying out by the lake?
- What should we do about the changes that are needed in our sports facilities? Pool?
- How do we attract the right business to build on the HSC corner?
- How come other communities are growing at a faster rate than us?
- If we want to attract entrepreneurs, what are we offering them?
- Should we be doing some community meetings to update our strategic plan and refine our vision for the city?

And the questions go on, and on and on ...

There are no easy answers to any of these questions, but that doesn't mean that we stop trying to work on them.

I'm not shy about saying that "I Love Yankton!" My hope is that you feel the same way and become a part of shaping Yankton's future. Comments are always welcome at mayor@cityofyankton.org.

## YOUR LETTERS

### Public Input?

Frank Kloucek, Scotland

SB 235 went against the process of open public input on legislation when it was introduced as a shell bill and passed through the South Dakota Senate in a form that was only what is called a "place holder bill or shell bill." This type of legislation happens far too often in our Legislature and hurts the credibility of the process.

SB 235 circumvents the legislative process and creates even more public mistrust of the Legislature. ... This bill is like sausage but the recipe seems to be wrong. There are too many unrelated issues addressed in SB235, kind of like pork barrel and earmarking in Congress. ... Do we move forward with economic development using money that should go to the general fund and be used for education and Medicare? ... We put wind power development, large-scale livestock production and education of immigrants all in the same bill and say they are related as economic development.

SB235 is the bill of the session and it is not over yet. It still has to go to the Senate for concurrence, and then — if not concurred in — go to conference committee. I called this one before the floor debate and am still correct that this so far is the biggest bill of the session. Where is the governor in all this?

I do not think we have seen the final version of SB 235 yet.

Rep. State Nelson was 100 percent right that SB 235 would probably not stand a challenge as being constitutional. A very respected constitutional scholar living in Pierre has said repeatedly that between 50-60 percent of laws passed in South Dakota every year probably would not pass constitutional muster. Did not the voters speak overwhelmingly against the use of monies that should go to the general fund and be used for the greater good of the state — in most cases, funding education and Medicaid?

### License Your Dog

Art and Marlys Blaaid, Yankton

Please buy a city pet license for your dog.

The other night we were driving home on Douglas and almost ran over a dog and as we drove in our driveway he followed us dragging his chain. We were able to see his license number. We called the police station and they were able give us both a name and telephone number and we were able to call the owners and they came immediately to pick him up.

So if even you think your pet is always contained just one time when he gets loose others are able to help him get back home.

## OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks 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 to views@yankton.net.

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN



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## OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# Are Antibiotics In Farming Killing Us?

THE DES MOINES (Iowa) REGISTER (March 4): A soldier shot in World War I may not have been killed by the initial wound. Yet there was a good chance a subsequent infection would take his life. By World War II, that soldier had a better chance of survival due to the wide availability of antibiotics. These miracles of modern medicine fight infections and save lives.

But the vast majority of antibiotics developed to treat people are given to the animals people eat. Farmers add low doses to feed and water to prevent disease in crowded livestock facilities. The drugs also promote growth. A bigger cow, pig, turkey or chicken translates into more money for producers.

How does this widespread use in animals affect humans? It is killing us, a growing number of scientists say.

Bacteria are adaptable little guys. Over time, they develop a resistance to commonly used antibiotics. Those more resilient bacteria then move from animals to humans. The bacteria causing everything from urinary tract infections to pneumonia in humans are more difficult to treat with common antibiotics.

Tens of thousands of Americans are killed each year by drug-resistant infections. It costs the country's health care system billions of dollars.

So what should be done? Obviously, there is a desperate need to develop new antibiotics. People have heard by now they should avoid over-using and misusing these drugs, which can contribute to resistance. But the extensive use of antibiotics in agriculture — and its culpability in a human health crisis — cannot be ignored. Science isn't ignoring it. Neither can Washington lawmakers. ...

At the very least, Congress should require more reporting on what drugs are being used on what animals so scientists can better track the impact on human health. ...

It's time for this country to care as much about protecting human health as growing big cows or chickens.

## Needed: A Pope John Paul III

THE AUGUSTA (Ga.) CHRONICLE (Feb. 28): The pope is much more than the head of the Catholic church.

He is the head of a city-state called Vatican City that actually issues passports and has a population count (about 800). That makes him a world leader. And even though he heads the smallest city-state on the planet, no world leader's reach comes close to the pope's. This is a position for which national boundaries mean little. His jurisdiction and followers are scattered all about the countries of the world.

A papal visit can be a life-changing, even world-changing event. Moreover, ours is a world starving for moral leadership, regardless of religion or denomination. What other leaders in peace, love and morality come quickly to mind?

Indeed, many believe that John Paul II was one of the great world leaders of the 20th century. The Poland native's gentle staff stood up to Eastern Bloc communism and fractured it in much the same way Moses' own freed the Israelites.

John Paul II was a decidedly difficult act to follow — and Pope Benedict XVI also was cast into the fire of a blazing pedophilia scandal. Benedict's fatigue and his frustrations — even about a lack of privacy — were evident in his last public addresses before becoming the first pope in six centuries to walk away from the job.

The leader of 1 billion Catholics, and the voice of conscience for many others, a pope carries the world on his shoulders. What a burden it must be for even the holiest among us. And that weight is usually added at an advanced age...

The process to choose Benedict's successor is shrouded in smoke — literally. But here's hoping the next pope can be a shepherd of peace not only for his own flock but for a world awash in conflict, confusion and chaos.

Catholics and non-Catholics alike could sure use a John Paul the third.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, March 7, the 66th day of 2013. There are 299 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On March 7, 1965, a march by civil rights demonstrators was violently broken up at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., by state troopers and a sheriff's posse in what came to be known as "Bloody Sunday."

**On this date:** In 1793, during the French Revolutionary Wars, France declared war on Spain.

In 1850, in a three-hour speech to the U.S. Senate, Daniel Webster of Massachusetts endorsed the Compromise of 1850 as a means of preserving the Union.

In 1876, Alexander Graham Bell received a patent for his telephone.

In 1912, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen arrived in Hobart, Australia, where he dispatched telegrams announcing his success in leading the first expedition to the South Pole the previous December.

In 1926, the first successful trans-Atlantic radio-telephone conversations took place between New York and London.

In 1936, Adolf Hitler ordered his troops to march into the Rhineland, thereby breaking the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Pact.

In 1945, during World War II, U.S. forces crossed the Rhine River at Remagen, Germany, using the damaged but still usable Ludendorff Bridge.

In 1960, Jack Paar returned as host of NBC's "Tonight Show" nearly a month after walking off in a censorship dispute with the network.

In 1963, the Pan Am Building (today the MetLife Building) first opened in midtown Manhattan.

In 1975, the U.S. Senate revised its filibuster rule, allowing 60 senators to limit debate in most cases, instead of the previously required two-thirds of senators present.

In 1983, the original version of The Nashville Network (now Spike) made its debut.

In 1994, the Supreme Court, in Campbell v. Acuff-Rose Music Inc., unanimously ruled that a parody that pokes fun at an original work can be considered "fair use" that doesn't require permission from the copyright holder. (The ruling concerned a parody of the song "Pretty Woman" by the rap group 2 Live Crew.)

**Ten years ago:** Virtually every musical

on Broadway shut down as musicians went on strike, and actors and stagehands said they wouldn't cross their picket lines; the walkout lasted four days.

**Five years ago:** On the heels of a gloomy report that 63,000 jobs were lost in February 2008, President George W. Bush said "it's clear our economy has slowed" as he tried to reassure an anxious public that the long-term outlook was good. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Samantha Power, who was acting as an adviser to Barack Obama, resigned after calling rival Hillary Rodham Clinton "a monster." Leon Greenman, the only Englishman sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp, died in London at age 97.

**One year ago:** President Barack Obama, speaking at a Daimler truck plant in Mount Holly, N.C., made his most urgent appeal to date for the nation to wean itself from oil, calling it a "fuel of the past" and demanding that the United States broaden its approach to energy. The Indianapolis Colts cut injured star Peyton Manning.

**Today's Birthdays:** Photographer Lord Snowdon is 83. TV personality Willard Scott is 79. Auto racer Janet Guthrie is 75. Actor Daniel J. Travanti is 73. Entertainment executive Michael Eisner is 71. Rock musician Chris White (The Zombies) is 70. Actor John Heard is 67. Rock singer Peter Wolf is 67. Rock musician Matthew Fisher (Procol Harum) is 67. Pro Football Hall-of-Famer Franco Harris is 63. Pro and College Football Hall-of-Famer Lynn Swann is 61. Rhythm-and-blues singer-musician Ernie Isley (The Isley Brothers) is 61. Actor Bryan Cranston is 57. Actress Donna Murphy is 54. Actor Nick Searcy is 54. Golfer Tom Lehman is 54. International Tennis Hall-of-Famer Ivan Lendl is 53. Actress Mary Beth Evans is 52. Singer-actress Taylor Dayne is 51. Actor Bill Brochtrup is 50. Opera singer Denyce Graves is 49. Comedian Wanda Sykes is 49. Actor Jonathan Del Arco is 47. Rock musician Randy Guss (Toad the Wet Sprocket) is 46. Actor Peter Sarsgaard is 42. Actress Rachel Weisz is 42. Classical singer Sebastian Izambard (Il Divo) is 40. Rock singer Hugo Ferreira (Tanic) is 39. Actress Jenna Fischer is 39. Actress Sarayu Rao (TV: "Monday Mornings") is 38. Actress Audrey Marie Anderson is 38. Actor T.J. Thyne (TV: "Bones") is 38. Actress Laura Prepon is 33.

**Thought for Today:** "The telephone book is full of facts, but it doesn't contain a single idea." — Mortimer J. Adler, American philosopher (1902-2001).

## FROM THE BIBLE

Lord, it is good that we are here. Matthew 17:4. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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