

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 Dakotian established April 26, 1875.

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

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The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotian 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.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES*

(Payable in advance)

CARRIER DELIVERY
1-month\$12.09
3 months\$36.27
6 months\$72.53
1-year\$133.09

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

The D.C. Virus Strikes Again

LINCOLN (Neb.) JOURNAL STAR (March 3): When the nation's governors gathered in the U.S. capital, they tried to deliver a bipartisan message that gridlock in Washington is impairing efforts to govern at the state level.

Too bad their efforts to drive home that point were undercut by their own displays of partisanship.

Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, chairman of the National Governor's Association, delivered the script.

"While Washington remains mostly gridlocked — preventing long-term solutions — we are addressing challenges by reforming education, building infrastructure, improving health care and developing energy resources. Governors do not have the luxury of standing still. Our hope is that our federal partners will do their part and take action," said Fallin, a Republican.

Chiming in was Gov. Steve Beshear of Kentucky, a Democrat. "The whole country's frustrated with this place," he said.

Gov. John Hickenlooper of Colorado, a Democrat who is vice chairman of the association, pointed out that "unlike what you see in Congress," state officials "love to share and steal ideas from each other and see them improved."

A month previously when delivering the governors' State of the States address, Hickenlooper pointed out that more than 26 percent of most state budgets come from the federal government. "The politics of fiscal responsibility can no longer be centered around crisis and deadlines," Hickenlooper said.

By the time the governors had disbanded, however, it was apparent that the same divisions that are hamstringing Washington are also interfering with cooperation among states.

After a group of Democratic governors met with President Barack Obama, they tore into Republicans. Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin, a Democrat, said Republican governors "have been distracted by a more radical social agenda that gives tax cuts to the wealthy (and) asks the middle class to pay for them while they cut education and the opportunities that allow us to grow jobs."

Shumlin tried to return to the script several days later in a bipartisan media briefing after governors met with Obama. "We governors actually have to get things done. It's not like Congress down here," Shumlin said.

That's when Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana launched his now-famous tirade against Obama. "The Obama economy is now the minimum wage economy," Jindal said, drawing gasps that he had broken protocol. Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy, a Democrat, claimed Jindal's remark was "the most insane statement I've ever heard."

To Americans more removed from the scene, however, it seemed like the visiting governors had succumbed to whatever virus infects Washington. It's unfortunate the governors couldn't stay on point. It's a message Washington needs to hear.

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.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, March 6, the 65th day of 2014. There are 300 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 6, 1836, the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, fell to Mexican forces after a 13-day siege.

On this date: In 1834, the city of York in Upper Canada was incorporated as Toronto.

In 1853, Verdi's opera "La Traviata" premiered in Venice, Italy.

In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that Scott, a slave, was not an American citizen and could not sue for his freedom in federal court.

In 1912, Oreos sandwich cookies were first introduced by the National Biscuit Co.

In 1933, a national bank holiday declared by President Franklin D. Roosevelt aimed at calming panicked depositors went into effect. Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak, wounded in an attempt on Roosevelt's life the previous month, died at a Miami hospital at age 59.

In 1944, U.S. heavy bombers staged the first full-scale American raid on Berlin during World War II.

In 1953, Georgy Malenkov was named premier of the Soviet Union a day after the death of Josef Stalin.

In 1964, heavyweight boxing champion Cassius Clay officially changed his name to Muhammad Ali.

In 1967, the daughter of Josef Stalin, Svetlana Alliluyeva, appeared at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi and declared her intention to defect to the West.

In 1970, a bomb being built inside a Greenwich Village townhouse by the radical Weathermen accidentally went off, destroying the house and killing three group members.

In 1983, in a case that drew much notoriety, a woman was gang-raped atop a pool table in a tavern in New Bedford, Mass., called Big Dan's; four men were later convicted of the attack.

In 1994, Greek actress-turned-politician Melina Mercouri, 73, died in New York.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush, playing host to Mexican President Vicente Fox at his Texas ranch, backed off on plans to require frequent Mexican travelers to the U.S. to be fingerprinted and photographed before crossing the border, a reversal welcomed by Fox. A water taxi capsized in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, killing five people.

Five years ago: The government reported the jobless rate reached 8.1 percent in February 2009. While ac-

knowledging an "astounding" number of job losses, President Barack Obama told critics of his \$787 billion economic recovery plan in Columbus, Ohio, that it was saving jobs and said, "I know we did the right thing." NASA's planet-hunting spacecraft, Kepler, rocketed into space on a voyage to track down other Earths in a faraway patch of the Milky Way galaxy.

One year ago: Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., a critic of the Obama administration's drone policy, launched an old-style filibuster to block Senate confirmation of John Brennan's nomination to be CIA director; Paul lasted nearly 13 hours before yielding the floor. Syria's accelerating humanitarian crisis hit a grim milestone as the number of U.N.-registered refugees topped 1 million, half of them children.

Today's Birthdays: Orchestra conductor Julius Rudel is 93. Former FBI and CIA director William Webster is 90. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan is 88. Author Gabriel Garcia Marquez is 87. Orchestra conductor Lorin Maazel is 84. Former Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova is 77. Former Sen. Christopher Bond, R-Mo., is 75. Actress-writer Joanna Miles is 74. Actor Ben Murphy is 72. Opera singer Dame Kiri Te Kanawa is 70. Singer Mary Wilson (The Supremes) is 70. Rock musician Hugh Grundy (The Zombies) is 69. Rock singer-musician David Gilmour (Pink Floyd) is 68. Actress Anna Maria Horford is 67. Actor-director Rob Reiner is 67. Singer Kiki Dee is 67. Broadcast journalist John Stossel is 67. Composer-lyricist Stephen Schwartz ("Godspell") is 66. Rock singer-musician Phil Alvin (The Blasters) is 61. Sports correspondent Armen Keteyian is 61. Actor Tom Arnold is 55. Former child actress Suzanne Crough is 51. Actor D.L. Hughley is 50. Country songwriter Skip Ewing is 50. Actor Shuler Hensley is 47. Actress Connie Britton is 47. Actress Moira Kelly is 46. Actress Amy Pietz is 45. Rock musician Chris Broderick (Megadeth) is 44. NBA player Shaquille O'Neal is 42. Country singer Trent Willmon is 41. Country musician Shan Farmer (Ricochet) is 40. Rapper Beanie Sigel is 40. Rapper Bubba Sparxxx is 37. Rock musician Chris Tomson (Vampire Weekend) is 30. Actor Eli Marienthal is 28. Actor Jimmy Galeota is 28. Rapper/producer Tyler, the Creator is 23. Actor Dillon Freasier (Film: "There Will Be Blood") is 18. Actress Savannah Stehlin is 18.

Thought for Today: "Best be yourself, imperial, plain and true!" — Elizabeth Barrett Browning, English poet (1806-1861).

FROM THE BIBLE

Train up a child. Proverbs 22:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



Writer's Block

This Isn't The Country I Fought To Preserve

BY WILLIAM KERR

For the Press & Dakotan



William KERR

In August of 1932, I began the first grade in elementary school. That November, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president of the United States of America. As I progressed through elementary, junior high and high schools, the president and the Democratic Congress elected with him developed the New Deal agencies. They closed the banks for 30 days until Congress could create reasonable regulations so the banks could not do many of the things that caused them severe financial problems bordering on bankruptcy and just do regular banking.

Then they created a program to hire the unemployed to repair and update our infrastructure. In 14 months or so, they reduced unemployment from 25 percent when he was elected to 11 percent, and it was not long after that it was reduced to whatever was considered normal at that time.

They continued by creating a Department of Labor and a minimum wage that workers could live on. It was set up so that when the Office of Management and Budget's annual computation of the cost of living rose the minimum wage would rise the same percent. In the meantime, the labor unions were striking and making gains in working conditions.

When I was in the 10th grade, the Federal Housing Authority had been formed and offered to back mortgage loans at 10 percent down; my parents were able to raise \$850 down with their savings, and borrowing a few hundred from relatives and bought a new three-bedroom home for \$8,500. My mother soon went to work in a defense plant to make extra payments on the mortgage. The defense plants were both building up our own military equipment and supplying same to our allies. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, my father quit his white collar job and went to work in a former "defense" plant, which was now a war plant.

Sometime while all this was happening, Congress created the Social Security program whereby some part of every worker's wages would be put into a trust fund and invested. Then, when a worker reached age 65, he or she could retire and be paid back their own money plus whatever extra was available from investment.

Another part of the New Deal was a progressive income tax, which was the major program that financed these new agencies and brought us out of the Great Depression. I remember at the time that a number of movie stars and sports figures complained along with other selfish high earners. The top tax rate after some millions were earned was 90 percent. Many benevolent organizations saw their donations from the wealthy rise as a result. They would rather give 100 percent to charity than 90 percent to the government! (It was deductible from the amount taxed.)

The result of all of these programs was a leveling of the playing field where everybody had a chance to have a job that paid a decent living, under reasonable working conditions, not just the "robber barons" and their friends.

When I graduated high school in 1944, one of my buddies and I went down to the draft board office and volunteered to enter the Army to love our country and preserve our way of life. When I returned from the war, I went to college on the GI Bill and went to work earning a decent living and enjoying the results of the New Deal.

In 1967 or so, my parents retired and, with their home paid for, could live comfortably on Social Security. These were the golden years of our country.

It wasn't long after that Congress, in its infinite wisdom, began easing the restrictions on banks and savings and loan institutions. Since then, we have had a number of recessions primarily resulting from banks and loan institutions returning to activity in questionable investments

YOUR LETTERS

The Value Of RTEC

Dr. Wayne Kindle, Superintendent, Yankton School District; and Dr. Jennifer Johnke, Principal, Yankton High School

Yankton School District and RTEC have had a great relationship that is a true benefit to our students. For many years, the students of Yankton High School have taken classes and been exposed to the areas of manufacturing through the efforts of RTEC. As a result, numerous students leave Yankton High School ready to enter the work force or pursue certification at a technical school as a result.

Currently, our students take classes for high school credit at RTEC which exposes them to Welding and Machining Processes. The RTEC facility allows us to offer this opportunity to our students which we may otherwise not be able to facilitate. Additionally, our students have earned high school credit from the RTEC Manufacturing Academy, a two-week program held during the summer. RTEC has also hosted an Automotives Academy which students from

and being bailed out by us taxpayers. Also, in 1968, Congress quit increasing the minimum wage as the original law required. (It should now, by original law, be \$12 an hour, which would also stimulate our economy as it would all be spent immediately on living costs, and begin requiring more workers to handle the business.)

In the 1980s, President Reagan talked Congress into "trickle down economics" reducing taxes for the rich which they would then invest to create jobs. (There has never been any evidence that any jobs were ever created by that means.)

That tax reduction caused a shortage of revenue to make the budget, so Congress began taking the workers' money from the Social Security Trust Fund, and have been doing so ever since, including 2013, to the tune of \$2.6 trillion. They say it is borrowed, but there is never been any payback plan to this day.

And now Congress is discussing reducing Social Security payments and Medicare payments to pay down our debt when both programs have paid their way since inception and are not costing the government a dime!

Reducing those payments would be like adding insult to injury. Not only taking our money — put by for safe keeping until retirement — to balance the budget but doing so in order to continue the tax reductions for the rich who are now paying only 35-38 percent at the highest level of income. That's just like taking money from the poor and giving it to the rich. (Most, if not all, of the other rich countries have top rates between 50-70 percent.)

Since the 90 percent rates got us out of the Great Depression, we could probably get us out of this Great Recession with 70 percent for tops. I know we are technically out of the recession, but it is now 5 1/2 years since this recession began and we are not near having created the jobs needed to reemploy millions of workers who lost their jobs when this all started and are still suffering. Nor has we increased revenue enough to begin paying back the Social Security Trust Fund on what Congress took and spent immorally, as well as meeting our annual budget and paying back some of our national debt.

Speaking of which, The Economist made the suggestion that both countries in Europe with high debts and America should consider selling off some assets to pay down some of our debt and get some breathing room. I wonder if Congress has considered that option?

Another option to consider, if Congress really cares about all of us citizens, clean up our election system by following the example of some rich countries that have a 60- or 90-day campaign period giving radio and television time free to each candidate in equal amounts, then allowing each to spend up to \$10,000 on campaign giveaways like buttons, pencils, cards, etc. Citizens are limited, as are we, to how much they can give, political action committees are not allowed and corporations cannot donate. Last I knew, this was what France's system is like.

So, here we are today with one-third of us living in poverty, another one-third of us living in near poverty — together, giving us the highest poverty rate among the rich nations, with our minimum wage almost \$5 an hour lower than the original law called for, with millions of our workers still unemployed 5 1/2 years after this recession began, with some candidates and other politicians calling for reducing Social Security and Medicare payments, which are fully covered by what we have already paid in (and cost the government nothing), thereby recommending taking more money from the poor, the workers and the middle class to give to the rich by retaining their tax reductions made from the original law.

This is no longer a country of the people, by the people and for the people!

No, this is not the country I fought to preserve!

Yankton High School have attended. These courses and academies have better prepared our students for their future endeavors.

RTEC is also a partner in the Governor's Grant which was recently awarded to Yankton High School. With the continued support of RTEC, Yankton High School will be able to offer dual credit courses in the areas of Computer-Aided Drafting, Machining Processes, and Welding.

This will further prepare our students to enter the workforce, a technical school, or a four-year institution. In addition, this partnership helps to fill high-need areas of the workforce for Yankton and the surrounding area.

We are grateful to RTEC and the past supporters of RTEC for providing this facility to our students. The partnership with RTEC has been extremely beneficial to students and we are hopeful these opportunities will be available for many years to come.

We ask you to please consider supporting the RTEC Capital Campaign!