

The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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OPINION

No Elections, But Don't Disengage

At least Yankton residents have a good excuse to avoid going to the polls this April.

It appears there won't be any elections.

As the deadline arrived last Friday to file petitions for the Yankton City Commission and Yankton School Board races, there were no excess candidates in either field. Thus, the two incumbents (David Carda and David Knoff) plus one newcomer (Nathan Johnson) will fill the three open city positions, and the two incumbents (Kathy Greenway and Matt Pietz) will return to the school board.

In general terms, is this a good thing?

That certainly isn't a criticism against the people who are and/or will be on the boards when the new terms begin in May (for the city) and July (for the school board). We know them all — and for full disclosure, Johnson was once a reporter here and is a good friend — and we believe they are fine people for the job. So, in that sense, the local constituencies are fortunate to have such quality people in their service.

Nevertheless, the lack of interest in this races may (or may not) be viewed as at least a little disconcerting.

On the city side, uncontested races are rare. According to city finance officer Al Viereck, it's been more than a decade since the City Commission last saw an uncontested election cycle. So, this year seems to be a bit of an outlier.

As for the school board, this is the second straight year that there won't be an election. That, unfortunately, is the makings of a trend.

Why aren't more people running?

There is good reason to believe, as Viereck stated, that the lack of controversy may have something to do with it.

This is a stark contrast to last fall's County Commission election, when four open slots attracted eight candidates, resulting in four new faces on the five-person board. And indeed, there was controversy stirring that pot, as the Napa Junction episode created some sharp divisions of opinion within the county.

In some previous elections, the school board saw several candidates filing for slots when the school district attempted, unsuccessfully, to opt out of the property tax freeze, which was not popular with everyone.

So, there is some validity to the notion that the lack of controversy or hot-button issues has created a general feeling of what might best be described as satisfaction among the electorate.

And that satisfaction — or lack of interest and/or anger — also speaks to the jobs that city and school officials are doing in managing the business of those entities.

For now, then, we can take the lack of a looming election season in Yankton as a good sign of the state of things.

Still, it's important for citizens to stay involved with their local governments. That doesn't mean you have to run for office, but you really need to voice your opinions and provide your input. Big issues do loom for the city and school district (as well as the county), and local officials will need you to have a say in the matter and supply some direction toward the future.

So, you don't have to vote this April if you live in Yankton. But don't become detached. Let your elected officials know how you feel and follow the business they conduct. That's a year-round duty for every one of us.

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OUR 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 Wednesday, March 4, the 63rd day of 2015. There are 302 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 4, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated for a second term of office; with the end of the Civil War in sight, Lincoln declared, "With malice toward none, with charity for all."

On this date: In 1789, the Constitution of the United States went into effect as the first Federal Congress met in New York. (The lawmakers then adjourned for lack of a quorum.)

In 1791, Vermont became the 14th state.

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as the 16th president of the United States. The Confederate States of America adopted as its flag the original version of the Stars and Bars.

In 1913, the "Buffalo nickel" officially went into circulation.

In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge's inauguration was broadcast live on 21 radio stations coast-to-coast.

In 1930, Coolidge Dam in Arizona was dedicated by its namesake, former President Calvin Coolidge.

In 1940, Kings Canyon National Park in California was established.

In 1952, Ronald Reagan and Nancy Davis were married in San Fernando Valley, California.

In 1964, Teamsters president James Hoffa and three co-defendants were found guilty by a federal court in Chattanooga, Tennessee, of jury tampering.

In 1974, the first issue of People magazine, then called People Weekly, was published by Time-Life Inc.; on the cover was actress Mia Farrow, then co-starring in "The Great Gatsby."

In 1989, Time Inc. and Warner Communications Inc. announced plans for a huge media merger.

In 1998, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that sexual harassment at work can be illegal even when the offender and victim are of the same gender.

Ten years ago: American troops in Iraq fired on a car carrying just-freed Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena, killing Nicola Calipari, the intelligence officer who'd helped negotiate her release and injuring the reporter. Martha Stewart, imprisoned for five months for her role in a stock scandal, left federal prison to start five months of home confinement. Presi-

dent George W. Bush nominated career scientist Stephen L. Johnson to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

Five years ago: A Hollister, California, man with a history of severe psychiatric problems opened fire at a Pentagon security checkpoint; John Patrick Bedell, 36, wounded two police officers before being killed by police. Two Germans and two Turkish men were convicted in Dueseldorf over a foiled 2007 plot to attack U.S. targets in Germany and given prison sentences ranging up to 12 years. Turkey, a key Muslim ally of the United States, angrily withdrew its ambassador after a congressional committee approved a resolution branding the World War I killing of Armenians a genocide. (The measure, however, was never taken up by the 111th Congress.)

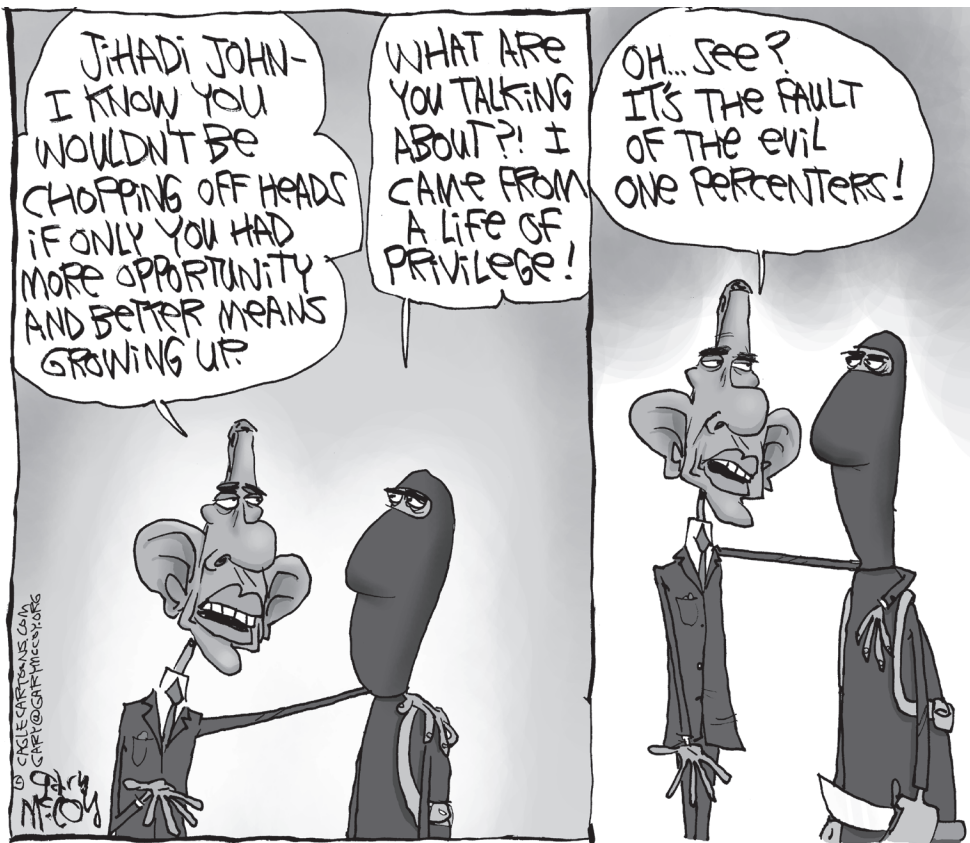
One year ago: President Barack Obama submitted a \$3.9 trillion budget for fiscal 2015. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met in Ukraine with the new government's leaders in a show of support following Russia's military incursion into the Crimean Peninsula.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Paula Prentiss is 77. Movie director Adrian Lyne is 74. Rock musician Chris Squire (Yes) is 67. Singer Shakin' Stevens is 67. Author James Ellroy is 67. Former Texas Gov. Rick Perry is 65. Singer Chris Rea is 64. Actor/rock singer-musician Ronn Moss is 63. Actress Kay Lenz is 62. Musician Emilio Estefan is 62. Movie director Scott Hicks is 62. Actress Catherine O'Hara is 61. Actor Mykelti Williamson is 58. Actress Patricia Heaton is 57. Actor Steven Weber is 54. Rock musician Jason Newsted is 52. Actress Stacy Edwards is 50. Rapper Grand Puba is 49. Rock musician Patrick Hannan (The Sundays) is 49. Rock singer Evan Dando (Lemonheads) is 48. Actress Patsy Kensit is 47. Gay rights activist Chaz Bono is 46. Actress Andrea Bendewald is 45. Actor Nick Stabile is 45. Rock musician Fergal Lawler (The Cranberries) is 44. Country singer Jason Sellers is 44. Jazz musician Jason Marsalis is 38. Actress Jessica Heap is 32. TV personality Whitney Port is 30. Actress Margo Harshman is 29. Actor Josh Bowman is 27. Actress Andrea Bowen is 25. Actress Jenna Boyd is 22.

Thought for Today: "I do not understand the world, but I watch its progress." — Katherine Anne Porter, American author (1894-1980).

FROM THE BIBLE

Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would raw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. Hebrews 11:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

**Robert Reich**

2016: Dems And Moneyed Interests

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

It's seed time for the 2016 presidential election, when candidates try to figure out what they stand for and will run on.

One thing seems reasonably clear. The Democratic nominee for president, whoever she may be, will campaign on reviving the American middle class.

As will the Republican nominee — although the Republican nominee's solution will almost certainly be a warmed-over version of George W. Bush's "ownership society," seeking to unleash the middle class's entrepreneurial energies by reducing taxes and regulations.

That's pretty much what we've heard from Republican hopefuls so far. As before, it will get us nowhere.

The Democratic nominee will just as surely call for easing the burdens on working parents through paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave, child care, elder care, a higher minimum wage, and perhaps also tax incentives for companies that share some of their profits with their employees.

All this is fine, but it won't accomplish what's really needed.

The big unknown is whether the Democratic nominee will also take on the moneyed interests — the large Wall Street banks, big corporations, and richest Americans — that have been responsible for the largest upward redistribution of income and wealth in modern American history.

Part of this upward redistribution has involved excessive risk-taking on Wall Street. Such excesses padded the nests of executives and traders but required a taxpayer-funded bailout when the bubble burst in 2008. It also has caused millions of working Americans to lose their jobs, savings and homes.

Since then, the Street has been back to many of its old tricks. Its lobbyists are also busily rolling back the Dodd-Frank Act intended to prevent another crash.

The Democratic candidate could condemn this, and go further — promising to resurrect the Glass-Steagall Act, once separating investment from commercial banking (until the Clinton administration joined with Republicans in repealing it in 1999).

The candidate could also call for busting up Wall Street's biggest banks and thereafter limiting their size; imposing jail sentences on top executives who break the law; cracking down on insider trading; and, for good measure, enacting a small tax on all financial transactions in order to reduce speculation.

Another part of America's upward redistribution has come in the form of "corporate welfare" — tax breaks and subsidies benefiting particular companies and industries (oil and gas, hedge-fund and private-equity, pharmaceuticals, big agriculture) for no other reason than they have the political clout to get them.

It's also come in the guise of patents and trademarks that extend far beyond what's necessary for adequate returns on corporate investment — resulting, for example, in drug prices that are higher in America than any other advanced nation.

It's taken the form of monopoly power, gen-



Robert B. REICH

erating outside profits for certain companies (Monsanto, Pfizer and Comcast, for example) along with high prices for consumers.

And it's come in the form of trade agreements that have greased the way for outsourcing American jobs abroad — thereby exerting downward pressure on American wages.

Not surprisingly, corporate profits now account for the largest percentage of the total economy in more than eight decades, with wages accounting for the smallest percentage of the total economy in more than six decades.

The candidate could demand an end to corporate welfare and excessive intellectual property protection, along with tougher antitrust enforcement against giant firms with unwarranted market power.

And an end to trade agreements that take a big toll on wages of working-class Americans.

The candidate could also propose true tax reform: raising corporate taxes in order to finance investments in education and infrastructure, ending all deductions of executive pay in excess of \$1 million, and cracking down on corporations that shift profits to countries with lower taxes.

She (or he) could likewise demand higher taxes on America's billionaires and multimillionaires — who have never been as wealthy, or taken home as high a percentage of the nation's total income and wealth — in order, for example, to finance an expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (a wage subsidy for low-income workers).

Not the least, taking on the moneyed interests would necessitate limiting their future political power. Here, the candidate could promise to appoint Supreme Court justices committed to reversing Citizens United, push for public financing of elections, and demand full disclosure of all private sources of campaign funding.

But will she (or he) do any of this? Taking on the moneyed interests is risky, especially when those interests have more economic and political power than at any time since the first Gilded Age. These interests are, after all, the main sources of campaign funding.

But a failure to take them on prevents any real change in the prospects of the bottom 90 percent of Americans.

It also robs the Democratic candidate of a potential public mandate to change the prevailing allocation of economic and political power — no less dramatically than it was changed by Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson a century ago, marking the end of that Gilded Age.

And a failure to take on the moneyed interests sacrifices the potential enthusiasm of millions of voters — Democrats and Republicans alike — who know the game is rigged, and who yearn for a leader with the strength and courage to unrig it, thereby giving them and their children a fair chance.

Robert Reich is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and Senior Fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. His new film, "Inequality for All," is now out on iTunes, DVD and On Demand.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Scam Alert**Skip VanDerhule, Yankton**

Readers should be aware of a very active telephone scam in the Yankton area. The scammers are saying that your computer with a Microsoft operating system has reported an error and they are calling to assist you in fixing it. HANG UP! Don't listen any further. They are good at convincing people that they are legitimate.

While it is true that Microsoft operating systems do report errors, neither Microsoft nor any of its partners call users to assist them with resolving errors. Microsoft software registrations do not include the user's telephone number.

These scammers are calling every phone number in the Yankton area, cell phones included. They are seeking people who are not computer savvy. Senior Citizens, because we tend to trust people, are especially vulnerable.

What they offer to do is connect to your computer via an internet link. They will do this by having you open your computer and! go to a web address that they will give you.

What they are trying to do is plant malicious software on your computer that will allow them to collect personal information, such as user names and passwords. If you use your computer to access your bank accounts, your money is definitely at risk, because this is what they really want from you.

If you have already encountered this scam, and you look at your bank accounts by computer, you need to immediately call your bank. Your bank can freeze your accounts and change your user names and passwords and give you a new account number. However your bank may be able to do little to replace any money already stolen.

If you have already succumbed to this scam, do not use your computer until it has been thoroughly cleaned of the spam software. If you did not allow the scammers access to your computer, you should be fine.

If your computer has been compromised, Microsoft does offer assistance, but YOU initiate the call, not the other way around. Their phone is 800-936-5700. Microsoft does charge for their services and they will go over those with you before charging you.