

The Press & Dakotan

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We Say

Saluting Farmers



THUMBS UP to farmers and ranchers as we celebrate National Ag Week. Agriculture provides nearly everything in our daily life, and it plays a major economic role for both South Dakota and Nebraska. In addition, each American farmer feeds more than 144 people, which is a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s, according to the Ag Day website. Promotional

efforts seek to educate young people, who may have little exposure to agriculture and not even realize the source of their food and clothing. Agriculture's importance will only grow in the years ahead, particularly in the U.S. as farmers and ranchers face the challenge of feeding and clothing a growing world population while ensuring a safe, affordable food supply.

Sunny



THUMBS UP to this week's observance of Sunshine Week. The annual event, marking its 10th anniversary, celebrates the importance of access to public information. The week, launched by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE), promotes the public's right to know their government's activities through means such as open meetings and records. Progress has been made

in the courts and all levels of government, but much work remains. Recent media stories have focused on the bureaucratic requirements and high fees that some government entities charge individuals for public information. Sunshine Week isn't just for journalists – it stresses the importance of open government for every citizen. In that spirit, let the sun shine not only this week but every week of the year.

Registered



THUMBS UP to the state of Oregon, for becoming the first state in the country to automatically register its residents to vote. Under the new law, residents are automatically registered to vote when they get a new driver's license or state identification card. If someone doesn't want to be registered, they can notify the secretary of state's office within 20 days to get their name

off the list. We too often forget that voting is a right, not a privilege; and yet, some states keep making the right to vote tougher under the guise of "voter fraud" allegations, which are mostly random accusations looking for a crime. Oregon's new law could bring hundreds of thousands onto the voter rolls, although it's certainly no guarantee they will vote. Nevertheless, this streamlining of a basic American right may be a model that could be emulated elsewhere.

received a number of complaints from parents. Some even said they were offended due to the loss of loved ones in Afghanistan — a nation whose official languages (Pashto and Dari) are rooted in Indo-European languages and have no common lineage with Arabic. It's pretty obvious this controversy isn't over the fact that the Pledge was recited in another language, but rather, that it was in the language of a part of the world that many in this country view as the enemy. Quite frankly, the outcry is a little embarrassing.

ONLINE OPINION

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you think Sen. John Thune will run for president in 2016?
No.....85%
Yes.....15%
TOTAL VOTES CAST.....326

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:

Should Gov. Dennis Daugaard sign the youth minimum wage bill?
To cast your vote in the **PRESS & DAKOTAN'S** Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Friday, March 20, the 79th day of 2015. There are 286 days left in the year. Spring arrives at 5:45 p.m. CDT.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 20, 1995, in Tokyo, 12 people were killed, more than 5,500 others sickened when packages containing the deadly chemical sarin were leaked on five separate subway trains by Aum Shinrikyo cult members.

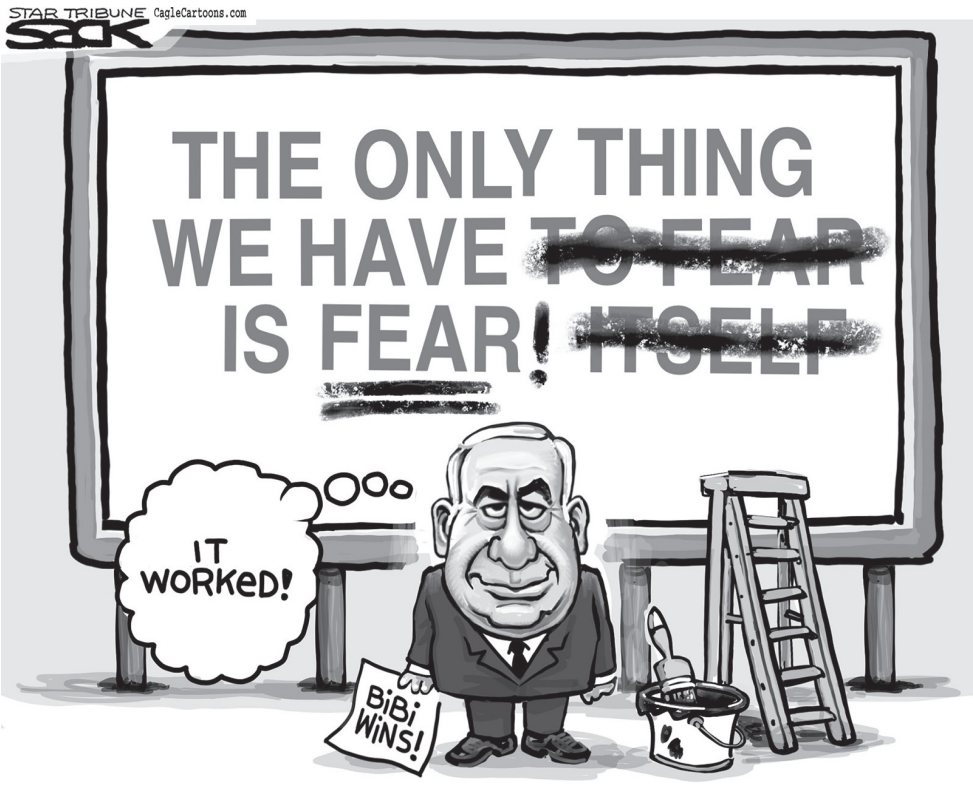
On this date: In 1727, physicist, mathematician and astronomer Sir Isaac Newton died in London.
In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte returned to Paris after escaping his exile on Elba, beginning his "Hundred Days" rule.
In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's influential novel about slavery, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was first published in book form after being serialized.
In 1899, Martha M. Place of Brooklyn, New York, became the first woman to be executed in the electric chair as she was put to death at Sing Sing for the murder of her stepdaughter.
In 1922, the decommissioned USS Jupiter, converted into the first U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, was recommissioned as the USS Langley.
In 1933, the state of Florida electrocuted Giuseppe Zangara for shooting to death Chicago Mayor Anton J. Cermak at a Miami event attended by President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt, the presumed target, the previous February.
In 1952, the U.S. Senate ratified, 66-10, the Treaty of Peace with Japan.
In 1969, John Lennon married Yoko Ono in Gibraltar.
In 1974, Britain's Princess Anne was the target of a kidnapping attempt near Buckingham Palace; the would-be abductor, Ian Ball, was captured. Former NBC News anchorman Chet Huntley, 62, died at his Montana home.
In 1985, Libby Riddles of Teller, Alaska, became the first woman to win the Iditarod Trail Dog Sled Race.
In 1990, singer Gloria Estefan suffered a broken back when a truck rear-ended her tour bus on a snow-covered highway in Pennsylvania. (Surgeons implanted titanium rods to stabilize her spine, and Estefan was able to make a comeback after months of intensive physical therapy.)
In 1999, Bertrand Piccard of Switzerland and Brian Jones of Britain became the first aviators to fly a hot-air balloon around the world nonstop as they floated over Mauritania past longitude 9 degrees west. (They landed safely in Egypt the next day.)

Ten years ago: A visibly frustrated Pope John Paul II made a brief but silent appearance at his Vatican apartment window after missing his first Palm Sunday Mass in 26 years as pontiff. Liz Johnson became the first woman to advance to the championship match of a Professional Bowlers Association tour event, but lost by 27 pins to Tommy Jones in the final of the PBA Banquet Open in Wyoming, Michigan.
Five years ago: Pope Benedict XVI sent an unprecedented letter to Ireland apologizing for chronic child abuse within the Roman Catholic church, but failed to calm anger of many victims. Thousands of protesters — many directing their anger squarely at President Barack Obama — marched through the nation's capital to urge immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall died in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at 90. Lady Bird Johnson's former press secretary, Liz Carpenter, died in Austin, Texas, at 89.
One year ago: President Barack Obama ordered economic sanctions against nearly two dozen members of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inner circle and a major bank that provided them support, raising the stakes in an East-West showdown over Ukraine. Four gunmen opened fire in a crowded restaurant frequented by foreigners at the Serena Hotel in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing nine people.
Today's Birthdays: Singer Dame Vera Lynn is 98. Producer-director-comedian Carl Reiner is 93. Actor Hal Linden is 84. Former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney is 76. Country singer Don Edwards is 76. TV producer Paul Junger Witt is 74. Country singer-musician Ranger Doug (Riders in the Sky) is 69. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Bobby Orr is 67. Blues singer-musician Marcia Ball is 66. Actor William Hurt is 65. Rock musician Carl Palmer (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) is 65. Rock musician Jimmie Vaughan is 64. Country musician Jimmy Sealie (Shenandoah) is 61. Actress Amy Aquino is 58. Movie director Spike Lee is 58. Actress Theresa Russell is 58. Actress Vanessa Bell Calloway is 58. Actress Holly Hunter is 57. Rock musician Slim Jim Phantom (The Stray Cats) is 54. Actress-model-designer Kathy Ireland is 52. Actor David Thewlis is 52. Rock musician Adrian Oxaal (James) is 50. Actress Jessica Lundy is 49. Actress Liza Snyder is 47. Actor Michael Rapaport is 45. Actor Alexander Chaplin is 44. Rock singer Chester Bennington (Linkin Park) is 39. Actor Michael Genady is 37. Actress Bianca Lawson is 36. Rock musician Nick Wheeler (The All-American Rejects) is 33. Actor Michael Cassidy is 32. Actress-singer Christy Carlson Romano is 31.

Thought for Today: "Every spring is the only spring, a perpetual astonishment." — Ellis Peters (Edith Pargeter), British author (1913-1995)

FROM THE BIBLE

In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



The Future Of Crane

BY KELLY HERTZ
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From a staunchly practical standpoint, the best way for the Yankton School District (YSD) — and the community — to proceed with the Crane Youngworth Field issue is to move Yankton's football games to Williams Field and dismantle the nearly 90-year-old Crane stadium located in the heart of town.

But practicality isn't always — nor should it automatically be — the final word on any issue. And that word ultimately belongs to the public.

Crane Youngworth has been Yankton's football mecca since 1926 and has generations of YHS Buck and Yankton College Greyhound gridiron pride steeped into the place. You could fairly call it a historic venue.

But physically, Crane has seen far better days. Recent studies have shown the stadium to be deteriorating steadily, with perhaps a five-year window of viability left until something has to be done. Besides the structural issues, it also faces electrical problems and inadequate accommodations. (For instance, a men's restroom under the grandstand offers only a group trough instead of individual urinals. I'm all for historical preservation and sentimentality — not to mention camaraderie — but THAT'S got to go.) The stadium grandstand either has to be torn down and rebuilt at the 12th St. site, or it must be dismantled permanently with YHS football transplanted, presumably, to Williams Field, located just north of YHS.

These options come with big costs: about \$1.9 million for a reconstruction at Crane Youngworth or about \$2.4 million to retool the much-newer and more conveniently located Williams Field. Both options include an \$800,000 turf upgrade, which will provide a cost savings to the school district in the long run.

The aforementioned practical approach probably sides with the Williams option. While it would cost more up front, there is undoubtedly far more life left in that facility, which opened in 2008, than at ancient, hemmed-in Crane. On paper, the former is probably a better pure investment.

But the sentimental aspect, which is a quite subjective matter, can't be ignored.

We all know the reverential hold that football has long had on this community. It's a Friday night ritual for the high school each fall. It was a Saturday showcase back in the days

when Greyhounds roamed the earth. There are a lot of former football players who carry a piece of Crane Youngworth with them in their hearts. Some players have even had their own offspring (and grand-offspring) play on that same field. For some of them, to see Yankton football without that old stadium glow on an autumn night is probably unthinkable.

So, weighing Crane's future as a facility may be a tough predicament.

But it's not the first time Yankton has had to deal with such matters. In the 1990s, as this city was working to secure the construction of a new bridge across the Missouri River, one of the big stumbling blocks was the dispensation of deteriorating Meridian Bridge, the beloved double-deck spans that had long been this town's most recognizable feature (besides a ton of state football titles).

At the time, the coldly practical thing to do would have been to let Meridian Bridge go to clear the way for a boring new bridge.

But while practicality can make compelling arguments, it often overlooks how much people are sometimes willing to work for the sentimental alternatives — which, by the way, can also have elements of practicality laced in their DNA.

Ultimately, another way was found. The Meridian Bridge was saved and converted into a pedestrian bridge that, among many other things, provides some of the most breathtaking (and impractical) views of the river that you may find anywhere. It's turned into an attraction and is the centerpiece of downtown and recreational development. In this way, the impractical has become somewhat practical.

Obviously, Crane Youngworth is a different kind of beast. It's not likely to find new life in some other guise. It's a football stadium (and, once a year, a circus venue). It is what it is.

And for some people, it's sacred, irreplaceable ground, which more than justifies its renovation.

This is going to be a curious discussion for this town. It may not be a life-or-death debate, but it may be seen as determining the fate of a little piece of Yankton's soul, not to mention the best interest of what is undeniably a rich community ritual.

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz/. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reform Needed!

John Magnuson, Yankton
Maybe you heard of the guy in town who sold his house and got a letter from the county the next day saying his property taxes were going up about 20 percent more than what he just sold his house for. So much for basing taxes on realistic market value.

Maybe you are part of the growing group that believes that the county's computerized appraisal system is broken and should be changed. If you received a 1.5 percent pay increase last year, how are you supposed to afford a double-digit property tax increase for several years in a row? Our county commissioners and responsible officials can do better by us.

It seems there's a belief that county money should be used to fund projects that will attract more business to the area. When new business locates to the area, certain local financial interests can benefit by making a lot of money for themselves and themselves only. Our tax money in part acts as startup money to create a positive environment for all this to happen. This process results in no gain for the rest of us. We need to tell officials that this system needs reform, now!

We would be better off with freeing our property taxes and starting a 1 percent state income tax. A 1 percent income tax is better

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