



Fall Of The Vikings

BY KELLY HERTZ
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Let me be clear on this opening point: I hate the Minnesota Vikings.

But the one thing I would hate even more than the Vikings is the prospect of an autumn without them and their purple shadow spread across these midwestern plains.

So, it was good news this week when the Minnesota Legislature finally secured a deal to build a new football stadium for the Vikings. At least I think it was good. The Vikings ownership basically extorted a new stadium from Minnesota's taxpayers by dangling the prospect that the team might head elsewhere if the lawmakers didn't help build them a new football palace. In professional sports, that's just good business, and the Vikings were good enough to get a \$975 million stadium — with the taxpayers agreeing to pick up almost a half-billion dollars of that cost — that guarantees that the team won't relocate to someplace like Southern California, a sun-dappled locale that was a logical landing spot for a team called the Vikings.



Kelly HERTZ

I suppose the prospect of the team even thinking about walking out on its devoted fan base would be just another excuse for me to hate the Vikings.

And you might think it would stand to reason that I'd be delighted to see the Vikings leave town for, say, that energy-sucking black hole of a professional football market called Los Angeles, where the team could rename itself the Beachdogs and never darken my Sundays again.

But whom would I hate then?

And whom would so many people in this region follow and love, or cheer against and despise, depending on their allegiances?

The Vikings are an essential part of our autumn. Make no mistake, fall is as much about familiarity as it is about change; the season is an empire of rhythms and rituals. What would our fall be without the Vikings? It's like asking what Halloween would be like without ghostly specters knocking at the door for candy, or what Veterans Day would be without veterans or what Thanksgiving would be without Christmas sales. We wear each fall like a comfortable jacket, and stuffed in one of those pockets are those Minnesota Vikings. Many football fans couldn't imagine an autumn without them.

That fact also goes for fans of the Green Bay Packers and the Chicago Bears, who make my feelings about the Vikings seem boredly noncommittal by comparison. But part of bleeding Packer green or Bears blue is coping with Minnesota fans week in and week out each fall, especially on those epic weekends when the teams play one another. Hating the Vikings is an essential, holy part of the experience of being a Packer and Bear fan. Period. What would THEY do without that rivalry?

There is a part of me that also feels somewhat sorry for the people of Minnesota, who generally don't seem to draw too much respect when it comes to professional sports franchises. The track record is spotty:

- Minneapolis lost the Lakers to Los Angeles 52 years ago, and the Timberwolves have been a poor substitute.
- Minnesota, which is absolutely nuts over hockey, lost its NHL North Stars to that other great hockey hotbed, Dallas, in the early 1990s. Happily, the replacement Wild have been embraced, well, wildly, at one stretch enjoying 409 consecutive home sellouts.
- The Minnesota Twins were rumored back in the mid-1980s to be headed to Tampa (to become, I presumed, the Tampa-St. Petersburg Twins; it seemed sadly logical), and once flirted with extinction via contraction, with team owner Carl Pohlad's blessing. The team stayed and stayed alive, respectively — although, based on this year's performance to date, the players didn't seem to get that memo.
- Now the Vikings have threatened to hoist anchor unless they got a new stadium, never mind the rabid regional fan base that feeds the team. (As memory serves, the team ownership may have floated this same moving threat back in the 1970s to help get the Metrodome built.)

Honestly, I think Minnesota sports fans deserve better.

This time, maybe they've finally gotten what they deserved, although it does come at a steep price.

Nevertheless, at least their football team (or, at least however much of it is "theirs" in the non-business, non-binding sense) is staying now. And the fans and the haters both know their autumns will remain intact, for our falls would never have been the same without the Vikings at our disposal, to love or loathe.

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at [twitter/kelly_hertz](https://twitter.com/kelly_hertz)

Place Blame On The Guilty Party

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.
Tribune Media Services

And another one bites the dust.

But Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar did not go quietly. After last week's defeat in the GOP primary, the veteran legislator issued a remarkable statement warning of the dangers of continued partisanship. Lugar, a conservative who embraces "the Republican principles of small government, low taxes, a strong national defense, free enterprise, and trade expansion," was nevertheless targeted for defeat by conservatives who felt he had strayed from ideological orthodoxy. This, because he compromised with the other party on a few matters — the auto industry bailout, TARP, the confirmation of two Supreme Court justices — that were, he thought, "the right votes for the country."

"Partisans at both ends of the political spectrum," said Lugar, "are dominating the political debate in our country. ... They have worked to make it as difficult as possible for a legislator of either party to hold independent views or engage in constructive compromise. If that attitude prevails in American politics, our government will remain mired in the dysfunction we have witnessed during the last several years."

The senator is in the ballpark. But he misstates the problem in two ways.

In the first place, the issue is not partisanship, but hyper-partisanship, a mindset that prioritizes party above country. In the second place, Lugar's sop to moral equivalence notwithstanding, this is not a problem caused by partisans "at both ends of the political spectrum."

It was not Democrats who held the economy hostage in a manufactured debt ceiling crisis that caused the nation's credit rating to be lowered for the first time in history. It was not Democrats who voted down their own deficit reduction resolution, apparently because they didn't want the president to share credit. It was not a Democratic leader who declared defeating the president his top legislative priority.

No, it was Republicans who did all that. And it is not



Leonard PITTS

Democrats who have seen a steady trickle of condemnation and defection by their own appalled members.

That trickle includes Nathan Fletcher, a San Diego mayoral candidate who left the GOP because, "I don't believe we have to treat people we disagree with as an enemy."

And former Sen. Chuck Hagel, who said he was "disgusted" by the "irresponsible actions" of the GOP during the debt ceiling crisis.

And congressional staffer Mike Lofgren, who likened his party to an "apocalyptic cult."

And former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who said too many in the GOP regard it as "an exclusive club where your ideological card is checked at the door."

In their new book, "It's Even Worse Than It Looks," Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein argue that the GOP has "become an insurgent outlier — ideologically extreme; contemptuous of the inherited social and economic policy regime; scornful of compromise; unpersuaded by conventional understanding of facts, evidence and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition." It is, they note, awkward for mainstream news media to report this because it might be seen as violating their ethos of non-bias or interpreted as blindness to the sins of Democrats.

But it needs reporting, regardless. One cannot fix a problem one will not face. And the new cultiness of the Republican Party is certainly a problem. It should concern anyone who thinks democracy is best served when political parties offer coherent alternatives and hash them out in the marketplace of ideas — something the GOP no longer does.

Or, as Lugar's opponent, Richard Mourdock, said in response to Lugar's statement: "I have a mindset that says bipartisanship ought to consist of Democrats coming to the Republican point of view."

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has been celebrated by the VFW since 1921. It was made an official holiday by the US Congress on July 18, 1958 (Public Law 85-529). Following the passage of this law, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proclaimed May 1, 1959 the first official observance of Loyalty Day.

At our program this year, we gave awards to the Yankton County Sheriff's Department and the Yankton Volunteer Fire Department. Be assured, the Yankton VFW will continue to celebrate Loyalty Day and our American freedom, which many of us risked our lives to attain.

I am extending Mr. Collen a personal invitation to our Loyalty Day program next May 1.

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OPINION | WE SAY

On The Rails



THUMBS UP to the Yankton County Commission for voting this week to join the Napa-Platte Regional Railroad Authority (NPRRA). We don't know the details of why the County Commission decided in 1981 that it didn't want to join the group, but with the potential for the Napa-Platte line to be utilized in the near future, we believe the right decision was made for today. As the state considers proposals for the 82-mile stretch of railroad, the NPRRA is a logical vehicle for the people of Yankton County to join the citizens of Bon Homme and Charles Mix counties and to have a say in the process.

Leading Ladies



THUMBS UP to some leading ladies in the community. This week, Pam Rezac oversaw her initial meeting as the first female chairperson of Yankton Area Progressive Growth. The community development corporation has been in existence since 1978. Meanwhile, the Yankton City Commission voted Monday to make Nancy Wenande the city's new mayor. It's only the second time in Yankton's history that a female has held the position. Some may question why that's a big deal. Man? Woman? Isn't it about who is qualified or willing to work for it? Certainly. But when you consider that Yankton County's population is pretty evenly split between men and women, it's a bit conspicuous that more women haven't occupied these and other local leadership positions over the years, don't you think? Our hope is that as we progress into the future, it becomes less and less of a rarity.

A Dwindling Breed



THUMBS DOWN to the passing of former South Dakota Sen. Jim Abdnor, who died Wednesday at age 89. Abdnor may be one of the last of a breed of prairie politicians: He was a plain-spoken man who hailed from humble roots and never forgot that humility. As for his political battles, he will be remembered as the man who ousted Sen. George McGovern in 1980 as part of the Republican tide that swept the country; and Abdnor will also be remembered as the man defeated by Tom Daschle six years later, marking the start of another notable senatorial career. Abdnor is the second political icon South Dakota has lost this year: Bill Janklow, the longtime governor and the man Abdnor defeated in the 1986 GOP senatorial primary, died this winter. With each passing, we lose a lot of history, and Abdnor certainly played his role in that intriguing story.

Summer's Gone



THUMBS DOWN to the passing of singer Donna Summer, who was the brightest musical light in during the 1970s disco era; she died of cancer Thursday at age 63. There will not be an obituary or tribute to Summer anywhere that will not have the word "disco" in the opening sentence, which in some ways is a disservice to a very talented singer. Summer enjoyed a string of hits in a frantic, thumping musical age when artists exploded on the scene and then faded away just as quickly. Her career saw 19 No. 1 dance hits between 1975 and 2008, which is impressive. She will always be remembered as a "disco queen," but her voice and her body of work will serve as the soundtrack for a generation of music lovers.

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. (During political campaigns, letters related to the campaign may be limited to 150 words.) 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.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Friday, May 18, the 139th day of 2012. There are 227 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 18, 1926, evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson vanished while visiting a beach in Venice, Calif. (McPherson reappeared more than a month later, saying she'd escaped after being kidnapped and held for ransom, an account that was greeted with skepticism in some quarters.)

On this date: In 1012, Theophylact, son of Gregory, Count of Tusculum, became Pope Benedict VIII, succeeding Pope Sergius IV.

In 1642, the Canadian city of Montreal was founded by French colonists.

In 1765, about one-fourth of Montreal was destroyed by a fire.

In 1896, the Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, endorsed "separate but equal" racial segregation, a concept renounced 58 years later in *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka.

In 1910, Halley's Comet passed by earth, brushing it with its tail.

In 1912, singer Perry Como was born in Canonsburg, Pa.; movie writer-director Richard Brooks ("Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"; "Elmer Gantry"; "In Cold Blood") was born in Philadelphia.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure creating the Tennessee Valley Authority.

In 1953, Jacqueline Cochran became the first woman to break the sound barrier as she piloted a Canadair F-86 Sabre jet over Rogers Dry Lake, Calif.

In 1969, astronauts Eugene A. Cernan, Thomas P. Stafford and John W. Young blasted off aboard Apollo 10 on a mission to orbit the moon.

In 1980, the Mount St. Helens volcano in Washington state exploded, leaving 57 people dead or missing.

In 1982, a jury in New York City convicted the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, founder and leader of the Unification Church, of tax evasion and conspiracy. (Moon served 13 months in prison.)

In 1991, Helen Sharman became the first Briton to rocket into space as she flew aboard a Soviet Soyuz spacecraft with two cosmonauts on an eight-day mission to the Mir space station.

Ten years ago: India and Pakistan ex-

changed fire across their shared border, renewing fears the countries were on the brink of another war over the Himalayan region of Kashmir. War Emblem won the Preakness Stakes, setting up a shot at the Triple Crown. (However, War Emblem came up short at the Belmont Stakes, which was won by long shot Sarava.)

Five years ago: The White House and Congress failed to strike a deal after exchanging competing offers on an Iraq war spending bill that Democrats said should set a date for U.S. troops to leave. France's new president, Nicolas Sarkozy, named a radically revamped cabinet which included seven women among its 15 members.

One year ago: Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, resigned, saying he wanted to devote all his energy to battling the sexual assault charges he faced in New York. (The charges were later dropped.) The United States slapped sanctions on Syrian President Bashar Assad and six others for human rights abuses over their brutal crackdown on anti-government protests, for the first time personally penalizing the Syrian leader for the actions of his security forces.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Bill Macy is 90. Hall-of-Fame sportscaster Jack Whitaker is 88. Actor Robert Morse is 81. Actor Dwayne Hickman is 78. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Brooks Robinson is 75. Bluegrass singer-musician Rodney Dillard (The Dillards) is 70. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Reggie Jackson is 66. Actress Candice Azzara is 65. Country singer Joe Bonsall (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 64. Rock musician Rick Wakeman (Yes) is 63. Actor James Stephens is 61. Country singer George Strait is 60. Rhythm-and-blues singer Butch Tavares (Tavares) is 59. Actor Chow Yun-Fat is 57. Rock singer-musician Page Hamilton is 52. Contemporary Christian musician Barry Graul (MercyMe) is 51. Singer-actress Martika is 43. Comedian-writer Tina Fey is 42. Rapper Special Ed is 38. Rock singer Jack Johnson is 37. Rhythm-and-blues singer Darryll Allen (Mista) is 32. Actor Matt Long is 32. Christian-rock musician Kevin Huguley (Rush of Fools) is 30. Actor Spencer Breslin is 20.

Thought for Today: "Never do anything you wouldn't want to explain to the paramedics." — Author unknown.

FROM THE BIBLE

The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. 1 Peter 4:7. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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YOUR LETTERS

May 1 Also Loyalty Day

Rich Wright, Yankton

Post Command, Yankton VFW Post 791

This letter is in response to William Collen's very indignant letter regarding Loyalty Day (*Press & Dakotan*, May 11). Mr. Collen must have missed my April 27 letter, printed in this paper, where I described what Loyalty Day is and invited the public, including Mr. Collen, to our Loyalty Day program at the Yankton VFW.

Loyalty Day, May 1, is a day set aside for the reaffirmation of loyalty to the United States and for the recognition of the heritage of American freedom. Loyalty Day