

## THE PRESS &amp; DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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## OPINION

Climate Change:  
The Time Is Now

The grim picture that came forth Tuesday from the White House regarding the effects of climate changes on the U.S. may have been "a landmark report," as the *Guardian* of London characterized it, but no one can truly say it was a surprise.

In fact, the real surprise in all this would be if it has the kind of impact that is urgently needed on this issue.

The 1,300-page National Climate Assessment, which was written by more than 240 scientists and academic experts, declares that the impact of climate change is not some far-off, futuristic prospect but "has firmly moved into the present."

It declares: "Americans are noticing changes all around them. Summers are longer and hotter, and periods of extreme heat last longer than any living American has ever experienced. Winters are generally shorter and warmer. Rain comes in heavier downpours, though in many regions, there are longer dry spells in between."

We're all familiar with the weather records and extremes. It was just announced, that the earth saw the fourth-warmest March on record (even though it was chilly here, but that's part of the cause-and-effect nature of weather patterns), which continues a numbingly familiar pattern. Also, April marked the first time in recorded history in which the average amount of carbon dioxide — a major greenhouse gas — in the air exceeded 400 parts per million for the entire MONTH, according to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC-San Diego. This comes less than a year after the first daily average of 400 ppm of carbon dioxide was ever recorded.

We also know the impacts: increased droughts in the west, more flooding in the east, a rise in food- and water-borne diseases, greater risks of wildfires and decreasing air-quality standards. For farmers, it could mean lower crop and livestock production due to "weeds, diseases, insect pests and other climate change-induced stresses," the report says.

The consequences are now showing up everywhere. A university economist told the *Guardian*: "One major take-home message is that just about every place in the (United States) has observed that the climate has changed. It is here and happening, and we are not cherry-picking or fear-mongering."

This is troubling, because this is trouble.

But what's even more troubling is the fact that a great many of us will wave it off. We have heard the warnings before. Skeptics will again deride it as "alarmist" propaganda, and cling to some outlier scientific theories that go against the opinions of an estimated 97 percent (according to NASA) of the world's scientists. We will likely react to this the same way we reacted to a United Nations report a month ago assessing the global impact of climate change: We'll yawn if we even bother to give it notice.

And yet, the general belief is that something can still be done to reverse the effects of climate change upon our planet. And even though we are now feeling the impact of this phenomenon, we can still do something to walk back from this bleak precipice.

But will we?

Or will we give it a pass as something beyond our control or years in the offing? Will we dismiss it as some environmentalist fantasy? Will we settle on the easy thing and do nothing — and ultimately reap what we sow?

It's up to us.

And now is the time to decide.

kmh

## ELECTION LETTERS

■ With the primary election season here, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** is limiting any letter related to the political campaigns to 150 words. (A letter that exceeds that total by a small margin may be edited down to fit within that parameter.) Letters that surpass that limit will be referred to the advertising department, and author will be given the option of paying to have the letter printed in its entirety elsewhere in the newspaper. Send your letters or questions to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at [views@yankton.net](mailto:views@yankton.net).

## ON THIS DATE

## By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, May 7, the 127th day of 2014. There are 238 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On May 7, 1789, America's first inaugural ball was held in New York in honor of President George Washington, who'd taken the oath of office a week earlier. (His wife, Martha, did not attend; she was back in Virginia, attending to family business.)

**On this date:** In 1763, Pontiac, chief of the Ottawa Indians, attempted to lead a sneak attack on British-held Fort Detroit, but was foiled because the British had been tipped off in advance.

In 1824, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, had its premiere in Vienna.

In 1889, the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore opened its doors.

In 1915, nearly 1,200 people died when a German torpedo sank the British liner RMS Lusitania off the Irish coast.

In 1928, the minimum voting age for British women was lowered from 30 to 21 — the same age as men.

In 1942, U.S. Army Gen. Jonathan Wainwright went on a Manila radio station to announce the Allied surrender of the Philippines to Japanese forces during World War II.

In 1945, Germany signed an unconditional surrender at Allied headquarters in Rheims (Rams), France, ending its role in World War II.

In 1954, the 55-day Battle of Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam ended with Vietnamese insurgents overrunning French forces.

In 1964, Pacific Air Lines Flight 773, a Fairchild F27, crashed near San Ramon, Calif., after a passenger apparently shot both pilots, then himself, killing all 44 people on board.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford formally declared an end to the "Vietnam era." In Ho Chi Minh City — formerly Saigon — the Viet Cong celebrated its takeover.

In 1984, a \$180 million out-of-court settlement was announced in the Agent Orange class-action suit brought by Vietnam veterans who charged they'd suffered injury from exposure to the defoliant.

In 1994, Norway's most famous painting, "The Scream" by Edvard Munch, was recovered almost three months after it had been stolen from an Oslo museum.

**Ten years ago:** Army Pfc. Lynndie England, shown in photographs smiling and pointing at naked Iraqi prisoners, was charged by the military with

assaulting the detainees and conspiring to mistreat them. (England was later convicted of conspiracy, mistreating detainees and committing an indecent act, and sentenced to 36 months; she served half that term.) Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld offered "my deepest apology" to abused Iraqi prisoners and warned that videos and photos yet to come could further inflame worldwide outrage.

**Five years ago:** A federal jury in Paducah, Ky., convicted a former soldier, Steven Dale Green, of raping and fatally shooting a 14-year-old girl after killing her parents and younger sister while he was serving in Iraq. (Green was sentenced to life without possibility of parole; he hanged himself in prison in February 2014.) Former Illinois police Sgt. Drew Peterson was indicted for murder in the death of his third wife, Kathleen Savio. (Peterson was convicted of murdering Savio, and was sentenced to 38 years in prison.) Mickey Carroll, one of the last surviving Munchkins from the 1939 film "The Wizard of Oz," died in Crestwood, Mo., at age 89.

**One year ago:** President Barack Obama and South Korea's new leader, Park Geun-hye met at the White House, where they projected a united front as they warned North Korea against further nuclear provocations. Twenty-four people were killed by a gas tanker-truck explosion on the outskirts of Mexico City. The Dow Jones industrial average closed above 15,000 for the first time, ending the day at 15,056.20, up 87.31 points. Movie special effects wizard Ray Harryhausen, 92, died in London.

**Today's Birthdays:** Former Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., is 82. Singer Jimmy Ruffin is 75. Rhythm-and-blues singer Thelma Houston is 71. Actress Robin Strasser is 69. Singer-songwriter Bill Danoff is 68. Rock musician Bill Kreutzmann (Grateful Dead) is 68. Rock musician Prairie Prince is 64. Movie writer-director Amy Heckerling is 62. Actor Michael E. Knight is 55. Rock musician Phil Campbell (Motorhead) is 53. Country musician Rick Schell is 51. Rock singer-musician Chris O'Connor (Primitive Radio Gods) is 49. Actress Traci Lords is 46. Singer Eagle-Eye Cherry is 43. Actor Breckin Meyer is 40. Rock musician Matt Helders (Arctic Monkeys) is 28. Actress-comedian Aidy Bryant (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 27. Actor Taylor Abrahams is 23.

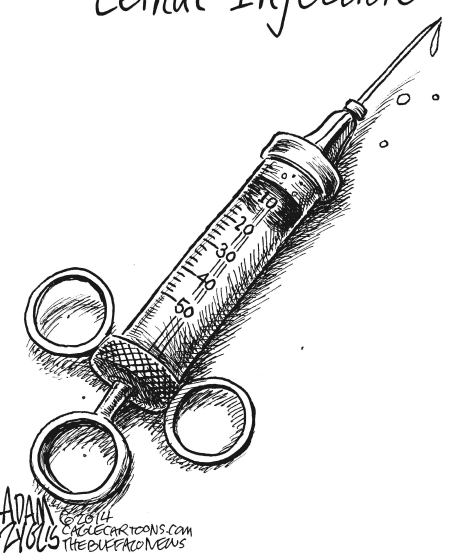
**Thought for Today:** "When an old man dies, a library burns down." — African proverb.

## FROM THE BIBLE

*Godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

## DEATH PENALTY..

Lethal Injection

Lethal Non-injection

## Inequality: Four Lies

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

Even though French economist Thomas Piketty has made an airtight case that we're heading toward levels of inequality not seen since the days of the 19th-century robber barons, right-wing conservatives haven't stopped lying about what's happening and what to do about it.

Herewith, the four biggest right-wing lies about inequality, followed by the truth.

• Lie No. 1: The rich and CEOs are America's job creators. So we dare not tax them.

The truth is, the middle class and poor are the job creators through their purchases of goods and services. If they don't have enough purchasing power because they're not paid enough, companies won't create more jobs and the economy won't grow.

We've endured the most anemic recovery on record because most Americans don't have enough money to get the economy out of first gear. The economy is barely growing and real wages continue to drop.

We keep having false dawns. An average of 200,000 jobs were created in the United States over the last three months, but huge numbers of Americans continue to drop out of the labor force.

• Lie No. 2: People are paid what they're worth in the market. So we shouldn't tamper with pay.

The facts contradict this. CEOs who got 30 times the pay of typical workers 40 years ago now get 300 times their pay not because they've done such a great job, but because they control their compensation committees and their stock options have ballooned.

Meanwhile, most American workers earn less today than they did 40 years ago, adjusted for inflation, not because they're working less hard now, but because they don't have strong unions bargaining for them.

More than a third of all workers in the private sector were unionized 40 years ago; now, fewer than 7 percent belong to a union.

• Lie No. 3: Anyone can make it in America with enough guts, gumption and intelligence. So

Robert  
REICH

we don't need to do anything for poor and lower-middle-class kids.

The truth is, we do less than nothing for poor and lower-middle-class kids. Their schools don't have enough teachers or staff, their textbooks are outdated, they lack science labs, their school buildings are falling apart.

We're the only rich nation to spend less educating poor kids than we do educating kids from wealthy families.

All told, 42 percent of children born to poor families will still be in poverty as adults — a higher percent than in any other advanced nation.

• Lie No. 4: Increasing the minimum wage will result in fewer jobs. So we shouldn't raise it.

In fact, studies show that increases in the minimum wage put more money in the pockets of people who will spend it — resulting in more jobs, and counter-acting any negative employment effects of an increase in the minimum.

Three of my colleagues here at the University of California at Berkeley — Arindrajit Dube, T. William Lester and Michael Reich — have compared adjacent counties and communities across the United States, some with higher minimum wages than others but similar in every other way.

They found no loss of jobs in those with the higher minimums.

The truth is, America's lurch toward widening inequality can be reversed. But doing so will require bold political steps.

At the least, the rich must pay higher taxes in order to pay for better-quality education for kids from poor and middle-class families. Labor unions must be strengthened, especially in lower-wage occupations, in order to give workers the bargaining power they need to get better pay. And the minimum wage must be raised.

Don't listen to the right-wing lies about inequality. Know the truth, and act on it.

*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.*

## Older People And New Numbers

BY LEWIS W. DIUGUID

© 2014, The Kansas City Star

Baby boomers need to start paying more attention to data about older people because as time passes more of them will be us.

More than 75 million Americans are baby boomers born from 1946 to 1964. Boomers born 1946 through 1949 this year will be age 65 and older.

For May, which President John F. Kennedy in 1963 set as Senior Citizen Month and President Jimmy Carter in 1980 designated as Older Americans Month, the U.S. Census Bureau gives an interesting look into the lives of older people in this country. The census reports that 4.3 million people age 65 and older in 2012 were full-time workers, up from 1.3 million in 1992. Older people are living longer, but they are working longer, too.

Older people now are a lot more educated than in the past with 82.6 percent of people age 65 and older in 2013 having completed high school or more and 25.3 percent earning a bachelor's degree or more. Older people also are well-rooted in their communities with 80.7 percent being homeowners as of the fourth quarter of 2013.

## YOUR LETTERS

## Animal Issues

Warren Peterson, Yankton

It is my understanding that Yankton has a city ordinance that requires both dogs and cats to be on a leash outside of the confines of their home unless in a fenced-in area. However, I have observed both types of animals running through my neighborhood without restriction. The cats go after birds that those of us feed and nurture, as well as get into trash containers and cause problems.

Numerous calls to the local police depart-

ment have done nothing. The animal control officer suggests that the homeowner is in charge of renting a live trap and capturing the cat and then turn it in.

It would seem to me a simple knock on the door of the pet owner's home with information regarding the ordinance and possibly a reprimand would do the trick. The department has been informed of where the cars are coming from, yet nothing has been done as the cats continue to prowl the neighborhood.

Does the animal control officer need to be reprimanded or replaced?

## PRESS &amp; DAKOTAN LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor and 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 us at [views@yankton.net](mailto:views@yankton.net).