

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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OPINION

Meyer's Amazing Spirit Will Endure

There's something at once quite important but utterly pointless in measuring the coaching career of Don Meyer in the mundane parameters of wins and losses.

Of course, on those terms, Meyer was, as ESPN analyst Buster Olney noted, "an absolute legend." He was the winningest coach in college basketball history with 923 victories.

But that pales in comparison to the triumph of his spirit, which left this world Sunday in Aberdeen after battling cancer. He was 69.

You probably know Meyer's story quite well by now. While coaching at Northern State University in Aberdeen, Meyer was driving a vehicle that was leading his players to a team retreat in September 2008 when he fell asleep at the wheel and drifted in front of an oncoming semi loaded with grain. The badly injured Meyer was taken to a hospital where doctors discovered the previously undiagnosed presence of carcinoid cancer, which is terminal; he was given two years to live. Meanwhile, Meyer's shattered left leg was amputated at the knee due to the accident. But less than two months later, Meyer was out of the hospital and back at work in a wheelchair, from which he coached the entire 2008-2009 season. It was during that season that he became the all-time winningest men's college basketball coach at any level.

Meyer retired following the 2010 season, but he never slowed down. He became a popular speaker, whether it was about the intricacies of basketball or about the fortunes of life. He spoke in Yankton just two months ago.

Meyer became an inspiration on a new level, but that leap shouldn't have been so surprising. As a coach, he was a mold of young athletes into responsible human beings; he stressed the importance of respecting yourself, respecting your teammates and respecting your opponents; as he saw it, how he and his players approached basketball reflected how they approached life. As more than a coach, he stressed and embodied the very same fundamentals, only to a much broader audience.

Meyer wore his faith like a warm coat on a winter day in Aberdeen. That was evident in his Yankton speech. In fact, he always said he looked at the misfortunes that befell him in 2008 not as a curse but as a blessing because it renewed his connection with his family and allowed him to connect and influence so many other people.

It's hard for his admirers — of which there are so many — to bid him farewell, but it's a painful parting they knew was coming. It's a moment that Meyer faced and embraced with the kind of dignity and courage we should all hope for ourselves. He was a pillar of strength, growing stronger, it seemed, as his body grew weaker. His spirit persevered to the last. A man like him will be dearly missed, but never, ever forgotten.

kmlh

ONLINE OPINION

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you believe in the theory of climate change and that man is causing it?
No 49%
Yes 46%
Not sure 5%
TOTAL VOTES CAST 389

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:

Who do you think will win South Dakota's Republican Senate primary?

To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, May 20, the 140th day of 2014. There are 225 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 20, 1939, regular trans-Atlantic mail service began as a Pan American Airways plane, the Yankee Clipper, took off from Port Washington, New York, bound for Marseille, France.

On this date: In 1712, the original version of Alexander Pope's satirical mock-heroic poem "The Rape of the Lock" was published anonymously in Lintot's Miscellany.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, which was intended to encourage settlements west of the Mississippi River by making federal land available for farming.

In 1902, the United States ended a three-year military presence in Cuba as the Republic of Cuba was established under its first elected president, Tomas Estrada Palma.

In 1914, the song "By the Beautiful Sea" by Harry Carroll and Harold R. Atteridge was published by Shapiro, Bernstein & Co. Inc., in New York.

In 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field in Long Island, New York, aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his historic solo flight to France.

In 1932, Amelia Earhart took off from Newfoundland to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. (Because of weather and equipment problems, Earhart set down in Northern Ireland instead of her intended destination, France.)

In 1942, during World War II, the Office of Civilian Defense was established.

In 1959, nearly 5,000 Japanese-Americans had their U.S. citizenship restored after renouncing it during World War II.

In 1961, a white mob arrested a busload of Freedom Riders in Montgomery, Alabama, prompting the federal government to send in U.S. marshals to restore order.

In 1969, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces captured Ap Bia Mountain, referred to as "Hamburger Hill" by the Americans, following one of the bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War.

In 1970, some 100,000 people demonstrated in New York's Wall Street district in support of U.S. policy in Vietnam and Cambodia.

In 1989, actress-comedian Gilda Radner died in Los Angeles at age 42.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush made a rare visit to Capitol Hill, where he sought to ease Republican lawmakers' concerns over the Iraq campaign. Iraqi police backed by American soldiers raided the home and offices of Ahmad Chalabi, a

prominent Iraqi politician once groomed as a possible replacement for Saddam Hussein.

Five years ago: In a rare, bipartisan defeat for President Barack Obama, the Senate voted overwhelmingly, 90-6, to keep the prison at Guantanamo Bay open for the foreseeable future and forbid the transfer of any detainees to facilities in the United States. A commission published a damning report on decades of rapes, humiliation and beatings at Catholic Church-run reform schools in Ireland. Suspended NFL star Michael Vick was released after 19 months in prison for running a dogfighting ring to begin two months' home confinement. An Indonesian C-130 Hercules military plane carrying troops and their families crashed in East Java province, killing 99 people. Kris Allen won the eighth season of "American Idol," defeating fellow finalist Adam Lambert.

One year ago: An EF5 tornado struck Moore, Oklahoma, killing at least 24 people and flattening 1,100 homes. Former general Thein Sein became the first president of Myanmar in 47 years to visit the White House, where President Barack Obama said he appreciated the Asian leader's efforts to lead the country in "a long and sometimes difficult" path toward democracy. Ray Manzarek, 74, a founding member of the 1960s rock group the Doors, died in Rosenheim, Germany.

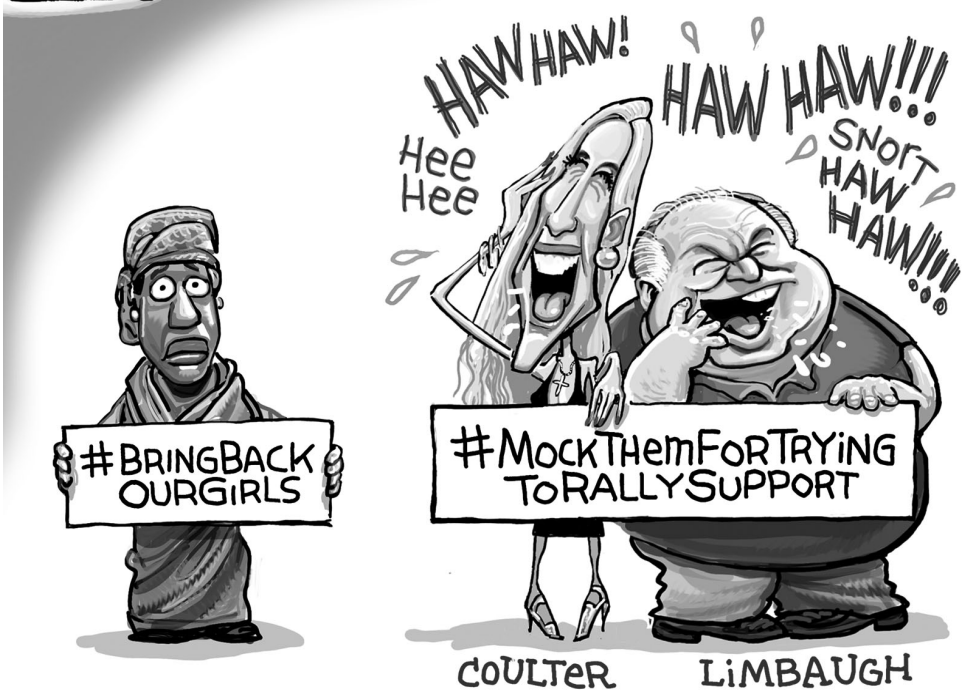
Today's Birthdays: Actor-author James McEachin is 84. Actor Anthony Zerbe is 78. Actor David Proval is 72. Singer Joe Cocker is 70. Singer-actress Cher is 68. Actor-comedian Dave Thomas is 65. Rock musician Warren Cann is 62. Former New York Gov. David Paterson is 60. Actor Dean Butler is 58. TV-radio personality Ron Reagan is 56. Rock musician Jane Wiedlin (The Go-Go's) is 56. Actor Bronson Pinchot is 55. Singer Susan Cowsill is 55. Actor John Billingsley is 54. Actor Tony Goldwyn is 54. Singer Nick Heyward is 53. TV personality Ted Allen is 49. Actress Mindy Cohn is 48. Rock musician Tom Gorman (Belly) is 48. Actress Gina Ravera is 48. Actor Timothy Olyphant is 46. Rapper Busta Rhymes is 42. Actress Daya Vaidya is 41. Rock musician Ryan Martinie is 39. Actor Matt Czuchy is 37. Actress Angela Goethals is 37. Actress-singer Natari Naughton is 30.

Thought for Today: "I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next." — Gilda Radner (1946-1989).

FROM THE BIBLE

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

STAR TRIBUNE
S&K



A Compassion Gap?

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

A hypothetical scenario:

Your little boy lies in a hospital bed, stricken by a mysterious, potentially fatal disease. You are frightened and in despair.

But your community rallies around you. Soon, the whole town is talking about your ordeal. Neighbors you've never spoken to send cards. Co-workers you've never socialized with send encouraging text messages.

None of it changes the objective fact of your son's condition, doesn't kill a virus, lessen a fever or ease his pain. All it does is tell you that you and your child are being thought of, that you are not alone.

So: So is that "pathetic"?

Rush Limbaugh would say it was.

The National Review would find it "simple-minded." George F. Will would regard it as "an exercise in self-esteem."

Or at least, that is what they have said about a roughly analogous situation.

You probably know the story. A terrorist group in Nigeria kidnaps nearly 300 schoolgirls. The reason is found in the abhorrent ideology from which it derives its name: Boko Haram — Western Education Is Forbidden. The families of the girls turn to their government for help and it shrugs. The story is likewise ignored in America by "news" media too busy handicapping the chances of Hillary Clinton's grandchild in the 2014 midterms to bother with anything so picayune as a mass kidnapping.

So supporters take to Twitter with a hashtag: #BringBackOurGirls. It spreads like fire. Michelle Obama, Ellen DeGeneres, Malala Yousafzai, Jesse Jackson, Amy Poehler and millions of lesser-known names all join the campaign.

Does it "solve" the problem? Of course not. Who would be so naive as to think it would? Is it the only thing we should be doing in response? Again, no.

But does the international attention spur Nigeria's lackadaisical government to take the abduction more seriously and to accept international help — including from the United States — it has previously spurned? Yes. Does the hashtag



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campaign force media to pay attention to a tragedy that was being ignored? Again, yes. Moreover, it delivers to the parents of these girls the same simple, sustaining message as the cards and texts in the hypothetical above: We are with you.

It's hard to see how anyone — anyone — could regard that as a bad thing. But at least some political conservatives do. As noted, Limbaugh, Will and the *National Review* have all pronounced themselves unimpressed. Donald Trump, Ann Coulter and Fox's Steve Doocy have also made attempts at ridicule.

There is something more than usually saddening about that.

It is a truth curdling into cliché that American politics is riven by a partisan gap, left wing and right wing estranged from each other like the husband and wife in some long, bad marriage. But in its behavior here, the right does not so

much seem estranged from a competing ideology as from its own humanity.

How is this a thing? How is an expression of caring, concern and outrage deemed worthy of mockery and condemnation? Are these people truly that corroded with cynicism and bile? Is their criticism now just a tic, a reflex bypassing thought? Is every damn thing to be reduced to politics?

Apparently, yes.

Once upon a time, we put politics to the side when tragedy came. Nowadays, that's something we seem less and less able — or willing — to do. That's a tragedy in itself.

Nearly 300 innocent girls were taken by madmen. Celebrities, political figures and everyday people wrote the social media equivalent of a petition to express their concern. That simple gesture begat a controversy — and gave us a sobering new measurement of that partisan gap.

Apparently, it's so wide even compassion cannot get across.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for The Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miami-herald.com.

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Point Of View

A Day Of Remembrance

BY HELEN GOTTSLEBEN

Past National Vice President, American Legion Auxiliary

Monday, May 26, has been designated as Memorial Day. It was meant to be a day of remembrance.

I remember a person I knew years ago, when I was a volunteer in a local nursing home. He was a World War II veteran. I knew Irving for one short year, and perhaps even then I did not know him well. But I do know this. He was a man who loved God, was considerate and kind to his fellow man and was willing to face each new day with courage and a smile, despite his illness and the loss of a leg.

I first met Irving during my weekly visits to the local manor. He was sitting in his wheelchair looking out the window where he had a clear view of the flag flying briskly in the chilly fall morning and watching the golden leaves swirling along as gusts of wind tugged them from the trees. He loved to look out the window and watch the seasons pass. There wasn't much else he could do. He had few, if any visitors from the outside world. He did not need to tell me but by looking in his eyes I knew how much he appreciated my visits. "Good morning Irving, how are you today?" What a needless question! I knew he was suffering and wracked with pain. But he would smile and say, "How is it in the world today?" I would tell him bits of news that I knew might be of interest to him.

As the Christmas season came around, I wanted to give him a little gift. I discovered he liked Copenhagen snuff. After wrapping three cans in bright paper, I topped it off with a big red bow. There were other friends to visit that morning and Irving was last on my list. I wanted it that way so I could spend a little more time with him.

YOUR LETTERS

Remember Them

Orval Schneider, Yankton

World War II Veteran, 41st Infantry Division

I want to thank Doug Haar, Dave Hosmer and the Yankton High School for hosting the World War II veterans.

It was evident a lot of time and effort has and will go into this incredible project. I appreciated the high school students recognizing

He looked at the package I handed him and said, "Ain't that pretty, ain't that pretty," and tears clouded his blue eyes. Irving and I both cried a little that morning. You would think I had given him a priceless jewel, his appreciation was so great and genuine.

And so the days passed. I knew he was growing weaker, but still with that same smile and never a complaint. Each week we had our little visit, and then it was spring, and the trees were budding. He looked for the first robin to pass his window, and he watched his beloved flag being raised each morning. How he loved the flag.

On the first of May, I fixed a little basket for him and went gaily on my way to the Manor, only to discover he had been taken to the hospital the day before. I drove to the hospital and was told I could only see him for a few minutes. Entering the room, I found him in an oxygen tent. He was very ill. I told him it was May Day, and I showed him the basket. He could not speak but his blue, blue eyes looked at me and seemed to say "Ain't that pretty." He recognized me and he knew I cared. Irving died the next day.

I always knew that some day I would have to write about Irving. To me, he represents thousands of lonely people in our country that ask little for themselves but have given so much for us. Can you seek out the "Irving" in your community? Will you tell them "how it is in the world today"? Will you carry the message of love to them? If so, then I would feel my encounter with Irving might represent a chain reaction from me to you to the lonely.

People will gather on Memorial Day 2014. Graves will be decorated, there will be some speeches and the band will play and ... would it be possible for all of us to pause a moment and say a prayer for the living, lonely people everywhere when you hear "The Star Spangled Banner"?

the WWII veterans after all these years.

The students were polite, very accommodating and respectful of our service. They were eager to visit with us and it meant a lot that they were so interested in veterans.

The entire program made me feel veterans were appreciated for their service. Many gave their lives and didn't come home. It is important they be remembered.

Thank you!

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." — **THE FIRST AMENDMENT to the U.S. Constitution**

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