

The Press & Dakotan

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We Say

On And On



THUMBS DOWN to the prospect of prolonged drought in the Missouri River basin. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along with South Dakota state climatologist Dennis Todey, provided an update on river levels and the forecast for precipitation. The long-term prospects call for continued drought, making river management even more of a balancing act. Hopefully, the region received prolonged moisture to pull the basin out of its current condition.

Moms!



THUMBS UP to Lynn Starzl and Elizabeth (Starzl) Koerner of Yankton, who are one of the few — and possibly only — mother-daughter combination to qualify for the American Mothers national competition in the same year. Starzl won for Mother of the Year, while Koerner won for Young Mother of the Year. They were nominated by Joyce Stevens of rural Crofton, Neb., the 2012 Nebraska Mother of the Year and a member of the American Mothers national board. The Yankton women will be honored with an open house from 2-4 p.m. Sunday — Mother's Day — with a 3 p.m. program, at the Lewis & Clark Resort and Lodge west of Yankton. For good measure, the program will feature music by Jan Schieferl of rural Fordyce, Neb. — the 2013 Nebraska Mother of the Year.

Moving On



THUMBS UP to Mount Marty College athletic trainer Andy Holzwarth, who is starting a new career as he enters the physician assistant program at the University of South Dakota. Holzwarth has served as MMC's only trainer and an instructor during the last 13 years, working with hundreds (if not thousands) of athletes. In addition, he has worked to introduce a number of strength conditioning and other programs at the college. The MMC sports sidelines won't be the same without him.

Good Showing



THUMBS UP to the good turnout seen Wednesday at the public meeting concerning the possible establishment of a rail authority in Yankton County. The meeting, conducted by the County Commission, heard testimony and solicited input about such a venture. This is an issue that has a direct bearing not only on the county but also the City of Yankton (which would be a partner in the authority) and the counties, particularly to the west, who would feel the economic impact of this venture. The strong turnout speaks well of the interest in the issue.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the PRESS & DAKOTAN. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.

ONLINE OPINION

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Would you support the construction of a wind farm within sight of where you live?
No.....50%
Yes.....46%
Not sure.....4%
TOTAL VOTES CAST.....418

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:

Do you think the Boston Marathon bomber should get the death penalty? 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, May 8, the 128th day of 2015. There are 237 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 8, 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced on radio that Nazi Germany's forces had surrendered, and that "the flags of freedom fly all over Europe."

On this date: In 1541, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto reached the Mississippi River.

In 1784, Antoine Lavoisier, the father of modern chemistry, was executed on the guillotine during France's Reign of Terror.

In 1884, the 33rd president of the United States, Harry S. Truman, was born in Lamar, Missouri.

In 1915, Regret became the first filly to win the Kentucky Derby.

In 1921, Sweden's Parliament voted to abolish the death penalty.

In 1945, the Sefid Massacre began in Algeria as French authorities clashed with protesters celebrating the surrender of Nazi Germany and calling for freedom from colonial rule; tens of thousands of Algerians are believed to have died in weeks of violence.

In 1958, Vice President Richard Nixon was shoved, stoned, booed and spat upon by anti-American protesters in Lima, Peru.

In 1962, the musical comedy "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" opened on Broadway.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon announced that he had ordered the mining of Haiphong Harbor during the Vietnam War.

In 1973, militant American Indians who'd held the South Dakota hamlet of Wounded Knee for ten weeks surrendered.

In 1984, the Soviet Union announced it would boycott the upcoming Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

In 1999, The Citadel, South Carolina's formerly all-male military school, graduated its first female cadet, Nancy Ruth Mace. British actor Sir Dirk Bogarde died in London at age 78.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin, meeting in Moscow, went out of their way to take a unified stand on Middle East peace and terrorism after sharp words in recent days about democratic backsliding and post-war Soviet domination. Steve Nash edged Shaquille O'Neal by 34 points to win the

NBA's most valuable player award. Lloyd Cutler, White House counsel to Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton and adviser to presidents of both parties, died at his Washington home at age 87.

Five years ago: Republican Sen. Bob Bennett of Utah, targeted by tea party activists and other groups, lost his bid to serve a fourth term after failing to advance past the GOP state convention in Salt Lake City. A coal mine in western Siberia was rocked by the first of two methane explosions that claimed the lives of 90 miners. Andor Lilienthal, 99, the last surviving member of the 27 original grandmasters of chess players, died in Budapest. Actress Betty White hosted NBC's "Saturday Night Live" as the result of a Facebook campaign.

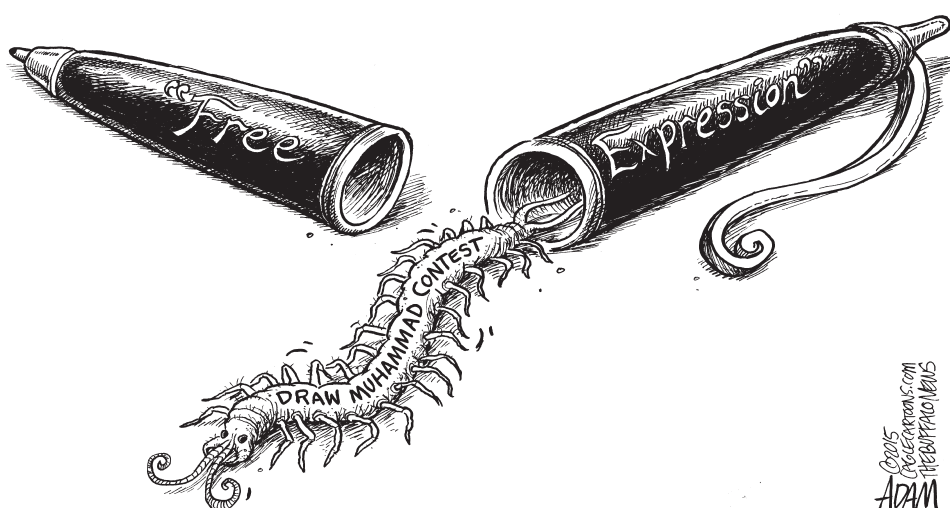
One year ago: Syrian rebels leveled a historic hotel being used as an army base in the northern city of Aleppo by detonating bomb-packed tunnels beneath it, killing a still-undetermined number of soldiers. House Republicans jumped into a new election-season investigation of the deadly Benghazi assault, naming majority members of a special House committee. Veteran actress, director and producer Nancy Malone, 79, died in Duarte, California.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian Don Rickles is 89. Naturalist Sir David Attenborough is 89. Singer Toni Tennille is 75. Actor James Mitchum is 74. Country singer Jack Blanchard is 73. Jazz musician Keith Jarrett is 70. Actor Mark Blankfield is 67. Singer Philip Bailey (Earth, Wind and Fire) is 64. Rock musician Chris Frantz (Talking Heads) is 64. Rockabilly singer Billy Burnette is 62. Rock musician Alex Van Halen is 62. Actor David Keith is 61. Actor Stephen Furst is 61. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is 54. Actress Melissa Gilbert is 51. Rock musician Dave Rowntree (Blur) is 51. Country musician Del Gray is 47. Rock singer Darren Hayes is 43. Singer Enrique Iglesias is 40. Blues singer-musician Joe Bonamassa is 38. Actor Matt Davis is 37. Singer Ana Maria Lombo (Eden's Crush) is 37. Actor Domhnall Gleeson is 32. Actress Julia Whelan is 31.

Thought for Today: "A man who works with his hands is a laborer; a man who works with his hands and his brain is a craftsman; but a man who works with his hands and his brain and his heart is an artist!" — Louis Nizer, American lawyer (1902-1994).

FROM THE BIBLE

If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go to hell. Matthew 5:30. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



PROTECTED...

ADAM ZIGLIS

A Cartoonish 'War'

BY KELLY HERTZ

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There's simply no way to see the planned attack by two gunmen on an event in Texas, at which cartoon drawings of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad were featured in a contest, as anything other than reprehensible and terroristic.

But there's also really no way to view the outcome of Sunday's incident as a shining triumph for our cherished freedom of speech.

As of this writing, law enforcement officials say Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi of Phoenix were killed by police Sunday when they allegedly began firing weapons outside of the aforementioned cartoon contest in the Dallas suburb of Garland, Texas. Since displaying depictions of Muhammad is considered offensive to Muslims, there were fears and even threats of violence — hence the beefed-up security for the well-publicized gathering. And Sunday, the threat came to pass, although it was stopped before greater bloodshed might have occurred.

There is no excuse for this kind of action. There can be no forgiveness.

But that probably applies both ways here.

The so-called First Annual Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest was sponsored by an anti-Islamic group called the American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI) and featured an appearance by Geert Wilders, an outspoken and controversial anti-Islamic Dutch lawmaker. Contest organizer Pamela Geller said the event sought images that featured "criticism of and mockery of Muhammad and the belief system and ideology that underlies global jihad terrorism." Thus, the contest's real aim was not to showcase the creative talents of artists; it was intended to insult and enrage. It was intended to provoke.

And to be sure, the violent reactions of the two militarized men played to every dark, squirming suspicion that some people harbor toward most (if not all) Muslims.

However, AFDI's taunting event also lived up to some familiar islamophobic stereotypes that are frustrating, often cartoonish (fittingly so, in this case) and aggravating even to non-Muslims. It springs from the same mentality that, for instance, fuels legislative efforts in some states to forbid the establishment of Sharia law, as if it was ever a threat to trump the Constitution. It's an attitude that compelled one state lawmaker in Texas to order her staff to demand that Muslim visitors declare allegiance to America, according



Kelly HERTZ

to The Associated Press. And it also motivated some souls to hold a cartoon contest that they KNEW was going to insult an entire religion.

The contest organizers naturally embraced their First Amendment right of free speech as justification for their cartoon cause. On her blog, Geller responded to Sunday's incident by noting, "The freedom of speech is under violent assault here in our nation. The question now before (us) is — will we stand and defend it, or bow to violence, thuggery and savagery?"

To be sure, Geller and her ilk do have such freedom of expression. It's a staple of our lives as Americans.

But it also bears remembering that every freedom carries a measure of responsibility with it.

The First Amendment guarantee of free speech is an extraordinary means to an end, but not an end in itself. It's one thing to have such freedom, but what you do with it is where the rubber really hits the road. Thus, the right to free expression does not give you the right to scream "Fire!" in a crowded theater; it does not give you the right to libel or slander someone. In fact, the right of free speech, beyond its many blessings, empowers you to inflict cruel pain and incite anger unless you're quite judicious in its use. To use the freedom recklessly is, arguably, more of a threat to its integrity than anything else.

Freedom demands that you think and exercise it wisely. But I suspect that thinking, at least along these prudent terms, wasn't part of this contest's mission statement. The denigrating and inciting nature of the event, together with the fortified security, clearly indicates what the organizers were all about and what they really wanted to do. And they got it.

This cartoon contest, though legal, was certainly irresponsible, but that in no way justifies the terrible reaction that resulted. However, that violence in no way validates the motivations for deliberately courting such mayhem in the first place, not to mention antagonizing many other Muslims in the Dallas metro area — and well beyond — who felt their religious beliefs were being insulted and assaulted.

"This is war," Geller declared on her blog after Sunday's incident.

But in this particular episode, in metaphorical terms, who really fired the first shot?

Follow @kelly_hertz on Twitter.

Kathleen Parker

Matters Of Racial Perception

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — Comments about recent events in Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray provide a glimpse at perhaps one of our greatest challenges — perception.

In this case, as in too many others involving police, perception seems to be black and white.

"I think that if you look at what's happened over the course of the last year, you just got to scratch your head," said House Speaker John Boehner on NBC's "Meet the Press," referring to the rash of fatal incidents involving police officers and African-American males.

"I heard your call for 'no justice, no peace,'" said Baltimore City State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby to demonstrators in her city and around the country, as she announced the charges. To the youth of Baltimore, she declared, "Our time is now!" and urged peaceful demonstration.

Both comments made headlines. And both, though well intentioned, carried subliminal messages freighted with racial (not racist) undertones.

Boehner's overly cautious remark was as starkly white as his OxiClean-ed, hand-pressed shirts. A man more accustomed to golf courses and marble hallways than to gritty urban streets, he was plainly trying to acknowledge that we have a police and race problem in America. But he sounded like he'd just landed on the planet. *Yes, quite head-scratching, all this police business.*

Mosby's remarks, jubilantly received by the Baltimore crowd, provoked high dudgeon elsewhere. Some of the words used to describe her performance have included "showboating," "demagoguing" and "grandstanding."

To some ears, Mosby sounded as though the cops' convictions were a *fait accompli*. That she found the evidence convincing enough to justify the charges may ultimately also justify her bravura. Let's do keep in mind that Gray's offense was making eye contact with an officer and running away.

Gray's voice box was crushed and his spine all but severed, according to his family. Anyone who watched the video could see that Gray was in terrible pain as he was led to the police van, where he was shackled and his pleas for help apparently ignored.

That his life ended in pain and horror is not in dispute. But no less a legal luminary than Alan

Dershowitz has taken issue with the charges, saying, "There's no plausible, hypothetical, conceivable case for murder under the facts as we now know them."

Charges brought against the six officers included one count of second-degree murder, four counts of involuntary manslaughter, assault and misconduct in office.

In other words, Mosby threw everything she could against the six officers. Many have asked: For justice? Or to quell the passions of the streets? Perhaps both. Mosby surely calculated that announcing the charges as she did — with a microphone in a public place — would have a dramatic effect. (She declined to be interviewed for this column.)

Mosby also was speaking as a member of her community, long plagued with a history of police brutality, including last year's fatal beating of Tyrone West. The medical examiner's report concluded that West died of a prior heart condition that was exacerbated by dehydration, the July heat and his police encounter.

No charges were leveled against the police in that case. Thus, from the perspective of many among Baltimore's protesters, the current charges are long overdue. Even so, one does worry that the six officers are paying not only for their role in Gray's death, to whatever degree this is determined, but also for the cumulative sins of others.

To the officers, the cheering and horn-honking following Mosby's words must have sounded like the Colosseum mob's cry for blood. To an older generation of Americans, they were reminiscent of the reaction 20 years ago when a mostly black jury found O.J. Simpson not guilty of murdering his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman.

Whites: He totally did it.

Blacks: It's our turn, in so many words.

This past week, whites across America spoke softly about the Freddie Gray case: "Thank God three of the cops were black."

Perception.

President Obama, speaking after Mosby leveled her charges, called for truth. How, indeed, do we get to it? In a diverse nation, we'll never all see things exactly the same way, nor would we want to, but we might at least strive to recognize our own biases and judge our own perceptions as harshly as we do others'.

Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleen-parker@washpost.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Amazing Artistry

Dores M. Allan, Yankton

There just aren't words to describe the All-School Visual Art Exhibit that was held Friday, May 1, and Saturday, May 2, at the Yankton

Middle School Gym.

I am in awe at the displays so artistically arranged and presented as a masterful exhibit.

Thank you students and faculty for giving us a view of various art techniques and media. We are proud of your accomplishments.