

# **A Line Of Secession**

Kelly

HERTZ

#### **BY KELLY HERTZ** kelly.hertz@yankton.net

4A

"What happened to those people?"

That question was put to me last week when the surprisingly current-events topic of secession came up. Following President Obama's re-election, thousands of people began visiting the White House's "We the People" website to sign petitions asking to secede from the union -Obama's win apparently being the last straw

for them and, as they see it, for "their" America. This exit strategy is gaining particular popularity in Texas, where, as of Tuesday, 116,000

people had signed the petition to allow the state to "peacefully withdraw from the United States of America and create its own NEW (all caps in the petition) government." People from each state have signed similarly-worded petitions, including at least 6,400 signers for a South Dakota petition and more than 7,100 for a Nebraska petition. (However, a very brief perusal suggests that a number of the South Dakota signers aren't from the state at all.)

I might have forgotten this whole thing, but I also received a phone call the other day from someone wondering where he could go to sign a petition of secession.

That's when I decided to draw a line.

I have a pretty clear idea as to the kind of people who are seriously (and some are reportedly quite serious) looking to secede from our country. (Others probably aren't so serious, but they ARE tripping down this path.)

These are the same people who otherwise fire-breathe patriotism in their political conversations. They probably coined the term "America, love it or leave it!" back in the turbulent 1960s. These people have for years browbeaten others about what's right and wrong with America and some of its people. They're "proud to be an American(s)," as a song declares. Except, apparently, when they aren't.

These are the same people who, if Mitt Romney had won the election and some upset Obama supporters talked of secession, would be screaming "Traitor!" and "Treason!" as loudly as their all-American lungs would permit.

I've endured such people ever since I was old enough to vote, which was back in the great Ronald Reagan tidal wave of 1980. Because I wasn't a conservative or a Republican, I felt the sting of ridicule from individuals ranging from local souls to national pundits - who saw no value in anything to the left of their views and who apparently believed you were either with them or against America. They damned "liberals" so often and so effectively that the term can no longer be used by the crowd that now calls themselves "progressives." This animus has intensified in recent years, as if these people are on a crusade to purge our holy land of an un-Amerimy experience with it: I've usually been too liberal for some conservatives, and they've let me know it; by contrast, I've occasionally been too conservative for some liberals, but they always seemed fairly understanding about it.)

Now, some of THESE people want to secede? After all the years of jingoism, antagonism, flag-waving and chestthumping, THEY want out?

My goodness, what HAS happened to them? Rep. Ron Paul of Texas tried to explain it, pointing

out that secession is "a deeply American principle." This may be true, but it's also com-

pletely oxymoronic here. I know who these people are, but let me tell vou who they aren't.

Generally, they aren't most of the Republicans or conservatives I know. (I do, however, leave open the possibility that some have pursued this secessionist quest in a heat-of-themoment fit of anger.) Many of these

acquaintances are extremely unhappy with the election, and they will never surrender on their principles. That's fair enough; we've all been there. But I cannot imagine any of them wanting to not be an American anymore. Our country isn't perfect, but fighting to make it better is part of who we all are because we love this nation. That describes most of the conservatives (and non-conservatives) I know.

These secessionists also aren't realists. It was noted by a Washington journalist last week that some of the states with the highest number of petition signers also get the most from the federal government in terms of bucks. So, who will fund them and defend them? Who will help them fix their roads and educate their kids? Who will be there when disaster strikes and a helping hand is needed?

Who exactly *are* these people? I suspect the answer lies in an editorial this week in the *Fort Worth Star*-Telegram, which surveyed the situation deep in the heart of Texas and concluded, "The secession idea is for sore losers.

Nevertheless, this silliness does let me draw that aforementioned line.

We may wonder what's happened to these people who are now threatening to pick up their toys and secede, but they aren't going anywhere — and they'll again be criticizing, ridiculing and demanding their (sic.) country back soon enough. However, petitioning to opt out of America is a shallow and pouty gesture that has rendered these people useless to me. The line has been drawn, and they've helped draw it. They will still rant about the course of our republic and those who differ from their views. But after this dubious stunt, they're no longer qualified to complain.



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# **OPINION** | WE SAY

# Standing Up



THUMBS UP to Yankton's Webster Elementary School for ramping up its anti-bullying efforts with a high-energy campaign that kicked off Tuesday at the school. The "Stand Up" campaign empowers the kids to take control when they are subjected to bullying, as well as cultivate empathy that could diffuse bullying behavior from happening in the first place. The program looks like a good one for everyone involved. Tuesday's program was

thought-provoking, to say the least. (And the video the school produced to go with the program is great.) Congrats for taking the initiative!

# The Dinner Bell



THUMBS UP to the great turnout Wednesday for a great event: the annual Yankton Community Feast, held at Calvary Baptist Church. Thousands of people turned out for this popular — and delicious event. The key ingredient to the event's successful recipe is the small army of volunteers who turn out to serve food, bus tables, wash dishes, make deliveries to shut-ins and generally make the entire event come off without a hitch. They deserve a

round of applause for their efforts in making this event a success.

# Changing Forecast?



THUMBS UP to a slightly more hopeful forecast for moisture this winter, courtesy of AccuWeather.com. In its updated winter forecast released Monday, the online weather service now sees several more clipper systems rolling across the Northern Plains, brinning a better chance of snowfall to the region. "Below-normal snowfall was previously forecast for eastern portions of the Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and northern Illinois," the

service said in a press release. "AccuWeather meteorologists now expect near-normal snow in this zone due to more frequent clippers." A clipper is a fast-moving system that rolls out of Alberta and dashes across the Midwest. They usually don't carry as much moisture as big winter storms, and can be a bit colder. But several clippers could add up to some needed moisture for the region. While it won't be enough to undo our drought problems, it will help somewhat until the spring rains (hopefully) arrive.

# Big, Bigger ...



Maryland and Rutgers? Really? THUMBS DOWN to the latest reshuffling in college conferences, which this week saw the University of Maryland and Rutgers bolt the Atlantic Coast and Big East conference, respectively, and head to the Big 10, to join up with the likes of Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota. Óbviously, money and conference strength are big factors in these moves, and it has in recent years created some odd alignments. (San Diego

State moving to the Big East?) Gone is the regional logic of such affiliations. And of course, tradition was scrapped a long, long time ago. Well, Husker fans, get ready to add Terrapins and Scarlet Knights to your 14team Big 10 family. (No, it doesn't add up, which completely figures in this current age of musical conferences.)

# OUR LETTER POLICY

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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 PRES

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can leftist, socialist pestilence. (This attitude can certainly run both ways, but here's

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly\_hertz

# **Point Of View** The Minimum-Wage Insanity?

### **BY MICHAEL FREEMAN**

Yankton

Albert Einstein is credited with the phrase "Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results."

What if you do something over, and over again and expect different results? Is, over, to the 19th power, insanity? Maybe.

That is what has happened with the arguments on why the minimum wage should always be increased. Honestly, I don't think that most of the people that propose such ideas are literally insane. They just do not have an understanding of what a true free-market society is and are bringing up the idea based on emotion, not logic, not sound economics, or history.

Those that believe increasing the minimum wage is good and a necessity make several arguments. I will only hit on the one brought up by William Kerr in his column (Press & Dakotan, Nov. 1) and prove that a minimum wage, no matter how large, has and will never do this - in turn, it will make the premise for Mr. Kerr's column invalid.

Argument: It will help increase buying power. (This in turn will help the feds with their budgeting debacle)

Mr. Kerr stated in his letter that a minimum wage increase would be "received by the working people, who haven't had a rise in buying power since 1968." So why has the minimum wage been raised 19 times and buying power has actually lost ground?

If you make an employer raise wages before the employee market is ready, several things will happen. The employers that are selling goods and services are needing to pay those higher wages along with the increase in the businesses share of FICA tax (which is 1/2), Medicare tax

(which is 1/2), and Unemployment taxes (which by the way DOES NOT directly come out of the employees' bottom line, it comes out of the employers' bottom line). In order to stay in business and hire employees, the employer usually does the most common thing: increase the costs of goods and services sold, to offset the rise in costs of having employees and to keep all the employees that they have hired.

The drawback is that, if the market does not take kindly to the increase in goods

and services, the employer will have to make one of several other decisions:

• They can cut back on the costs of goods and services and let go of one or more employees (increase in unemployment);

• They can cut back hours (decreases the wages that are received by the employees);

• They can close up shop and say the cost of being in business is too much and retire (then you have a whole group of employees are unemployed).

If the market is OK with the increase in cost of goods and services sold, the buyers will also be looking to have THEIR wages increased, which means that wherever they work, that place will also have to increase in price of goods and services, and the cycle eventually comes back around to those that have not had an increase in buying power because now the goods and services that they purchased before have gone up in price, which just negated the reason to increase their wages in the first place, which was to increase in buying power.

Is the proposal of raising the minimum wage insanity? Maybe. Invalid? Definitely.

# YOUR LETTERS

# Criminal Coddling

### Michael Welch, Yankton

This is a response to the verbal coddling article on the behalf of the convicted felon Matthew Eugene Thompson (Press & Dakotan, Nov. 17).

He was convicted of stealing more than 30 batteries as well as gas thefts. "During the hearing Friday, Thompson told the court, 'I just feel really bad about what I did.

It was at this point I gagged and about threw up. His defense attorney, Luci Youngberg, said that when she first met her client, he was immature and in denial. Then the nausea continued, "According to Youngberg, Thompson's father died when he was young and his mother was rarely around." I nearly need to seek medical attention for the bleeding heart. I had almost stifled my gag reflex and then read, "While sentencing Thompson, (Judge) Eng acknowledged that Thompson had a difficult childhood" - by this time I was sobbing so hard

### I was gasping for air.

While some feel sorry for this bathtub soap ring, I do not. One of the batteries he stole was mine; it cost \$109 to replace. I had to WORK to pay for it, as did the rest of the victims. The article also said the amount of restitution is yet to be determined. It has already been determined: Whatever he took, he needs to pay restitution.

I'll give you real perspective on how 21-year-olds should act, By the time my daughter was 21, she was working at Wells Fargo nearly full time and was making the Dean's list at USD. My son had already completed two full combat tours in the Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan and flew rescue missions into Bangladesh. The bad part is that my kids were not coddled and now pay for the wee little boy who stole.

I am not sure what is worse, the crook, the misguided affection of the attorney or the judge who wonders why they are recidivists.

In the military rule number one is the universal rule: "The Stupid shall be punished."

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event.

Bucharest, Romania, where he vowed to

defend hard-won freedoms behind the for-

mer Iron Curtain. Miss World organizers

moved the beauty pageant from Abuja,

Nigeria, to London after some 100 people

died in violence triggered by a Nigerian

newspaper's suggestion that the Islamic prophet Muhammad would have liked the

other Arab nations grudgingly agreed to at-tend an upcoming U.S.-sponsored Mideast

peace conference, despite failing to get

any guarantee of Israeli concessions.

Lebanon's President Emile Lahoud left of-

fice without a successor after announcing

he was handing over security powers to the

army. A Canadian cruise ship, the MS Ex-

plorer, struck submerged ice off Antarctica and began taking on water, but all 154 pas-

sengers and crew took to lifeboats and

were plucked to safety by a passing cruise

ship. One year ago: Yemen's authoritarian President Ali Abdullah Saleh agreed to

step down amid a fierce uprising to oust

him after 33 years in power. Today's Birthdays: Former Labor Sec-retary William E. Brock is 82. Actress El-

marie Wendel is 80. Actor Franco Nero is

71. Actress Susan Anspach is 70. Screen-

writer Joe Eszterhas is 68. Actor-comedy

writer Bruce Vilanch is 65. Sen. Chuck

Schumer, D-N.Y., is 62. Singer Bruce

Hornsby is 58. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La.,

is 57. Actor Maxwell Caulfield is 53. Actor

John Henton is 52. TV personality Robin

Roberts ("Good Morning America") is 52.

Rock singer-musician Ken Block (Sister

Hazel) is 46. Rock musician Charlie Grover

is 46. Actress Salli Richardson-Whitfield is

45. Actor Oded Fehr is 42. Rapper-actor

Kurupt (Tha Dogg Pound) is 40. Actor Page Kennedy is 36. Actress Kelly Brook

is 33. Actor Lucas Grabeel is 28. Actress-

singer Miley Cyrus is 20. Actor Austin Ma-

so I think regretting is a useless occupa-

tion. You help no one with it. But you can't

live without illusions even if you must fight

for them, such as 'love conquers all.' It isn't

true, but I would like it to be." - Marlene

Thought for Today: "I'm a realist and

Five years ago: Saudi Arabia and

# TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press Γoḋay is Friday, Nov. 23, the 328th day

of 2012. There are 38 days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On Nov. 1942, during World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure establishing the U.S. Women's Coast Guard Reserve, or SPARS (an abbreviation of the U.S. Coast Guard motto "Sem-

per Paratus" — "Always Ready"). On this date: In 1765, Frederick County, Md. became the first colonial entity to repudiate the British Stamp Act.

In 1804, the 14th president of the United States, Franklin Pierce, was born in Hillsboro, N.H.

In 1887, actor Boris Karloff was born William Henry Pratt in London.

In 1903, Enrico Caruso made his American debut at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, appearing in "Rigoletto.'

In 1910, American-born physician Hawley Harvey Crippen was hanged at Pentonville Prison in London for murdering his wife, Cora. (Crippen's mistress, Ethel Le Neve, was acquitted in a separate trial of being an accessory.)

In 1936, Life, the photojournalism magazine created by Henry R. Luce, was first published.

In 1943, during World War II, U.S. forces seized control of Tarawa and Makin atolls from the Japanese.

In 1959, the musical "Fiorello!." starring Tom Bosley as legendary New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, opened on Broadway.

In 1971, the People's Republic of China was seated in the U.N. Security Council. In 1980, some 2,600 people were killed

by a series of earthquakes that devastated southern Italy.

In 1992, in Germany, three Turks were killed when rightist militants firebombed their homes in Moelln; in Berlin, hundreds of demonstrators protested in solidarity with foreigners. Country music star Roy Acuff died in Nashville at age 89.

In 1996, a commandeered Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the water off the Comoros Islands, killing 125 of the 175 people on board, including all three hijackers.

Ten years ago: President George W. Dietrich, German-born actress (1901-Bush visited Vilnius, Lithuania, and 1992).

# FROM THE BIBLE

Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn). Genesis 48:14. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

iors is 17.

Jamie Selves Cathy Sudbeck Kelsev Thomas Brenda Willcuts Jackie Williams

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