

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | WE SAY

Tumbleweed Connection



THUMBS UP to a little national press for both Yankton and Scotland, courtesy of the December issue of (fittingly enough) *National Geographic*. The edition includes an article titled "The Weed That Won the West," which examines tumbleweeds — described as "an invader from the Russian steppes" that went on to "become a symbol of the American West." The article notes that, back in 1880, the Department of Agriculture in Washington first got a report of "a strange plant" that had appeared in South Dakota. The report included a sample "that had been found near the town of Yankton on the Missouri River." Through the years, the alarming increase in the plants (and their rolling brush) caused some to wonder if there was a plot involved. But USDA officials assured them it wasn't, noting that it likely came from Russia with settlers in the early 1870s and that "contaminated flaxseed" had been accidentally sown "near the town of Scotland, South Dakota." It's an interesting article about a piece of our agrarian past that blows by us without notice.

On The Rise



THUMBS DOWN to the sharp rise in diabetes in South Dakota and across the nation. A study has shown nearly 9 percent of area residents have diabetes, and 35 percent have pre-diabetes, according to Susan Barnes, a registered nurse and Avera Sacred Heart Hospital (ASHH) diabetes educator. Most disturbing, many people don't know they have the condition. The disease isn't just striking the elderly, she said, as a shocking incidence of Type II diabetes has been found in children as young as age 5. Diabetes and related diseases are also showing a marked rise in teenagers, and the largest diabetes and pre-diabetes numbers are in the 45- to 60-year-old age group. Diabetes has emerged as the top priority in the community health needs assessment. November marks American Diabetes Month, and ASHH officials are urging the public — particularly those with high-risk factors — to get tested for both the disease.

The Other 50th Anniversary



THUMBS UP to the 50th anniversary of the world-famous British institution "Doctor Who." The science fiction television series featuring a Time Lord known as "the Doctor" aired its first episode in England on the day after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. In the decades since, "Doctor Who" has amassed millions of fans in countries around the globe. Even a 17-year hiatus from television couldn't kill off the Doctor, who, along with his companions, battle various forms of evil throughout the universe while eschewing violence. To celebrate, the British Broadcasting Corporation is simulcasting a 75-minute anniversary episode in more than 75 countries this Saturday. You can be assured that the member of our newsroom who grew up wanting to be a companion and idolizing the Doctor will be pulling out his sonic screwdriver and joining his fellow Whovians from around the world in celebrating this momentous occasion. We hope you'll join him on "The Day of the Doctor."

ONLINE OPINION

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you support the decision to dump Joan Jett from South Dakota's Macy's Parade float?
Yes 49%
No 27%
I don't care 24%
TOTAL VOTES CAST 324

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:

How much of your holiday shopping do you plan to do online?
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 Friday, Nov. 22, the 326th day of 2013. There are 39 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Nov. 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was shot to death during a motorcade in Dallas; Texas Gov. John B. Connally, in the same open car as the president, was seriously wounded. A suspect, Lee Harvey Oswald, was arrested.

On this date: In 1718, English pirate Edward Teach — better known as "Blackbeard" — was killed during a battle off present-day North Carolina.

In 1862, Giuseppe Verdi's opera "La Forza del Destino" had its world premiere in St. Petersburg, Russia.

In 1928, "Bolero" by Maurice Ravel was first performed, in Paris.

In 1930, listeners of the British Broadcasting Corp. heard, for the first time, radio coverage of an American college football game as Harvard defeated Yale, 13-0.

In 1935, a flying boat, the China Clipper, took off from Alameda, Calif., carrying more than 100,000 pieces of mail on the first trans-Pacific airmail flight.

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek met in Cairo to discuss measures for defeating Japan. Lyricist Lorenz Hart died in New York at age 48.

In 1954, the Humane Society of the United States was incorporated as the National Humane Society.

In 1965, the musical "Man of La Mancha" opened on Broadway.

In 1967, the U.N. Security Council approved Resolution 242, which called for Israel to withdraw from territories it had captured the previous June, and implicitly called on adversaries to recognize Israel's right to exist.

In 1975, Juan Carlos was proclaimed King of Spain.

In 1986, Elzire Dionne, who gave birth to quintuplets in 1934, died at a hospital in North Bay, Ontario, Canada, at age 77.

In 1990, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, having failed to win reelection of the Conservative Party leadership on the first ballot, announced her resignation.

Ten years ago: The Medicare prescription drug bill narrowly passed the House, 220-215, following a dusk-to-dawn debate. Thousands of mourners gathered in downtown Dallas along the street where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated 40 years earlier. College student Dru Sjodin disappeared while leaving her job at a Grand Forks, N.D., mall. (Sjodin's body was found in April 2004; a suspect, Alfonso Rodriguez

Jr., was later convicted of kidnapping and murdering her and was sentenced to death.)

Five years ago: In the weekly Democratic radio address, President-elect Barack Obama promoted an economic plan he said would provide 2.5 million jobs, although his spokesman later clarified that the plan would "save and create" that many jobs. President George W. Bush snared fresh international support on the economy and North Korea at a Pacific Rim economic summit in Peru. A revised Nebraska safe-haven law took effect with a 30-day age limit, ending abandonments of older children. Rapper MC Breed died in Ypsilanti, Mich., at age 37, reportedly of kidney failure.

One year ago: The traditional "Black Friday" sales began even earlier than before, on Thanksgiving evening, as stores including Target and Toys R Us opened their doors in hopes that Americans would be willing to shop right after their Thanksgiving meal. Some of the people displaced by Superstorm Sandy had front-row seats to Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, while others enjoyed free holiday meals. In a series of constitutional amendments, Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi granted himself sweeping new powers and placed himself above judicial oversight.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Arthur Hillier is 90. Actor Robert Vaughn is 81. Actor Michael Callan is 78. Actor Allen Garfield is 74. Animator and movie director Terry Gilliam is 73. Actor Tom Conti is 72. Singer Jesse Colin Young is 72. Astronaut Guion Bluford is 71. International Tennis Hall of Famer Billie Jean King is 70. Rock musician-actor Steve Van Zandt (a.k.a. Little Steven) is 63. Rock musician Tina Weymouth (The Heads; Talking Heads; The Tom Tom Club) is 63. Retired MLB All-Star Greg Luzinski is 63. Rock musician Lawrence Gowan is 57. Actor Richard Kind is 57. Actress Jamie Lee Curtis is 55. Alt-country singer Jason Ringenberg (Jason & the Scorchers) is 55. Actress Mariel Hemingway is 52. Actor Winsor Harmon is 50. Actor-turned-producer Brian Robbins is 50. Actor Stephen Geoffreys is 49. Rock musician Charlie Colin is 47. Actor Nicholas Rowe is 47. Actor Mark Ruffalo is 46. International Tennis Hall of Famer Boris Becker is 46. Country musician Chris Fryar (Zac Brown Band) is 43. Actor Josh Cooke is 34. Actor-singer Tyler Hilton is 30. Actress Scarlett Johansson is 29. Actor Jamie Campbell Bower is 25. Singer Candice Glover is 24. Actor Alden Ehrenreich is 24.

Thought for Today: "Nothing great will ever be achieved without great men, and men are great only if they are determined to be so." — Charles de Gaulle (born this date in 1890, died 1970).

FROM THE BIBLE

[Flowing] through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit. . . . The leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations. Revelation 22:2. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

This was the editorial cartoon printed in the *Press & Dakotan* on Monday, Nov. 25, after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy the previous Friday in Dallas. The image plays on one of the iconic metaphors associated with the event: the passing of the torch, not only from one leader to the next (in this case, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, who is shown picking it up after it had fallen along a symbolic road to the future) but also from one generation to the next. Addressing Kennedy's murder, the *Press & Dakotan* editorial on Nov. 25, which was a national day of mourning, noted: "The memory of this great and good man today is seared in the hearts of his fellow Americans."



A Nightmare Amplified

BY KELLY HERTZ

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What was "Mighty Mouse"? That was the most pressing question on my 4-year-old mind 50 years ago today after President John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

America was lost in a whirlwind that day, but I wasn't old enough to grasp it. Instead, I only knew that at 4 p.m., the "Captain 11" kids' television show would come on KELO, and one of the cartoons the good captain would show was "Mighty Mouse," a superhero rodent armed with the greatest theme song ever, with the soaring chorus "Here I come to save the day ...!"

No one did, of course, on that bleak Friday afternoon in 1963.

I don't believe I've ever met anyone who said they couldn't remember what they were doing or where they were at when the news of Kennedy's assassination found them. I've heard numerous recollections, mostly from people who were in school that day when the information was passed along to their teachers and then to them.

Younger generations may grow weary of hearing about this matter today, but the assassination was a genuinely defining moment for this nation. While Kennedy wasn't the first president to be gunned down, he was the first and only president to be murdered in the television age. The news traveled with unprecedented speed like a contagion, and the nation witnessed and shared in the grieving in a way that it never could before. It was all new to us then, although we would get much more practice with such matters later in the decade when Martin Luther King Jr. and yet another Kennedy were gunned down. The assassination of JFK was the starkest realization yet of the "global village" concept as described by communications guru Marshall McLuhan in 1962. He foresaw a world growing interconnected and interwoven by technology that transmitted information instantly around the planet, as if it were simply traveling around a neighborhood.

So, just imagine if an event like the Kennedy assassination were to happen now.

Lord, there would be an information overload unlike anything we've ever witnessed. "Global



Kelly HERTZ

village?" Imagine a global living room.

The television news channels would go into hyperdrive with relentless, fantastic, unending coverage. High drama and hyperbole would rule, quite in contrast to the understated show of dignified emotion that Walter Cronkite emanated

when he soberly informed the world 50 years ago that our president was dead. Speculation, which was rampant back in the paranoid Cold War days of 1963, would explode on all the channels now.

And just try to imagine how those networks would handle something like Jack Ruby's shooting of accused Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald two days after JFK's murder. It was a mesmerizing and frightening moment presented on live television. I vaguely remember this surreal event, too: a dim fragment of gray ghosts and shock. It was a titanic body blow to an already reeling nation. Now, it would be positively apocalyptic.

But even all this would be dwarfed when compared to the instant, overbearing, unfiltered and rumor-fueled tsunami that would utterly devour social media. Imagine what you'd see on Twitter and Facebook: the undiluted hysteria, the snowballing plague of unconfirmed reports, the viral speculation and the acrimonious catharsis that would fly from tens of millions of fingertips at any given instant, over and over and with each bit of new information. It would be a tidal wave too momentous to contemplate.

The JFK assassination was a groundbreaking moment in modern American media. It was an event unlike any other at the time, and it has probably only been surpassed by 9/11 — a much different tragedy in a far more technologically integrated age. Thus, this anniversary was not only an end but also a beginning.

But what would happen if — or when — we confront it again? How would we react now?

The most chilling exercise involved with this day's remembrances and reflections is to contemplate those answers.

Where will that chaos take us?
And who will save the day then?

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz/. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

What JFK Was — And Wasn't

BY RICHARD REEVES

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Twenty-five years ago, I asked Charles Bartlett, a syndicated columnist, to tell me about his old and close friend, John F. Kennedy. Bartlett's answer: "No one ever knew John Kennedy, not all of him."

Now, 50 years after Kennedy's assassination, that answer still seems relevant.

Kennedy was a compartmentalized man with much to hide, comfortable with secrets and lies. He organized his White House as a wagon wheel, with himself as what he called "the vital center," the hub. All of his relations along the spokes were bilateral. "It was instinctive at first," he said. "I had different identities, and this was a useful way of expressing each without compromising the others."

Debate about those identities, and about what kind of president Kennedy really was, has dominated the discussion in advance of the anniversary of his death. Professors and pundits tend to downgrade Kennedy's legacy, seeing him as an ordinary, even ineffective leader. But the American people — or at least three-quarters of them, according to polling done this month by the Gallup organization — rate him as the greatest of modern presidents.

Historians and scholars do not rank Kennedy with the top tier of presidents. They often seem peeved that citizens place him alongside Washington, Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt in the top five. And their assessment is starting to influence the history books that students read in school. The *New York Times*, in a long front-page story by Adam Kelly, recently reported that high school textbooks, unlike those of an earlier era, no longer portray Kennedy as a tragic hero.

"In general, the picture has evolved from a charismatic young president who inspired youths around the world to a deeply flawed one whose oratory outstripped his accomplishments," wrote Clyde Kopp. "Averting war in the Cuban missile crisis got less attention and respect. Legislative setbacks and a deepening commitment in Vietnam got more. The Kennedy-era glamour seemed more image than reality." And others have focused recently on how Kennedy's deeds never matched his soaring rhetoric.

But image counts, and so do words. Kennedy, like Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, understood that words and images are the way to reach millions of people. The president's job is to lead the nation, not manage the government, which is unmanageable. Nobody remembers whether Lincoln balanced the budget.

Kennedy probably doesn't belong on a list of the top five presidents. But I would put him near the top of the next list. Although he served less than three years, he was the most important man in the world at a critical time, the man in charge at a hinge-point in national and world politics, diplomacy and war — at home and abroad.

At the end of his days, he had his share of historic achievements: He prevented regional wars in Cuba and Germany, and possibly even World War

III. He put the government on the side of the minority in the black struggle for civil rights — no small act of political courage when his own party, the Democrats, controlled the segregated Southern states and Congress. He gambled confidently that the United States could overtake the Soviets' early lead in space exploration, mobilizing the nation by pledging that an American would walk on the moon before the end of the 1960s. (And we did it!) He negotiated a nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviet Union, the first of the nuclear age. He put national healthcare and immigration reform on the agenda.

Yes, he also had his disasters. He recklessly approved an invasion of Cuba in 1961 at the Bay of Pigs, and he foolishly did the same in signing off on the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam in 1963, leaving the United States stupidly overcommitted in Southeast Asia and backing military dictators distinguished by their corruption and incompetence.

Kennedy also changed the way we choose our leaders. He ignored and destroyed the structure of party bosses and conventions, winning the Democratic nomination by traveling the country, building his own state organizations and winning over the national political media. In service of his ambition, he employed everything available to him: family money, the new medium of television, even home movies of his photogenic family and lifestyle. He would not wait his turn, cutting to the head of the line in front of Lyndon Johnson, Adlai Stevenson and Hubert Humphrey. He built the model of modern presidential ambition and campaigning, demonstrating that the crucial qualification for the top job was wanting it.

He also inspired and organized a generation ready for something new, the young veterans of World War II. He and, later, his beautiful wife, were the role models for the way younger Americans lived their lives. He did not wear hats, and soon enough, no men did. He wore his hair long, and soon we all did. He promoted optimism in the people who elected him.

He was irresistible to millions around the world; the story was classic tragedy, the young prince struck down, an athlete dying young. It became the stuff of its own myths and legends, carefully cultivated by his wife, his family and his followers. And the legends have faded slowly. In that Gallup poll taken this month, the Americans that most admired Kennedy were those in the age group 18 to 29.

So there is every chance they will be showing and telling this story 50 years from now.

Richard Reeves is a senior lecturer at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California. He is the author of "President Kennedy: Profile of Power" and general editor of "The Kennedy Years: From the Pages of The New York Times." He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.