

# The Press & Dakotan

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**OPINION**

## Elections And The Turnout

There is a lot that can be read into the results of the national midterm elections two weeks ago, and goodness knows, pundits (among others) have been doing just that in the many days since.

However, the fact that 70 percent of the electorate didn't bother to make their voices heard during the election is disconcerting — and perhaps it should be an admonishment, or warning, to both parties.

Whether the parties will actually listen is problematic. After all, they have the luxury of choosing to ignore the warning signs. When they, collectively, are the only game in town, that's how they can view the world. Still, the low turnout remains.

So, too, do the results of some other polling done by The Associated Press of people who actually did bother to turn out to the polls or fill out ballot. One such survey found that voters were generally unhappy not only with President Obama but also with congressional Republicans. And another survey found that voters in both parties were unhappy with their party's leaders.

The bottom-line results showed big gains for Republicans across the country, an unsurprising development considering it was the midterm election with a Democratic president in his second term of office. Such instances usually favor the party not in control of the White House, and the GOP took vigorous advantage of it.

Was this an earth-shaking development? History suggests it wasn't. We saw a seismic triumph by Democrats in 2006, which was the midterm election during the second term of President George W. Bush. We then saw a big Democratic win in 2008, followed by a Republican midterm tidal wave in 2010, which then led to another Democratic White House win in 2012.

Voters seems to vacillate between one party or the other frequently. It usually depends on who they are upset with at a given moment. Or perhaps they're looking for something, and these are the only choices available.

When voters are upset with both parties, they tend to either hold their noses and make a choice or stay away from the process in droves. Seventy percent might be considered a "drove," in this instance.

There is no sign that our politicians/lawmakers are learning from this. They seem more intent on getting elected or pushing agendas rather than genuinely trying to address the issues that Americans face every day, whether those politicians want to acknowledge it or not. That's why it took Congress decades to address health care reform and why they are still fighting it now; that's why we've never begun to adequately address immigration; that's why veterans' issues seem to be stuck on the back burner; that's why our national infrastructure systems are being allowed to steadily deteriorate ... the list staggers on.

One could say it's time for a major third-party movement in this country, but that won't happen: The two-party mentality is too entrenched and too well-monied for it to occur on a truly competitive and difference-making scale.

So, the change has to come from within what might be viewed as a dysfunctional machine.

But the people have to somehow send the message to Washington. How we can do it is stubbornly unclear at this point. But the lesson has to ring out: Work together, leave the partisan baggage behind and actually get things done, for a change.

kmh

**ONLINE OPINION**

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

**LATEST RESULTS:**

Do you approve of the U.S.-China climate deal??

No.....	47%
Yes.....	22%
Never heard of it.....	22%
Not sure.....	9%
<b>TOTAL VOTES CAST</b> .....	<b>236</b>

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:**

**Should the U.S. pay ransoms to terrorists holding Americans hostage?**  
To cast your 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, Nov. 18, the 322nd day of 2014. There are 43 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Nov. 18, 1964, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover described civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. as "the most notorious liar in the country" for allegedly accusing FBI agents in Georgia of failing to act on complaints filed by blacks; King, who denied making such a claim, replied, "I cannot conceive of Mr. Hoover making a statement like this without being under extreme pressure."

**On this date:** In 1883, the United States and Canada adopted a system of Standard Time zones.  
In 1886, the 21st president of the United States, Chester A. Arthur, died in New York.  
In 1928, Walt Disney's first sound-synchronized animated cartoon, "Steamboat Willie" starring Mickey Mouse, premiered in New York.  
In 1936, Germany and Italy recognized the Spanish government of Francisco Franco.  
In 1942, "The Skin of Our Teeth," Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning allegory about the history of humankind, opened on Broadway.  
In 1959, "Ben-Hur," the Biblical-era spectacle starring Charlton Heston, had its world premiere in New York.  
In 1963, the Bell System introduced the first commercial touch-tone telephone system in Carnegie and Greensburg, Pennsylvania.  
In 1966, U.S. Roman Catholic bishops did away with the rule against eating meat on Fridays outside of Lent.  
In 1978, U.S. Rep. Leo J. Ryan, D-Calif., and four others were killed in Jonestown, Guyana, by members of the Peoples Temple; the killings were followed by a night of mass murder and suicide by more than 900 cult members.  
In 1987, the congressional Iran-Contra committees issued their final report, saying President Ronald Reagan bore "ultimate responsibility" for wrongdoing by his aides. A fire at London King's Cross railway station claimed 31 lives.  
In 1994, bandleader Cab Calloway died in Hockessin, Delaware, at age 86.  
In 1999, 12 people were killed when a bonfire under construction at Texas A-and-M University collapsed. A jury in Jasper, Texas, convicted Shawn Allen Berry of murder for his role in the dragging death of James Byrd Jr., but spared him the death penalty. American author and composer Paul Bowles died in Morocco at age 88.

**Ten years ago:** Former President Bill Clinton's library opened in Little Rock, Arkansas; in attendance were President George W. Bush, former President George H.W. Bush and former President Jimmy Carter. Former Ku Klux Klansman Bobby Frank Cherry, convicted of killing four black girls in the racially motivated bombing of a Birmingham, Alabama, church in 1963, died in prison at age 74. Britain outlawed fox hunting in England and Wales (Scotland had already abolished hunting). Composer Cy Coleman died in New York at age 75.

**Five years ago:** President Barack Obama visited the Great Wall of China, which he described as "magical," before heading to Seoul, South Korea, for the final stop of his eight-day Asia tour. Two days before turning 92, Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., set a record for longest-serving lawmaker in congressional history at 56 years, 320 days. (That record was broken in 2013 by U.S. Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich.)

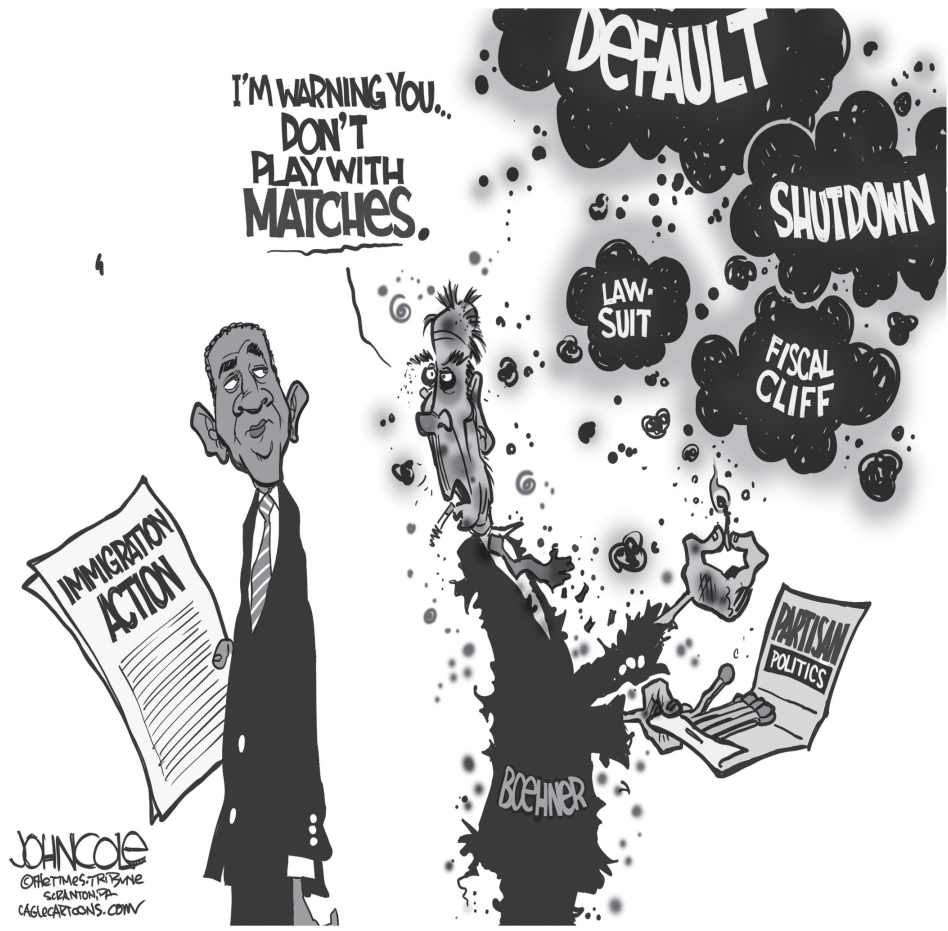
**One year ago:** Toronto's city council voted to strip scandal-plagued Mayor Rob Ford of many of his powers following a heated debate in which he knocked over a city councilor. NASA's robotic explorer, Maven, rocketed toward Mars on a quest to unravel the ancient mystery of the red planet's radical climate change.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Brenda Vaccaro is 75. Author-poet Margaret Atwood is 75. Actress Linda Evans is 72. Actress Susan Sullivan is 72. Country singer Jacky Ward is 68. Actor Jameson Parker is 67. Actress-singer Andrea Marcovici is 66. Rock musician Herman Rarebell is 65. Singer Graham Parker is 64. Actor Droy Lindo is 62. Comedian Kevin Nealon is 61. Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback Warren Moon is 58. Actor Oscar Nunez is 56. Actress Elizabeth Perkins is 54. Singer Kim Wilde is 54. Rock musician Kirk Hammett (Metallica) is 52. Rock singer Tim DeLaughter is 49. Actor Romany Malco is 46. Actor Owen Wilson is 46. Singer Duncan Sheik is 45. Actor Mike Epps is 44. Actress Peta Wilson is 44. Actress Chloe Sevigny is 40. Country singer Jessi Alexander is 38. Actor Steven Pasquale is 38. Rapper Fabolous is 37. Actor Nate Parker is 35. Rapper Mike Jones is 34. Actress/comedian Nasim Pedrad is 33. Actress Allison Tolman (TV: "Fargo") is 33. Actor Damon Wayans Jr. is 32. Actor Nathan Kress is 22.

**Thought for Today:** "Your way of giving is more important than what you give." — Vietnamese proverb.

**FROM THE BIBLE**

Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your skin atoned for. Isaiah 6:7. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



**The Rez Of The Story**

## 'They Don't Listen'

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), Plato attributes this quote to the Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 B.C.) who is generally regarded as one of the wisest people of all times: "Our youth now love luxury. They show disrespect for the elders and love chatter in place of exercise; they no longer arise when elders enter the room; they contradict their parents, chatter before company; gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers."

Sound familiar? I hear parents and grandparents here in Indian Country, and in local non-Indian communities as well, say the same thing about our young people—"they don't listen!" We try to tell them what's what about life but it seems to fall on deaf ears. "Nuge Waniche" (No Ears), you'll hear Dakotah elders say as they gather in their daily circles of circumspection. So what are our young people listening to?

It is more than a little disconcerting among our adult/elder citizens here in Indian Country to know that many of our young people are listening to what they call "hip-hop" and/or "rap" music. These forms of communication that some of our young people ostensibly find relevant seem to be carrying the messages from the streets of America. Now this seems a little odd since we don't have many streets to speak of on the rez.

In truth, there seems to be a fairly wide variety of music our folks in Indian Country listen to these days including rock and roll; blues; country and western; Indian music like pow-wow and flute music in addition to hip-hop and rap.

There seems to be a pattern here that has gone on for millennia. The generation moving into adulthood from the formative years of their youth bring with them their own unique world view. It is the way it has always been done. Generation after generation passes on those things the outgoing generation wants the in-coming to know, then those receiving the information will interpret through their own perspective and make it their own. This is why, I think, elders feel like they are irrelevant at times.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Bridging The Facts**

Kathy Grow, Yankton

I couldn't help but laugh out loud at Jim Van Osdel's letter (*Press & Dakotan*, Nov. 12), when he proved my personal theory that local coffee conversations are based on half-truths and speculation!

Don List was one of many authorities who lent their expertise and experience to the writing of "The Bridge We Built: The Story of Yankton's Meridian Bridge," but he was wrong this time — as reported, at least, by Mr. Van Osdel. Possibly it's because the question he was asked was itself founded on one of those half-truths.

Here's the straight scoop: Yes, the lift span of the Meridian Bridge could be moved, but not by "rolling" the towers and their weights anywhere. Instead, quoting the bridge designers, "... [I]t is possible to dismantle the towers and to move the operating machinery to one of the other fixed spans of the same length, and so provide for it to be movable instead of the present lift span."

That quote came from page 31 of the book written by Lois Varvel and me, and there's a lot more information in that chapter, too, that will correct every bit of "fact" presented in the letter.

In the future, I'd suggest to Mr. Van Osdel and his coffee buddies that they ditch the half-truths and speculation in favor of just a little bit of research. Take some of that free time and drop in at the library and/or the Dakota

Territorial Museum. Actual facts could make those conversations even more exciting!

**A Tail's Tale**

Bonnie Whatling, Yankton

While shopping at my favorite store recently, I was walking past the meat section and noticed some beef oxtail. I hadn't seem oxtail in any store for years. My mother would make the most fantastic vegetable oxtail soup that her nine children loved. She passed that onto me and I passed it to my daughter. I knew what I was having for supper that night.

I went over and picked up a package that had four in them. They were awfully fatty but no problem, I can cut that off. I turned the package over to see how much it was, and I actually said out loud, "Oh my Lord." One of the butchers was standing next to me and he asked me if there was a problem? And I said yes these must be a mistake, this package says \$7.99 all. He said, "That's no mistake."

I don't have to tell you my supper plans changed real fast. I think the last time I had oxtail soup I probably paid 59-69 cents per pounds. So that was a long time ago.

After I got home, I sat there thinking about it and I know that there are countries that have problems with people cutting off certain parts of animals for medicinal purposes or cults, for whatever reason. I thought, if the price of oxtail goes up higher and higher, will there come a day when a farmer goes out to check his cattle and finds they have no tails?

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