

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 Dakotan
established June 6, 1861.
Yankton Daily Press and
Dakotan established April
26, 1875.
Postmaster: Send
address changes to Yankton
Daily Press & Dakotan,
319 Walnut, Yankton, SD
57078.

MEMBERSHIPS
The Yankton Daily
Press & Dakotan is a
member of the Associ-
ated Press, the Inland
Daily Press Association and
the South Dakota
Newspaper Association.
The Associated Press is
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use of all the local
news printed in this
newspaper.

**SUBSCRIPTION
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(Payable in advance)
CARRIER DELIVERY
1-month.....\$12.09
3 months.....\$36.27
6 months.....\$72.53
1-year.....\$133.09

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Daugaard Right To Seek Medicaid Expansion

RAPID CITY JOURNAL (Nov. 22): The upcoming legislative session is shaping up to be an interesting one. In addition to likely introducing legislation that would change how the state funds public education, Gov. Dennis Daugaard is working on a bill that if approved by lawmakers would make South Dakota the 31st state to expand Medicaid coverage as part of the Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as Obamacare. Since the legislation was signed into law by President Obama, Daugaard has expressed concerns about how much the program would cost the state in 2020 when the federal government will cover 90 percent of the costs. Since 2013, the federal government has picked up 100 percent of the expansion costs and will continue to do so through 2016 when the states will be expected to gradually contribute to the program until they pay for 10 percent of the costs in 2020 and beyond. In order to make the program affordable for the state, the governor's office is working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to expand the number of services offered by Indian Health Service, which offers care to Native Americans. A spokesman for the federal government told the Associated Press that the administration is working at "warp speed" to review the proposed changes.

If the federal government approves the plan, it would make as many 55,000 additional low-income South Dakotans under the age of 65 eligible for the public health program.

The reason they become eligible is that any individual or family that earns up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level is covered by Medicaid if their state legislature opts in to the plan.

According to the Department of Human Services in North Dakota, which expanded Medicaid in 2013, the income guidelines are \$16,243 for a single person, \$21,983 for a couple, \$27,724 for a family of three and \$33,465 for a family of four.

Gov. Daugaard has said in the past that his concern with Medicaid expansion is the cost to the state beginning in 2020, which is what we expect from a fiscally conservative governor.

Others, however, oppose it on ideological grounds. They see it as an expansion of the welfare state that provides handouts to healthy men and women who would rather feed at the public trough than work for a living.

But that point of view glazes over some important facts, including that South Dakota is one of the lowest-wage states in the nation and it would be even more dire if voters had not approved a ballot measure in 2014 to raise the minimum wage to \$8.50 an hour. A quick glance at any help-wanted section in this area shows that many jobs pay \$12 an hour or less and many of those are part-time positions that do not offer health-care coverage.

The reality is that many in this state are among the working poor. Many are mothers and fathers and their children. By getting these families enrolled in Medicaid, they can get the kind of preventive care that can lead to cost savings in the future. As we should know by now, we all pay through higher insurance rates or other charges when an uninsured person goes to the emergency room or is admitted to the hospital.

It also is important to remember that Medicaid funds go directly to hospitals, clinics and other health-care providers. It is not a blank check for the recipients.

Gov. Daugaard deserves credit for working with the federal government to pick up more of the costs of Medicaid expansion. In the end, taking advantage of this program to make health care available to more residents is the right thing to do.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Monday, Nov. 30, the 334th day of 2015. There are 31 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Nov. 30, 1965, "Unsafe at Any Speed" by Ralph Nader, a book highly critical of the U.S. auto industry, was first released in hardcover by Grossman Publishers.

On this date: In 1782, the United States and Britain signed preliminary peace articles in Paris, ending the Revolutionary War.

In 1803, Spain completed the process of ceding Louisiana to France, which had sold it to the United States.

In 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens — better known as Mark Twain — was born in Florida, Missouri.

In 1874, British statesman Sir Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace.

In 1900, Irish writer Oscar Wilde died in Paris at age 46.

In 1936, London's famed Crystal Palace, constructed for the Great Exhibition of 1851, was destroyed in a fire.

In 1939, the Winter War began as Soviet troops invaded Finland. (The conflict ended the following March with a Soviet victory.)

In 1940, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz were married at the Byram River Beagle Club in Greenwich, Connecticut. (The marriage ended in divorce in 1960.)

In 1954, Ann Elizabeth Hodges of Oak Grove, Alabama, was slightly injured when an 8-1/2-pound chunk of meteor crashed through the roof of her house, hit a radio cabinet, then hit her as she lay napping on a couch.

In 1966, the former British colony of Barbados became independent.

In 1982, the Michael Jackson album "Thriller" was released by Epic Records. The motion picture "Gandhi," starring Ben Kingsley as the Indian nationalist leader, had its world premiere in New Delhi.

In 1990, the horror-thriller film "Misery," starring James Caan and Kathy Bates, was released by Columbia Pictures.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush gave an unflinching defense of his Iraq war strategy in a speech at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, refusing to set a timetable for troop withdrawals and asserting that once-shaky Iraqi troops were proving increasingly capable. Shimon Peres quit Israel's Labor

Party, his political home of six decades, to campaign for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's new organization. Actress Jean Parker died in Woodland Hills, California, at age 90.

Five years ago: Pentagon leaders called for scrapping the 17-year-old "don't ask, don't tell" ban after releasing a survey about the prospect of openly gay troops. The Obama administration announced that all 197 airlines that flew to the U.S. had begun collecting names, genders and birth dates of passengers so the government could check them against terror watch lists before they boarded flights.

One year ago: Pope Francis and the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, issued a joint declaration at the end of Francis' visit to Turkey demanding an end to violent persecution of Christians in the Middle East and calling for dialogue with Muslims. Former U.S. poet laureate Mark Strand, 80, died in New York. Anthony Marshall, 90, a decorated World War II veteran, diplomat and Broadway producer who saw his aristocratic life unravel as he was convicted in 1990 of raiding the fortune of his socialite mother, Brooke Astor, died in New York.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Robert Guillaume is 88. Radio talk show host G. Gordon Liddy is 85. Country singer-recording executive Jimmy Bowen is 78. Movie director Ridley Scott is 78. Movie writer-director Terrence Malick is 72. Rock musician Roger Glover (Deep Purple) is 70. Playwright David Mamet is 68. Actress Margaret Whitton is 65. Actor Mandy Patinkin is 63. Musician Shuggie Otis is 62. Country singer Jeannie Kendall is 61. Singer Billy Idol is 60. Historian Michael Beschloss is 60. Rock musician John Ashton (The Psychedelic Furs) is 58. Comedian Colin Mochrie is 58. Former football and baseball player Bo Jackson is 53. Rapper Jaill (Whodini) is 52. Actor-director Ben Stiller is 50. Rock musician Mike Stone is 46. Actress Sandra Oh is 45. Singer Clay Aiken is 37. Actor Billy Lush is 34. Actress Elisha Cuthbert is 33. Actress Kaley Cuoco is 30. Model Chrissy Teigen is 30. Actress Christel Khalil is 28. Actress Rebecca Pidgeon (TV: "Blood & Oil") is 27. Actress Adelaide Clemens is 26.

Thought for Today: "Civilization is the limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities." — Mark Twain (1835-1910).

FROM THE BIBLE

Then [Jesus] led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands He blessed them. While He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. Luke 24:50-51. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

United As One

Mark Winegar, Vermillion
Unlike Donald Trump, I never saw anyone celebrating the terrorist attack on 9/11.

I did, however, see outward expressions of solidarity. I remember most clearly the evening that foreign students of every variety in Vermillion's Cof-

fee Shoppe Art Gallery invited me to stand outside with them for a candlelight vigil. It was an emotional blend of patriotism and brotherhood. We cried and hugged each other as if we were eulogizing a loved one.

For a moment in time, we were all one and we can be again.



Capitol Notebook

We Enjoy Fortunate Lives In Good Times

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — One of the great enjoyments of the winter holiday season is the music.

Not my singing, mind you. Sister B. asked me to only mouth the words during a school Christmas concert 40-something years ago. I happily complied.

Who says teachers don't know what they're doing?

No, I'm writing about the beauty that springs from the hearts and the souls of people who really can sing and really can play musical instruments.

They live all around us. The holidays provide the stages for them to perform.

So it was on Tuesday night, in our state Capitol's rotunda, when the Daugaards celebrated the annual lighting of the Christmas trees display.

They let Ava Krush, a seventh-grader from Rapid City, push the button. And they sat together, in front of several hundreds of people, and enjoyed songs from some very talented people.

Some very brave people, I should say. Any person who is willing to go before a group or a crowd and sing or play has my admiration.

They step forward at church services. And sometimes at public events, such as ballgames, they perform "The Star Spangled Banner."

It's during the winter holidays when the stars among us are invited to shine the brightest for us.

At the rotunda ceremony came music from three children — Frank, Kylee and Vick — of the Denette and David Becker family playing African instruments.

And songs from Debra Owen, who learned to sing as a girl from Helena.

And songs from the band Houdek, whose name refers to the soil found only in South Dakota.

And of course the Capitol City Children's Chorus.



Bob
MERCER

They played traditional Christmas songs — and a newer song that is now a Christmas tradition too, "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)," from John Lennon.

This year 97 trees are decorated in the Capitol. The theme is "Christmas Around the World."

Egypt, Russia, Switzerland and Mexico are countries highlighted with banners on each of the four sides in the rotunda.

The trees have a variety of nations as their themes. Charities, schools, families, businesses and organizations decorate them.

One tree is dedicated to the late Dottie Howe. With 12 trees, she began the tradition that now is in year 35 in our Capitol.

A beautifully decorated tree by the St. Mary's Catholic second- and third-graders at Dell Rapids happens to stand next to the governor's office.

Linda Daugaard taught at St. Mary's before her husband won election as governor.

For the Daugaards, this is Christmas No. 5 as South Dakota's first family. They greeted every child and every adult who came forward after the 40-minute ceremony.

I thought perhaps Gov. Dennis Daugaard might sing a bit with his speech. Alas.

His message fit the night. "We are fortunate to live in a peaceful place, with many freedoms," he said.

The children's chorus and Houdek added to the theme with the Lennon song.

"War is over ...
"If you want it ...
"War is over ...
"If you want it ..."

And of course, Santa Claus showed up, in the nick of time.

The tree display is open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. CT daily through Dec. 26. It's worth your time.

Cry Havoc ... Followed By Some Milk And Cookies

BY KATHLEEN PARKER
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WASHINGTON — It would be easy to call protesting college students crybabies and brats for pitching hissy fits over hurt feelings, but this likely would lead to such torrents of tearful tribulation that the nation's university system would have to shut down for a prolonged period of grief counseling.

Besides, it would be insensitive.

Instead, let me be the first to say, it's not the students' fault. These serial tantrums are a direct result of our "Everybody Gets A Trophy" culture and an educational system that, for the most part, no longer teaches a core curriculum, including history, government and the Bill of Rights.

They simply don't know any better.

This isn't necessarily to excuse them. Everyone has a choice whether to ignore a perceived slight — or to form a posse. But as with any problem, it helps to understand its source. The disease, I fear, was auto-induced with the zealous pampering of the American child that began a few decades ago.

The first sign of the epidemic of sensitivity we're witnessing was when parents and teachers were instructed never to tell Johnny that he's a "bad boy," but that he's "acting" like a bad boy.

Next, Johnny was handed a blue ribbon along with everyone else on the team even though he didn't deserve one. This had the opposite effect of what was intended. Rather than protecting Johnny's fragile self-esteem, the prize undermined Johnny's faith in his own perceptions and judgment. It robbed him of his ability to pick himself up when he fell and to be brave, honest and hardy in the face of adversity.

Self-esteem is earned, not bestowed.

Today's campuses are overrun with little Johnnys, their female counterparts and their adult enablers. How will we ever find enough fainting couches?

Let's anyone feel slighted so soon, this is also not to diminish the pain of racism (or sexism, ageism, blondism or whatever -ism gets one's tear ducts moistened). But nothing thus far reported on campuses the past several weeks rises to the level of the coerced resignations of a university chancellor and president.

The affronts that prompted students to demand the resignations include: An off-campus, drive-by racial epithet apparently aimed at the student body president; another racial epithet hurled by a drunk white student; a swastika



Kathleen
PARKER

drawn with feces in a dorm restroom.

Someone certainly deserves a spanking — or psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud had plenty to say about people who play with the products of their alimentary canal.

But do such events mean that students have been neglected, as protesters have charged? Or that the school tolerates racism?

Concurrent with these episodes of outrage is the recent surge on campuses of "trigger warnings" in syllabuses to alert students to content that might be upsetting, and "safe zones" where students can seek refuge when ideas make them uncomfortable. It seems absurd to have to mention that the purpose of higher education is to be challenged, to be exposed to different views and, above all, to be exhilarated by the exercise of free speech — other people's as well as one's own.

The marketplace of ideas is not for sissies, in other words. And it would appear that knowledge, the curse of the enlightened, is not for everyone.

The latter is meant to be an observation, but on many college campuses today, it seems to be an operating principle. A recent survey of 1,100 colleges and universities found that only 18 percent require American history or government, where such foundational premises as the First Amendment might be explained and understood.

The survey, by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, assesses schools according to whether they have at least one required course in composition, foreign language at the intermediate level, American government or history, economics, science, mathematics and literature. Coincidentally, the very institutions where students are dominating what passes for debate also scored among the worst: Missouri, D; Yale, C; Dartmouth, C; and Princeton, C — all for requiring only one or a few of the subjects.

Amherst scored an F for requiring nothing.

Such is the world we've created for young people who soon enough will discover that the world doesn't much care about their tender feelings. But before such harsh realities knock them off their ponies, we might hope that they redirect their anger. They have every right to despise the coddling culture that ill prepared them for life and an educational system that has failed to teach them what they need to know.

Weep for them — and us.

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