



# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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## OPINION | OUR VIEW

### New Voting Process: Another Excuse Gone

You may be one of those people — sometimes in the minority, too often in the majority — who doesn't always bother to vote in national, state and/or local elections. Perhaps you do sometimes and not others, or perhaps you just never exert the effort at all. If so, you're on notice that your excuses for not voting if you live in Yankton County have been whittled down again. An interesting meeting last week at the Yankton County Government Center served as a platform for introducing the public to the new voting system that will be in place for the November election. The county has been approved to allow voters to cast their ballots at any of six polling stations; you will no longer be restricted to voting at a specific place in your specific precinct. All the stations will be electronically networked so that, when a person votes at, say, the Yankton Mall, the act (although not the results, obviously) will instantly be communicated to other stations; thus, a person can't vote at one spot in the morning and another site later in the day.

This is an inventive streamlining of the voting process that figures to save the county a good deal of money. What's more, it gives voters a lot more freedom to exercise their democratic right. As Secretary of State Jason Gant noted during last Wednesday's meeting, if you live in a precinct in Yankton but are working in the northern part of the county on Election Day, you could vote at, say, Lesterville instead of having to rush back here to go through the process.

Honestly, it's a terrific new addition to our election process. Governments have (for the most part) been working hard in recent years to make it easier for its citizenry to vote.

In 2006, for instance, South Dakota opened up its absentee voting procedure to allow "no excuse" voting, meaning you could cast your vote at any time and for any reason several weeks before an election. A lot of people have taken advantage of the process ever since.

Currently, 35 states (including South Dakota and Nebraska) and the District of Columbia allow voting before Election Day. According to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, 30.6 percent of all votes cast across the country in the 2008 general election were early votes. That includes about 25 percent in South Dakota and 21 percent in Nebraska. (In Nebraska, some people are now automatically mailed ballots for certain elections and allowed to vote from home.)

Thus, the early voting window removed a "hurdle" (or excuse) for most people who were inclined to not vote in an election. It's not a one-day nuisance anymore.

The new polling station idea makes the task that much easier on Election Day itself. It gives you a choice of locations and it assures the security of your vote. You can no longer cite long lines at "your" precinct as a reason for not getting involved.

All that's really left for those exercising voter apathy is simple disinterest or laziness, which aren't particularly defensible reasons — not in a democracy like ours, where everyone has a say (except, apparently, in states where some are working to create roadblocks, but that's another issue for another time). It's up to you, of course, but be advised that your ammunition for staying out of the process is running pretty low.

So it's not too early to say, "Vote!" And when Election Day rolls around in five weeks, it doesn't matter where you do it — just do it!

kmh

## The Rez of the Story

# 'The Tip Of The Iceberg'

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), The late American journalist Barbara Grizzuti Harrison (1934-2002) once wrote: "Our awesome responsibility to ourselves, to our children, and to the future is to create ourselves in the image of goodness, because the future depends on the nobility of our imaginings."

Added Karen Casey and Martha Vanceburg: "The world we live in depends on the responsible contributions each of us makes. And this world is just as good as are the many talents we commit ourselves to developing and offering. None of us is without obligation to offer our best to our family, friends, or strangers, if our hope is to live in a good world. The world can only be as good as each of us make it."



Vince TWO EAGLES

With the United Nations in the news and currently in session as I write this column, we are reminded that as of Aug. 30, 2012, the highly anticipated report on the rights of indigenous peoples written and submitted by Special Rapporteur James Anaya has finally been released. It has been titled "The Situation of Indigenous Peoples in the United States of America." This is part one of three that, over the course of the next few weeks, I will be devoting extra time and space to this historical event.

Mr. Anaya traveled throughout the United States on an information-gathering journey that lasted from April 23-May 4, 2012. He visited with U.S. officials as well as with indigenous peoples, tribes, and nations both in Indian country as well as urban areas.

Mr. Anaya has determined "... that indigenous peoples in the United States — including American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian peoples — constitute vibrant communities that have contributed greatly to the life of the country; yet they face significant challenges that are related to widespread historical wrongs, including broken treaties and acts of oppression, and misguided government policies, that today manifest themselves in various indicators of disadvantaged and impediments to the exercise of their individual and collective rights."

The report goes on to say, "Significant federal legislation and programs that have been developed over the last few decades, in contrast to early exercises of federal power based on misguided policies, constitute good practices that in significant measure respond to

indigenous people's concerns. Especially to be commended are the many new initiatives taken by the executive to advance the rights of indigenous peoples in the last few years."

The report states in its findings, conversely, "... that existing federal programs need to be improved upon and their execution made more effective. Moreover, new measures are needed to advance toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples and address persistent deep-seated problems related to historical wrongs, failed policies of the past and continuing systemic barriers to the full realization of indigenous people's rights."

"The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an important impetus and guide for improving upon existing measures to address the concerns of indigenous peoples in the United States, and for developing new measures to advance toward reconciliation. The Declaration, which is grounded in widespread consensus and fundamental human rights values, should be a benchmark for all relevant decision-making by the federal executive, Congress, and the judiciary, as well as by states of the United States."

The declaration, which was passed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2006, "affirms that indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, and to be respected as such, and that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind and that all doctrines, policies, and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin, racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust ..."

This is but the tip of the proverbial iceberg in terms of the 180 degree departure from what was considered the "conventional wisdom" of the past which regarded indigenous peoples as non-humans. The declaration is indeed to be regarded as a working premise toward the development of relationship building. There is much to be gained by creating productive partnership development when the base philosophy for that partnership building is founded upon the truth of equality.

Next week, part two of three.  
Doksha ...

and bridges. If people had believed we needed it, they'd have demanded it. That they didn't goes to the lack of leadership.

Worse, though, was the fact that the president tried to pass a huge new entitlement, Obamacare, without fixing Social Security and Medicare.

He was like the owner of two failing restaurants saying: "I really think I need to open a third restaurant, then worry about the horrid money sucking of the first two." He needed to deal with the problems in the opposite order.

The Social Security fix is easy, a matter of raising the cap on contributions and bumping up the withholding percentages a couple of points. If Obama had started with that, he would have increased his power, rather than destroying it.

Medicare is a harder fix. But if you can't get Medicare costs under control, you can't afford to expand government-subsidized health care. People sensed that, particularly because much of the funding for Obamacare was supposed to come from cutting reimbursements to doctors. That's the same plan Congress passed to fix Medicare in 1997, and has voted to evade every year since. This kind of trickery is what turned the public against the president.

In 2008, some Republicans favored health care reform — and immigration reform, clean energy and emissions reductions. Obama's highhandedness erased all that, and lost Democrats the House and sane Republicans their House seats.

Had he handled things differently, had he not wasted a serious crisis, and a special moment in our political history, he (and we) could have had it all.

That doesn't mean John McCain would have done better, or that Mitt Romney would. It simply means Obama could have done better, and the fact that he didn't can best be described as failure.

Lane Filler is a member of the Newsday editorial board. His email address is lane.filler@newsday.com.

title to this documentary suggest "voting the right way, Republican"? Some people had thought the title was pro-President Obama.

My initial letter to the editor (Press & Dakotan, Sept. 19) was an attempt to help voters educate themselves, only I also suggested in my initial "letter" that voters read President Obama's books which the documentary is based on. If you don't want to see the documentary I suggest you go to the library and read the books, then draw your own conclusion.

America, educate yourselves, don't rely on what you read in the media or on the talking heads in the media.

## ONLINE OPINION

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

### LATEST RESULTS:

#### Who do you support in the 2012 presidential race?

Mitt Romney	50%
Barack Obama	38%
None/not sure	7%
Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party)	4%
Virgil Goode (Constitution Party)	1%
<b>TOTAL VOTES CAST</b>	<b>809</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:

#### Who do you support in the South Dakota U.S. House race between Kristi Noem and Matt Varilek?

To vote in the Press & Dakotan's Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Tuesday, Oct. 2, the 276th day of 2012. There are 90 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Oct. 2, 2002, the Washington, D.C. area sniper attacks began as a resident of Silver Spring, Md., was shot and killed in a store parking lot in Wheaton; the next day, five people were shot dead, setting off a frantic manhunt lasting three weeks. (John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo were finally arrested for 10 killings and three wounding; Muhammad was executed in 2009; Malvo was sentenced to life in prison.)

**On this date:** In 1780, British spy John Andre was hanged in Tappan, N.Y., during the Revolutionary War.

In 1835, the first battle of the Texas Revolution took place as American settlers fought Mexican soldiers near the Guadalupe River; the Mexicans ended up withdrawing.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson suffered a serious stroke at the White House that left him paralyzed on his left side.

In 1941, during World War II, German armies launched an all-out drive against Moscow.

In 1944, Nazi troops crushed the two-month-old Warsaw Uprising, during which a quarter of a million people were killed.

In 1950, the comic strip "Peanuts," created by Charles M. Schulz, was syndicated to seven newspapers.

In 1958, the former French colony of Guinea in West Africa proclaimed its independence.

In 1967, Thurgood Marshall was sworn as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court as the court opened its new term.

In 1970, one of two chartered twin-engine planes flying the Wichita State University football team to Utah crashed into a mountain near Silver Plume, Colo., killing 31 of the 40 people on board.

In 1971, the music program "Soul Train" made its debut in national syndication.

In 1985, actor Rock Hudson died at his home in Beverly Hills, Calif., at age 59 after battling AIDS.

In 2006, an armed milk truck driver took a group of girls hostage in an Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, Pa., killing five of them and wounding five others before committing suicide.

**Ten years ago:** The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled unanimously the Democratic Party could replace Sen. Robert Torricelli on the November ballot with former Sen. Frank Lautenberg.

**Five years ago:** Blackwater chairman Erik Prince, testifying before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, vigorously rejected charges that guards from his private security firm had acted recklessly while protecting State Department personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. Five workers were found dead 1,000 feet inside an empty underground water tunnel following a chemical fire at a Colorado hydroelectric plant. A federal jury in New York ordered the owners of the New York Knicks to pay \$11.6 million to former team executive Anucha Browne Sanders, concluding she'd been sexually harassed and fired out of spite. Tony Award-winning actor George Grizzard died in New York at age 79.

**One year ago:** Syrian dissidents formally established a broad-based national council designed to overthrow President Bashar Assad's regime, which they accused of pushing the country to the brink of civil war.

**Today's Birthdays:** Country singer-musician Leon Rausch (Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys) is 85. Retired MLB All-Star Maury Wills is 80. Movie critic Rex Reed is 74. Singer-songwriter Don McLean is 67. Cajun/country singer Jo-el Sonnier is 66. Actor Avery Brooks is 64. Fashion designer Donna Karan is 64. Photographer Annie Leibovitz is 63. Rock musician Mike Rutherford (Genesis, Mike & the Mechanics) is 62. Singer-actor Sting is 61. Actress Lorraine Bracco is 58. Country musician Greg Jennings (Restless Heart) is 58. Rock singer Phil Oakey (The Human League) is 57. Rhythm-and-blues singer Freddie Jackson is 54. Singer-producer Robbie Nevil is 54. Retrosoul singer James Hunter is 50. Rock musician Bud Gaugh (Sublime, Eyes Adrift) is 45. Folk-country singer Gillian Welch is 45. Country singer Kelly Willis is 44. Rhythm-and-blues singer Dion Allen (Az Yet) is 42. Actress-talk show host Kelly Ripa (TV: "Live with Kelly and Michael") is 42. Singer Tiffany is 41. Rock singer Lene Nyström is 39. Actor Efron Ramirez is 39. Rhythm-and-blues singer LaTocha Scott (Xscape) is 39. Gospel singer Mandisa (TV: "American Idol") is 36. Rock musician Mike Rodden (Hinder) is 30. Rock singer Brittany Howard (Alabama Shakes) is 24.

**Thought for Today:** "Heresy is another word for freedom of thought." — Graham Greene, English writer (1904-1991).

# President Wasted Economic Crisis

BY LANE FILLER  
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It was a week after President Barack Obama was elected that his chief-of-staff, Rahm Emanuel, said, "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste."

It's because Obama failed to heed Emanuel that his administration has been a failure.

Obama failed to harness America's greatest strength, its ability to pull together in a crisis. And he compounded that error by putting his legislative priorities in the worst possible order.

To persuade Americans to each pull their oar in rowing the nation out of great danger, you must convince them they are in great danger. Obama endeavored to do the opposite.

Improvement was always just around the corner, or already here. There were no stirring calls to action or heartfelt pleas to come together. Why come together if everything was almost all right?

Obama should have painted the economy as devastated and our broader challenges as daunting. When Republicans screamed, "There are no jobs," Obama should have bellowed, "Buster, you don't know the half of it." When the unemployment rate improved, he should have said, "That's because people are so dependent they no longer apply, and besides, the new jobs are all bad gigs holding signs advertising 'Going Out of Business' sales. It's a disaster."

Obama was elected with a decent mandate, and his party controlled both houses of Congress. Had he convinced the nation we were in truly dire straits, he could have sold a package of nation-building that would have been stimulative and given us the improvements we need.

Instead, we got a halfhearted \$800 billion in spending that kept a lot of government workers, cops and teachers on the job for a short time, instead of the much greater multiplying effect of a real construction stimulus, which also would have given us better roads

## YOUR LETTERS

### Educate Yourselves II

Brad Butzlaff, Yankton

First, I must clarify something regarding "2016, Obama's America." This is NOT a movie (my mistake). It is a documentary based on the books written by President Obama. The books are "Dreams From My Father" and "The Audacity of Hope."

In Charles Snyder's letter to the editor (Press & Dakotan, Sept. 25), he stated: "I know nothing about the 'movie,' but suspected by the 'movie's' title that was an attempt by Mr. Butzlaff to influence voters to vote the right way, that is Republican." How does the

## FROM THE BIBLE

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:31. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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