



The Rez Of The Story

Our Politics And The Truth

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),  
The 35th president of our country once said that;  
“The Great enemy of truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived, and dishonest — but the myth — persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic.”

So, when we listen to the presidential debates, how are we, the voting public, supposed to sort out which side is truthful and which side is not? I know some will say that one should trust the political party they are members of to be more honest than the other. Others will say that they trust one candidate’s credibility over another’s and therefore whichever candidate one happens to support is the “truth-teller,” “the other guy just tends to get his facts wrong.”

One thing is for sure, these debates definitely give all the media pundits something to do the morning after.

But what about the truth?  
Alex Altman in an article he wrote for *Time* magazine put it like this: “Campaign strategists, especially at the presidential level, know well just how easy it is to fool the public. No ad goes out without significant data from polls and focus groups to ensure its effectiveness.”

Are we so gullible that the politicians in this country depend upon that gullibility to garner your vote? Are the respective candidates so flawed as to make telling lies and half-truths desirable and even preferred to telling the whole truth?

Wrote Altman: “Even for the most open-minded and informed voters, truth is often subjective. Discerning it is that much harder when the campaigns cater to two different groups of voters who seem to prefer two very different sets of facts.”

For example, the Obama campaign says, “We do not need an outsourcing pioneer in the Oval Office (referring of course to Romney’s tenure at Bain Capital).” According to the *Time* article: “[In] reality, many firms like Bain Capital invested in companies that outsourced jobs, but it was not the first to do so, and Romney was no longer directly responsible when the outsourcing occurred. Verdict: This claim is a distortion by Obama’s team.”



Vince  
TWO EAGLES

The Romney campaign asserts that “We are only inches away from no longer being a free economy.” According to Altman, “The conservative Heritage Foundation ranks the U.S. in the top 10 for economic freedom worldwide, ahead of Japan, Germany and the U.K.” Verdict: The Romney campaign’s statement is “highly misleading.”

The Obama campaign proclaims, “Both Romney and Ryan backed proposals to outlaw abortion, even in cases of rape and incest.” In truth Altman says, “Romney has repeatedly said he would not seek to prohibit abortions in cases of rape or incest or when the health of the mother is endangered. *Time’s* conclusion is that “Obama’s ad is untrue.” According to Altman’s article, “Many Republicans have supported an absolute abortion ban, but Romney has never embraced one.”

The Romney campaign, on the other hand, has proclaimed, “Under Obama’s plan [for welfare], you wouldn’t have to work and wouldn’t have to train for a job. They just send you your welfare check.” In reality,

“Obama granted waivers to states that asked for flexibility in making welfare-to-work more effective at ending dependency. Verdict: Romney’s claim is false.”

What’s mostly disturbing is how our politics allows for the distortion of truth as a usual weapon in the political discourse. While one side claims to be telling the truth, they are attacking the other for not telling the truth and visa-versa.

I think we have become too complacent as a voting public and have abandoned our good common sense for the version of political reality our politics has prescribed.

The article concludes, “... as it stands, the very notions of fact and truth are employed in American politics as much to distort as to reveal. And until the voting public demands something else, not just from the politicians they oppose but also from the ones they support, there is little reason to suspect that [it] will change.”

That also goes for tribal and other elections as well. And now you know the rez of the story.  
Doksha (later) ...

Stop Playing Chicken With Voters

BY JOHN B. ANDERSON

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It’s election time, and once again we’re hearing an epithet so often applied to third-party presidential candidates: “spoiler.”

I heard it in 1980, when my face was pinned on dart boards by angry Democrats who accused me of helping Ronald Reagan beat Jimmy Carter. Ross Perot and Ralph Nader were also attacked for daring to introduce new ideas and approaches to voters.

This year’s targets are former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson of the Libertarian Party, former Virginia Congressman Virgil Goode of the Constitution Party and the Green Party’s Jill Stein. As former Republicans, Johnson and Goode have faced particularly vigorous efforts to deny them spots on state ballots. All three candidates were blocked from participating in presidential debates.

The problem is that under current state laws, presidential candidates are able to win all of a state’s electoral votes with a minority of the vote. In 1992, Ross Perot’s strong performance led to only one state being won with more than 50 percent of the vote. In 2000, Al Gore lost Florida and the presidency by 537 votes even as Ralph Nader won more than 181 times that margin in the state.

Finger-pointing about “spoilers” happens in states too. The most surprising example is in Maine, where the Democrats’ U.S. Senate nominee trails a Republican and independent Angus King. Now some Democrats are asking their nominee to drop out in order to avoid a vote-split — well aware that in 2010, a Republican defeated a moderate independent with just 39 percent, with the Democrat again in the “spoiler” split in third.

Because of the potential of split votes, plurality voting forces many Americans to vote for a lesser choice candidate rather than one they actually want. Voters who refuse to compromise may perversely help elect the candidate they dislike the most. Either way, they lose.

It’s time for major party leaders to stop playing chicken with voters and instead uphold majority rule with a straightforward reform. Instant runoff voting (IRV) would allow Americans to achieve the basic goal of representative democracy — electing the candidate with the most support — while ending the concept of “spoiler.”

With IRV, voters get to rank candidates in order of choice: first, second and third. A candidate can win with a majority of first choices. If there’s no majority winner, the last place candidate is eliminated, and that candidate’s backers have their votes added to the totals of their compromise choice. This process continues until there’s a majority winner.

IRV is a proven voting method. It’s used to elect Ireland’s president, London’s mayor and Australia’s House of Representatives. American cities using IRV include Oakland, Calif.; San Francisco; Minneapolis; St. Paul, Minn.; and Portland, Maine. New voting machines are making IRV all the easier to implement.

Traditional runoffs provide another reform option. States could hold a September first round and a November runoff between the top two candidates. Runoffs are more costly and complicated than asking voters to indicate a second and third choice, but still better than the status quo.

So the next time you hear a politician talk about “spoilers,” tell them to stop complaining and start standing up for voters. Major party leaders have nothing to fear if truly believing in their own ability to win electoral majorities. Let’s have IRV in our presidential elections by 2016.

*John B. Anderson, a former congressman from Illinois, was an independent candidate for president in 1980 and serves on the board of FairVote, a nonpartisan electoral reform organization. Readers may write to him at FairVote, 6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 610, Takoma Park, Md. 20912; website: www.fairvote.org.*

YOUR LETTERS

Wired For Success

Wire Me Awake Founders

Wire Me Awake, a one day conference, was held in Yankton in early October at the National Field Archery Association headquarters. We picked this location in part because of the innovative business style they bring to Yankton.

The conference focused on providing our region with an event to demonstrate and encourage collaboration and innovation through motivation. This was not a Techie conference, however technology is a big part of today’s world. We were able to bring in people who are doing innovative things right here in South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska. The conference was open to anyone.

We appreciate the ability to reach out to all those who attended, but especially want to recognize those students from Yankton High School and Mount Marty College who attended. These students have a distinct leg up by stretching themselves with an event like this. We also want to thank the local and regional media coverage of the event.

We look forward to providing continued motivation and opportunity to our region.

Online Opinion

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

LATEST RESULTS:

If a murderer’s execution was televised live, would you watch it?  
No ..... 67%  
Yes ..... 27%  
Not sure ..... 6%  
TOTAL VOTES CAST ..... 687  
*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. do away with the Electoral College for deciding its presidential elections?

To vote in the *Press & Dakotan’s* Internet poll, log on to our Web site at www.yankton.net.

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

George McGovern:  
The End Of An Era

The passing of former South Dakota Sen. George McGovern may mark the end of an era, not only in state history and national politics, but also in the broader conversation of what we want our politics, our lawmakers and, really, ourselves to be.

After McGovern died Sunday morning in Sioux Falls at age 90, accolades and eulogies poured out from all across the political and social spectrums. This reflected, beyond any question, a deep respect for a man many people of a certain era either idolized or disdained politically.

What stood out among many of the praises was the sense that McGovern was his own man, a decorated World War II pilot who was shaped by the extraordinary times in which he lived and fueled by a dynamic passion to make the world a better and more humane place.

He was a man of war who became a fighter for peace, and this was not a contradiction. Instead, it was a lesson he learned and carried with him to his last breath.

He was a visionary of sorts, and politically speaking, it was a double-edged sword.

The first line of McGovern’s obituary refers to his ill-fated 1972 presidential run. He won the Democratic nomination, and what followed was an epic political slaughter at the hands of Richard Nixon — at a moment when Watergate was only on the periphery of our attentions. In retrospect, McGovern was an idealist who tapped into a counterculture energy, but he was the wrong candidate at the wrong time. The nation was bitterly divided in the shadow of the polarizing Vietnam War and in the wake of the turbulent 1960s. We were deep in the Cold War with the Soviet Union, and his ideas of immediately withdrawing our troops from Southeast Asia and slashing defense spending were militarily and economically unrealistic to many people. Also, McGovern’s campaign was a train wreck, derailling any meager hope of victory he might have had before he could even leave the station.

Through all this, McGovern emerged as a symbol. To liberals, he was a beacon of values that transcended political posturing; to conservatives, he represented everything that was wrong with the political left.

But McGovern was also prescient. In 1972, he briefly proposed the idea of giving every man, woman and child in the country \$1,000, for which he was roundly ridiculed; however, the idea acknowledged the gap between rich and poor, which has widened immensely since. During a brief, long-shot presidential run in 1984, McGovern championed the importance of family farmers, telling the nation that without them, we’d all find out what the price of food *really* was. Who could argue with that now? The anti-war candidate of 1972 later became a tough critic of the Iraq war and then urged President Obama to bring the troops home from Afghanistan.

McGovern remained steadfastly true to his conscience, which drove him to seek a better — and better-led — world. The one-time seminary student saw hunger as one of the roots of global instability and human suffering, and he never relented in fighting that evil.

We may rarely see the likes of such political figures again. Certainly, McGovern played the political game like anyone else, as anyone who climbs so far must. But he could reach across the ideological aisle, too. He could also take resolute stands. There are too many politicians now who seem too mindful of party lines and of their own political futures to, for instance, tell the U.S. Senate that “this chamber reeks of blood,” as he did in condemning the funding for the Vietnam war in a 1970 speech. Also, many of these lawmakers wouldn’t devote so much energy and so many decades to humanitarian causes that really offer little gain in political terms.

George McGovern’s life as a servant may stand as a reflection of what Abraham Lincoln referred to in his first inaugural address when calling upon “the better angels of our nature” to do the right thing for the nation. That’s what McGovern did, from battling the forces of darkness in World War II to battling empty stomachs and starving minds until the end of his life. And for that, he will be missed and very long remembered.

kmh

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Oct. 23, the 297th day of 2012. There are 69 days left in the year.

**Today’s Highlight in History:** On Oct. 23, 1942, during World War II, Britain launched a major offensive against Axis forces at El Alamein in Egypt, resulting in an Allied victory.

**On this date:** In 1862, King Otto of Greece was deposed in a revolt.

In 1915, tens of thousands of women marched in New York City, demanding the right to vote.

In 1932, comedian Fred Allen began his first regular radio show for CBS, “The Linit Bath Club Revue.”

In 1935, mobster Dutch Schultz, 34, was shot and mortally wounded with three other men during a gangland hit at the Palace Chophouse in Newark, N.J. (Schultz died the following day.)

In 1954, West Germany was invited to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which it did the following year.

In 1956, a student-sparked revolt against Hungary’s Communist rule began; as the revolution spread, Soviet forces started entering the country, and the uprising was put down within weeks.

In 1972, the musical “Pippin” opened on Broadway.

In 1980, the resignation of Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin was announced.

In 1983, 241 U.S. service members, most of them Marines, were killed in a suicide truck-bombing at Beirut International Airport in Lebanon; a near-simultaneous attack on French forces killed 58 paratroopers.

In 1987, the U.S. Senate rejected, 58-42, the Supreme Court nomination of Robert H. Bork.

In 1992, Japanese Emperor Akihito began a visit to China, the first by a Japanese monarch.

In 1995, a jury in Houston convicted Yolanda Saldívar of murdering Tejano singing star Selena. (Saldívar is serving a life prison sentence.)

**Ten years ago:** Gunmen seized a crowded Moscow theater, taking hundreds hostage and threatening to kill their captives unless the Russian army pulled out of Chechnya. President George W. Bush signed the biggest military spending increase since Ronald Reagan’s administration — a \$355.5 billion package. Broadway librettist Adolph Green died in New York at age 87. The San Francisco Giants edged

the Anaheim Angels, 4-3, to tie the World Series at two games each.

**Five years ago:** Evacuations due to out-of-control wildfires in Southern California topped 500,000; President George W. Bush declared a federal emergency for seven counties. Shuttle Discovery and its crew of seven thundered into orbit for a complex space station construction mission.

**One year ago:** Libya’s interim rulers declared the country liberated, formally marking the end of Moammar Gadhafi’s 42-year tyranny. A 7.2-magnitude earthquake strikes eastern Turkey, killing some 600 people. Tim Tebow rallied the Broncos for two touchdowns in the final 2:44 of the fourth quarter to force overtime, and Matt Prater’s 52-yard field goal gave Denver an improbable 18-15 victory over the stunned Miami Dolphins. The Texas Rangers evened the World Series at two games apiece, shutting out the St. Louis Cardinals 4-0.

**Today’s Birthdays:** Baseball Hall of Famer and former U.S. Senator Jim Bunning, R-Ky., is 81. Movie director Philip Kaufman is 76. Soccer great Pele (pay-lay) is 72. Rhythm-and-blues singer Barbara Ann Hawkins (The Dixie Cups) is 69. ABC News investigative reporter Brian Ross is 64. Actor Michael Rupert is 61. Movie director Ang Lee is 58. Jazz singer Dianne Reeves is 56. Country singer Dwight Yoakam is 56. Community activist Martin Luther King III is 55. Movie director Sam Raimi is 53. Parodist “Weird Al” Yankovic is 53. Rock musician Robert Trujillo (Metallica) is 48. Christian/jazz singer David Thomas (Take 6) is 46. Rock musician Brian Nevins (Big Head Todd and the Monsters) is 46. Country-musician Junior Bryant is 44. Actor Jon Huertas is 43. Movie director Chris Weitz is 43. CNN medical reporter Dr. Sanjay Gupta is 43. Country singer Jimmy Wayne is 40. Actress Vivian Bang (TV: “Sullivan & Son”) is 39. Rock musician Eric Bass (Shinedown) is 38. TV personality and host Cat Deeley is 36. Actor Ryan Reynolds is 36. Rock singer Matthew Shultz (Cage the Elephant) is 29. Actress Masiela Lusha is 27. Actress Briana Evigan is 26. Actress Jessica Stroup is 26.

Thought for Today: “Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind.” — Bertrand Russell, English philosopher (1872-1970).

FROM THE BIBLE

*This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your promise gives me life. Psalm 119:50. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*

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