



Losing George McGovern

BY KELLY HERTZ

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For the sake of balance, as well as to give me a fixed point from which to navigate here, I need to point out that there were a lot of people who didn't like George McGovern, once upon a time.

They didn't like him in 1972 when he ran for president and lost to Richard Nixon. They despised his brand of prairie populism, damned him as a liberal so-and-so. They laughed at McGovern's brief idea of giving \$1,000 to every person in the country. (When the trickle-down tax cuts a decade later gave millions to major companies and relative pennies to the middle class, these same people were probably just fine with that.)

They chortled with glee in 1980 when McGovern was ousted from the Senate in the great conservative tidal wave. They were done with him, they figured. Done with him for good.

And many of them probably still had little good to say about McGovern when he died in Sioux Falls last Sunday at age 90.

These bitter feelings were part of the former South Dakota senator's legacy: I encountered them all the time back in the day.

I bring this up because, since McGovern's death, I've come across a swarm of accounts that praised the former South Dakota senator in the most heartfelt terms. Many were from journalists and politicians who professed that McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign was what really got them interested in politics, or it impacted them in ways that have never left them.

McGovern may have had more influence on a generation of people and on a line of political thinking than any loser of a presidential campaign has ever had.

Perhaps that's the best measure of the man as a politician. He brought something to the table that stirred people. It was a passion and a compassion. It was a commitment to peace amid the clatter of war. It was a soul-bearing honesty that declared the emperor had no clothes and this is what we had to do about it. It was a warm thoughtfulness that practically cast McGovern as a saint to American liberalism.

But I also suspect McGovern may have been an accidental icon, at least in part. All those accounts by people saying they first got interested in politics because of McGovern's presidential quest suggest there was something more there than the platform. It was probably a matter of timing, as McGovern's candidacy caught a wave of Baby Boomers who were emerging from the disillusioning 1960s and looking for



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a fresh light of hope. The ministerial, soft-spoken McGovern, a decorated World War II veteran, seemed like an unlikely counterculture lightning rod, but he was transformed into one. And he was also crucified as one by opponents who cast him in the most radical terms possible.

Ultimately, McGovern's 1972 campaign was a disaster: an idealistic crusade that was poorly run and poorly funded. He made many mistakes in his battle against Nixon, and the results showed it. But honestly, those errors pale in comparison to the mistakes Nixon committed and for which he will forever be judged.

Now, it seems like a safe prediction that we may never see a politician like McGovern again, and I don't mean that in terms of his ideology. Instead, we will probably never again see a quiet, plain-spoken soul like McGovern rise so far up the political ladder and capture so many imaginations. It won't matter if that person is a Democrat or a Republican, a conservative or a liberal, or somewhere in between.

Look at the kind of personalities that dominate modern politics. They are charismatic figures whose words explode like fireworks across the heavens or who serve up the reddest of red meat to their partisans. They have the sound bite down to a science. They talk a lot but carefully don't say too much, or they will tell you what you want to hear before they tell the next person what he or she wants to hear. They are usually telegenic and they communicate in poll-tested talking points, not in a conversational depth.

McGovern did a lot for this country well into the 21st century as he battled hunger, ignorance and war until the very last, but as a politician, he really didn't fit in this age anymore. A McGovern candidacy now would be eaten alive by the cable news pundits, and sliced and diced by the radio screamers. The right would have railed against his liberalism; the left would have howled because he wouldn't tear apart the right at every opportunity. There wouldn't be room for the dialogue or the candor that were McGovern's strengths in another time and place.

That may say a lot about him, but it really says a lot more about the political landscape that has enveloped our democracy — one that we've allowed to take hold.

McGovern's ideals will endure, but his thoughtful political, quiet style may not. In these last days of an overlong, angry, divisive election cycle, the contrast seems achingly clear. And so, too, does the loss.

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz

Food Squeeze Tightening Around Us

BY PETER GOLDMARK

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We have drifted into a serious and fascinating global problem that will affect every human being on this planet: the food squeeze. For the first time in decades, we're on the verge of producing too little food to feed the planet.

As with all perfect storms, several forces are converging to create this danger. They include:

- Falling water tables, particularly in the three biggest food producers: the United States, India and China.
- Global warming-driven increases in temperatures and drought that reduce crop yield, as was dramatically the case here in the United States this summer.
- Slowdown in grain-productivity increases derived from technology breakthroughs, as new advances appear less powerful than the previous round.
- Growing population in the poorer countries.
- Soil erosion, in large part from overgrazing.
- The conversion of food stocks — largely corn — into biofuel for cars.
- Rising grain demand as people around the globe move up the food chain to middle-class diets with more meat and poultry.
- Overfishing of many of the world's fisheries.

Many of these trends are deeply rooted, long-term trends that will not be easily reversed. A new book by Lester Brown called "Full Planet, Empty Plates" tells us that over the past decade, world grain reserves have fallen by a third and food prices have doubled. Most Americans spend about 10 percent of their income on food. But millions of families in poor countries need to spend as much as 80 percent — and for them, a big increase in food prices can spell disaster. A recent survey by Save the Children in India reported that a quarter of Indian families experience foodless days. For them, the food squeeze has already begun.

The United States sits in an interesting position as the jaws of the squeeze begin to close around poor countries. American agriculture is enormously productive, and we still have some unused capacity. U.S. agricultural know-how has been the source of high-yield grains used around

the world. The United States is not far advanced in water conservation, so for our own sake we will have to get serious on that subject as well.

The world is fast becoming interdependent in terms of food economy. Asian countries are beginning to battle over that continent's rivers. Exports from the major food producers — including the United States, Europe, Canada, Brazil, Argentina and Australia — will be needed by the emerging economies and the poor countries of Asia and Africa. And along the way we are going to have to stabilize the planet's population and encourage people to eat only as much meat as they need, not more.

What do we need to do? The first steps are clear. We must build up global grain reserves so we can ride out sudden shocks and droughts, and prevent individual countries from shutting down exports when a bad crop season hits someone else. Russia and Vietnam, for example, both temporarily closed off exports in recent years, which sharpened the squeeze on grain importers who relied on them.

We need the food surplus countries, led by the United States, to start producing more food, sustainably, for the long haul. And the United States needs to stop the inefficient manufacture of biofuels from grains better suited to produce food. The grain turned into ethanol here in 2011 could have fed some 400 million people.

We also need all the countries of the world, especially those like Israel that have pioneered efficient drip irrigation, to pool their knowledge on water and soil conservation. Soil and water are the indispensable ingredients for food, and we need to make sure supplies of both are adequate and environmentally sustainable.

Oil-price spikes and shortages are one thing. Food spikes and shortages would be a hundred times more disruptive and dangerous. But we can avoid them if we address the food squeeze now.

Peter Goldmark, a former budget director of New York State and former publisher of the International Herald Tribune, headed the climate program at the Environmental Defense Fund. He wrote this for Newsday.

they should be bound the same benefits of any STATE worker, healthcare, employee pension plan etc. Of course, we need to provide adequate housing allowance and wage based on performance.

Provide a job description of what is expected of them along with an annual evaluation to be administered by the state senators and representatives, who would derive input from constituents. An important question should be asked "What have you done to help America?" next: "What have you done to help South Dakotans?" They should know that WE are not afraid of a revote, if they are not representing US.

"What if" other states followed OUR example? WE might get people in Congress that care for their state and not the money and perks.

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OPINION | WE SAY

BID Business



THUMBS UP to attempts this week to revive the effort to create a business improvement district (BID) in Yankton. The effort stalled out earlier this year as hotel owners had a difficult time coming to agreement on the concept. However, we cannot help but think of the many times we've stayed at hotels in other cities and paid a much higher tax than the \$2 per night fee being proposed here in order to support economic development or tourism efforts in those locales. It's time that Yankton took advantage of this taxing mechanism to do things that will attract more visitors to our community. Hopefully, the involved parties can find common ground to create the BID and implement the tax by April 1 as proposed.

Jacked Up!



THUMBS UP to WNAX broadcaster Steve Imming, who is being recognized today (Friday) by South Dakota State University as a non-alumnus for his service to the state. Imming served as the long-time voice for the Jackrabbits, particularly in football and men's basketball. Imming actually started his career working with another sport — greyhound racing — before taking the microphone for the Yankton radio station. Through Imming's work, thousands of SDSU fans from across the Midwest, and later around the world thanks to the Internet, enjoyed the action of their beloved Jackrabbits. It's a well-deserved honor for the St. Louis native and Creighton University graduate.

Shining Schools



THUMBS UP to the Scotland and Freeman high schools, along with Armour, Corsica, Hurley and Avon elementary schools, that were listed among 30 schools receiving "exemplary" ratings in South Dakota. Scotland and Freeman topped the list of high schools with respective scores of 90.80 and 87.84. The state identified 23 elementary and middle schools and seven high schools as exemplary. The ratings were based on the new School Performance Index, which takes into account math and reading scores, along with attendance rates for elementary and middle schools and graduation rates and ACT scores for high schools. These local schools can definitely be found at the head of the class.

Snow What?



THUMBS DOWN to the arrival of the first snow of the "winter season" — or specifically, those of us who weren't ready for it. A lot of people probably looked out the window Thursday morning, saw the 1 inch (though quickly melting) blanket of snowfall on the ground and began looking for their wintry weaponry: gloves, ice scraper, scarves, etc. So, Thursday's snow event was a little reminder to get ready for what is — or may be — to come. However, given the dire lack of moisture and the need for more before next spring, we hope this is the first of several rude awakenings we get in the months to come.

ONLINE OPINION

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Should the U.S. do away with the Electoral College for deciding its presidential elections?
Yes 72%
No 24%
Not sure 4%
TOTAL VOTES CAST 678
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 District 18 House race?

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 Friday, Oct. 26, the 300th day of 2012. There are 66 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 26, 1942, Japanese planes badly damaged the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet* in the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands during World War II. (The *Hornet* sank early the next morning; the battle itself ended in a tactical victory for Japan, but ultimately a strategic win for the Allies.)

On this date: In 1774, the First Continental Congress adjourned in Philadelphia.

In 1825, the Erie Canal opened in upstate New York, connecting Lake Erie and the Hudson River.

In 1861, the legendary Pony Express officially ceased operations, giving way to the transcontinental telegraph. (The last run of the Pony Express was completed the following month.)

In 1881, the "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" took place in Tombstone, Ariz.

In 1902, women's rights pioneer Elizabeth Cady Stanton died in New York at age 86.

In 1921, the Chicago Theatre, billed as "the Wonder Theatre of the World," first opened.

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman signed a measure raising the minimum wage from 40 to 75 cents an hour.

In 1958, Pan American Airways flew its first Boeing 707 jetliner from New York to Paris in 8 hours and 41 minutes.

In 1962, the thriller "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?," starring Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, had its premiere in New York.

In 1972, national security adviser Henry Kissinger declared, "Peace is at hand" in Vietnam. Aviation innovator Igor Sikorsky died in Easton, Conn., at age 83.

In 1979, South Korean President Park Chung-hee was shot to death during a dinner party along with his chief bodyguard by the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, Kim Jae-kyu, who was later executed.

In 1982, the medical drama "St. Elsewhere" premiered on NBC.

Ten years ago: The hostage siege by Chechen rebels at a Moscow theater ended with 129 of the 800-plus captives dead, most from a knockout gas used by Russian special forces who stormed the theater; 41 rebels also died. Tens of thousands of anti-war protesters circled the

White House after Jesse Jackson and other speakers denounced the Bush administration's Iraq policies. The Anaheim Angels defeated the San Francisco Giants 6-5 in Game 6 of the World Series, forcing a seventh and final showdown.

Five years ago: A federal jury in Kansas City, Mo., decided that Lisa Montgomery, convicted of killing expectant mother Bobbie Jo Stinnett and cutting the baby from her womb, should receive the death penalty. The Georgia Supreme Court freed Genarlow Wilson, saying his 10-year sentence for consensual oral sex with another teenager, a 15-year-old girl, was cruel and unusual punishment. Friedman Paul Erhardt, television's "Chef Tell," died in Upper Black Eddy, Pa., at age 63.

One year ago: President Barack Obama recalled his struggles with student loan debt as he unveiled a plan at the University of Colorado Denver that could give millions of young people some relief on their payments. In a verdict that disappointed pro-democracy activists, two Egyptian policemen who beat a man to death were convicted of the lesser charge of manslaughter and given a relatively light sentence in a case that helped spark Egypt's uprising.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Edward Brooke III, R-Mass., is 93. Actress Shelley Morrison is 76. Actor Bob Hoskins is 70. Author Pat Conroy is 67. Actress Jaclyn Smith is 67. TV host Pat Sajak is 66. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is 65. Singer Maggie Roche (The Roches) is 61. Musician Bootsy Collins is 61. Actor James Pickens Jr. is 60. Rock musician Keith Strickland (The B-52's) is 59. Actor D.W. Moffett is 58. Actress Rita Wilson is 56. The president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, is 53. Actor Dylan McDermott is 51. Actor Cary Elwes is 50. Singer Natalie Merchant is 49. Country singer Keith Urban is 45. Actor Tom Cavanagh is 44. Actress Rosemarie DeWitt is 41. Actor Anthony Rapp is 41. Writer-producer Seth MacFarlane (TV: "Family Guy") is 39. Actress Lennon Parham is 37. Actor Hal Ozsan is 36. Actor Jon Heder is 35. Singer Mark Barry (BBMak) is 34. Olympic silver medal figure skater Sasha Cohen is 28.

Thought for Today: "Facts are many, but the truth is one." — Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Indian Nobel Prize-winning poet (1861-1941).

FROM THE BIBLE

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory, for the sake of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness! Psalm 115:1. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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