

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

The Name Game And Football Defiance

The Washington "Redskins" are not going away. Neither is the controversy surrounding the team's nickname.

At this moment, despite the latest storm of controversy being spun over the nickname, there is no compelling (read: financial) reason for the team to change gears and, more importantly, enrage its fans by doing away with an archaic and insensitive name.

Do we like the nickname? Not really. When you consider its blatant reference in a vacuum, it certainly feels like a racist label. (But we also recognize the possibility that the name is a racial reference but not specifically intended to be racist. Whether that matters or not is another issue.)

So, it does come across as an "insult" and a "slur," as NBC sports personality Bob Costas declared Sunday night in a televised commentary during halftime of Washington's game with the Dallas Cowboys. Also, there are news outlets that refuse to use their word "Redskins" in their reporting, referring to them simply as "Washington" or the "Washington football team."

In all honesty, many of us are probably guilty of being numb to the reference. Washington's NFL team has been called the Redskins for as long as most of us can remember. It has never really bothered us before, and only lately has it occurred to some among us that maybe it's a problem.

Of course, what matters more is what the Native American population thinks about the name. An oft-cited 2004 Annenberg Institute survey found that about 90 percent of Native Americans polled did not find the name offensive. However, it's also clear that while some Native Americans don't seem to mind the nickname, those who do usually find it extremely upsetting.

But the name's not going away because neither the team's ownership nor its fans want to make the change.

Team owner Dan Snyder, who insists the name is meant to be respectful and not at all derogatory, has been defiant in his insistence that the nickname will not change. "We'll never change the name. It's that simple. NEVER — you can use caps," Snyder told *USA Today* back in May.

Most Washington fans are also dead set against changing the name. For them, the autumnal ritual of NFL football has included singing "Hail to the Redskins" after every touchdown for more than 70 years.

And since this is a free country — and since this isn't the NCAA that Snyder is dealing with (as University of North Dakota fans might point out) — the name is staying put.

However, it WILL change on the day that the fans want it changed. The name will continue because changing it now would alienate much of Washington's fan base. And those people are the ones who spend the money at the turnstiles and inside the stadiums. They're the ones who drive the team economically.

It will stay that way until that fan reaction turns around, and they decide they cannot stomach the name any longer and stay away in protest. If that ever happens, we guarantee you the nickname "Redskins" will disappear.

Until that day, this issue serves as little more than a handy point over which we can argue and discuss cultural differences and sensibilities. That's actually practical, and perhaps that can one day lead to a change in attitudes and facilitate a change in the team's nickname. Until then, it appears to be a headline we can talk about, and little else.

kmh

THE VIEWS PAGE

■ The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** Views page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters to the editor on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 16, the 289th day of 2013. There are 76 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 16, 1962, President John F. Kennedy was informed by national security adviser McGeorge Bundy that reconnaissance photographs had revealed the presence of missile bases in Cuba.

On this date: In 1793, during the French Revolution, Marie Antoinette, the queen of France, was beheaded. In 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown led a group of 21 men in a raid on Harpers Ferry in western Virginia. (Ten of Brown's men were killed and five escaped. Brown and six followers ended up being captured; all were executed.)

In 1901, Booker T. Washington dined at the White House as the guest of President Theodore Roosevelt, whose invitation to the black educator sparked controversy.

In 1912, the Boston Red Sox won the World Series, defeating the New York Giants in Game 8, 3-2 (Game 2 had ended in a tie on account of darkness).

In 1942, the ballet "Rodeo," with music by Aaron Copland and choreography by Agnes de Mille, premiered at New York's Metropolitan Opera House.

In 1943, Chicago Mayor Edward J. Kelly officially opened the city's new subway system during a ceremony at the State and Madison street station.

In 1952, the Charles Chaplin film "Limelight" premiered in London.

In 1962, the New York Yankees won the World Series, defeating the San Francisco Giants in Game 7 at Candlestick Park, 1-0.

In 1972, a twin-engine plane carrying U.S. House Majority Leader Hale Boggs, D-La., and U.S. Rep. Nick Begich, D-Alaska, disappeared while flying over a remote region of Alaska; the aircraft was never found.

In 1978, the College of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church chose Cardinal Karol Wojtyla to be the new pope; he took the name John Paul II.

In 1987, a 58-1/2-hour drama in Midland, Texas, ended happily as rescuers freed Jessica McClure, an 18-month-old girl trapped in an abandoned well.

In 1991, a deadly shooting rampage took place in Killeen, Texas, as George Hennard opened fire at a Luby's Cafeteria, killing 23 people before taking his own life.

Ten years ago: The U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a reso-

lution aimed at attracting more troops and money to help stabilize Iraq and speed its independence. Three American soldiers were killed during a clash at a Shiite Muslim cleric's headquarters in Karbala. Pope John Paul II celebrated his 25 years as pontiff before a huge crowd in St. Peter's Square. The New York Yankees won the American League Championship Series, defeating the Boston Red Sox 6-5 in Game 7.

Five years ago: A volatile Wall Street pulled off another stunning U-turn, transforming a 380-point loss for the Dow Jones industrial average into a 401-point gain.

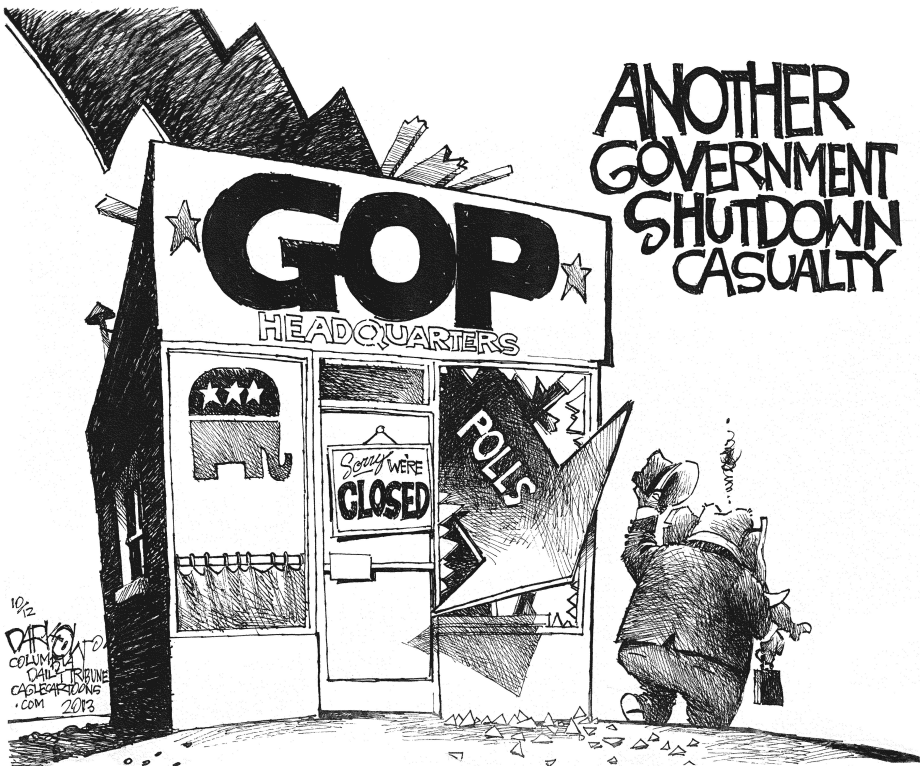
One year ago: With national polls showing a dead heat three weeks before Election Day, President Barack Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney met for their second debate. During the town-hall-style encounter in suburban New York, Obama accused Romney of favoring a "one-point plan" to help the rich at the expense of the middle class, while Romney countered by saying "the middle class has been crushed over the last four years." The Detroit Tigers beat the New York Yankees 2-1 to go up 3-0 in the American League Championship Series.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Angela Lansbury is 88. Author Gunter Grass is 86. Actor-producer Tony Anthony is 76. Actor Barry Corbin is 73. Sportscaster Tim McCarver is 72. Rock musician C.F. Turner (Bachman-Turner Overdrive) is 70. Actress Suzanne Somers is 67. Rock singer-musician Bob Weir is 66. Producer-director David Zucker is 66. Record company executive Jim Ed Norman is 65. Actor Daniel Gerroll is 62. Actor Morgan Stevens is 62. Actress Martha Smith is 61. Comedian-actor Andy Kindler is 57. Actor-director Tim Robbins is 55. Actor-musician Gary Kemp is 54. Singer-musician Bob Mould is 53. Actor Randy Vasquez is 52. Rock musician Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers) is 51. Actor Todd Stashwick is 45. Jazz musician Roy Hargrove is 44. Actress Terri J. Vaughn is 44. Singer Wendy Wilson (Wilson Phillips) is 44. Rapper B-Rock (B-Rock and the Bizz) is 42. Rock singer Chad Gray (Mudvayne) is 42. Actor Paul Sparks is 42. Actress Kellie Martin is 38. Singer John Mayer is 36. Actor Jeremy Jackson is 33. Actress Caterina Scorsone is 33. Actress Brea Grant is 32.

Thought for Today: "To walk into history is to be free at once, to be at large among people." — Elizabeth Bowen, Irish-born author (1899-1973).

FROM THE BIBLE

Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength. Nehemiah 8:10. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



Tea Party Republicans Make A Big Mistake

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

Democrats aren't unscathed from these past weeks of shuttered government and potential default, but polls show Republicans have taken a shellacking.

Republicans who tried to hijack America didn't understand one very basic thing. While most Americans don't like big government, Americans revere our system of government. That's why even though a majority still disapprove of the Affordable Care Act, a majority also disapproved of Republican tactics for repealing or delaying it.

Government itself has never been popular in America except during palpable crises such as war or deep depression. The nation was founded in a revolution against an abusive government — that was what the original Tea Party was all about — and that distrust is in our genes.

If you're on the left, you worry about the military-industrial-congressional complex that's spending zillions of dollars creating new weapons of mass destruction, spying on Americans and killing innocents abroad. And you don't like government interfering in your sex life, telling you how and when you can have an abortion, whom you can marry.

If you're on the right, you worry about taxes and regulations stifling innovation, out-of-control bureaucrats infringing on your freedom, and government deficits as far as the eye can see.

So when Tea Party Republicans, bankrolled by a handful of billionaires, began calling the Affordable Care Act a "wholesale takeover of American health care," many Americans were inclined to believe them.

Health care is such a huge and complicated system, affecting us and our families so intimately, that our inherent distrust of government makes us instinctively wary. It's no accident we're still the only advanced nation not to have universal health care. Franklin D. Roosevelt decided against adding it to his plan for Social Security because he didn't want to jeopardize the rest of the program; subsequent presidents never got close, at least until Obama.

The Tea Party Republicans' mistake was to assume that Americans' distrust of big government and, by extension, the Affordable Care Act would allow them to ride roughshod over the process we have for making laws.

Their double-barreled threat to shut down the government and cause the United States to default on its obligations if the Affordable Care Act isn't repealed or at least delayed is a direct assault on our system of government. If even unpopular laws can be gutted by a majority in one house of Congress holding the rest of government hostage, there's no end to it. No law on the books will be safe.

While most of us distrust government, we're indelibly proud of our system of government.

Robert
REICH

We like to think it's just about the best system in the world. We don't much like politicians, but we canonize the Founding Fathers, the framers of the Constitution.

And we revere the fading parchment on which the Constitution is written. When we pledge allegiance to the United States, we bind ourselves to that system of government.

Tea Partiers have begun sounding like traitors to the system, radicals for whom the end they seek justifies whatever means they think necessary to achieve it. As such, they began losing support even among Americans who had bought their view of the Affordable Care Act.

So they've had to back down, and soon, hopefully, we can move to the next stage — negotiating over the size of government. That should be stronger ground for the Tea Partiers.

But the president and the Democrats (and any moderate Republican who dares show his face) can still gain ground by framing the question properly. The size of government isn't the real issue. It's who government is for. The best way to reduce future budget deficits is to ensure it's for all of us and not just a privileged few.

That means revenues should be raised from the wealthy, who have never been wealthier — limiting their deductions and tax credits, closing loopholes like "carried interest," and taxing financial transactions.

Spending should be cut by ending corporate welfare — terminating tax subsidies to oil and gas, ballooning payments to agribusiness, sweetheart deals for military contractors, and the "too big to fail" subsidy for Wall Street's biggest banks.

Future health-care costs should be contained by using the government's bargaining leverage over providers (through Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act) to force a shift from fee-for-service to payments-for-healthy-outcomes. And we should spend more on high-quality education and infrastructure for everyone.

Americans distrust big government and always will. There's ample reason — especially given the huge sums now bankrolling politicians, coming from a relative handful of billionaires, big corporations and Wall Street. But we love our system of government. That's what must be strengthened.

By using tactics perceived to violate that system, the Tea Partiers have overplayed their hand. If they don't stop their recklessness, they'll be out of the game.

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of "Beyond Outrage," now available in paperback. His new film, "Inequality for All," was released last month. He blogs at www.robertreich.org.

YOUR LETTERS

Conversation Piece

Michael A. Rossiter, Yankton

I found this old manuscript record of a conversation between James Madison and Benjamin Franklin.

Madison: "Mr. Franklin, do you realize what we have just done?"

Franklin: "I believe that I do Mr. Madison. But, pray, what do you think we have just done?"

Madison: "Well, Mr. Franklin, if one single political party elects 50 percent plus one of the House of Representatives, and if 50 percent plus 1 of that party could control the party caucus; one-fourth of the House could control the purse of all three branches of the federal government. It could shut the United States government all down. That is what we have done Mr. Franklin!"

Franklin: "Nonsense Mr. Madison. Nobody would be that stupid."

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Fountain Help

Keep Yankton Beautiful

The Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Committee hosted a Growth/Partnership ribbon cutting for Keep Yankton Beautiful/City of Yankton Parks & Recreation's fountain at Westside Park. If you have not had a chance to see the fountain, during the day or at night with the lights on, make sure you put it on the things to see and do. Thank you to the following sponsors that helped make this happen: Mount Marty College, Clark and Agnes Eide, The Benedictine Sisters, Northwestern Energy, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Dr. Jon C. Baumann, Riverfront Dental, Tom & Theresa Nelson, Eileen Shea, Merle & Virginia Larson, Paul's Kwik Stop.

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