

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

CONTACT US

PHONE:
(605) 665-7811
(800) 743-2968
NEWS FAX:
(605) 665-1721
ADVERTISING FAX:
(605) 665-0288
WEBSITE:
www.yankton.net
EMAIL ADDRESS:
news@yankton.net

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Published Daily

Monday-Saturday

Periodicals postage
paid at Yankton,
South Dakota, under
the act of March 3,
1979.

Weekly Dakotian
established June 6,
1861. Yankton Daily
Press and Dakotian
established April 26,
1875.

Postmaster: Send
address changes to
Yankton Daily Press
& Dakotian, 319 Wal-
nut, Yankton, SD
57078.

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The Yankton Daily
Press & Dakotian is a
member of the Associ-
ated Press, the Inland
Daily Press Associa-
tion and the South
Dakota Newspaper
Association. The Asso-
ciated Press is entitled
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the local news printed
in this newspaper.

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SUBSCRIPTION

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CARRIER DELIVERY
1-month \$12.09
3 months . . . \$36.27
6 months . . . \$72.53
1-year \$133.09

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Lunching Within
The Guidelines

ARGUS LEADER, **Sioux Falls (Oct. 12):** These days, it's easy to blame the federal government for aggravating our lives.

Here's one example: The new school lunch program standards unveiled last year. The healthier eating guidelines, effective at the start of last school year, set limits on calories and salt in the lunches. They also phased in more whole grains and required fruits and vegetables to be included in the menus daily.

The problem is many students just didn't like the foods being served.

So, many observers quickly blamed the federal program for the problems in implementation. Some parents started supplementing their children's lunches or replacing the meals altogether with foods their kids would eat.

That's certainly one corrective avenue to take.

But it's refreshing to see some school districts take a different approach. Maybe, the school officials said, if we work at it just a little — add a dose of ranch dressing here and there for example — we can get our students to try new foods and to eat the healthier meals.

In Baltic, for example, school lunch supervisors tinkered with the menus, and presented more familiar foods to kids more often. And meal planners started serving one-ounce servings of fat-free ranch dressing with the carrot sticks and broccoli.

In Tea, when students refused to try green peppers, refried beans and garbanzo beans, the school lunch officials also went back to a more familiar list of vegetables. And they're marketing the foods differently, changing the names of some offerings to entice kids to try them.

Some of their tactics seem to be working. And that's the point.

The standards set up in the National School Lunch program are designed to be healthier for children. We cannot deny that childhood obesity is a problem in our society. Healthier eating habits, even small bites at a time, will help these young people live longer, happier lives.

It's a goal that's certainly worthy of effort by school districts. We applaud those school lunch officials who haven't thrown up their hands and blamed the federal government or simply blamed the media for the problems with the reception and implementation of the healthier lunch guidelines.

They're being imaginative. They're communicating with parents, and they're working out healthier eating solutions.

Wouldn't it be nice if all federal government disagreements could end in compromises such as these?

OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Oct. 21, the 294th day of 2013. There are 71 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 21, 1879, Thomas Edison perfected a workable electric light at his laboratory in Menlo Park, N.J.

On this date: In 1797, the U.S. Navy frigate *Constitution*, also known as "*Old Ironsides*," was christened in Boston's harbor.

In 1805, a British fleet commanded by Adm. Horatio Nelson defeated a French-Spanish fleet in the Battle of Trafalgar, Nelson, however, was killed.

In 1917, members of the 1st Division of the U.S. Army training in Luneville, France, became the first Americans to see action on the front lines of World War I.

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. troops captured the German city of Aachen.

In 1959, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, opened to the public in New York.

In 1960, Democrat John F. Kennedy and Republican Richard M. Nixon clashed in their fourth and final presidential debate in New York.

In 1962, the Seattle World's Fair closed after six months and nearly 10 million visitors. (President John F. Kennedy, scheduled to attend the closing ceremony, canceled because of what was described as a "head cold"; the actual reason turned out to be the Cuban Missile Crisis.)

In 1967, the Israeli destroyer *INS Eilat* was sunk by Egyptian missile boats near Port Said; 47 Israeli crew members were lost.

In 1969, beat poet and author Jack Kerouac died in St. Petersburg, Fla., at age 47.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon nominated Lewis F. Powell and William H. Rehnquist to the U.S. Supreme Court. (Both nominees were confirmed.)

In 1986, pro-Iranian kidnappers in Lebanon abducted American Edward Tracy (he was released in August 1991).

In 1991, American hostage Jesse Turner was freed by his kidnappers in Lebanon after nearly five years in captivity.

Ten years ago: Invoking a hastily-passed law, Florida Governor Jeb Bush ordered a feeding tube inserted into Terry Schiavo, a brain-damaged woman at the center of a bitter right-to-die battle. The Senate

voted to ban the practice that critics call partial-birth abortion. The U.N. General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution demanding that Israel tear down a barrier jutting into the West Bank. Boston anti-busing activist Louise Day Hicks died at age 87. Actor Fred Berry died in Los Angeles at age 52. The New York Yankees pulled away from the Florida Marlins for a 6-1 victory and a 2-1 World Series lead.

Five years ago: Dozens of members of the Mongol motorcycle gang were arrested by federal agents in six states on a variety of charges following a three-year investigation in which undercover agents infiltrated the group. Iraq's Cabinet decided to ask the U.S. for changes to the draft agreement that would keep American troops there for three more years. The former prime minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra, was convicted in absentia of corruption and sentenced to two years in prison.

One year ago: Former senator and 1972 Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern died in South Dakota at the age of 90. A Wisconsin man, Radcliffe Haughton, opened fire at the spa where his wife worked, killing her and two others and wounding four other women before turning the gun on himself.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Joyce Randolph is 89. Author Ursula K. Le Guin is 84. Rock singer Manfred Mann is 73. Musician Steve Cropper (Booker T. & the MG's) is 72. Singer Elvin Bishop is 71. TV's Judge Judy Sheindlin is 71. Actor Everett McGill is 68. Musician Lee Loughnane (Chicago) is 67. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is 64. Musician Charlotte Caffey (The Go-Go's) is 60. Movie director Catherine Hardwicke is 58. Actress-author Carrie Fisher is 57. Singer Julian Cope is 56. Rock musician Steve Lukather (Toto) is 56. Actor Ken Watanabe is 54. Actress Melora Walters is 53. Rock musician Che (chay) Colovita Lemon is 43. Rock singer-musician Nick Oliveri (Mondo Generator) is 42. Christian rock musician Charlie Lowell (Jars of Clay) is 40. Actor Jeremy Miller is 37. Actor Will Estes is 35. Actor Michael McMullan is 35. Reality TV star Kim Kardashian is 33. Actor Matt Dallas is 31. Actor Aaron Tveit is 30.

Thought for Today: "A man is what he thinks about all day long." — Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, poet and philosopher (1803-1882).

FROM THE BIBLE

So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him." John 12:19.
Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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Capitol Notebook

Fewer Pheasants? State
Has Faced Cliffs Before

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Remember when South Dakota wasn't labeled as America's best place for hunting pheasants?

We've been blessed the past 25 years. But there is real worry this autumn.

The annual brood survey indicates the statewide population after the hatch was down 64 percent from 2012 and down 76 percent from the 10-year average.

The average of 1.51 pheasants per mile along the routes was the smallest since 1.81 in 1986.

That would put South Dakota below 3 million for the first time since 1989's estimated population of 2.7 million pheasants.

And so Gov. Dennis Daugaard plans a summit Dec. 6 in Huron.

During the early 1960s South Dakota had 10 million or more birds three seasons in a row. But by 1965 it was down to 3.3 million. The low point of modern times came in 1976 with 1.4 million.

The story of how South Dakota re-built as the pheasant center has many heroes. Mostly they are farmers and ranchers who put grass-land into the federal Conservation Reserve Program established in 1985 by Congress.

Another reason why pheasants prospered again was the man South Dakota voters chose for governor in 1986.

George Speaker Mickelson loved to hunt and fish. Under the banner of Pheasants for Everyone, he put his shoulder behind programs for rebuilding rural South Dakota as an autumn Mecca for pheasant hunters.

The walk-in program, started in 1988 by the state Game, Fish and Parks Department, pays landowners to allow public hunting on private land.

Another was the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. It provided cash for

many farmers and ranchers to reduce debt and invest in their operations.

Landowners received lump sums and pledged future proceeds from their federal CRP payments.

Mickelson put Clint Roberts in charge of CREP. The program was Roberts' idea.

Clint was a rancher who served one term in the U.S. House, before finishing second to George in the four-way primary for the Republican governor nomination in 1986.

After the election George and Clint went to Washington, D.C., for approval of CREP from U.S. Agriculture Secretary John Block, whom Clint knew while in Congress.

Through CRP and CREP and GFP and a variety of other federal programs, plus the spread of local chapters of the Pheasants Forever organization that began in Minnesota in 1982, pheasant hunting grew into a new golden age in South Dakota.

By 2007 state biologists estimated South Dakota had 11.9 million pheasants.

What's happened since then is rural economics.

A 2008 analysis by South Dakota State University faculty put the economic benefits of returning CRP land to production at four to six times more than remaining in CRP.

CRP enrollments declined from a peak of 1.8 million acres in 1997 to less than 1 million acres currently.

The small tracts — 20 acres here, 500 there — still being put into pheasant habitat through GFP and federal programs can't match the sweeping bottom-line decisions of producers converting grasslands to crops.

Agricultural management marches forward, and rural South Dakota looks its most prosperous in decades.

Management of pheasant habitat now needs to innovate too, just as George and Clint did some 25 years ago.

Problem Solved? No

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

Yay.
Yippee.
Woo hoo, even.

It was a nick of time rescue, like when Polly Pureheart is whisked off the railroad tracks right before the train comes barreling through, or the correct wire is snipped and the bomb timer stops counting down with just seconds left.

Last week, hours before a historic default, Congress finally stopped playing chicken with the world's largest economy and ended the government shutdown.

So ... hurray, right?
Huzzah, right?
Crisis averted, lessons learned, common sense restored. Everything's good, is it not?

Well, no. Not even close.
Pardon the pooping of the party, but it's hard to cheer the aversion of a crisis that:

A) Was entirely manufactured.

B) Will in all likelihood recur very soon.

This is what it has come to in Tea Party America: government of the crisis, by the crisis, for the crisis, government that lurches from emergency to emergency, accomplishing little, resolving less and generally behaving with all the thoughtful reflection of a toddler holding her breath until she gets her way.

Let no one claim this is no big deal because we've had shutdowns before. Let no one chirp that this is how things are supposed to work — checks and balances and all. Let none of us act as if it's anything but bizarre to see a militant faction in one chamber of the legislature bring government to a halt because it doesn't like a law.

Most of all, let us finally stop pretending this is only about that law, the Affordable Care Act, and the delusional claim that it will usher in socialism, communism and slavery, resurrect Vladimir Lenin and send Nazis marching down Pennsylvania Avenue.

Obamacare?

No, this is about Obamascare, the terror of what some still regard as alien and their consequent refusal, even five years in, to accept the legitimacy of a president twice elected with

Leonard
PITTS

nary a hanging chad in sight.

The only good news out of this 16-day debacle is that his refusal to kowtow to these bully-boy tactics suggests that the president does, indeed, have a spine, rumors to the contrary notwithstanding.

Repeat: That's the only good news. Anyone expecting the even better news that this closes the book on the Tea Party, given its abject failure to achieve its stated goal of defunding the Affordable Care Act, will be bitterly disappointed. These are true believers. True believers thrive on rejection.

Note that, even as other Republicans were sounding appropriately chastened, Tea Party activists were as-sailing the party for "surrender" and were disavowing regret. As the shutdown was going down in flames, Sen. Ted Cruz, a Tea Party stalwart, told

CNN, "Unfortunately, once again, it appears the Washington establishment is refusing to listen to the American people."

This, as polls show the American people's esteem for the GOP and the Tea Party at record lows and 62 percent of respondents were telling Gallup they wanted their representatives to compromise so the government could reopen. Gallup also tells us Americans now identify government dysfunction as this country's biggest problem.

The disconnect between what Cruz says the people are saying and what they are actually saying should surprise no one. The defining characteristic of the Tea People has always been their ability to convince themselves reality is whatever they need it to be.

Reality, after all, is not the point. Ideological purity is.

So we will likely return to this crossroads, or one very much like it. Any hope of avoiding that rests with the dwindling population of adults in the GOP and their ability to make their party realize what should have long ago been obvious.

They can have purity or they can have power. They cannot have both.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for The Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miami-herald.com.

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YOUR LETTERS

Students And Citizens

Michele Termansen, Yankton

I want to thank Derek Bartos on his great article about Josey Kaiser (*Press & Dakotan*, Oct. 12). The article speaks volumes about the

staff at Yankton High School and even more about our students.

It warms my heart that his classmates treat him so special and with respect regarding his special need. WE ARE raising another generation of great Yankton citizens!