

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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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 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078.

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1-year \$133.09
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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Sports Authority: Seeking A Vision

Yankton's vision for a centralized sports authority to oversee and promote recreational activities in the community wasn't particularly clear during a public meeting Monday night.

But perhaps that in itself is a clear vision.

Monday's meeting was the continuation of a dialogue that began a few weeks ago concerning the concept of a commission that would serve as the coordinating entity for such sports as baseball, soccer, softball, hockey and other activities. One area of control would be the facilities used by these sports, which is roughly where this whole discussion really began 18 months ago.

The meeting this week asked many questions, but it didn't stir up a lot of answers. At the end of the night, there was no real sense of the direction in which the concept of a sports authority was headed.

You could draw two conclusions about where the process is at this moment: People either aren't excited about the idea or they don't have a handle on it yet since it is still in a vague stage of development.

For the moment, let's lean toward the latter, if for no other reason than we're curious to see what this proposed idea ultimately looks like.

The notion of a sports authority has considerable appeal on many levels; it all depends on where those involved decide to take it. It could coordinate many of the activities and the facilities in the community, and/or it could become a tool for promoting those activities and luring major events like regional tournaments to town. A sports authority could also be a fundraising driver and help develop better facilities for everyone involved.

The idea also doesn't have to be limited to just Yankton. There were some mentions made Monday of approaching Vermillion officials about formulating such an authority for both communities. Now, we didn't get the impression that Vermillion officials have been contacted about this at all, so it's hard to say where such an idea might go. It was thrown out as just a possibility, but it would seem to be an intriguing one.

So, there is a lot of potential with the sports authority idea.

But here's the other side of the coin: Most of the sports activities offered in Yankton now are successful because volunteers have spent years making those particular endeavors work. They've raised the funds and they've devoted the time. They know what works and they know what they're doing. Now, they may face the prospect of coming under the umbrella of a centralized authority that is looking out for more than just one sport. Could the various independent pieces function under such an arrangement? There seemed to be a real hesitancy about that prospect Monday night.

Whatever happens with this idea will likely be decided in the next few weeks. Another public meeting is planned, and in the interim, it's expected that the various sports groups in town will consider the options and offer feedback. If they are at least intrigued with the idea, the concept of a sports authority can be explored and fleshed out. If they are not enthused, the idea will likely die right there.

We'd be interested to see where the idea might go. It's understandable to be hesitant to commit to something that is not yet a solid proposal, but we hope enough interest is shown to see what the proposal may ultimately look like. There's a lot of potential on the table, and we hope the ideas can at least be developed before they are summarily judged.

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SPEAK UP!

■ Share your thoughts with us. Write to the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** on a topic of the day or in response to an editorial or story. Write us at: 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 Wednesday, Oct. 30, the 303rd day of 2013. There are 62 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 30, 1938, the radio play "The War of the Worlds," starring Orson Welles, aired on CBS. (The live drama, which employed fake breaking news reports, panicked some listeners who thought the portrayal of a Martian invasion was real.)

On this date: In 1735, the second president of the United States, John Adams, was born in Braintree, Mass. In 1885, poet Ezra Pound was born in Hailey, Idaho.

In 1893, the U.S. Senate gave final congressional approval to repealing the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890.

In 1912, Vice President James S. Sherman, running for a second term of office with President William Howard Taft, died six days before Election Day. (Sherman was replaced with Nicholas Murray Butler, but Taft, the Republican candidate, ended up losing in an Electoral College landslide to Democrat Woodrow Wilson.)

In 1921, the silent film classic "The Sheik," starring Rudolph Valentino, premiered in Los Angeles.

In 1944, the Martha Graham ballet "Appalachian Spring," with music by Aaron Copland, premiered at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., with Graham in a leading role.

In 1945, the U.S. government announced the end of shoe rationing, effective at midnight.

In 1961, the Soviet Union tested a hydrogen bomb, the "Tsar Bomba," with a force estimated at about 50 megatons. The Soviet Party Congress unanimously approved a resolution ordering the removal of Josef Stalin's body from Lenin's tomb.

In 1972, 45 people were killed when an Illinois Central Gulf commuter train was struck from behind by another train in Chicago's South Side.

In 1974, Muhammad Ali knocked out George Foreman in the eighth round of a 15-round bout in Kinshasa, Zaire, known as the "Rumble in the Jungle" to regain his world heavyweight title.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter announced his choice of federal appeals judge Shirley Hufstetler to head the newly created Department of Education.

In 1985, schoolteacher-astronaut Christa McAuliffe witnessed the

launch of the space shuttle Challenger, the same craft that would carry her and six other crew members to their deaths in Jan. 1986.

Ten years ago: The House approved an \$87.5 billion package for Iraq and Afghanistan. Four construction workers were killed when an Atlantic City casino parking garage collapsed.

Five years ago: A federal jury in Miami convicted the son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in the first case brought under a 1994 U.S. law allowing prosecution for torture and atrocities committed overseas. (Charles McArthur Emmanuel was later sentenced to 97 years in prison.)

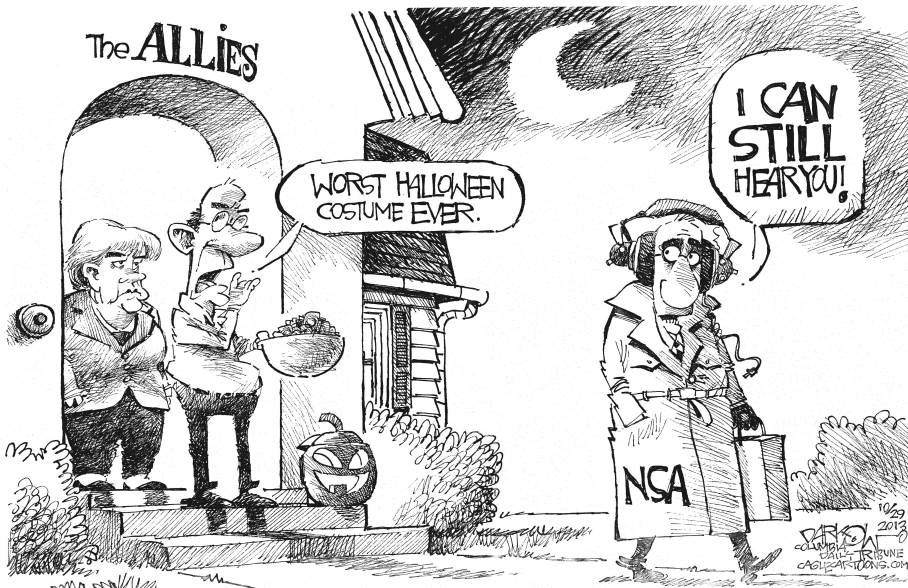
One year ago: New York's subways remained shut down, and much of Manhattan was still without power, in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. Rescuers and staff at a New York City hospital were hailed as heroes for working through the night to evacuate nearly 300 patients, floor-by-floor, after the hospital lost generator power at the height of the storm. Entering the final week of a hard-fought battle for the White House, President Barack Obama stayed off the campaign trail, while Republican Mitt Romney spoke of the needs of storm survivors rather than bashing his rival.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Dick Gautier is 76. Movie director Claude Lelouch is 76. Rock singer Grace Slick is 74. Songwriter Eddie Holland is 74. Rhythm-and-blues singer Otis Williams (The Temptations) is 72. Actor Henry Winkler is 68. Broadcast journalist Andrea Mitchell is 67. Rock musician Chris Slade (Asia) is 67. Country/rock musician Timothy B. Schmit (The Eagles) is 66. Actor Leon Rippy is 64. Actor Harry Hamlin is 62. Actor Charles Martin Smith is 60. Country singer T. Graham Brown is 59. Actor Kevin Pollak is 56. Actor Michael Beach is 50. Rock singer-musician Gavin Rossdale (Bush) is 46. Actor Jack Plotnick is 45. Comedian Ben Bailey is 43. Actress Nia Long is 43. Country singer Cassidy Osborn (SHEDAISY) is 37. Actor Gael Garcia Bernal is 35. Actor Matthew Morrison is 35. Actor Shaun Sipos is 32. Actress Janel Parrish is 25. Actor Tequan Richmond ("Everybody Hates Chris") is 21.

Thought for Today: "When love is not madness, it is not love." — Pedro Calderon de la Barca, Spanish dramatist (1600-1681).

FROM THE BIBLE

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. *Hebrews 11:1*. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



Pierre Report

Yankton Kicks Off State's 125th Birthday Party

BY SEN. JEAN HUNHOFF AND REPS. MIKE STEVENS AND BERNIE HUNHOFF

District 18

Saturday is a big day for this old city. Governor Dennis Daugaard, our Mayor Nancy Wenande and a number of other elected officials, past and present, will gather with the public-at-large to kick off South Dakota's 125th birthday party.

We hope you'll participate because this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for all of us to recognize and appreciate Yankton's important place in history.

Geographically, our role was established long before anyone was writing and recording such matters. Native Americans had a permanent camp, possibly going back several centuries. Our city's very name comes from the Dakota word "thanktonwan" which was the end village along the Missouri.

Lewis and Clark camped here in 1804, and visited with the Native American residents. When a baby was born while they were here, the famous explorers wrapped him in an American flag and celebrated his birth. Later, the child grew to be a Dakota leader, Struck-by-the-Ree — an amazing chief who promoted women's rights, environmentalism in the river valley, religious freedom and education.

White settlers built a trading post here in 1857, and the city became prominent when President James Buchanan declared it capitol of Dakota Territory in 1861. Of course, we lost the capitol 22 years later but Yankton has continued to be a political, educational, medical, manufacturing, recreational, business and media powerhouse, playing a role that has always exceeded

its modest population.

The three of us are proud to represent Yankton in the legislature. Few communities throughout the West have such a reputation, past and present. We constantly hear people tell us, "If I ever moved from [insert their hometown] I think I'd move to Yankton."

Saturday is a golden opportunity for us to show once again why we're the Mother City of the Dakotas. Our local business community — organized by the great folks at the Chamber of Commerce — have worked with us and the governor's office to celebrate with style. Curt and Cena Bernard have opened their beautiful Riverfront Events Center as the quasiquicentennial headquarters for the day.

The activities begin at 3:30 p.m. downtown with costumed re-enactors who will speak for some of our most colorful and important historical characters. We move to the Riverfront Events Center at 6 p.m. for a social hour, followed by a 7 p.m. program with the governor and then a 7:30 p.m. dance with a 10-piece orchestra.

It's all free, thanks to the generosity of local businesses. Wear whatever you like — from a tux and top hat to pioneer garb or your usual blue jeans.

Bring your children and grandchildren. This is our opportunity to give them a sense of the history that their community represents. And let's all encourage the seniors in our lives to attend, for without their stewardship through the decades we wouldn't enjoy a vibrant community today.

We hope you'll join us Saturday afternoon and evening to celebrate life in South Dakota. Yes, there'll be a big birthday cake.

Robert Reich

The GOP's Obamacare Irony

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor says Republicans will seek to delay a requirement of the 2010 Affordable Care Act that all Americans obtain health insurance or face a tax penalty.

"With so many unanswered questions and the problems arising around this rollout, it doesn't make any sense to impose this 1 percent mandate tax on the American people," Cantor said.

While Republicans plot new ways to sabotage the Affordable Care Act, it's easy to forget that for years they've been arguing that any comprehensive health insurance system should be designed exactly like the one that officially began Oct. 1, glitches and all.

For as many years, Democrats tried to graft health care onto Social Security and Medicare, and pay for it through the payroll tax. But Republicans countered that any system must be based on private insurance and paid for with a combination of subsidies for low-income purchasers and a requirement that the younger and healthier sign up.

Not surprisingly, private health insurers cheered on the Republicans while doing whatever they could to block Democrats from creating a public insurance system.

In February 1974, Republican President Richard Nixon proposed, in essence, today's Affordable Care Act. Under Nixon's plan, all but the smallest employers would provide insurance to their workers or pay a penalty, an expanded Medicaid-type program would insure the poor, and subsidies would be provided to low-income individuals and small employers. Sound familiar?

Private insurers were delighted with the Nixon plan, but Democrats preferred a system based on Social Security and Medicare, and the two sides failed to agree.

More than 30 years later, a Republican governor, Mitt Romney, made Nixon's plan the law in Massachusetts. Private insurers couldn't have been happier, although many Democrats in the state had hoped for a public system.

When today's Republicans rage against the individual mandate in the Affordable Care Act, it's useful to recall this was their idea as well.

In 1989, Stuart M. Butler of the conservative

Heritage Foundation came up with a plan that would "mandate all households to obtain adequate insurance."

Insurance companies loved Butler's plan so much that it found its way into several bills introduced by Republican lawmakers in 1993. Among the supporters were Sens. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Charles Grassley, R-Iowa (who now oppose the mandate under the Affordable Care Act). Newt Gingrich, who became Speaker of the House in 1995, was also a big proponent.

Romney's health care plan in Massachusetts included the same mandate to purchase private insurance. "We got the idea of an individual mandate from [Newt Gingrich], and [Newt] got it from the Heritage Foundation," said Romney, who thought the mandate "essential for bringing the health care costs down for everyone and getting everyone the health insurance they need."

Now that the essential Republican plan for health care is being implemented nationally, health insurance companies are jubilant.

Last week, after the giant insurer WellPoint raised its earnings estimates, CEO Joseph Swedish pointed to "the long-term membership growth opportunity through exchanges." Other major health plans are equally bullish. "The emergence of public exchanges, private exchanges, Medicaid expansions ... have the potential to create new opportunities for us to grow and serve in new ways," UnitedHealth Group CEO Stephen J. Hemsley effused.

So why are today's Republicans so upset with an act they designed and their patrons adore? Because it's the signature achievement of the Obama administration.

There's a deep irony to all this. Had Democrats stuck to the original Democratic vision and built comprehensive health insurance on Social Security and Medicare, it would have been cheaper, simpler and more widely accepted by the public. And Republicans would be hollering anyway.

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

Cooperatives Shine in Tough Times

Kim Vanneman, Ideal

As National Co-op Month comes to a close, South Dakotans have seen their local cooperative businesses at work in times of need.

We missed it here in Ideal, but this month's blizzard downed more than 6,300 power poles in the western part of the state. Rural electric cooperatives have been battling since to make repairs and restore power to their member-customers.

Among the hardest hit Dakotans are ranchers in the west, particularly those with cow-calf operations. Officials estimate at least 20,000 livestock died and believe the number will likely rise. The loss of those animals is a tragedy for the people who owned and cared for them.

Financial consequences will be enormous. Ranchers lost the calves that were to generate this year's income AND they lost the cows that would provide income next year and beyond. For many families affected by this loss, the

road to recovery will be long and difficult.

Once again, a cooperative has stepped up to offer support. Farm Credit Services of America, which I'm proud to serve as a director, has mobilized to help our state's livestock producers restore working capital as they rebuild their lives and operations. That's the power of a member-owned co-op that returned \$24.3 million in shared earnings to South Dakota farmers and ranchers this year.

Cooperatives come in many forms — they are credit unions, utilities, retailers and service providers — but they share common features. They are owned by the people who use their services and are dedicated solely to serving customer needs. They illustrate the power of members coming together and collaborating for the common good.

The challenges South Dakotans have faced during this 2013 National Co-op Month shine a bright and positive light on the value of cooperatives in our state.