

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861  
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**OPINION**

## Newspapers Are Still On A Mission

You know what a newspaper is: It's that news source on your doorstep each morning, that packet of information you hold in your hand and scan to find out the local news and whatever else is going on in your world.

Yes, that's the product most of us call a newspaper — a fairly self-explanatory label. But a newspaper business is MUCH more than that, and that's something that National Newspaper Week — which this week is — serves to remind the world.

Newspapers have evolved greatly in the 74 years that National Newspaper Week has been observed. But the changes made in the last 20 years, the last 10 years or even the last two years have been remarkable.

The storyline for the newspaper business has not been a bright one for the past several years. Across the industry, both profits and circulation have

fallen as consumers seek new, more immediate ways to get the information they want. That desire has been fueled by computers, tablets and smartphones.

It's easy to dismiss the newspaper industry as a lumbering dinosaur facing extinction.

But here's a clear truth: The people within the newspaper industry recognized long ago that change was essential for survival. While the industry weathered the arrivals of radio and television, it faced a monumental challenge when the internet roared into our lives and across our society. Newspapers could have folded right there; in fact, some did.

But so many others did not, because change required something far more dramatic from them.

With that, newspapers began providing an online component back in the 1990s; they didn't wait until the wave passed them by. And they've moved into the realms of social media and video. Today, we do stories that often require more than words and a photo on a printed page.

There is much more to newspapers than just the paper. It's been a struggle, to be sure. But we still attack this mission with the same outlook: Providing the best local news that we can, with whatever means are at our disposal.

That's what National Newspaper Week reminds us. We have customers to serve, a base we call home. They — you — are our purpose for existing.

With all that being said, the week should also serve as a reminder that there is still a vital place in our society for printed news. It has a permanence that is unmatched; once something is in print — like a legal notice, for instance — there is no eradicating it, no redacting the contents, no changing certain facts to match prevailing desires. That aspect makes print an indispensable matter of record in a digital age in which the flow of history can be altered with a few keystrokes. And items in print aren't here and gone like a sound byte, and they don't vanish with a refreshed computer window display. Again, print offers permanence; in a sense, it truly is the people's domain.

And that age-old trait is just one more facet of what a newspaper is all about here in the 21st century — and it remains as vital as ever.

So, whether it's through digital access or time-honored print delivery, newspapers still do what they have always done to serve their readers and their communities, and they will continue to be dedicated to that mission long into the future.

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**ON THIS DATE**

**By The Associated Press**

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 8, the 281st day of 2014. There are 84 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Oct. 8, 1914, the World War I song "Keep the Home Fires Burning," by Ivor Novello and Lena Guilbert Ford, was first published in London under the title "Till the Boys Come Home."

**On this date:** In 1869, the 14th president of the United States, Franklin Pierce, died in Concord, New Hampshire.

In 1871, the Great Chicago Fire erupted; fires also broke out in Peshigo, Wisconsin, and in several communities in Michigan.

In 1918, U.S. Army Cpl. Alvin C. York led an attack that killed 25 German soldiers and captured 132 others in the Argonne Forest in France.

In 1934, Bruno Hauptmann was indicted by a grand jury in New Jersey for murder in the death of the kidnapped son of Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

In 1944, "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," starring Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, made its debut on CBS Radio. Former Republican presidential nominee Wendell Willkie, 52, died in New York.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced that the secret of the atomic bomb would be shared only with Britain and Canada.

In 1956, Don Larsen pitched the only perfect game in a World Series to date as the New York Yankees beat the Brooklyn Dodgers in Game 5, 2-0.

In 1957, the Brooklyn Baseball Club announced it was accepting an offer to move the Dodgers from New York to Los Angeles.

In 1967, former British Prime Minister Clement Attlee died in London at age 84.

In 1970, Soviet author Alexander Solzhenitsyn was named winner of the Nobel Prize for literature.

In 1982, all labor organizations in Poland, including Solidarity, were banned.

In 1992, former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt died in Unkel, Germany, at age 78.

**Ten years ago:** In a testy debate rematch, President George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry quarreled over the war in Iraq, jobs, education, health care, abortion, the environment, cheaper drugs and tort reform at a town-hall session in St. Louis. Thirty-four people, most of them Israelis, were killed when suicide bombers blew up the Taba Hilton Hotel in Egypt. A videotape surfaced showing militants beheading British hostage Kenneth Bigley in Iraq. Martha Stewart reported to the Alderson Federal Prison Camp in West Virginia to begin

servicing five months behind bars for lying about a stock sale. Kenyan environmentalist Wangari Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Five years ago:** An Arizona sweat lodge ceremony turned deadly as some participants became ill and collapsed inside the 415-square-foot structure; three died. (Motivational speaker James Arthur Ray, who'd led the ceremony, was convicted in 2011 of three counts of negligent homicide and served 20 months in prison.) A powerful car bomb exploded outside the Indian Embassy in Kabul, killing 17 people. Romanian-born German writer Herta Mueller won the Nobel Prize in literature.

**One year ago:** The White House said President Barack Obama would nominate Federal Reserve vice chair Janet Yellen to succeed Ben Bernanke as chairman of the nation's central bank. Britain's Peter Higgs and Belgian colleague Francois Englert won the Nobel Prize in physics for helping to explain how matter formed after the Big Bang. Phil Chevron, 56, the guitarist for the boisterous Anglo-Irish band the Pogues, died in Dublin.

**Today's Birthdays:** Entertainment reporter Rona Barrett is 78. Actor Paul Hogan is 75. Rhythm-and-blues singer Fred Cash (The Impressions) is 74. Civil rights activist Rev. Jesse Jackson is 73. Comedian Chevy Chase is 71. Author R.L. Stine is 71. Actor Dale Dye is 70. Country singer Susan Raye is 70. TV personality Sarah Purcell is 66. Actress Sigourney Weaver is 65. Rhythm-and-blues singer Robert "Kool" Bell (Kool & the Gang) is 64. Producer-director Edward Zwick is 62. Country singer-musician Ricky Lee Phelps is 61. Actor Michael Dudikoff is 60. Comedian Darrell Hammond is 59. Actress Stephanie Zimbalist is 58. Rock musician Mitch Marine is 53. Actress Kim Wayans is 53. Rock singer Steve Perry (Cherry Poppin' Daddies) is 51. Actor Ian Hart is 50. Gospel and rhythm-and-blues singer CeCe Winans is 50. Rock musician C.J. Ramone (The Ramones) is 49. Actress-producer Karyn Parsons is 48. Singer-producer Teddy Riley is 48. Actress Emily Procter is 46. Actor Dylan Neal is 45. Actor-screenwriter Matt Damon is 44. Actress Kristanna Loken is 35. Rhythm-and-blues singer Byron Reeder (Mista) is 35. Rock-soul singer-musician Noelle Scaggs (Fitz and the Tantrums) is 35. Actor Nick Cannon is 34. Actor Max Crumm is 29. Singer-songwriter-producer Bruno Mars is 29. Actor Angus T. Jones is 21. Actress Molly Quinn is 21.

**Thought for Today:** "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." — Carl Gustav Jung, Swiss psychiatrist (1875-1961).

**FROM THE BIBLE**

But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



## Why We Allow Big Pharma To Rip Us Off

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

According to a new federal database put online last week, pharmaceutical companies and device makers paid doctors some \$380 million in speaking and consulting fees over a five-month period in 2013.

Some doctors received over \$500,000 each, and some got millions of dollars in royalties from products they helped develop.

Doctors claim these payments have no effect on what they prescribe. But why would drug companies shell out all of this money if it didn't provide them a healthy return on their investment?

America spends a fortune on drugs, more per person than any other nation on earth, even though Americans are no healthier than the citizens of other advanced nations.

Of the estimated \$2.7 trillion America spends annually on health care, drugs account for 10 percent of the total.

Government pays some of this tab through Medicare, Medicaid and subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. But we pick up the tab indirectly through our taxes.

We pay the rest of it directly, through higher co-payments, deductibles and premiums.

Drug company payments to doctors are a small part of a much larger strategy by Big Pharma to clean our pockets.

Another technique is called "product hopping" — making small and insignificant changes in a drug whose patent is about to expire, so it's technically new.

For example, in February, before its patent expired on Namenda, its widely used drug to treat Alzheimer's, Forest Laboratories announced it would stop selling the existing tablet form of in favor of new extended-release capsules called Namenda XR. The capsules were just a reformulated version of the tablet. But even the minor change prevented pharmacists from substituting generic versions of the tablet.

Result: Higher profits for Forest Laboratories and higher costs for you and me.

Another technique is for drug companies to continue to aggressively advertise prescription brands long after their 20-year patents have expired, so patients ask their doctors for them. Many doctors will comply.

America is one of few advanced nations that allow direct advertising of prescription drugs.

A fourth tactic is for drug companies to pay the makers of generic drugs to delay their cheaper versions. These so-called "pay-for-delay" agreements generate big profits for both the proprietary manufacturers and the generics. But here again, you and I pay. The tactic costs us an estimated \$3.5 billion a year.

Europe doesn't allow these sorts of pay-offs, but they're legal in the United States because the major drug makers and generics

have fought off any legislative attempts to stop them.

Finally, while other nations set wholesale drug prices, the law prohibits the U.S. government from using its considerable bargaining power under Medicare and Medicaid to negotiate lower drug prices. This was part of the deal Big Pharma extracted for its support of the Affordable Care Act of 2010.

The drug companies say they need the additional profits to pay for researching and developing new drugs. But the government supplies much of the research Big Pharma relies on, through the National Institutes of Health.

Meanwhile, Big Pharma is spending more on advertising and marketing than on research and development — often tens of millions to promote a single drug.

And it's spending hundreds of millions more every year on lobbying. Last year alone, the lobbying tab came to \$225 million, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

That's more than the formidable lobbying expenditures of America's military contractors. In addition, Big Pharma is spending heavily on political campaigns. In 2012, it shelled out over \$36 million, making it the biggest political contributor of all American industries.

Why do we put up with this? It's too facile to say we have no choice given how much the industry is spending on politics. If the public were sufficiently outraged, politicians and regulatory agencies wouldn't allow this giant rip-off. But the public isn't outraged. That's partly because much of this strategy is hidden from public view.

I think it's also because we've bought the ideological claptrap of the "free market" being separate from and superior to government.

And since private property and freedom of contract are the core of the free market, we assume drug companies have every right to charge what they want for the property they sell.

Yet in reality the "free market" can't be separated from government because government determines the rules of the game. It determines, for example, what can be patented and for how long, which side payoffs create unlawful conflicts of interest, what basic research should be subsidized and when government can negotiate low prices.

The critical question is not whether government should play a role in the market. Without such government decisions there would be no market, and no new drugs.

The issue is how government organizes the market. So long as big drug makers have a disproportionate say in these decisions, the rest of us pay through the nose.

Robert Reich is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and Senior Fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. His new film, "Inequality for All," is now out on iTunes, DVD and On Demand.



Robert REICH

**YOUR LETTERS**

**'In The Minority'**

Patrick Greene, San Antonio, Texas

My wife and I are 66 and 67 years old, and when we heard about the gay teen employee who was slandered and emotionally hurt because of small minded prejudice, both my wife and I realized that closed-minded people will always be in our society to try to harm our young people.

As senior citizens, we want to take this opportunity to say to all the gay and lesbian teenagers in South Dakota and elsewhere that the people who hurt that teenage boy are very much wrong, immoral and in the minority.

**ELECTION LETTERS**

With the election season here, the PRESS & DAKOTAN has decided that all political letters received as of Sept. 9 will only run for a fee. All letters will be referred to the advertising department, and author will be given the option of paying to have the letter printed in its entirety elsewhere in the newspaper. Send your letters or questions to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at views@yankton.net/.

**PRESS & DAKOTAN LETTER POLICY**

The PRESS & DAKOTAN encourages its readers to write letters to the editor and 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 us at views@yankton.net.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." — The FIRST AMENDMENT to the U.S. Constitution

**FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: It's Your Right To Know!**