

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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OPINION

Ebola Fears? Worry About Flu Instead

Are you all in a panic about the Ebola outbreak that you're sure is going to sweep the country like the second coming of the Black Plague?

If so, here's what you should do about it. Get a flu shot.

In fact, even if you aren't panicking, you should get one. It's not that the flu shot is going to help you ward off the Ebola virus. (It's too bad that wasn't the case.)

But the plain fact is you have an infinitely greater chance of contracting influenza this coming winter season than you ever have of being anywhere near the Ebola virus, let alone becoming infected by it.

Of course, you can't really tell that from watching the around-the-clock cable TV news channels. They are all over the story of the initial Ebola case that was diagnosed in Texas — the victim (who has since died) being a man who contracted the disease in West Africa, which is the epicenter of the current outbreak. When a health care worker treating him wound up becoming infected, as well, the TV coverage magnified predictably.

And naturally, Ebola has emerged in the midterm campaign trail, as both Republican and Democratic sources try to score points by fear-mongering on the topic.

Yet, your chances of contracting it are incalculably remote, according to *The Oregonian* newspaper. You virtually have to go out of your way to just get in a position to being exposed to it. (The Centers for Disease Control website has a page devoted to informing the public how to protect themselves from Ebola. One of the tips: "Avoid hospitals in West Africa where Ebola patients are being treated.")

Honestly, you probably have better odds dying from an asteroid (which is listed at 1 in 147,717).

Meanwhile, the influenza season is upon us, and up to 20 percent of the American population may be exposed to it. Unfortunately, it's estimated that 20,000 Americans will die this winter because of it.

A flu shot is not a sure-fire guarantee to ward off the bug, but it sure ups your odds. And while the chances of you dying from the flu are probably small, the chances of the flu making your life miserable for 24 to 48 hours are much greater — and often avoidable.

However, despite the constant campaigning by medical officials for people to get flu shots, many people choose to forego this layer of protection. They'd rather take their chances during a season that is brimming with viral dangers.

But, that won't stop some of these people from freaking out about Ebola.

Look at it this way: The best protection you have against Ebola is to play it smart. Be sensible and your chances of good health increase.

The exact same thing applies to preparing for the flu season. (The two topics even share some of the same precautions, such as washing your hands regularly.)

It's an odd comparison to make between Ebola and influenza, but there is a big difference: You or someone you know WILL be exposed to influenza this winter.

So tap into this paranoid energy being cultivated by the cable TV news scribes and take the hint. Get a flu shot. Your best defense starts right there.

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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/.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Wednesday, Oct. 22, the 295th day of 2014. There are 70 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 22, 1934, bank robber Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd was shot to death by federal agents and local police at a farm near East Liverpool, Ohio.

On this date: In 1746, Princeton University was first chartered as the College of New Jersey.

In 1797, French balloonist Andre-Jacques Garnerin made the first parachute descent, landing safely from a height of about 3,000 feet over Paris.

In 1836, Sam Houston was inaugurated as the first constitutionally elected president of the Republic of Texas.

In 1883, the original Metropolitan Opera House in New York held its grand opening with a performance of Gounod's "Faust."

In 1928, Republican presidential nominee Herbert Hoover spoke of the "American system of rugged individualism" in a speech at New York's Madison Square Garden.

In 1953, the Franco-Lao Treaty of Amity and Association effectively made Laos an independent member of the French Union.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy revealed the presence of Soviet-built missile bases under construction in Cuba and announced a quarantine of all offensive military equipment being shipped to the Communist island nation.

In 1964, Jean-Paul Sartre was named winner of the Nobel Prize in literature, even though the French writer had said he would decline the award.

In 1979, the U.S. government allowed the deposed Shah of Iran to travel to New York for medical treatment — a decision that precipitated the Iran hostage crisis. French conductor and music teacher Nadia Boulanger died in Paris.

In 1981, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization was decertified by the federal government for its strike the previous August.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed into law sweeping tax-overhaul legislation.

In 1991, the European Community and the European Free Trade Association concluded a landmark accord to create a free trade zone of 19 nations by 1993.

Ten years ago: In a wrenching videotaped statement, aid worker Margaret Hassan, kidnapped in Baghdad, begged the British government to help save her by withdrawing its troops from Iraq, saying these "might

be my last hours." (Hassan was apparently killed by her captors a month later.) President George W. Bush signed a corporate tax overhaul to close loopholes and provide \$136 billion in new tax breaks for businesses, farmers and others.

Five years ago: Mortars fired by Islamic militants slammed into Somalia's airport as President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed boarded a plane, sparking battles that killed at least 24 people; the president was unhurt. Gunmen kidnapped Gauthier Lefevre, a French staff member working for the International Committee of the Red Cross, in Sudan's western Darfur region. (Lefevre was released in March 2010.) Comedian Soupy Sales died in New York at age 83.

One year ago: The United States defended drone strikes targeting al-Qaida operatives and others, rejecting reports by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International questioning the legality of attacks that the groups asserted had killed or wounded scores of civilians in Yemen and Pakistan.

Today's Birthdays: Black Panthers co-founder Bobby Seale is 78. Actor Christopher Lloyd is 76. Actor Derek Jacobi is 76. Actor Tony Roberts is 75. Movie director Jan de Bont is 71. Actress Catherine Deneuve is 71. Rock musician Leslie West (Mountain) is 69. Former Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour is 67. Actor Jeff Goldblum is 62. Rock musician Greg Hawkes is 62. Movie director Bill Condon is 59. Actor Luis Guzman is 57. Actor-writer-producer Todd Graff is 55. Rock musician Chris Kirkwood is 52. Olympic gold medal figure skater Brian Boitano is 51. Christian singer TobyMac is 50. Singer-songwriter John Wesley Harding is 49. Actress Valeria Golino is 48. Comedian Carlos Mencia is 47. Country singer Shelby Lynne is 46. Reggae rapper Shaggy is 46. Movie director Spike Jonze is 45. Rapper Tracey Lee is 44. Actress Saffron Burrows is 42. MLB player Ichiro Suzuki is 41. Actor Jesse Tyler Ferguson is 39. Christian rock singer-musician Jon Foreman (Switchfoot) is 38. Actor Michael Fishman is 33. Talk show host Michael Essany is 32. Rock musician Rickard Goransson (Carolina Liar) is 31. Rock musician Zac Hanson (Hanson) is 29. Actor Jonathan Lipnicki is 24. Actress Sofia Vassilieva is 22.

Thought for Today: "There is no such thing as notoriety in the United States these days, let alone infamy. Celebrity is all." — Christopher Hitchens, Anglo-American author and essayist (1949-2011).

FROM THE BIBLE

For this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found. Luke 15:32. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



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Get A Grip On Ebola

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

We have to get a grip. Ebola is not a crisis in the United States. One person has died and two people are infected with his body fluids.

The real crisis is the hysteria over Ebola that's being fed by media outlets seeking sensationalism and politicians posturing for the midterm elections.

That hysteria is causing us to lose our heads. Parents have pulled their children out of a middle school in Mississippi after learning the school's principal had traveled to Zambia. Zambia happens to be in Africa, but it has not even had a single case of Ebola.

A teacher at an elementary school in Maine has been placed on paid leave because parents were concerned he might have contracted the Ebola virus. When and how? During a recent trip to Dallas for an educational conference.

Are we planning to quarantine Dallas next? Some politicians from both parties are demanding an end to commercial flights between the United States and several West African countries. But there are no direct flights to the U.S. from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, where Ebola is taking its biggest toll.

So do they want to ban all commercial flights that might contain someone from any of these countries who might have transferred planes? That would cover just about all commercial flights coming from outside the United States.

The most important thing we can do to prevent Ebola from ever becoming a crisis here is to help Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, where 10,000 new cases could crop up weekly unless the spread of the virus is slowed soon.

Isolating these poor nations would only make their situation worse. Does anyone seriously believe we could quarantine hundreds of thousands of infected people a continent away who are infecting others?

The truth is quite the opposite. If the disease is allowed to spread in these places, the entire world could be imperiled.

These nations desperately need medical professionals in the field, more medical resources, isolation facilities and systems in place to detect early cases.

Even at this stage, that's not an impossible task. Nigeria is succeeding in checking the spread of the disease. It has not had a new case of Ebola in over a month.

But I'm worried about America. I'm not worried about Ebola. I'm worried about our courage.

Every time a global crisis arises these days — the drug war in Latin America, terrorism in the Middle East, climate change that's strain-

ing global food and water supplies and threatening many parts of the world with flooding — the knee-jerk response of some Americans is to stop it at our borders.

As if we have the option. As if we live on another planet.

What's wrong with us? We never used to blink at taking a leadership role in the world.

And we understood that leadership often required something other than drones and bombs.

We accepted global leadership not just for humanitarian reasons but also because it was in our own best interest. We knew we couldn't isolate ourselves from trouble. There was no place to hide.

After World War II, we rebuilt Europe and Japan. Belatedly, we achieved peace in Kosovo. We almost eradicated polio. We took on tuberculosis worldwide.

Now, even Cuba is doing more on the ground in West Africa than we are. It's dispatching hundreds of doctors and nurses to the front lines. The first group of 165 arrived in Sierra Leone in the past few days.

Where are we? We're not even paying attention to health crises right under our own noses.

More people are killed by stray bullets every day in America than have been killed by Ebola here. More are dying because of poverty and hunger.

More American kids are getting asthma because their homes are located next to major highways. One out of three of our children is obese, at risk of early-onset diabetes.

We're not even giving a flu shot to all Americans who need one.

Instead, we bicker. For the last eight months, Republicans have been blocking confirmation of a surgeon general. Why? Because the President's nominee voiced support for expanded background checks for gun purchases, and the National Rifle Association objected.

We've got to get our priorities straight. Media outlets that are exploiting Ebola because they want a sensational story and politicians using it to further their own ends ought to be ashamed.

Public fear isn't something to be played with.

There's a huge job to be done, here and abroad. Let's roll up our sleeves and get on with it.

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

Napa Observations

Allen Sinclair, Yankton

Yankton County Commissioner
I believe that the Napa Junction issue needs further clarification. After all the meetings over the past several years, all the claims, accusations and finger pointing, and finally a site selected, the following results are apparent to me.

(1) The Yankton County Commission did vote to allow the Rezone and the Conditional Use needed for the Yankton county site. The Commission did not support a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) proposal that would have given millions of property tax dollars to the developers. I believe that any property taxes generated by the grain handling facility must be used to help maintain the network of County and Township roads that would be damaged by the trucks utilizing the Napa Junction site — 4 1/2 miles from any South Dakota state highway.

(2) The site now selected near Tabor is the correct location. South Dakota state highways 50 and 25 are nearby — eliminating the extensive use of county roads by the hundreds of trucks daily using the site.

(3) I consider the Tabor site to be in our area and should be supported by those Yankton entities and individuals concerned about economic

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/.

development in this area.

(4) A couple of questions remain to be discussed in the future. Should county property taxes be used to support huge businesses such as Cargill/Agrex? Or should they be expected to pay their own way as many of our small businesses already have?

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