

# The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

## Mascot Change Teaches A Lesson

ABERDEEN AMERICAN NEWS, Aberdeen (Oct. 1): Quietly, with very little fanfare, the McLaughlin School District took a step toward kindness.

The McLaughlin school board last week dropped its mascot and nickname "midgets."

And, we will not mention that word again here.

The M-word, as some little people have called it, is a hurtful word with roots in old-time "freak shows." Today it is viewed as a pejorative.

Donna Bertsch Bratland, an Aberdeen resident, explains in today's edition just how that word is viewed by little people. It has outlived its usefulness, and instead creates and condones a mocking tone against others.

McLaughlin school board President Juliana White Bull-Taken Alive told us the district was contacted by the nonprofit national group Little People of America, who asked that the name be retired. And it was.

Granted, the students didn't see a lot of positivity in the name anyway, White Bull-Taken Alive said, and the moniker was already being phased out.

But what a simple gesture, to be inclusive to all by dropping hurtful labels.

Some people need more convincing that words can hurt.

In Freeburg, Illinois, for instance, Freeburg Community High School District 77 officials say they will keep their mascot, despite concern from the Little People of America and even from a local man whose son has dwarfism.

According to at stlouis.cbslocal.com, "Supporters of the nickname told the board their intent wasn't to hurt anyone" by using that mascot.

Their intent may be innocent, but the effect on others is not.

It's interesting to note that the school that did drop the nickname, McLaughlin, is on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in Corson County. Usually, it is Native Americans who are made into mascots and characterizations, who are "chiefs" and "squaws" and "fighting" and "whooping."

As we know, language and culture evolves. McLaughlin's mascot was chosen in 1929, White Bull-Taken Alive said.

Many other words and terms from the '20s and '30s have fallen out of favor; many of us would not even be able to have a simple conversation with our peers from 100 years ago.

We won't blame the McLaughlin Class of 2101 if they don't find our language and values to be appropriate or relevant for them to rally around, either.

Some will argue that tradition trumps all. Of course, that is not true.

When it comes to the Sisseton High School Redmen or Ki-Yi Days homecoming at Watertown, tradition should not trump common decency.

McLaughlin's decision stands as an effective reminder: schools teach and people can learn, grow and change.

IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Monday, October 5, the 278th day of 2015. There are 87 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On October 5, 1947, President Harry S. Truman delivered the first televised White House address as he spoke on the world food crisis.

**On this date:** In 1829, the 21st president of the United States, Chester Alan Arthur, was born in North Fairfield, Vermont.

In 1931, Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon completed the first non-stop flight across the Pacific Ocean, arriving in Washington state some 41 hours after leaving Japan.

In 1953, Earl Warren was sworn in as the 14th chief justice of the United States, succeeding Fred M. Vinson.

In 1955, a stage adaptation of "The Diary of Anne Frank" by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett opened at the Cort Theatre in New York.

In 1969, the British TV comedy program "Monty Python's Flying Circus" made its debut on BBC 1.

In 1970, British trade commissioner James Richard Cross was kidnapped in Canada by militant Quebec separatists; he was released the following December.

In 1974, the Irish Republican Army bombed two pubs in Guildford, Surrey, England, resulting in five deaths and dozens of injuries. (Four men who became known as the Guildford Four were convicted of the bombings, but were ultimately vindicated.)

In 1984, the space shuttle Challenger blasted off from the Kennedy Space Center on an 8-day mission; the crew included Kathryn D. Sullivan, who became the first American woman to walk in space, and Marc Garneau, the first Canadian astronaut.

In 1988, Democrat Lloyd Bentsen lambasted Republican Dan Quayle during their vice-presidential debate, telling Quayle, "Senator, you're not Jack Kennedy."

In 1990, a jury in Cincinnati acquitted an art gallery and its director of obscenity charges stemming from an exhibit of sexually graphic photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe.

In 1995, Seamus Heaney of Ireland won the 1995 Nobel Prize in literature.

In 1999, two packed commuter trains collided near London's Paddington Station, killing 31 people.

**Ten years ago:** Defying the White House, senators voted 90-9 to approve an amendment sponsored by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., that would prohibit the use of "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" against anyone in U.S. government custody. (A reluctant President George W. Bush later signed off on the amendment.) Americans Robert H. Grubbs and Richard R. Schrock

and Frenchman Yves Chauvin won the Nobel Prize in chemistry. Daniel Alfredson scored twice in the final six minutes of regulation and once during the first shootout in NHL history, leading the Ottawa Senators to a 3-2 win over the Toronto Maple Leafs.

**Five years ago:** Faisal Shahzad, the Pakistani immigrant who'd tried to detonate a car bomb in Times Square, accepted a life sentence from a federal judge in New York with a smirk and warned that Americans could expect more bloodshed at the hands of Muslims. President Barack Obama convened the first-ever White House summit on community colleges, calling them the "unsung heroes of America's education system." Paroled burglar Steven Hayes was convicted of murdering a woman and her two daughters during a home-invasion robbery in Cheshire, Connecticut. (Hayes and fellow perpetrator Joshua Komisarjevsky remain on death row.)

**One year ago:** A suicide bomber blew himself up in Grozny, killing five policemen and wounding 12 others as the Chechen capital celebrated the birthday of its pro-Russian leader, Ramzan Kadyrov. Geoffrey Holder, a Tony Award-winning director, actor, painter, dancer and choreographer, died in New York at age 84.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Glynnis Johns is 92. Comedian Bill Dana is 91. Actor Peter Brown is 80. College Football Hall of Fame coach Barry Switzer is 78. Rhythm-and-blues singer Arlene Smith (The Chantels) is 74. Singer-musician Steve Miller is 72. Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin, D-Md., is 72. Rock singer Brian Johnson (AC/DC) is 68. Actress Karen Allen is 64. Writer-producer-director Clive Barker is 63. Rock musician David Bryson (Counting Crows) is 61. Rock singer and famine-relief organizer Bob Geldof is 61. Designer Maya Lin is 56. Actor Daniel Baldwin is 55. Rock singer-musician Dave Dederer is 51. Hockey Hall of Famer Mario Lemieux is 50. Actor Guy Pearce is 48. Actress Josie Bissett is 45. Singer-actress Heather Headley is 41. Pop-rock singer Colin Meloy (The Decemberists) is 41. Rock musician Brian Mashburn (Save Ferris) is 40. Actress Parminder Nagra is 40. Actor Scott Weinger is 40. Actress Kate Winslet is 40. Rock musician James Valentine (Maroon 5) is 37. Rock musician Paul Thomas (Good Charlotte) is 35. Actor Jesse Eisenberg is 32. TV personality Nicky Hilton is 32. Actress Azure Parsons is 31. Rhythm-and-blues singer Brooke Valentine is 30. Actor Kevin Bigley is 29. Actor Joshua Logan Moore is 21.

**Thought for Today:** "America has believed that in differentiation, not in uniformity, lies the path of progress. It acted on this belief; it has advanced human happiness, and it has prospered." — Louis D. Brandeis, U.S. Supreme Court justice (born 1856, died this date in 1941).

FROM THE BIBLE

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Matthew 10:29-30. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'We Deserve Better'

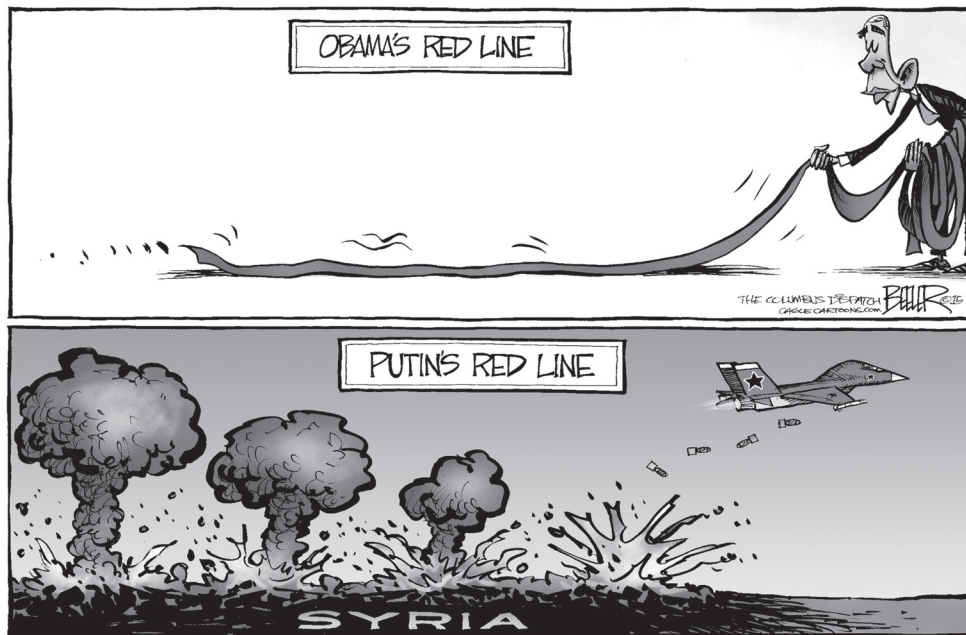
**John Magnuson, Yankton**  
The roots of our local tax and road issues really lie with the American Congress.

The full-on crazy radical insurgency known as the Republican Party has long advocated tax cuts for the rich and corporations with the myth or lie that money would trickle down to the people. The game was rigged from the beginning

with armies of lobbyists, lawyers and massive campaign donations. Federal tax dollars used to be shared with local governments for roads and schools. This money is no more for us and is spent on yachts, penthouses and online mistresses. There has been no trickling down, and wages are essentially frozen. Lawmakers knew that tax burdens would be shifted to local governments by increasing property taxes. They were a bunch of self-serving liars.

We need to take our government back for the people. The lie of unfettered and unregulated big business resulted in larger piles of doo-doo for taxpayers to clean up, like financial bailouts, the mortgage crisis, toxic spills, huge deficits and ill-advised wars. That's why we need leaders like Bernie Sanders to fight the large corporations who are stealing our lives. If it's too big to fail, it's too big to exist! If we had fair taxation of big business, we

wouldn't be beating ourselves up over road taxes. Oh, and by the way, our cousin in Colorado says that state now has a surplus tax problem due to the marijuana tax. Maybe they will get tax rebates! They used their taxes for roads and schools and have no funding problems. It makes you wonder why South Dakota has to be in such a rut. We deserve better. Let's be more innovative. Feel the Bern!



## Honoring Walt

Point Of View: Walter Dale Miller Become Governor Amid Tragedy And Was Always 'Cool In A Crisis'

BY GOV. DENNIS DAUGAARD  
R-South Dakota

Last Monday, South Dakota lost a statesman and we also lost a friend.

Walter Dale Miller was tall, quiet and unassuming. He was born on his family's ranch near New Underwood and he spent his life on that ranch. Walt spent years on the local school board, and was elected to the State House in 1966. That was the first of ten times that his friends and neighbors chose him to be their representative in Pierre.

In Pierre, Walt quickly emerged as a leader, and he became one of our state's legendary legislators. He didn't give a lot of speeches or sponsor dozens of bills. He chose his words carefully. But when he did speak, people listened, and they followed his lead. Walt was the only person in the history of South Dakota to serve as speaker, speaker pro tempore, majority leader, assistant leader and majority whip. That's the kind of respect his peers had for him.

In 1986, George S. Mickelson was looking for a partner to join his ticket, and he looked to Walt. George had served in the State House with Walt and knew that Walt was steady, capable and respected. George invited Walt to be the first full-time lieutenant governor. Walt wasn't flashy and he didn't seek attention, but during his time in the Mickelson Administration he was an important partner to Gov. Mickelson.



Daugaard

Then came the tragedy of April 19, 1993, when Gov. Mickelson and seven others died in the crash of the state plane. For the first time in South Dakota, a lieutenant governor succeeded a governor who had died in office. And for the first time, we had a full-time lieutenant governor to step in. Many South Dakotans remember being reassured by Gov. Miller's calm, steady leadership during that tragic time.

In the days that followed, Gov. Miller was challenged again and again. The river flooding of 1993 was among the worst in state history, and he led response efforts. A penitentiary riot ended without bloodshed thanks to Gov. Miller's restraint and leadership. A court ruling that suspended video lottery required Gov. Miller to impose deep mid-year cuts to keep the state solvent.

When Walt ran for his own term in 1994, his campaign slogan was "Cool in a Crisis." It was the perfect slogan to describe a man who was perfectly suited to lead South Dakota during a very difficult time.

The State Capitol memorial service on Oct. 5 coincides with Walter Dale Miller's 90th birthday. That day is a time for all South Dakotans to say "thanks," one last time, to the quiet, west river cowboy who stepped up when South Dakota needed him.

Capitol Notebook

## Patience, Perseverance Mark Vehle's Victories

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Officially, Mike Vehle is retired. Hardly.

Now heading toward age 66 come Nov. 17, the Mitchell Republican has invested the latest 11 years of his life serving as a South Dakota legislator.

He grew up in the grain business and understands that crucial South Dakota facility called a country elevator. He knows roads and bridges are vitally important too.

And he seems to have a solid grasp for money and finance.

Yes, he also likes bow ties, but that's a story for another day.

The story on this day is that he has an appointment for Thursday evening, golly bum.

He will be the only person to be inducted this year in the South Dakota Department of Transportation's hall of honor.

Today (Monday) is the final day to purchase tickets for the 5:30 p.m. banquet at Highlands Conference Center in Mitchell on Oct. 8.

His photo will be added to the honor wall that greets visitors to the DOT building in Pierre.

He will be the only legislator there. All he did was work the past decade on trying to get more money for roads and bridges in South Dakota.

He couldn't get anything past the previous administration of Gov. Mike Rounds. Instead Rounds ordered an austerity program.

When Lt. Gov. Dennis Daugaard ran for governor in 2010, Daugaard showed zero interest in raising taxes and fees for much of anything.

Vehle tried anyway in 2011. Daugaard sent a member of his Cabinet, state Transportation Secretary Darin Bergquist, to testify against Vehle's legislation.



Bob MERCER

The defeat didn't stop Vehle. He knew DOT's needs were piling up. He convinced the Legislature's leaders in 2014 to appoint a study of highway and bridge needs.

At the same time Daugaard began to shift his position. Daugaard indicated he would be willing to consider a road and bridge proposal.

The hard part should have been over, right? Hardly.

The 2015 legislation became a battle between Vehle, with the Senate backing him, and House Republican leader Brian Gosch of Rapid City, with his GOP majority in the House backing him.

This wasn't new. Vehle clashed with Gosch in 2013 over banning texting while driving. Vehle's bill died in the House Judiciary Committee.

They grappled again in 2014 over texting. Vehle wanted a more restrictive ban than Gosch would allow through the House.

Vehle's bill died in a House committee again.

Meanwhile Gosch brought his own ban legislation. It won final approval in its fifth amended version.

Now texting in most instances is banned for drivers of motor vehicles while underway. A violation is a petty offense with a \$100 fine.

Vehle didn't get as much as he wanted. Gosch didn't get as little as he wanted.

This year, the Legislature split into the Vehle/Senate and Gosch/House camps again on how to increase taxes and fees for highways and bridges.

The tie-breaker? Raising the speed limit to 80 mph on much of I-90 and I-29.

Gosch wanted the 80. At the very end, Vehle smartly let it ride along.

Now the hall of honor awaits Vehle. As Mike would say, golly bum.

## WRITE US

Make your feelings known! Write to the PRESS & DAKOTAN on a topic of the day, 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 (605) 665-1721 or email to kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.