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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

**SUBSCRIPTIONS/
CIRCULATION**
Extension 104
jim.gevens@yankton.net
CLASSIFIED ADS
Extension 116
tera.schmidt@yankton.net
NEWS DEPT.
Extension 114
news@yankton.net
SPORTS DEPT.
Extension 106
sports@yankton.net
ADVERTISING DEPT.
Extension 122
sales@yankton.net
BUSINESS OFFICE
Extension 119
ar@yankton.net
NEW MEDIA:
Extension 136
beth.rye@yankton.net
COMPOSING DEPT.
Extension 129
kathy.larson@yankton.net

MANAGERS
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Publisher
Michele Schievelbein
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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Chalking Is Also Free Speech

THE VOLANTE, Vermillion (Oct. 19): When someone visits the University of South Dakota and sees the Al Neuharth Media Center, they will see the words of the First Amendment proudly displayed on the outside of the building.

"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."

Freedom of speech has been upheld time and time again to be a universal standard by which we govern our society in the U.S.

Some universities throughout the country have tried to limit this freedom of speech to certain areas known as "free-speech zones."

The very notion of a "free-speech zone" asserts that a person's free speech rights do not extend past the boundaries set by the university.

Basically, since public universities are collectively owned by the taxpayers, they should ensure that there is no barrier to free speech anywhere on campus.

Recently, sidewalk chalkings around campus concerning pro-life and pro-choice have sparked debate and ignited passions for several causes.

Reviews of the student body range from vitriol against those that chalked up the sidewalks to admiration for the time and energy that was put into accomplishing this task.

No matter where one stands on any kind of issue being advocated for, it is essential that we come together and recognize that students have a right to chalk.

Chalking is protected speech under the First Amendment to the Constitution. Any attempt by the school administration to limit the chalking or confine it to certain areas and certain times of the year would be an infringement on the rights of these students.

Debate is good. Debate sparks action. Debate ignites passions. Debate should not be squashed in any way.

The university has a duty to uphold the law as determined by our Supreme Court and legislators.

The university should be a place where students can advocate for causes they believe to be just and proper.

In this case, the chalk messages do at least have some level of support among the American populace.

The university must continue to ensure that the right to chalk around campus and advocate for causes is absolute and not infringed upon.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Monday, Oct. 26, the 299th day of 2015. There are 66 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 26, 1865, The Beatles received MBE medals as Members of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire from Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace.

On this date: In 1774, the First Continental Congress adjourned in Philadelphia.

In 1825, the Erie Canal opened in upstate New York, connecting Lake Erie and the Hudson River.

In 1861, the legendary Pony Express officially ceased operations, giving way to the transcontinental telegraph. (The last run of the Pony Express was completed the following month.)

In 1881, the "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" took place in Tombstone, Arizona.

In 1921, the Chicago Theatre, billed as "the Wonder Theatre of the World," first opened.

In 1944, the World War II Battle of Leyte Gulf ended in a major Allied victory over Japanese forces, whose naval capabilities were badly crippled.

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman signed a measure raising the minimum wage from 40 to 75 cents an hour.

In 1958, Pan American Airways flew its first Boeing 707 jetliner from New York to Paris in 8 hours and 41 minutes.

In 1972, national security adviser Henry Kissinger declared, "Peace is at hand" in Vietnam. Aviation innovator Igor Sikorsky died in Easton, Connecticut, at age 83.

In 1975, Anwar Sadat became the first Egyptian president to pay an official visit to the United States.

In 1984, "Baby Fae," a newborn with a severe heart defect, was given the heart of a baboon in an experimental transplant in Loma Linda, California. (Baby Fae lived 21 days with the animal heart.) "The Terminator," a science-fiction movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a killer cyborg from the future, was released by Orion Pictures.

In 1994, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali of Jordan signed a peace treaty during a ceremony at the Israeli-Jordanian border attended by President Bill Clinton.

Ten years ago: Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared that Israel was a "disgraceful blot" that should be "wiped off the map." A 20-year-old Palestin-

ian blew himself up in an open-air market in Hadera, killing five Israelis. The Chicago White Sox defeated the Houston Astros, 1-0, in Game 4 to win their first World Series since 1917.

Five years ago: Saddam Hussein's foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, was sentenced to death for persecuting members of Shiite religious parties under the former regime. (The sentence was never carried out; Aziz died of a heart attack in June 2015.) Iran began loading fuel into the core of its first nuclear power plant. A day after an earthquake sparked a deadly tsunami, Indonesia saw another natural disaster as Mount Merapi began erupting explosively, resulting in hundreds of deaths in the weeks that followed.

One year ago: Left-leaning Dilma Rousseff was narrowly re-elected in Brazil's tightest presidential election since its return to democracy three decades earlier. Serena Williams won the WTA Tour Finals for the third straight year and fifth time overall, beating Simona Halep 6-3, 6-0 in Singapore. The San Francisco Giants shut out the Kansas City Royals 5-0 to take a 3-2 edge in the World Series.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Shelley Morrison is 79. Author Pat Conroy is 70. Actress Jaclyn Smith is 70. TV host Pat Sajak is 69. Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is 68. Singer Maggie Roche (The Roches) is 64. Musician Bootsy Collins is 64. Actor James Pickens Jr. is 63. Rock musician Keith Strickland (The B-52's) is 62. Actor D.W. Moffett is 61. Actress-singer Rita Wilson is 59. The president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, is 56. Actor Patrick Breen (TV: "Madam Secretary") is 55. Actor Dylan McDermott is 54. Actor Cary Elwes is 53. Singer Natalie Merchant is 52. Country singer Keith Urban is 48. Actor Tom Cavanagh is 47. Actress Rosemarie DeWitt is 44. Actor Anthony Rapp is 44. Writer-producer Seth MacFarlane (TV: "Family Guy") is 42. TV correspondent and co-host Paula Farris (TV: "The View") is 40. Actress Lennon Parham is 40. Actor Hal Ozsan is 39. Actor Jon Heder is 38. Singer Mark Barry (BBMak) is 37. Actor Jonathan Chase is 36. Olympic silver medal figure skater Sasha Cohen is 31. Rapper Schoolboy Q is 29.

Thought for Today: "Without a song, each day would be a century." — Mahalia Jackson, gospel singer and civil rights activist (born this date in 1911, died in 1972).

FROM THE BIBLE

[Jesus] went up on the mountain to pray. Luke 9:28. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Housing Solution?

Randy Gleich, Yankton
An Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing District (AHTIF) could solve the housing issue facing Yankton and Yankton County.

The Federal Housing Administration could provide loans to homebuyers with as little as 3.5 percent down payment. Monthly payment terms are reasonable and affordable.

The type of home is a "manufactured" home that meets federal standards. This home sits on a foundation and isn't mobile.

A basic home in the 880-1,200-square-foot range with land acquisition and good landscaping can be kept under the \$100,000 threshold. It can provide the homeowner top-notch living with all the modern conveniences while still having a reasonable, affordable monthly payment. Taxes on a similar home in Yankton County (2015) run about \$1,400 per year.

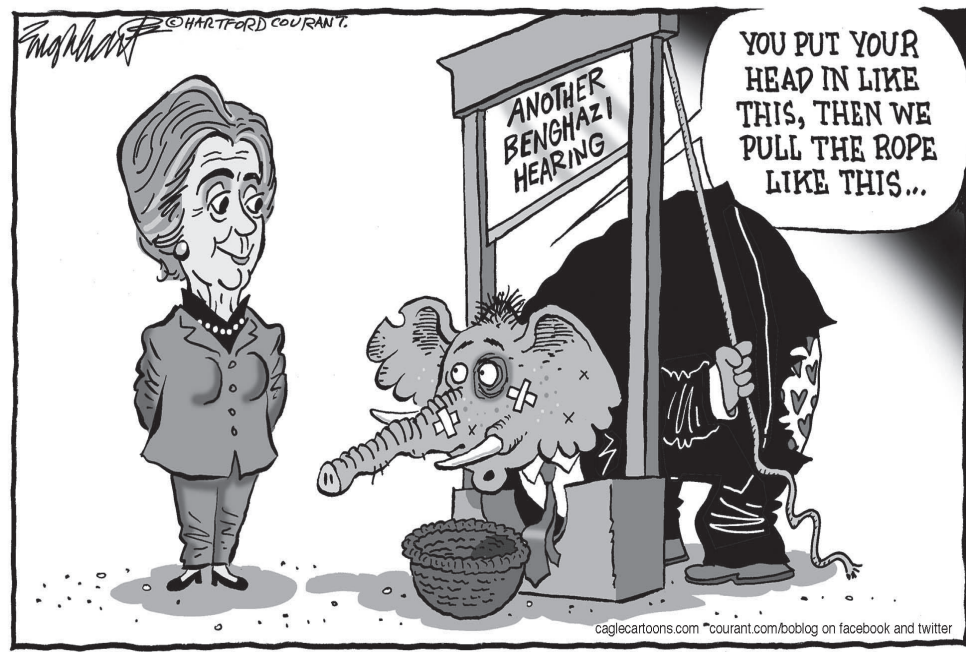
A \$1 million AHTIF with a repayment term of 2 percent for 20 years could possibly be repaid in only five years. The \$1 million AHTIF would build 10 homes for a value of \$100,000 each with property taxes of \$1,400/year per dwelling.

With around \$140,000 in new yearly property taxes, less the yearly AHTIF payment of \$60,705.96, the positive difference of approximately \$79,294.04 applied to the AHTIF could allow this AHTIF to be repaid in five years — a quick payback term.

The assumption used in these calculations are that the actual AHTIF would build and sell the homes, and possibly carry the financing on the home, until conventional financing is found by the homeowner. Other inputs not taken into account are the down payments and interest (which is at a higher percent than the AHTIF), which, when applied, would again decrease the time frame the entire AHTIF would be repaid. It doesn't include infrastructure improvements.

While Yankton explores a \$2 million TIF for the Yankton Mall and Yankton County looks at \$7.5 million TIF or more for the Napa project, an AHTIF could provide over 90 new homes for 90 new families in Yankton QUICKLY for the same amount of money. It would be money well invested and providing a greater benefit to the community than a grain elevator or mall improvement.

We need starter homes less than \$100,000. It can be done.



Capitol Notebook

On Teacher Salaries, Mickelson Tried, Too

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The last time a governor put his name on the line trying to raise teacher salaries in South Dakota, his political party was punished.

Republican George S. Mickelson in his 1991 State of the State address called on legislators to pay more to teachers and to set a minimum salary.

He also called for raising the state sales tax to 4.5 percent — and for local school boards to match the additional state money with local revenue.

"We have a road of progress in front of us, and it is time to run, not walk," he said.

But nobody went anywhere. Instead, the next year's legislative elections saw Democrats win 18 of the 35 seats in the Senate. For two years, state government stood divided.

Republicans won back the Senate back in 1994. They have controlled both chambers of the Legislature ever since.

The state sales tax has remained 4 percent ever since, too.

That history comes to mind as the current governor, Republican Dennis Daugaard, awaits recommendations from the Blue Ribbon task force he appointed to study K-12 education.

The task force meets for the final time Thursday.

We are likely to see some sort of tax increase recommended, perhaps an additional one-half of a percent of sales tax.

The related recommendations likely will call for some of the revenue to go to school districts, in the hope that teachers might see their worst-in-nation \$40,000 average salary climb by \$6,000 or \$8,000 or so in the coming years.

Some also could go for property-tax relief. There probably will be other recommendations.



Bob
MERCER

Such as bringing back caps on the amounts of unobligated money that school districts can keep in reserve, rolling the pension levy into the general education levy and sliding some of the capital outlay levy into the general education levy.

There also could be a recommendation to restructure the state aid formula, so distribution of state funding would be based on teachers rather than enrollment, and thereby eliminate the bonuses that small school districts receive.

Whatever the task force does, the next decision is up to the governor whether to propose those changes to the Legislature.

In his 1991 speech, Mickelson said he was "steadfastly committed" to raising salaries so quality teachers were retained and the profession attracted new teachers.

His wife, Linda, was a former teacher. He had been a lawyer for the Brookings school district.

"We cannot build an educational system on a foundation of sand, which is how I would characterize our salary structure for teachers in this state," Mickelson said.

But the '91 session ended without his plan getting a roll-call vote in the Senate.

To pass, he would have needed 24 ayes in the Senate, which had 18 Republicans and 17 Democrats.

The rules were suspended and four times the bill was deferred, but negotiations went nowhere. Time ran out.

A year later, Democratic legislative candidates used the teacher pay plan against Republicans. They characterized it as an attempt to force property-tax increases.

Democrats won a Senate majority. And many Republicans declared: Never again. Different times now? Soon we shall see.

Doctors Agree: Obama's Electronic Medical Records Mandate Sucks!

BY MICHELLE MALKIN
Creators.com

Hey, who's up for a stiff dose of "See, I told you so?"

For the past several years, medical professionals have warned that the federal electronic medical records mandate — buried in the trillion-dollar Obama stimulus of 2009 — would do more harm than good. Their diagnosis, unfortunately, is on the nose.

The Quack-in-Chief peddled his tech-centric elixir as a cost-saving miracle. "This will cut waste, eliminate red tape and reduce the need to repeat expensive medical tests," he crowed at the time. In theory, of course, modernizing record-collection is a good idea, which many private health care providers had already adopted before the Healer of All Things took office.

But in the clumsy, power-grabbing hands of Washington bureaucrats, Obama's one-size-fits-all EMR regulations have morphed into what one expert called "health-care information technology's version of cash-for-clunkers."

I reported in 2012 how my own primary care physician quit her regular practice and converted to "concierge care" because of the maddening EMR burden. Untold numbers of docs across the country have done the same.

In 2013, health care analysts at the RAND Corporation admitted that their cost-savings predictions of \$81 billion a year were vastly inflated.

In 2014, RAND researchers interviewed doctors who spotlighted "important negative effects" of the EMR mandate on "their professional lives and, in some troubling ways, on patient care. They described poor EHR usability that did not match clinical workflows, time-consuming data entry, interference with face-to-face patient care, and overwhelming numbers of electronic messages and alerts."

And the hits keep coming. Robert Wachter, author of the recently published "The Digital Doctor: Hope, Hype, and Harm at the Dawn of Medicine's Computer Age," chronicled the damage he's witnessed: "Physicians retiring early. Small practices bankrupted by up-front expenses or locked into ineffective systems by the prohibitive cost of switching. Hours consumed by onerous data entry unrelated to patient care. Workflow disruptions. And above all, massive intrusions on our patient relationships."

The American Medical Association, which foolishly backed Obamacare, is now balking at top-down government intrusion into their profession. Better late than never. The group launched a campaign called "Break the Red

Tape" this summer to pressure D.C. to pause the new medical-record rules as an estimated 250,000 physicians face fines totaling \$200 million a year for failing to comply with "meaningful use" EMR requirements.

In Massachusetts last month, physicians decried the failure to achieve true "interoperability" between EMR systems despite a \$30 billion federal investment through the Obama stimulus. Dr. Dennis Dimitri, president of the Massachusetts Medical Society, noted at a rancor-filled town hall that the mandate has "added significant time to the daily life of most physicians in their practices," WBUR reported. "It has not necessarily lived up to expectations in terms of its ability to provide cues to physicians to make sure that necessary treatments are not being missed. It has certainly not been able to swiftly disseminate information from one clinical setting to another."

That's in no small part due to the cronyism embedded in the federal stimulus "incentives" — a massive chunk of which the White House doled out to behemoth EMR company Epic Systems, headed by Obama crony Judith Faulkner. As I've noted repeatedly in this column the past three years, Epic continues to be plagued by both industry and provider complaints about its creaky, closed-end system and exorbitant fee structure to enable the very kind of interoperability the Obama EMR mandate was supposed to ensure.

Now, even left-wing Mother Jones magazine reports this week that "instead of ushering in a new age of secure and easily accessible medical files, Epic has helped create a fragmented system that leaves doctors unable to trade information across practices or hospitals. That hurts patients who can't be assured that their records — drug allergies, test results, X-rays — will be available to the doctors who need to see them. This is especially important for patients with lengthy and complicated health histories."

The Obama White House has responded by doubling down on its destructive EMR rules that punish both patients and providers. Congress must intervene. Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, introduced a bill Thursday to repeal the draconian penalties "so that providers can get back to the business they are uniquely trained to do — utilizing their skills and knowledge to heal the sick and support the continued vitality of the healthy."

Prescription: Butt out, Washington. Primum non nocere.

Michelle Malkin is author of the new book "Who Built That: Awe-Inspiring Stories of American Tinkerpreneurs." Her email address is malkinblog@gmail.com.



Michelle
MALKIN