

## THE PRESS &amp; DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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## OPINION | OUR VIEW

## Pheasant Numbers And CRP Numbers

A report released Friday showing a dramatic drop in the annual pheasant brood survey conducted by South Dakota's Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GF&P) indicates that we are living with the fallout of what has happened in recent years.

Now, what precisely has happened is open to far more speculation and debate.

The mid-summer pheasant count reported a startling 64 percent drop in the number of birds this year. According to the GF&P, the average number of pheasants per square mile counted this year was just 1.52; the average last year was 4.19 birds per square mile.

The fact that the number was down was not surprising given the harshness of the drought last year. But the depth of this drop may have caught some people by surprise.

While the drought's impact — not only on cover but on insect life, which is a primary element of the pheasants' diet — is undeniable, a group dedicated to cultivating the pheasant population zeroed in on another culprit.

In a press release, the South Dakota chapter of Pheasants Forever stated, first and foremost, that "upland habitat loss is the primary culprit in the downturn of South Dakota's legendary pheasant population, a trend which will continue unless federal policy makers swiftly enact strengthened conservation policies." This refers to the shrinking of conservation acreage across the state in recent years, as more farmers either bypass or pull land out of such programs in order to use them for crop production and take advantage of high market prices.

"By not passing a Farm Bill, by not including the 'Protect Our Prairies Act' ..., by not re-linking crop insurance payments to conservation compliance, federal policy makers are all but ensuring this unprecedented habitat loss will continue in South Dakota and across the Midwest," stated Dave Nomsen, Pheasants Forever's vice president of governmental affairs, in the press release.

Pheasants Forever noted that, for the first time in two decades, there is less than 1 million acres of South Dakota farmland now enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a fact that is depriving the birds of the cover they need to endure harsh weather and to propagate.

Unquestionably, the loss of habitat has had an impact on pheasant numbers, to go along with hot summers and tough winters. How much of the blame can be placed on the loss of conservation acreage is open to vigorous conversation, which will no doubt pick up steam as we move toward the start of the hunting season next month. It's a season that generates almost a quarter-billion dollars for South Dakota's economy.

Just as there may be no one culprit for what has happened to the pheasant numbers this year, there is likely no one solution.

However, the only issue we would have any direct control over would be the loss of habitat acres. It surely magnifies the impact of the problems created by the weather and places South Dakota at economic risk.

Conservation is a vital part of agriculture, although it sometimes seems to be seen by some as more of a nuisance or a hurdle than as an integral component of sound land management. The brood survey suggests it has a broader impact. It magnifies the importance of conservation thinking, not only in government farm programs but also in individual farming operations. Cause does have an effect. And this should serve as a eye-opening — but not irreversible — lesson.

kmh

## ON THIS DATE

## By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 4, the 247th day of 2013. There are 118 days left in the year. Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, begins at sunset.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On September 4, 1888, George Eastman received a patent for his roll-film box camera, and registered his trademark: "Kodak."

**On this date:** In 1781, Los Angeles was founded by Spanish settlers under the leadership of Governor Felipe de Neve.

In 1886, a group of Apache Indians led by Geronimo (also known as Goyathlay, "One Who Yawns") surrendered to Gen. Nelson Miles at Skeleton Canyon in Arizona.

In 1893, English author Beatrix Potter first told the story of Peter Rabbit in the form of a "picture letter" to Noel Moore, the son of Potter's former governess.

In 1917, the American Expeditionary Forces in France suffered their first fatalities during World War I when a German plane attacked a British-run base hospital.

In 1948, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands abdicated after nearly six decades of rule for health reasons.

In 1951, President Harry S. Truman addressed the nation from the Japanese peace treaty conference in San Francisco in the first live, coast-to-coast television broadcast.

In 1957, Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus used Arkansas National Guardsmen to prevent nine black students from entering all-white Central High School in Little Rock. Ford Motor Co. began selling its ill-fated Edsel.

In 1962, The Beatles, with new drummer Ringo Starr, recorded "Love Me Do" at EMI Studios in London. (The more familiar version with substitute drummer Andy White and Starr on tambourine was recorded a week later.)

In 1963, a Swissair Caravelle III carrying 80 people crashed shortly after takeoff from Zurich, killing all on board.

In 1971, an Alaska Airlines jet crashed near Juneau, killing all 111 people on board.

In 1972, U.S. swimmer Mark Spitz won a seventh gold medal at the Munich Olympics, in the 400-meter medley relay. "The New Price Is Right," hosted by Bob Barker, premiered on CBS. The game show later dropped the "New" from its title and expanded from a half-hour to an hour.

In 1998, Internet services company Google filed for incorporation in California.

**Ten years ago:** Miguel Estrada, whose nomination had become a flash point for Democratic opposition

to President George W. Bush's judicial choices, withdrew from consideration for an appeals court seat after Republicans failed in seven attempts to break a Senate filibuster. Verizon Communications and two unions, the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, reached a tentative, five-year contract agreement after four months of talks.

**Five years ago:** With a pledge that "change is coming," Sen. John McCain accepted the Republican presidential nomination at the party's convention in St. Paul, Minn., vowing to vanquish what he called the "constant partisan rancor" gripping Washington. The Dow industrial average fell 344.65 points to 11,188.23 on gloomy economic data. Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice in a sex scandal, forcing the Democrat out of office after months of defiantly holding onto his job.

**One year ago:** Democrats opened their national convention in Charlotte, N.C., by ridiculing Republican Mitt Romney as a millionaire candidate who "quite simply doesn't get it"; first lady Michelle Obama lovingly praised her husband as a devoted spouse and caring father at home and a "man we can trust" to revive the nation's weak economy as president. The Treasury Department reported the national debt had topped \$16 trillion.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Mitzu Gaynor is 82. Actor Kenneth Kimmins is 72. Singer Merald "Bubba" Knight (Gladys Knight & The Pips) is 71. World Golf Hall of Famer Raymond Floyd is 71. Actress Jennifer Salt is 69. World Golf Hall of Famer Tom Watson is 64. Rhythm-and-blues musician Ronald LaPreau is 63. Actress Judith Ivey is 62. Rock musician Martin Chambers (The Pretenders) is 62. Actress Khandi Alexander is 56. Actor-comedian Damon Wayans is 53. Rock musician Kim Thayil is 53. Actor Richard Speight Jr. is 44. Actor Noah Taylor is 44. Actress Ione Skye is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer Richard Wingo (Jagged Edge) is 38. Actor Wes Bentley is 35. Actor Max Greenfield is 34. Singer Dan Miller ("Making the Band") is 33. Singer Beyonce Knowles is 32. Country singer-musician Tom Gossin (Gloriana) is 32. Actress-comedian Whitney Cummings is 31. Folk-rock musician Neyla Pekarek (The Lumineers) is 27. Actor Carter Jenkins is 22. Actor Trevor Gagnon is 18.

**Thought for Today:** "I am one of the people who love the why of things." — Catherine the Great, Russian czarina (1729-1796).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? Job 11:7. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*



## The Rez Of The Story

## Ghosts Of The Ghost Dance

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),

In 1977, the Seven Mile Creek Sundance — which was started here on the Yankton by my grandfather, Fred Zephier Sr., the year before — was conducted by one, George Eagle Elk who was an elder medicine man from Parmelee. Mr. Eagle Elk has subsequently made his journey to the spirit world but left this account of Sitting Bull's ultimate demise that I thought I'd share with you. This was as it was told to Richard Erdoes, who is co-author of "American Indian Myths and Legends":

"The ghost dance was peaceful, but the whites thought of it as the signal for a great Indian uprising. They asked the army for help, and in the end many unarmed ghost dancers, mostly women and children, were killed at Wounded Knee. We Indians think that the white people were afraid of the ghost dance because they had a bad conscience, having taken away half of the remaining Indian land just a few years before. People with bad consciences live in fear, and they hate most those whom they have wronged. Thus it was with the ghost dance.

"At the time, Sitting Bull lived on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota with his Hunkpapa people. He was not, as some people think, the war leader who defeated Custer on the Little Big Horn. He was a holy man, the spiritual leader of the Sioux nation. He got along well with some whites, even had a few white friends, but he always said: 'I want the white man beside me, not above me.' Sitting Bull, or Tatanka Iyotanka, as he is called in Sioux, was a proud and dignified man, and nobody's slave. Now, at some time before 1890, Sitting Bull had joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. He had traveled all over the country. In New York he could often be seen sitting on a doorstep on Broadway, glibly nickels tom poor street urchins and saying that white folks did not know how to take care of their children. He also said that all children — red, white, black, yellow — were alike in their innocence, and that if grown-ups could remain children in their hearts, all would be well. Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill became friends. When the circus show was over, Buffalo Bill presented his friend Tatanka Iyotanka with a fine sombrero, which the Indian holy man wore from then on. Buffalo Bill Cody also gave Sitting Bull his favorite circus horse. It was white and could do many tricks.

"At the time the Great White Father in Washing-



Vince TWO EAGLES

ton, and the white agents who ruled the reservations, thought that the solution to what they called the 'Indian problem' was for Indians to behave like whites: to speak and dress like whites, to become Christians and worship like whites, to own property

and work like whites, to marry whites, and to be swallowed up by white society. The 'problem' would be solved by simply having no more Indians, by letting them disappear into the great American melting pot.

"Sitting Bull opposed this. He did not want the Indians to die out. He wanted them to be true to their old ways, to go on worshipping the Great Spirit, to continue speaking their own language and singing their old Sioux songs. And because Sitting Bull was a Wichasha Wakan, a medicine man, the most respected one among the Lakota people, many Indians rallied around him. Thus he became the center of the resistance to being swallowed up by the culture of the whites. And thus he became the enemy of those who wanted to make the Indians into white men.

"They said that he stood in the path of progress, and the ghost dance trouble seems a good opportunity to get rid of the old chief. He was accused of siding with the dancers and protecting them. The white reservation chief sent out the Indian police, forty-three of them, to arrest Sitting Bull. If he resisted and was killed, so much the better. The police force was made up of what we now call 'apples,' men who are red outside and white inside. They were led by Lieutenants Shave Head and Bull Head.

"The police came to arrest the great leader before dawn on an icy winter morning. The ground was covered with snow. They burst into his one-room log cabin with their six shooters drawn. They dragged him naked from beneath his buffalo robe and pushed him outside; they would not even let him dress properly. They kept pushing him as they put handcuffs on. The commotion awoke Sitting Bull's friends and relatives in the cabins nearby. Led by the old chief's friend and adopted brother Chase-the-Bear, they came boiling out of their huts and tipis. A woman's voice rose in a song: Sitting Bull, you were a warrior once, what are you going to do now?

"The old chief stopped abruptly. He pushed the policemen away, saying: 'I won't go!'

Next week will be part two of George Eagle Elk's version of Sitting Bull's death. Doksha (later) ...

## Leonard Pitts Jr.

## IRS Ruling Moves Us Forward

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

Abraham Lincoln said it best.

As the drums of disunion began to drown out the softer melodies of comity and reason, Lincoln, a candidate for U.S. Senate, warned a convention of Illinois Republicans that the nation could not escape its moment of decision.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand," he said in a celebrated 1858 speech. "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other."

The showdown he foresaw came three years later, when the guns began to fire at Fort Sumter. Today we face another division of the house — and another looming showdown. This one will not be resolved with guns — the violence will be rhetorical — but it will be difficult, nonetheless.

We took a step toward the showdown last week when the IRS announced that married, same-sex couples will now be allowed to file joint federal tax returns, just as married opposite-sex couples do. Adam and Steve — or Keisha and Rose — will be entitled to all the federal exemptions and deductions marriage provides, even if they live in states that prohibit same-sex marriage. Washington will recognize their union, even if North Carolina does not.

You may think that is simply proof North Carolina and other recalcitrant states are on the wrong side of history — again — and will eventually and belatedly have to concede the fact. You're right, except that it may not be as eventual and belated as you think.

Consider Article IV, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution, which reads, in part, as follows: "Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records and judicial proceedings of every other state."

It's called the "full faith and credit clause." What it means is that each state honors and recognizes the official acts of other states. It is why,

## YOUR LETTERS

## The Next Steps

V.E. Rossiter Jr., Hartington, Neb.

The recent letter from Dennis Heine ("What An Idea," *Press & Dakotan*, Aug. 8) was a start in the dialogue of guns. He suggested that kids be allowed to carry guns, which is something I have thought about for some time.

I did some research on the matter recently and discovered that there are 311,800,000-plus people in America. Further research indicated that there are some 271 million guns in America. Obviously there are some 40 million-plus souls that don't have guns.

Let's start with teachers. Guys like Dave and

Steve are not the biggest stature wise, so we should hang a six-shooter on each hip, Roy Rogers-style. Then, starting with pre-schoolers, kindergartners, first-, second- and third-graders we should give them single shot .22's, and other lightweight hand guns. Fourth- through eighth-graders could be issued automatic .22's, .32's and other medium-size hand guns. Ninth- through the 12th-graders could carry .40 caliber locks, .50 caliber and .44 magnum heavy guns. Depending on the individual, size, mental capabilities and general outlook, we might even equip them with bazookas.

Like I said, Dennis has the right idea. He just didn't flesh it out enough.

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