

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Gov. Sets Right Tone On DUI Reform

CAPITAL JOURNAL, Pierre (Sept. 20): Daugaard sets the right tone in responding to request for DUI reform

Gov. Dennis Daugaard is striking exactly the right note — respectful, interested, but not hasty to promise anything — in responding to a grieving father's request for DUI reform.

It's more fallout from the July 8 traffic accident that killed two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service researchers in Pickstown. Robert Klumb, 46, of Pierre and Maegan Spindler, 25, of Cazenovia, N.Y. — also a Pierre resident at the time of the accident — were struck and killed by an out-of-control driver who was allegedly driving while intoxicated.

We fully understand that the parents of Maegan Spindler don't want their daughter to have died in vain. It's clear the governor understands that, too.

We appreciate the way Gov. Daugaard has responded to the Spindlers, making it clear that he and his staff take seriously the Spindlers' 13-point proposal for making South Dakota a "Best in Class" model for DUI enforcement.

And frankly, there are some interesting ideas here. Why shouldn't first- and second-offense DUIs be treated as felonies rather than misdemeanors? What is so unlucky about the third time? Is it only on the third time that some idiot with too much to drink and a thousand pounds of steel around him actually endangers someone out there on the road with that blunt object he's driving? The laws of physics say a drunk is a danger anytime he gets behind the wheel, regardless of whether or not he's done it before.

We need to talk about ideas like this.

We also need to talk about a key part of the Spindlers' proposal, that idea of a permanent, explicitly dedicated excise tax of 10 percent on the wholesale cost of all alcoholic beverages sold in South Dakota in order to supplement current DUI enforcement efforts.

If there is a lack of consensus for enacting a new tax, the Spindlers propose that the governor abolish one or more unpopular taxes affecting families or business development which currently go into the general fund in order to offset the proposed dedicated alcohol excise tax.

And here is where the governor and his staff, and perhaps lawmakers, need to think carefully, if this proposal ever goes anywhere.

We have nothing in particular against a tax that would pay for stricter alcohol enforcement. Taxing the stuff that costs the society money is not a bad idea. It's a voluntary tax, after all; you would pay according to how much you choose to drink. But the fact is, there are plenty of ways that alcohol costs the state and its taxpayers money. In fact law enforcement costs could be, for all we know, one of the lesser costs. What about alcohol-related health care costs? Go online and you can easily find a dozen diseases or health conditions made worse by alcohol.

If we are going to seriously discuss an added excise tax on alcohol — and we're not sure that's going to happen — then let's see the numbers on what a tax would generate, and what our alcohol-related costs are, before we decide how to spend it.

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.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Sept. 30, the 273rd day of 2013. There are 92 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Sept. 30, 1955, actor James Dean, 24, was killed in a two-car collision near Cholame, Calif.

On this date: In 1777, the Continental Congress — forced to flee in the face of advancing British forces — moved to York, Pa.

In 1791, Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" premiered in Vienna, Austria.

In 1809, a treaty was signed by Indiana Territory Gov. William Henry Harrison and representatives of four Indian tribes under which the Indians sold some 3 million acres of land to be used for U.S. settlements.

In 1846, Boston dentist William Morton used ether as an anesthetic for the first time as he extracted an ulcerated tooth from merchant Eben Frost.

In 1938, after co-signing the Munich Agreement allowing Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain said, "I believe it is peace for our time."

In 1949, the Berlin Airlift came to an end.

In 1954, the first nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Nautilus, was commissioned by the Navy.

In 1962, black student James Meredith was escorted by federal marshals to the campus of the University of Mississippi, where he enrolled for classes the next day.

In 1986, the U.S. released accused Soviet spy Gennadiy Zakharov, one day after the Soviets released American journalist Nicholas Daniloff.

In 1988, Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev retired President Andrei A. Gromyko from the Politburo and fired other old-guard leaders in a Kremlin shake-up.

In 2001, under threat of U.S. military strikes, Afghanistan's hard-line Taliban rulers said explicitly for the first time that Osama bin Laden was still in the country and that they knew where his hideout was located.

Ten years ago: The FBI began a full-scale criminal investigation into whether White House officials had illegally leaked the identity of undercover CIA officer Valerie Plame. Eighteen accused al-Qaida sympathizers were convicted in Belgium's biggest terrorism trial.

Five years ago: Congressional leaders and President George W. Bush rummaged through ideas new and old, desperately seeking to

change a dozen House members' votes and pass a multibillion-dollar economic rescue plan. Wall Street regained hope as the Dow industrials rose 485 points. More than 200 people were killed in a stampede of pilgrims at a Hindu temple in Jodhpur, India. J.L. Chestnut Jr., the first black lawyer in Selma, Ala. and a prominent activist in civil rights cases across a half century, died in Birmingham at age 77.

One year ago: Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, said President Barack Obama has "misunderstood" American values in his policies toward other countries. Looking to lower expectations in advance of his first debate against Mitt Romney, President Barack Obama described himself as just an "OK" debater. Mike Trout of the Los Angeles Angels became the first rookie in Major League history to hit 30 home runs and steal 40 bases in a season.

Today's Birthdays: Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel is 85. Actress Angie Dickinson is 82. Singer Cissy Houston is 80. Singer Johnny Mathis is 78. Actor Len Cariou is 74. Singer Marilyn McCoo is 70. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is 68. Pop singer Sylvia Peterson (The Chiffons) is 67. Actor Vondie Curtis-Hall is 63. Actress Victoria Tennant is 63. Actor John Finn is 61. Rock musician John Lombardo is 61. Singer Deborah Allen is 60. Actor Calvin Levels is 59. Actor Barry Williams is 59. Singer Patrice Rushen is 59. Actress Fran Drescher is 56. Country singer Marty Stuart is 55. Actress Debrah Farentino is 54. Rock musician Bill Rieflin (R.E.M.) is 53. Former Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., is 53. Actress Crystal Bernard is 52. Actor Eric Stoltz is 52. Rapper-producer Marley Marl is 51. Country singer Eddie Montgomery (Montgomery-Gentry) is 50. Rock singer Trey Anastasio is 49. Actress Monica Bellucci is 49. Rock musician Robby Takac (Goo Goo Dolls) is 49. Actress Lisa Thornhill is 47. Actress Andrea Roth is 46. Actor Silas Weir Mitchell is 44. Actor Tony Hale is 43. Actress Jenna Elfman is 42. Actor Ashley Hamilton is 39. Actress Marion Cotillard is 38. Actor Stark Sands is 35. Actor Mike Damus is 34. Tennis player Martina Hingis is 33. Olympic gold medal gymnast Dominique Moceanu is 32. Actress Lacey Chabert is 31. Actor Kieran Culkin is 31. Singer-rapper T-Pain is 29.

Thought for Today: "Nothing you can't spell will ever work." — Will Rogers, American humorist (1879-1935).

FROM THE BIBLE

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering. 2 Timothy 4:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

STAR TRIBUNE
S&K

HOW "INCENTIVES" WORK:

FOR THE RICH

FOR THE POOR



GIVE THEM
TAX BREAKS
GIVE THEM
BONUSES
GIVE
THEM
STOCK
OPTIONS
GIVE
THEM
PERKS AND
GOODIES AND
PRIVILEGE



TAKE
AWAY
THEIR
FOOD

Capitol Notebook

As Education Starves, It's Time To Ask: Why?

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Jim Abbott is no fool.

He ran for statewide office three times and came closest in 2002 when he was the Democratic candidate for governor. He's put his talents to the public's benefit via another route, as the president of the University of South Dakota, a post he's held since 1997.

On Thursday night, he made a statement to which attention should be paid.

"I think it's clear," he said in his annual State of the University speech, "that South Dakota does not support education."

The story that followed by Braley Dodson in the *Volante* (the USD student newspaper) amplified the point.

"Our state has a tremendous aversion to taxes," Abbott said. "We want excellence, but we don't want to pay for it."

Larry Rhoden is no fool, either.

He's a state senator from the ranch country of Union Center. He's running for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate. He wants the Legislature and the governor to restore the K-12 aid that was cut two years ago during the recession.

So does Wade Pogany, executive director for the Associated School Boards of South Dakota. Pogany told a panel of legislators Tuesday that \$23 million would be needed to bring the per-student allocation back up to the pre-cut level.

Administrators from Sioux Falls, Tea, Milbank, Custer, Estelline, Burke and Parkston told their stories to the panel. Details varied but the themes don't take many words: Programs cut, salaries frozen, class sizes in-

creased and fewer teachers seeking jobs.

Sen. Bill Van Gerpen, R-Tyndall, is no fool, either. He said the Legislature needs to follow the state law which guarantees that state aid per student increase annually by the rate of inflation but no more than 3 percent.

Two years in a row that didn't happen. One year it was no increase, the next year was the 8-plus percent cut. That is why the school districts are \$23 million behind.

To understand why schools are struggling, we need to look back to 20 years ago. The property tax revolt was at its modern peak in South Dakota.

An initiative on the 1994 election ballot sought to limit property taxes to 1 percent of a property's assessed value — the equivalent of a cut, by half to two-thirds, depending on the area and the level of government.

The limitation lost, but barely. Yes voters numbered 152,048 and no voters 155,435. Republican Bill Janklow won election for governor and led the Legislature to impose property-tax caps, limit budgets of local governments and establish our current school aid formula.

The formula uses a combination of local property taxes and state aid to assure every student receives an equal amount of funding — and more if the student attends a small-enrollment school district.

Janklow also convinced legislators to allow local governments and school districts to opt-out of the limits. An opt-out was subject to a local vote. The idea was voters would want their districts to excel and pay more.

That hasn't happened. Opt-outs generally are loathed and often rejected.

Jim Abbott, unfortunately, is all too right.

When There's Hell To Pay

BY BILL O'REILLY

Creators Syndicate

While writing my latest book, "Killing Jesus," I knew I would catch hell once it hit the marketplace. Your mom was right when she told you never to discuss politics and religion, because emotions run so high in those arenas. Especially religion.

Even before "Killing Jesus" was released, the mail began pouring in. And some of it was very nasty.

Brent in Texas opined: "O'Reilly, you are not someone who has the right to write a book about Jesus."

Eric in South Carolina: "You are helping to deceive people with your ignorance about Jesus."

Al in Louisiana: "Bill, what do you know about Jesus? You are Catholic, and they don't know anything about the Bible."

And Raleigh in California really let loose with some disturbing stuff: "Bill, please repent before it is too late. You seem to be angry at God because he put a black man in the White House."

Of course, none of these folks had actually read "Killing Jesus," because it had not been released. The book is pure history; there is no religion in it. The people lashing out at me for daring to address their savior in any capacity are so intense in their beliefs that they have lost all sight of reality.

Now, a sad fact of life in America is that there are some very unstable folks running around, and they have always been with us. But from my perch as a national TV commentator, I

can tell you with certainty that the level of fanaticism is rising not only here, but all over the world.

The reason is the Internet. In the past, kooks were kind of isolated. But now they can find other loons in cyberspace with whom to commiserate. That encourages bizarre behavior, as disturbed people think their outlook is acceptable because others are saying the same thing on their machines.

The chief al-Qaida recruiting tool is the Internet. Neo-Nazis campaign heavily in cyberspace. NAMBLA, the child rape club, has a worldwide presence on the 'Net.

There is little anyone can do with fanatics. Reasoning with them is a fool's errand. Avoiding them is mandatory. These people are dangerous.

They spread poison and could not care less who they hurt. Thus, the Internet has become a hate-filled town square with no limits put on destructive verbal behavior.

And millions of children have access to all the vitriol.

Freedom has always had a downside. With technology allowing for instant communication, hate groups, perverts and killers now have many more opportunities to cause harm than ever before. Again, there's little anyone can do about it.

But everyone should be aware of it.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of many books, including the newly released "Killing Jesus."



Bill
O'REILLY

YOUR LETTERS

Shout Out To GFWC

Yankton Homeless Shelter Board

The Yankton Homeless Shelter would like to thank Yankton's General Federated Women's Club for choosing to spend their time and resources with us to give the upstairs apartment of the shelter a wonderful makeover.

The homeless shelter has served many individual males and families over the years, and this group has taken the rooms and revived them with wonderful colors and decorations that make their stay here better. Anytime you can put a smile on someone's face who is going through a tough time is wonderful, and this group has done just that.

Thank you again Pauline Akland, Mary Pietila, Maysel Goltz, and Sonny and Judi Olson.

Great Summer Program

Paty, Ryan, Alice, Tom, Joelina, Curtis, Violet and others

We would like to thank Lisa Brasel of the Yankton Police Department for Lisa's Pet Project this summer, she did an excellent job of explaining to us how to care for, handle and play with or work with each animal she presented. She let us play with, feed and groom the animals. It was both educational and fun. We hope to see more wonderful programs in the future.

WRITE US

Letters, Yankton Press & Dakotan, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078