

# The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

## Pipelines Are Better Than Alternative

**WATERTOWN PUBLIC OPINION, Watertown (Sept. 22):** This past weekend, as reported in Monday's edition of the *Public Opinion*, we all saw and read that "it" can happen here.

What is "it"?  
A train derailment and subsequently, tanker cars on fire. What before this weekend was something that happened elsewhere (out of sight, out of mind), came home to roost right here in eastern South Dakota.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe train, 98 cars long, was carrying tanker cars from Mina, S.D., to Deer Park, Texas. It was traveling at 10 mph at the time of the accident.

It's important to note no one was hurt when the cars derailed Saturday morning. The derailment occurred between the towns of Scotland and Lesterville over a small wooden bridge that spanned a dry creek. Seven cars loaded with ethanol derailed, three of them ruptured and the ethanol caught fire. Emergency crews from both Yankton and Bon Homme counties responded, as did fire fighters from Scotland, Lesterville, Menno, Tabor and Tyndall.

Crews let the fire burn itself out since there were no structures in the vicinity and, with high moisture and low winds in the area, nothing else was in danger of igniting.

The on-site investigation will take up to five days, possibly longer, to determine what caused the derailment.

For us, this near-tragedy is a reminder of why we need to build pipelines to transport volatile products like oil, gas and even ethanol.

There are a number of oil pipelines on the docket nationally, including the Keystone XL pipeline that's been caught up in Washington, D.C., politics for more than a half-decade. It's been tied up so long, in fact, that the South Dakota Public Utility Commission had to hold hearings for the second time to allow it to be built in and traverse our state.

It is clear to us a pipeline transporting those products is infinitely safer than using over-the-ground railroads or trucks. News reports of train derailments and resulting explosions, including the near destruction of a small town in Canada, only proves the point.

How bad did it get? In the township of Lac-Megantic in the province of Quebec, on July 6, 2013, a 74-car freight train carrying North Dakota crude oil rolled down a hill and derailed downtown, causing multiple tank cars to explode and burn.

Forty-two people were confirmed dead, with five more missing and presumed dead. More than 30 buildings in the town's center, roughly half of the downtown area, were destroyed. All but three of the 39 remaining downtown buildings are to be demolished due to petroleum contamination of the townsites.

Sure pipelines do have problems, including spills and leaks, but no devastation like the Canadian town experienced. The current practice of shipping oil in large quantities from Canada and North Dakota to refineries in the south via trains is a game of Russian roulette, and the odds are against the people who live in communities where those trains pass through.

Note: This is not an indictment of railroads. Not in the least bit. Our sense is they are doing all that they can to make their lines safer and tanker cars less prone to exploding in a crash or derailment.

It is, however, a statement in support of decades of successfully transporting oil-based products through underground pipelines that crisscross the nation. Given the choice of a 100-car oil train traversing through Watertown or another pipeline underground doing the same job, we would pick a pipeline over railcar any time, any day.

When will the White House and Congress understand that simple idea and start approving the needed oil pipeline infrastructure upgrades and additions needed in this country?

Or will they wait until another rail-car derailment occurs and more lives are lost as a result?

### IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Monday, September 28, the 271st day of 2015. There are 94 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On September 28, 1928, Scottish medical researcher Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, the first effective antibiotic.

**On this date:** In 1066, William the Conqueror invaded England to claim the English throne.

In 1542, Portuguese navigator Juan Rodriguez Cabrilho arrived at present-day San Diego.

In 1787, the Congress of the Confederation voted to send the just-completed Constitution of the United States to state legislatures for their approval.

In 1850, flogging was abolished as a form of punishment in the U.S. Navy.

In 1914, the First Battle of the Aisne during World War I ended inconclusively.

In 1939, during World War II, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed a treaty calling for the partitioning of Poland, which the two countries had invaded.

In 1945, the motion picture drama "Mildred Pierce," starring Joan Crawford, opened in New York.

In 1958, voters in the African country of Guinea overwhelmingly favored independence from France.

In 1967, Walter E. Washington was sworn in as the first mayor-commissioner of the District of Columbia (he'd been appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson).

In 1974, first lady Betty Ford underwent a mastectomy at Bethesda Naval Medical Center in Maryland, following discovery of a cancerous lump in her breast.

In 1989, deposed Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos died in exile in Hawaii at age 72.

In 1995, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat signed an accord at the White House ending Israel's military occupation of West Bank cities and laying the foundation for a Palestinian state.

**Ten years ago:** House Majority Leader Tom DeLay was indicted by a Texas grand jury on a charge of conspiring to violate political fundraising laws. (DeLay was convicted in 2010, but the conviction was ultimately overturned.) A woman disguised as a man slipped into a line of Iraqi army recruits and detonated explosives

strapped to her body, killing six recruits in the first known suicide attack by a woman in Iraq's insurgency. The U.S. Treasury unveiled the new \$10 bill, featuring splashes of red, yellow and orange.

**Five years ago:** The youngest son of North Korean President Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong Un, was selected for his first leadership post in the ruling Workers Party, putting him well on the path to succeed his father. Movie director Arthur Penn ("Bonnie and Clyde") died in New York a day after turning 88.

**One year ago:** In an interview that aired on CBS' "60 Minutes," President Barack Obama acknowledged that U.S. intelligence agencies had underestimated the threat from Islamic State militants and overestimated the ability and will of Iraq's army to fight. Gov. Jerry Brown announced that he had signed a bill making California the first in the nation to define when "yes means yes" and adopt requirements for colleges to follow when investigating sexual assault reports. Europe defeated the United States to win the Ryder Cup, 16 1/2 to 11 1/2. Jordan Zimmermann threw the first no-hitter by a Washington Nationals pitcher in a 1-0 victory over the Miami Marlins.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Brigitte Bardot is 81. Actor Joel Higgins is 72. Singer Helen Shapiro is 69. Movie writer-director-actor John Sayles is 65. Rock musician George Lynch is 61. Zydeco singer-musician C.J. Chenier is 58. Actor Steve Hytner is 56. Actress-comedian Janeane Garofalo is 51. Country singer Matt King is 49. Actress Mira Sorvino is 48. TV personality Moon Zappa is 48. Actress-model Carre Otis is 47. Actress Naomi Watts is 47. Country singer Karen Fairchild (Little Big Town) is 46. Country musician Chuck Crawford is 42. Country singer Mandy Barnett is 40. Rapper Young Jeezy is 38. World Golf Hall of Famer Se Ri Pak is 38. Actor Peter Cambor is 37. Writer-producer-director-actor Bam Margera is 36. Actress Melissa Claire Egan is 34. Actress Jerrica Hinton is 34. Pop-rock singer St. Vincent is 33. Rock musician Daniel Platzman (Imagine Dragons) is 29. Actress Hilary Duff is 28. Actor Keir Gilchrist is 23.

**Thought for Today:** "A great truth is a truth whose opposite is also a truth."  
— Thomas Mann, German writer (1875-1955).

### FROM THE BIBLE

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

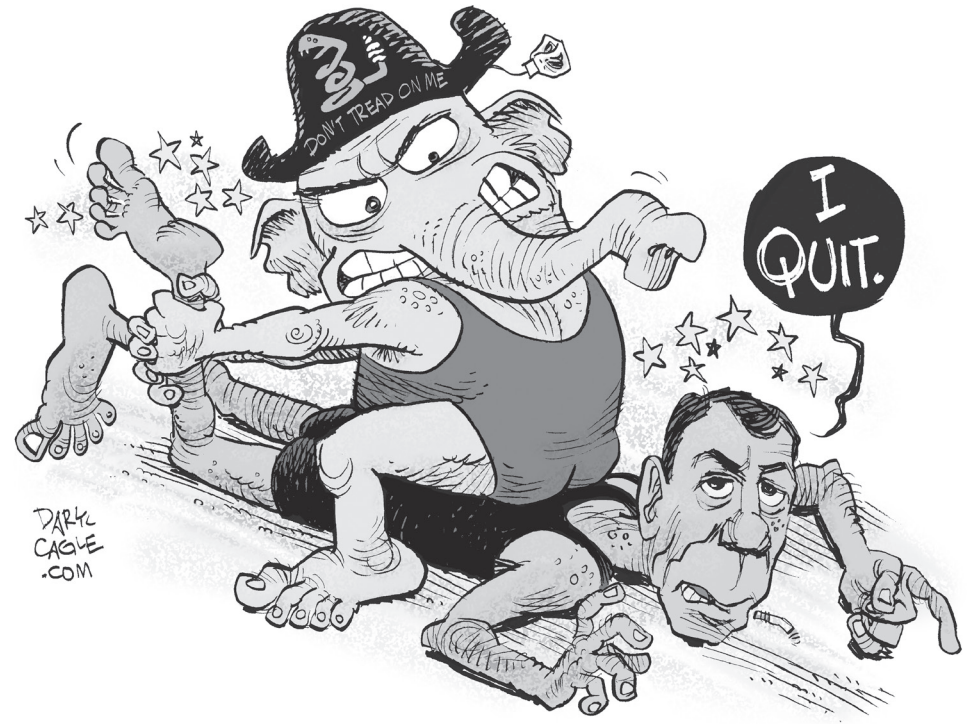
#### Good Show!

**Lori Peine, Miesville, Minn.**  
On Friday, Sept. 11, my family attended the live entertainment music show at the WJ Ranch 7 miles south of Yankton. I just happened to google Mark Willis touring schedule and saw that he was performing at the ranch. I was intrigued to find out how an event like this could be put together. So we made the five-hour drive from Minnesota to attend.

What a fun road trip! I was very impressed by the hospitality of the Schiefel's and all the staff

that pulled this together. Even parking cars on horseback! It was such an inviting and personable event. I was so impressed with the support from the community and the sponsors that are willing to stand behind such a unique family event! You have a gem right in your own backyard!

I have always wanted to do something like this in our barn and could only hope to have such wonderful support from the local businesses! I have told many about our fun weekend and we are looking forward to returning next fall!



## Faith Issues: With Charity Toward Some

BY KATHLEEN PARKER  
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WASHINGTON — In the spirit of charity prompted by Pope Francis' visit to the U.S., let's not call them bigots.

Let's just call them the clueless, the incurious, the moronic, the dull. In short, ignoramuses.

I refer to those Republican wits who unconsciously demonize a swath of Americans based on their religious views. Haven't we gone through this sort of thing before? It was all rather bloody, as history recalls.

But each generation seems to need to create its own religious contretemps in order to resolve that which is already resolved, at least in this country. Our Constitution is clear — no religious test shall be required of anyone seeking public office.

And yet, we do test — again and again — in subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

NBC's Chuck Todd asked Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson on "Meet the Press" whether a president's faith should matter. The simple answer, the correct one, would have been to cite the Constitution, punctuated with a dazzling, gotcha-back smile. But Carson's instinct for honesty (and his political inexperience) tripped the "Oops" meter. He told the truth that he would not "advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation."

Too little too late, he clarified that he could support a Muslim if he denounced Shariah law, which is antithetical to a free, democratic society. This is certainly more to the point, but it misses the most important issue.

Faith — or no faith — should have no bearing on whether a person is qualified to be president. We may care individually because we tend to prefer people who share our fundamental values, but voters can draw those distinctions with their ballots.

Other politicians have made similar blunders even as they sought the high road. In 2008 when John McCain was confronted by a woman insisting that then-candidate Barack Obama was really an "Arab," McCain stopped her, saying that Obama is a "decent family man citizen." Yes, and according to Joe Biden, before he joined Obama's presidential ticket, Obama was the "first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean, and a nice-looking guy."

When I'm sure neither politician meant anything negative by his remarks, but both statements were implicitly racist and underscore how prejudice hunkers down in the



Kathleen PARKER

subconscious. Consciously, we profess to no prejudice, but our words often betray hidden biases that reflect at least a lack of understanding.

Biden's remark was intended to compliment Obama, but it was hardly flattering to African-Americans in the main. McCain's remark was plainly well intended (and widely lauded), but in saying that Obama is a decent family man, one may infer that Arabs, therefore, are not decent family men.

You have to wonder sometimes whether Republicans even know any Arabs or Muslims. Donald Trump claims he has many Muslim friends. But then, how do you explain his response when an audience member asked when we could get rid of all the Muslims?

Sounding loopy (or like an opposition plant?), the man said: "We've got a problem in this country, it's called Muslims." (Gee, and I thought it was idiots.) "We know our current president is one. You know, he's not even an American."

The man insisted that the country is rife with Muslim training camps "growing where they want to kill us. That's my question, when can we get rid of them?"

Such incoherence deserves only a mute button. But Trump, who has led the charge questioning Obama's citizenship, lent credence to the query: "A lot of people are saying that," he said. "... We're going to be looking at that and plenty of other things."

Other things like what? Detention centers? Usually undaunted by decorum, Trump trotted around the question and the obvious answer — your question is ridiculous — in an apparent attempt to avoid offending anyone. But whom? Which voter bloc hung in the balance? Don't overthink this.

Trump and Carson both missed a chance to be awesome. Carson could have identified a foundational American tenet and at least a glancing familiarity with the U.S. Constitution. Trump could have redeemed himself after a hundred awful comments by saying something like:

"Sir, we are a pluralistic society of many races, ethnicities and creeds. This is both our strength as a nation and our pledge to the future. While I understand your concerns about the threat of radical Islam, I am equally concerned about the underlying bigotry of your question."

Alas. Ignoramuses. When can we get rid of them?

Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleen.parker@washpost.com.

### Capitol Notebook

## What Do You Give A Father On His 80th Birthday?

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — We live about 700 miles apart. I had a gift ready to send but work got in the way. Three days in a row. Or so I tell myself. I missed the mail.

I woke up Friday thinking about my dad's birthday. He turned 80. I thought about what makes him who he is. And what about him that has helped me be who I am.

Reeling back through the turning points of his life, I see a man who found another path, when circumstances closed the one he hoped to follow.

My dad grew up on small farms. He didn't talk to us much about his family. His goal coming through high school was to learn to be a veterinarian. Colleges still offered boxing as a scholarship sport. He learned to box.

Among the items he later kept in his gun case were some small trophies and a patch from those amateur fights. But the boxing route closed. Deaths of fighters led colleges to drop the sport.

The fight stayed in his blood, though. For many years he kept a punching bag hanging on its swivel in the basement of our house. The speed gloves waited nearby. He could make them a blur.

He didn't go to college and didn't become a veterinarian. I don't know what he did in his single years before he met and married my mom. He never talked to us about it.

His sister's husband eventually helped get him into a furniture factory that had two unions, one for the plant workers and one for the truckers.

That's how he became, throughout my



Bob MERCER

childhood, a trucker and a Teamster.

There was another driver for the same company who lived in the same trailer court where we did. I remember hearing the two couples talking about how wonderful it would be to make \$300. That was for two weeks of work. It was the early 1960s.

My dad lived on principles. One morning when I was in my early teens I went with him to the truck yard. Two other drivers peeled up and popped out of a car. They confronted him. He broke into a boxing stance. They backed off.

He lost his job sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s. The plant workers' union was out on strike again. The truckers, being Teamsters, wouldn't cross the picket line.

The local owners, already under stress from lower-priced and lower-quality competitors, declared enough. The truckers were out.

After that, he went to college. He was always good with wood and took some gunsmith courses. He made fine stocks for rifles and shotguns, but he couldn't make enough to support a family.

He also took courses at a technical college. He spent the rest of his working life as a machinist in factories, on his feet all day.

Gradually, he built a gun shop in the basement of the family house and invested in the expensive tools and wood blanks necessary for the craft. He worked nights and weekends down there, alone.

He seemed at last to be doing what he loved.