



David Lias
Between The Lines

We hope effort is more than an empty gesture

We applaud the effort, and at the same time, find ourselves asking, "Why did this take so long?"

Gov. Mike Rounds will officially proclaim a Year of Unity at a Feb. 19 ceremony in the state capitol.

February marks the 20th anniversary of the Year of Reconciliation in South Dakota, which was announced by the late Gov. George Mickelson as a means to bring all races together.

"This observance was an effort to improve understanding, cooperation and peace among all races in cultures in South Dakota," Gov. Rounds said of the 1990 initiative.

The 2010 Year of Unity will build upon the legacy and work of those leaders who moved the state forward in the Year of Reconciliation, the governor said.

"It is my hope, through this Year of Unity, to call upon South Dakotans to promote, celebrate and understand the contributions of all races and cultures in South Dakota," he said.

"We hope that Year of Unity efforts will be pursued on a community-by-community and person-to-person basis," Gov. Rounds added.

The governor used his State of the State address on Jan. 12 to announce the new effort to commemorate and advance race relations in the state.

Leaders of the state's nine Native American tribes, as well as community and state officials have been invited to the Capitol for the Feb. 19 ceremony.

We're happy to see this effort being made to improve race relations in our state. It is an endeavor that has withered on the vine for too long. Twenty years ago, we seemed to be on the right track.

Gov. George Mickelson, in 1990, the 100th anniversary of the Wounded Knee Massacre, declared a Year of Reconciliation.

More important than that symbolic gesture, however, was his attitude. I think we all remember that Mickelson was serious about improving race relations in the state — of doing more than affixing his signature to a proclamation in an effort to appease people who thought enough wasn't done.

The dreams that many South Dakotans had of an intense focus on the problems of race, and, perhaps, steps South Dakota to take to improve the cruel poverty and other negative living conditions experienced by residents of the state's reservations, seem to come to an abrupt halt in 1993, when Mickelson and other state leaders were killed in an airplane crash.

We should be appreciative of Gov. Rounds' endeavors to proclaim a Year of Unity later this month. We have to admit, however, that we find it a bit troubling that this tiny sign of progress in improving race relations in our state comes, not at the beginning, but near the end of Rounds' time as governor.

So, we hope the governor indeed takes steps to make sure the positive gesture that is about to be made is not merely fluff. We'd like to see some substance.

We'd like to see, for example, the governor follow the lead of the Charles Mix County Commission and the Yankton Sioux Tribe.

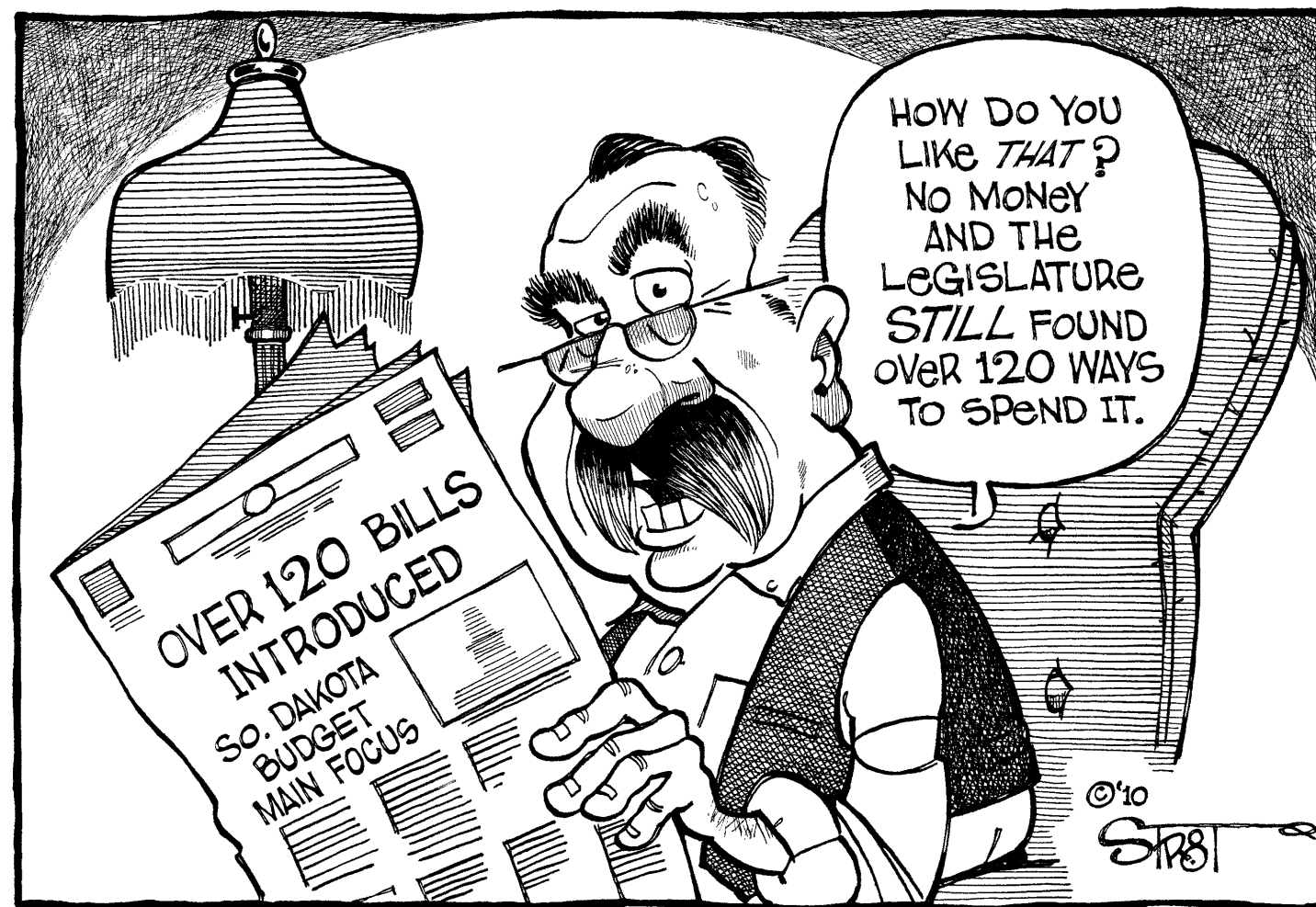
In the spring of 2001, those two governing bodies, with assistance from the Community Relations Service (CRS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, signed a CRS-mediated agreement to improve communication, cooperation and race relations.

- to form a permanent County-Tribal Relations Committee to ensure continuing communication, information sharing, and collaboration on issues of common interest.
- to work cooperatively on developing day care and emergency placement of at-risk youth.
- to jointly make a presentation to the Law Enforcement Task Force on the need to explore ways to avoid racial profiling and improve law enforcement-tribal relations.
- to develop and implement a drug-court program and an effective support-aftercare program for youth.
- to meet with education leaders in Lake Andes and Wagner to improve school curriculum and programs on Indian culture, encourage having an Indian counselor in each school, promote more tribal input into decisions affecting Indian youths, and develop strategies for promoting self-esteem and acknowledgment of Indian youth.

We throw this out as merely a starting point. We realize that improving relations between residents of Indian Country and the rest of South Dakota likely will be more complicated than the efforts made between a single county and a single tribe.

For two decades, however, an idea that at least brought some hope to people of our state has, for all intents and purposes, simply been shelved, gathering dust, not even part of the collective memories of an entire generation of South Dakotans.

It's time to revive that idea of reconciliation. And back it with meaningful action.



Karolevitz family travels explored Lincoln's life

When daughter Jan was in grade school, her favorite president was Abraham Lincoln.

He has since been replaced by scads of rock singers and movie stars.

We had been in Missouri for a family reunion and on the way home we made a special stop in Springfield, IL, to see where Lincoln was buried.

Of course, we had to visit the farm where he was born in Hodgenville, KY in a one-room log cabin on Feb. 12, 1809. He developed a reputation as "Honest Abe."

In Washington, DC, we visited Ford's Theatre where he was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth. Before that time he had been elected 16th



Bob Karolevitz
Writer At Large

president of the United States, freeing the slaves with his Emancipation Proclamation and he delivered the address at Gettysburg during the Civil War, which he conducted to its conclusion at the Antietam Courthouse.

After his assassination, his body was carried on a funeral train which traveled 1,654 miles retracing the route Lincoln had traveled to Washington, DC. "The Greatest

Funeral in the History of the United States," Abraham Lincoln's funeral train was the first national commemoration of a president's death by rail. The body was accompanied by several dignitaries and his son Robert Todd Lincoln. His widow, Mary Todd Lincoln was so distraught, she did not make the trip.

On our visit to Springfield with Jan, we visited the tomb where he was finally buried

after being exhumed 17 times due to reconstructions to the tomb and security. Lincoln's coffin would be placed in a steel cage and encased in concrete because in 1876 two counterfeiters attempted to steal Lincoln's body and hold it for ransom. The thieves were caught just as they had caught John Wilkes Booth. That was the end of Jan's love affair with Abraham Lincoln.

It was appropriate because that was the end of the 16th president of the United States who ranks with George Washington as the most prominent chief executive of our nation.

Jan knew how to pick them!

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Pile in. We're going for a ride

While I was sitting at a stoplight on my way home from work last Thursday night, I noticed a sedan with the right of way pull through the intersection and turn into the oncoming lane.

The car was teeming with what looked like an entire family: two adults in the front seat and tall gangly looking teenagers in the back.

As they passed, I turned my head and stared. Gawking from the inside out at this family "picture," I was hit smack dab in the middle of my 2010 consciousness with a new awareness.

We really don't have family cars anymore. Mom has her car, Dad has his, Junior and Sister have their cars and so on. Even Grandma and Gramps have their own sets of wheels.

And for better or worse, we don't really pile into the car as a family the way families did years ago. Why don't we travel together, all in one vehicle

MyStory YourStory



Paula Damon
Columnist

across town, across state or across the country?

I understand that for some families this may not be a very good idea, since all members would not get along.

Even so, when I saw this family barreling along on their way to wherever, I came to the realization that we really do live much of our lives in isolation.

Coexisting in our homes, schools, offices and stores, we travel separately — often arriving alone at the same place: a school play, the wrestling match, a basketball game, Sunday morning church, Wal-Mart, Suzie's house, Aunt Mabel's or Papa John's.

It has long been a status symbol of modern families, some more than others, for each member to have his or her own vehicle. And for most teenagers, it is not even an option to have their parents drive them anywhere. Heaven forbid! They would rather walk than to be seen riding with Mom or Dad.

Seeing that family car loaded down with a real family inside all going to the same place, I was refreshed.

Watching that family car with all of its passengers sitting side-by-side, heads bobbing to the beat of the pot-holes beneath sagging tires, I was rejuvenated.

Noticing that family car loaded down with a real family inside, all seeing the same dull night lit by the Dairy Queen on the corner, street lights up and down the lane and headlights from oncoming cars, I was renewed.

When I look back on that family scene, I feel reborn.

A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her columns have won first-place in National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women Communications Contests. In the 2009 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contest, Paula's columns took three first-place awards. To contact Paula, email pauladamon@iw.net, follow her blog at www.my-story-your-story.blogspot.com and find her on Facebook.

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

By Rep. Jamie Boomgarden
District 17

Three weeks have passed and not too much has changed. We are all still trying to digest all the suggestions people are sending in as well as the ones that we have come up with as well. It is interesting to watch as everyone who was determined to make drastic cuts become more timid and defensive when a suggestion comes up that affects them or their district personally.

Appropriations have been more intense than ever looking for cuts. They know they have a big job to do and are taking it very seriously and thanks to them for being on that committee. For those of you who do not know, this is a committee that runs from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day.

Not much happened this last week, especially since it was a short week due to the white out snow storm on Monday and having few bills in the Health committee on both Tuesday and Wednesday. Due

to the short week, I was crazy enough to bring Owen, my 3 1/2-year-old son. Not sure how smart that was since all he wanted to do was run up and down the stairs. Of course the one time I did not follow him down the stairs, he decides to go all the way to the basement. A father's panic sets in when he does not come back up the steps and as I looked around on the second floor, until five minutes later he comes up from down below. Needless to say he did not go up or down those steps alone after that point. The good part was it was good for my weight control. Thinking about it in retrospect — I couldn't even remember what he was wearing if I did have to report him misplaced to the capitol police, and I dressed him!

This next week is the one we have been getting ready for. Week four will contain many more bills that will have debate as well as emotions and some of the political positioning I advised we would be expecting.

Thanks to everyone who



Owen, 3-year-old son of District 17 Rep. Jamie Boomgarden, tries his hand as a "little legislator" as he accompanied his dad on the South Dakota House floor recently during this year's legislative session.

has submitted suggestions to my e-mail.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me by e-mail: Rep.Boomgarden@state.sd.us or by calling and leaving a message at 773-3851.

Do not forget the American troops, the Coalition forces and all their families as they perform their duties for our nation.

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Chancellor

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