

# The Daily Republic



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## What's inside



### Spicing it up in Huron

Ghost peppers, gourmet butter added into State Fair mix. **A7**

### Service time

Heat not stopping MHS volleyball team prepare for season opener. **B1**

### Keystone XL feelings

Pipeline not seen as job starter in some rural South Dakota areas. **B5**

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## Paper wins lawsuit against school

Agreement that paid ex-superintendent \$175K still under wraps, though

By **CHRIS MUELLER**  
The Daily Republic

**HURON** — A copy of a secret agreement that directed nearly \$175,000 to an ex-superintendent of the Huron School District must be provided to The Daily Republic, a judge ruled Wednesday. As of Wednesday afternoon, however, the

district had not provided a copy of the agreement to the newspaper.

In a four-page decision, Third Circuit Judge Jon Erickson said the district must release a copy of the settlement agreement between it and ex-superintendent Ross Opsal. The agreement had the district making

monthly payments to Opsal after his resignation in March 2011, according to public payment information already obtained by The Daily Republic. The reason for the payments, which is presumably spelled out in the agreement, has never been made public.

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## 50th anniversary of 'I Have a Dream' speech

# 'America became more free and more fair'



AP photo

President Barack Obama speaks Wednesday in front of the Lincoln Memorial at the 50th anniversary celebration of the March on Washington.

## Obama: More work needed to achieve King's ideals

By **IAN SIMPSON and JEFF MASON**  
Reuters

**WASHINGTON** — The United States is struggling to realize the vision that civil rights leader Martin Luther King described in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech 50 years ago, President Barack Obama said on Wednesday, citing economic security as a still elusive goal.

Obama, the first black U.S. president, spoke to thousands of marchers on Washington's National Mall to commemo-

rate King's landmark address, which came to symbolize the struggle for equality among blacks and whites in America.

Joined by members of the King family and two former presidents, Obama and his fellow speakers urged Americans to continue the slain leader's quest for justice.

Obama said King's speech inspired millions of Americans to fight for a more equal society and rights that people now take for granted.

"To dismiss the magnitude of this

progress, to suggest, as some sometimes do, that little has changed, that dishonors the courage, the sacrifice of those who paid the price to march in those years," Obama said.

"But we would dishonor those heroes as well to suggest that the work of this nation is somehow complete," he said, calling economic justice the "unfinished business" of the civil rights battle.

Marchers, many wearing T-shirts with

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## Man takes plea deal in area case

Alleged kidnapper admits to aggravated assault in incident with daughter

By **ANNA JAUHOLA**  
The Daily Republic

**KENNEBEC** — A man who fired a gun near his 10-year-old daughter's head last year changed his plea Wednesday morning in Lyman County court.

Clinton James Brown, 36, pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated assault-domestic abuse and admitted to habitual offender allegations, according to Sara Rabern, of the South Dakota Attorney General's Office.

Brown was arrested in August 2012 in Lyman County and accused of kidnapping his daughter, firing a gun near her head, striking her with the butt of a gun and shooting her dog. He was indicted a month later on 14 felony and three misdemeanor charges, including attempted murder, aggravated kidnapping, commission of a felony while armed with a firearm, possession of a firearm by a felon and possession of a controlled substance.

Wednesday's hearing was originally scheduled as a motions hearing, but Brown and his attorney decided at the last minute to take a plea agreement, Rabern said. All charges except aggravated assault were dropped.

The count to which Brown pleaded guilty was one in which he was accused of repeatedly shooting a gun near and around his

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**BROWN**

## Fears of possible Syria hit spread in Mideast

By **ALBERT AJI**  
Associated Press

**DAMASCUS, Syria** — Fears of a possible U.S. strike against Syria's regime over an alleged chemical weapons attack rippled across the region Wednesday, as about 6,000 Syrians fled to neighboring Lebanon in a 24-hour period and Israelis scrambled for gas masks in case Damascus retaliates against them. U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon



**BAN KI-MOON**

pleaded for more time for diplomacy and to allow U.N. investigators to complete their work. The experts, wearing flak jackets and helmets, collected blood and urine samples from victims during a visit to at least one of the areas hit in last week's attack.

Seven days after chemical weapons were purportedly unleashed on rebel-held suburbs of the Syrian capital, momentum grew toward Western military action against President Bashar Assad's regime. At the same time, Syria's chief allies, Russia and Iran, warned of dire conse-

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## Jumping for a cause



Photo courtesy of S.D. Governor's Office

South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard skydives with DeLon Mork, top, Madison Dairy Queen operator, Wednesday in Madison. Daugaard had agreed to the event if the restaurant sold 32,000 Blizzards on Miracle Treat Day Aug. 8 to raise money for Children's Miracle Network hospitals. The restaurant sold 38,412 Blizzards.



**Today's forecast:** Sunny and hot with a high around 99. South winds at 7-14 mph. **Details, A2.**



**High 99° Low 68°**

**Delivery questions?**  
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# OBITUARIES

## Herman J. Knutson

Herman J. Knutson, 90, of Wessington Springs died Monday evening August 26, 2013 at the Prairie View Care Center in Woonsocket, SD. Funeral service will be held at 10:00 am Saturday August 31, 2013, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church with Rev. John Paulson officiating. Burial will be in Prospect Hill Cemetery with military rites by the Willman-Fee American Legion Post 14 and the South Dakota Nation Guard Honor Guard. Friends may call at the Basham Funeral Home Friday from 5-7 and at the church on Saturday one hour prior to the service. A prayer service will be held at 7:00 pm.

Herman Joseph Knutson was born on September 28, 1922, to Oscar and Flora (Grant) Knutson at Wessington Springs, SD. They lived on a farm south of Wessington Springs until March 1, 1930. They moved into Wessington Springs. Herman attended all his schooling in Wessington Springs. He worked for several farmers in the area. In 1942 he started farming for himself and working part time for other farmers in the area. In 1944, Uncle Sam called and on June 4, 1944, he entered the US Navy serving two years in the Ship Repair Unit, serving aboard two different repair ships - one the Destroyers USS Eaton DD510 in the Pacific - also at ship repair at San Diego, CA and at ship repair Pascagoula, MS.

Upon his discharge, he was able to buy a new Model A John Deere tractor and started farming again.

On January 14, 1948, Herman was united in marriage to Jennie VonEye at Platte, SD. They moved to a farm in south Hand County. They attended the Ebenezer Baptist Church in south Hand County. In June 1953, they both accepted the Lord Jesus as their personal savior and were baptized at which time they became members of Ebenezer Baptist Church. When the church closed, their memberships transferred to Immanuel Baptist Church in Wessington Springs.

On March 1, 1955, they bought a farm in northwest Je- rauld County and bought additional land in 1972 living there for 38 years. They spent 45 years working together, making a living and raising a family before retiring and moving to Wessington Springs on November 1, 1993.

Herman and Jennie raised three children - Christine, Joyce and Raymond.

Herman and Jennie went on several bus trips to most of the USA, and Canada, Hawaii and also took a Caribbean Cruise. They also wintered in Arizona for 20 years.

Herman's hobbies were gardening, fishing, wood craft- ing and making jewelry using silver and nickel silver while mounting turquoise and other colorful stones.

Those left to cherish his memories are his three chil- dren Christine Schleining (Bill Spannrng) of Livingston, MT, Joyce (Dan) Piehl of Mitchell, SD, and Raymond (Kim) Knutson of Huron, SD; one brother Walter Knutson of Michigan; seven grandchildren Kim (John) Sieler of Chicago, ILL, Lea (Shane) Fairchild of Clyde Park, MT, David (Christy) Speck of Churchill, MT, Heath Koth of Mitchell, SD, Michael Koth of Sioux Falls, SD, Samantha Piehl of Mitchell, SD, Nicholas (Janeel) Knutson of Huron, SD; seven great grandchildren Jared and Samantha Sieler, Michael Speck and Jennifer Fairchild, Adam and Alexandra Speck, and Hayzleigh Knutson; including two sisters-in-law and two brothers-in-law and several nieces and nephews.

Preceding in his death: his wife Jennie, his parents, two brother, one sister, one sister-in-law and one brother-in-law.



# MARCH

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King's face on them, began their walk near the U.S. Capitol.

They were led by a line of military veterans and people who had been at the 1963 march, their arms linked. People sang "We Shall Overcome" and other civil rights anthems.

Fighting restrictive voting rights laws that Democrats say hurt minorities, combating joblessness and reducing gun violence among African-Americans are among the issues that civil rights leaders have put at the forefront of their efforts in 2013.

"This march was supposed to be about jobs, but it's about a lot more," said marcher Ash Mobley, 27, of Washington, who said she was there to represent her grandmother, who had been at the 1963 event.

The marchers heard speeches from former presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter and members of King's family on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the site of King's address on Aug. 28, 1963.

A bell rang at 2 p.m., 50 years to the minute after King ended his clarion call of the civil rights movement with the words "Let freedom ring."

King's speech is credited with helping spur passage of sweeping civil rights laws. A white prison escapee assassinated him in 1968.

King's elderly sister, Christine King Farris, said her brother's dream was alive, if unfulfilled.

"Yes they can slay the dreamer, but no, they cannot destroy his immortal dream," she said.

## More to do

Bernice King, the slain leader's youngest child, urged the crowd to stay true to the ideals enunciated by her father.

"If freedom is going to ring in Libya, in Syria, in Egypt, in Florida, then we must reach across the table, feed each other and let freedom ring," she said.

Obama's address commemorating King, a Nobel Peace Prize winner and advocate of non-violence, came as the



AP photo

President Barack Obama talks with Yolanda Renee King, 5, granddaughter of Martin Luther King Jr., her mother, Arndrea Waters, and Martin Luther King III, right, after speaking at Wednesday's ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. From left are Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., former President Jimmy Carter and former President Bill Clinton.

White House edges closer to launching military strikes in Syria in response to what U.S. officials say they believe was a chemical weapons attack by the Syrian government on civilians.

Obama made no mention of Syria in his address.

The president, whose mother was white and whose father was black, has sometimes seemed reluctant to weigh in on persistent racial divides in the United States, but he spoke forcefully about the issue last month after the man who killed black Florida teenager Trayvon Martin was acquitted.

On Wednesday, Obama said the 1960s civil rights movement led to greater freedoms for many different groups of U.S. society.

"Because they marched, city councils changed and state legislatures changed, and Congress changed, and, yes, eventually, the White House changed," he said to applause, a nod at his own historic election.

"Because they marched, America became more free and more fair — not just for African-Americans, but for

women and Latinos, Asians and Native Americans, for Catholics, Jews, and Muslims, for gays, for Americans with a disability," he said.

The "Let Freedom Ring and Call to Action" ceremony came as almost half of Americans say much more needs to be done before the color-blind society King envisioned is realized.

Wednesday's event capped a week-long celebration of King's historic call for racial and economic justice. They included a march on Saturday that drew thousands of people urging action on jobs, voting rights and gun violence.

Obama and Clinton also used their remarks to chide lawmakers in Washington for partisan battles that have prevented agreement on issues such as the budget and immigration reform.

"I would respectfully suggest that Martin Luther King did not live and die to hear his heirs whine about political gridlock," Clinton said. "It is time to stop complaining and put our shoulders against the stubborn gates holding the American people back."

# LAWSUIT

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"Obviously, we're pleased with Judge Erickson's decision," said Jon Arneson, of Sioux Falls, the newspaper's attorney. "I think he has done precisely the right thing."

Erickson's ruling affirms an earlier decision in favor of the newspaper issued in March by the state Office of Hearing Examiners. The school district, despite the two rulings against it, could still choose to appeal to the state Supreme Court.

"I will be more than a little surprised if they appeal," Arneson said.

The Daily Republic, acting on a tip, first asked for a copy of the agreement more than a year ago, hoping to learn why the school continued to pay Opsal after his employment ended and a new superintendent had been hired.

At the time of his resignation, Opsal and the school district released a public letter citing "personal health issues" as a reason for Opsal's departure, but offered no other details.

Despite Erickson's ruling and the earlier ruling from the Office of Hearing Examiners, the district had not provided The Daily Republic with a copy of the agreement as of Wednesday afternoon. The newspaper again requested the document earlier Wednesday in an email to Terry Nebelsick, the district's current superintendent.

Nebelsick acknowledged the request in an email reply and asked for a copy of the judge's decision.

The Daily Republic provided it, and Nebelsick said he would forward the judge's decision to the school board and the district's attorney, Rodney Freeman.

Nebelsick and Freeman did not immediately return calls for comment Wednesday.

Scott Swier, Opsal's attorney, declined to comment on the judge's decision because he hadn't yet reviewed it when he was contacted Wednesday.

The South Dakota Newspaper Association assisted the newspaper with the cost of the lawsuit.

Dave Bordewyk, the association's general manager, praised the judge's decision.

"It's a good thing," Bordewyk said. "It's a good decision for open government in South Dakota."

Erickson ruled that the district's agreement with Opsal is a public record and should be open to inspection because it was never declared closed or confidential as a result of civil or criminal court proceedings, and it is not classified as closed by any other law.

Additionally, Erickson found state law requires all reports, books, records, contracts and papers related to school business must be kept by the district and made available for inspection "at reasonable hours to any voter or taxpayer."

"(The law) requires the district to keep open to reasonable inspection by the public all contracts relating to school business," Erickson wrote in his decision. "There are no exceptions."

The Daily Republic first sought a copy of the agreement in early 2012 after receiving a tip that the Huron School District was still paying an ex-superintendent, even as the district paid its new superintendent.

The tipster had seen ex-superintendent Opsal's name in a list of payments in the district's legal notices, in the classifieds of the Huron newspaper.

The district and its lawyer refused to provide a copy of the agreement, but did acknowledge payments to ex-superintendent Opsal of \$10,916.51

per month since his March 2011 resignation.

According to monthly payment information obtained from the district and compiled by The Daily Republic, the payments stopped after 16 months and totaled \$174,664.

The newspaper wrote a story in February 2012 detailing the payments and the district's refusal to speak further about the issue or release a copy of the agreement.

Then, in July 2012, a new state law took effect clarifying that a superintendent contract is a public record.

That change was sparked partly by a controversy in Sioux Falls, where the superintendent refused to divulge her contract.

Citing the new law, The Daily Republic made a new request for the Huron agreement in September 2012 and was once again denied by the district and its lawyer.

The newspaper appealed that new denial to the state Office of Hearing Examiners, which is the office charged with settling open-records disputes in South Dakota.

The Office of Hearing Examiners ruled in favor of The Daily Republic in March of this year and found the agreement should be open to public inspection.

Shortly thereafter, the district appealed to circuit court, which ended in Wednesday's ruling in favor of the newspaper.

"We just think the taxpayers of the Huron School District should know why an ex-superintendent was paid nearly \$175,000 of public money," said Daily Republic Editor Seth Tupper, who is named as the plaintiff in the lawsuit.

"We also want to avoid a precedent that would allow other school districts to keep that kind of information secret."

## Shirley Cope

Shirley Cope formerly of Artesian, SD, died Wed., August 21, 2013 at the Johnson Memorial Home in Dawson at the age of 78.

Funeral services were Mon., August 26 at Fedora Presbyterian Church.

Shirley Gold Cope was born September 16, 1934 at Mitchell, SD the daughter of Herbert "Curly" and Margaret (Corwin) Matthews. She grew up on the farm and graduated from Forestburg High School in 1952. Shirley then attended Augustana College, sang in the choir and received her Education Degree before teaching 3-years at Huron and Letcher, SD. On November 6, 1957 Robert & Shirley were married in Pipestone, MN. They lived on a farm near Artesian where she raised large gardens, lots of chickens and chased one wild child. After retiring in Custer in 1993, she enjoyed many hours walking her dogs in the Black Hills, feeding deer and turkeys, spinning wool into yarn and knitting/crocheting gifts for friends and family. She continued to use her gift of singing in church and care center choirs. Shirley & Robert enjoyed traveling and sight-seeing and were able to visit all of the states except Hawaii.

She is survived by her daughter, Laurel (Manley) Peterson of Dawson, MN; three grandchildren: Darci (Mike) Neugebauer of Omaha, NE, Dani Peterson of Tuscaloosa, AL, and Dustin (Megan) Peterson of Lakewood, CO; two sisters: Joyce (Harlan) Tlustos of Sioux Falls, SD and Marge (Harvey) Lindemann of Pueblo, CO.

Preceding her in death were her parents and her husband, Robert.

hansondahlfuneralhome.com



# SYRIA

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quenced for the region if any armed intervention is undertaken.

U.S. leaders, including Vice President Joe Biden, have charged that Assad's government was behind the Aug. 21 attack that Doctors Without Borders says killed at least 355 people. The White House says it's planning a possible military response while seeking support from international partners.

The U.S. has not presented concrete proof of Syrian regime involvement in the attack, and U.N. inspectors have not endorsed the allegations, although the U.N. envoy to Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, said evidence suggests some kind of "substance" was used that killed hundreds.

Two senior Obama administration officials said U.S. intelligence

agencies are drawing up a report laying out the evidence against Assad's government. The classified version would be sent to key members of Congress and a declassified version would be made public.

One of the officials said the administration is considering more than a single set of military strikes and "the options are not limited just to one day" of assault.

"If there is action taken, it must be clearly defined what the objective is and why" and based on "clear facts," the senior administration official said on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss internal deliberations publicly.

President Barack Obama is weighing a limited response that focuses on punishing the Syrian government for violating international agreements that bar the use of chemical weapons. Any U.S. military action, officials say, would not be aimed at toppling the Assad regime or vastly alter-

ing the course of Syria's civil war, which has already claimed 100,000 dead.

As the U.S., France and Britain push for military action, the U.N. secretary-general urged restraint to give U.N. inspectors time to finish their investigation, which began Monday.

"Let them conclude ... their work for four days and then we will have to analyze scientifically" their findings and send a report to the U.N. Security Council, Ban said. The U.N. said the analysis would be done "as quickly as possible."

Syria's Ambassador to the U.N., Bashar Ja'afari, said he sent Ban a letter demanding that the inspectors extend their investigation to what he described as three chemical weapons attacks against Syrian soldiers in the Damascus suburbs. He said the attacks occurred on Aug. 22, 24, and 25, and that dozens of Syrian soldiers are currently being treated for inhaling nerve gases.

# PLEA DEAL

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daughter.

Aggravated assault carries a maximum punishment of 15 years in prison, a \$30,000 fine or both. The habitual offender conviction could stiffen the penalty — it carries a maximum penalty of 50 years in prison, a \$50,000 fine or both, Rabern said.

The state recommended 50 years in prison, with 25 years suspended, and also recommended this sentence run consecutively — or one after the other — to the 51-month sentence Brown recently received for a federal court conviction. He was sentenced in June in federal court for being a felon and drug user in possession of a firearm.

Judge Patricia DeVaney ordered a presentence investigation and scheduled sentencing for October.