

THEIRS

## And the Facebook race is on

Poor Dave Knudson. He only has 396 Facebook fans. Prior to last week, I didn't realize how sad that was. But then, I'd never done the Facebook thing, either. All the other kids — the ones in news, that is, especially the ones without gray hair — seemed to be doing it, so I checked it out. It even got to be a news story in the U.S. House campaign, something about Kristi Noem topping Blake Curd and Chris Nelson in attracting Facebook fans in the U.S. House race. I would have never known about such a potentially decisive campaign development, except for Paul Guggenheimer. He brought it up Monday during our "Political Junkies" show on South Dakota Public Radio. I've been trying to ignore the whole Facebook thing in hopes that it would go away. I tried the same thing with other passing fads, such as the Internet, cell phones and microwave ovens. Lately I've started to admit, however, they might be here to stay.

Still, I persist in defending my narrow technological comfort zone, when possible. I lost my Internet boycott when my bosses decided it would be part of the news business. I do have a microwave oven, but I try to step into the bathroom or out on the deck when it's in operation. And I don't have a cell phone, or a wrist watch — although lack of the latter might say more about a lack of responsibility and obsession with mortality than it does about technology. Lately I've focused my technological boycott energies on Facebook, ignoring it myself and deleting all invitations to become Facebook fans for others. So I was unsettled when Guggenheimer brought it up, and dismayed to learn that fellow political junky, Argus Leader reporter Jonathan Ellis, had actually collaborated on a newspaper story on the race for Facebook fans in the U.S. House race. I respect Ellis, and his news judgment. So, I felt less like a crusader in the war against technology and more like a behind-the-curve newshound with pre-Cambrian online skills. Oh, how the techno-world turns. It seems like only yesterday that I learned to "Google," and also learned how to pervert a proper noun into an improper verb in ways that I still find socially troubling. But I do it. I "Google," therefore, I am.

I'm not sure if you can "Facebook," yet. But I can and did "Google" Facebook, starting with Noem, of course. She had 1,481 Facebook fans Friday morning, topping Curd with 928 and Nelson with 713. Incumbent Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin is still out front in the House Facebook race, with 2,254 on a personal Facebook site and another 601 on her congressional site.

I was on a roll, so I tried the governor's race, where the Facebook fan count breaks down like this: Dennis Daugaard, 1,618; Scott Munsterman, 1,486; Scott Heidepriem, 1,235; Ken Knuippe, 617; Gordon Howie, 438 and Dave Knudson, 396. It raised a couple of questions: First, who really cares? Second, I wonder if Knudson has a microwave oven.

Wait, make that three questions: How important is the Facebook fan count when compared to available campaign funds, advertising, personal appearances and debates? I tend to wonder. I guess I'm not entirely sold on Facebook as a defining force in the campaign. But then, I'm a just a mostly grown-up Lyman County kid. We're old fashioned out that way, you know, unlike all those techno giants over in Jones County.

And speaking of John Thune, he has 53,915 Facebook fans. That's just showing off.

Contact Kevin Woster at 294-8413 or kevin.woster@rapidcityjournal.com

Kevin WOSTER

OURS

## Playhouse lease gets second act

**THE ISSUE:** Future of the Black Hills Playhouse.  
**OUR VIEW:** We support a legislative remedy that gives the playhouse time to take financial responsibility for its own future.

Supporters of the Black Hills Playhouse who want to see the storied theater tradition stay in its longtime Custer State Park location know a receptive audience when they see it.

The 2010 Legislature is proving to be one. Despite an ongoing legal dispute with the state, playhouse supporters took their back-and-forth lease battle with Game, Fish & Parks Department directly to Pierre, where they seem to be winning the hearts and minds of legislators.

Last week, the state Senate overwhelming passed a bill to extend the playhouse's lease at the scenic, forested setting it has called home for almost 65 years.

By a veto-proof majority of 26-8, the Senate told Gov. Mike Rounds that it doesn't approve of the tactics that his GF&P has utilized in its attempts to remove the non-profit, summer theater troupe from its historic, but somewhat dilapidated, campus just over the hill from Center Lake. If SB 102 passes the House by a similar margin and becomes law — despite an expected veto by the governor — the bill would extend the playhouse's lease at the state-owned campus, with certain conditions. The playhouse must raise the funds to make necessary upgrades to its sewer system and other infrastructures by September 2012.

That means supporters who have been passionate in their defense of the beloved institution will have to put their money where their mouths are and prove that they have the fundraising muscle necessary to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Oddly, two of the eight "no" votes against SB 102 were Rapid City legislators, Sen. Gordon Howie and Sen. Craig Tieszen, both of whom must certainly face constituents unhappy with their votes. Tieszen argues that the Senate floor is no place to negotiate a lease. Perhaps not, but it is a place to negotiate a little breathing room for a theatrical treasure that has become an integral part of the history of both Custer State Park and South Dakota.

We think the legislature's reaction to this playhouse drama has been fueled by what the public sees as a lack of clarity from the governor's office on the playhouse's future.

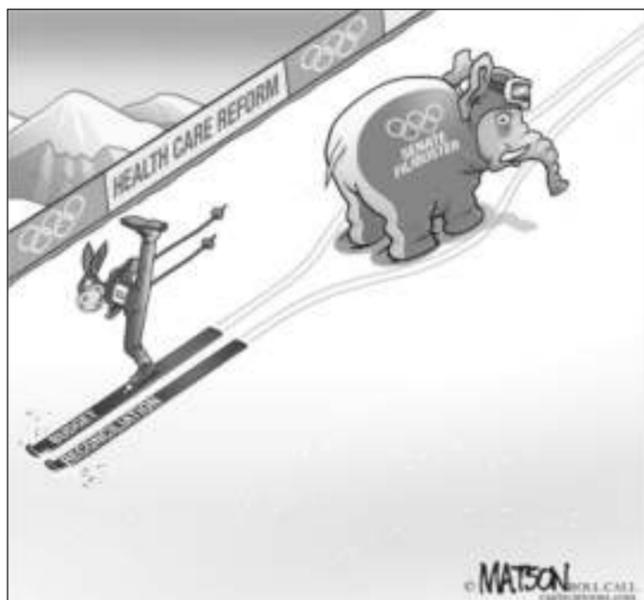
The state has done a poor job of communicating what it wants to see happen to the playhouse, or where else it might go, or even why it has taken such an uncompromising approach to the situation.

That has frustrated everyone, but especially people who think that the Black Hills Playhouse should, without question, be preserved for the entertainment of future generations in South Dakota.

Surely, the governor doesn't want to see this performing arts gem simply disappear. At least, we hope not.

The Legislature is doing its part, by extending the lease with certain conditions and reservations attached, to keep the curtain from coming down permanently at the Black Hills Playhouse. We hope SB 102 will give the playhouse time to save itself and urge the entire Legislature to pass it.

ARTISTS'



YOURS

### Regional satisfies Sabow on medical library

Rapid City Regional Hospital has not closed the medical library. While it is true that the library's footprint in the hospital is smaller, we have many assets available for medical education.

Medical books and journals with two computers and a printer are available on the first floor of the hospital for all to use. Books are now also housed in the Family Medicine Residency. Medical books for the general public were donated to the Rapid City Public Library. The bulk of our collection of medical books was donated to Western Dakota Technical Institute's library. Anyone with a Regional Health ID can access the books.

Regional Health has moved to a mostly electronic library. On our intranet library page are multiple electronic assets for medical education. Any computer in Regional Health can access our medical library. Our medical library is even accessible outside our system, such as from home or an internet cafe, to our medical staff and employees.

I have spoken with Dr. Sabow. As an affiliate staff member of Rapid City Regional Hospital, he has access to our electronic library. He has given me permission to state he is very satisfied with what is available.

ROBERT ALLEN, MD  
V.P. Medical Affairs

### Former council rep unhappy with censure

I, for one, believe the censorship of Sam Kooiker was totally uncalled for and wrong. Sam was 100 percent correct in the way he handled this matter. If an employee of the city comes to him regarding another employee, he has the right, and duty, to bring that matter forth or the mayor should have brought it forth. He is one of the most frugal representatives we have and is constantly working to try to save the taxpayers' money. It was because of this act that he now finds himself in this position. Why are the taxpayers paying \$1,300 a month for each council member if they are not doing what

they were elected to do? I served on the Rapid City Council for 24 years, and was very proud to do so.

The mayor has the ability to veto the censure measure, and under the state statute, he has the legal authority to sign or veto any ordinance or resolution passed by the council within 10 days. Many citizens, along with me, hope he does just that. That is the best way to handle this unfortunate situation. If not, it will be interesting to see what happens when election time rolls around.

BABE STEINBURG  
Rapid City

### Prison bond legislation bad idea for parolees

Once again the money hungry political machines are at it again. To feed their insatiable appetite for money, the South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles has pushed legislation (SB-110) that would authorize the board to require all parolees to post an unlimited bond before being paroled. This idea would simply overcrowd the already crowded prison system because if an inmate can not post bond he would not make parole.

With a prison population (at last count) of 25 percent Native Americans, this legislation would ensure that number would soar. It doesn't make any sense for the board to profit off the backs of poor inmates and their families; black, white, or Native American.

RALPH BLOCK  
Mike Duffee State Prison

### Censure isn't right answer for Kooiker

So they decided to censure Mr. Kooiker. I understand the mayor has final say on this matter. From what I understand, Mr. Kooiker was searching for answers and didn't get them. He pursued the truth which is what every good councilman would do. He's being punished for that? Isn't this one of the reasons why the country is where it is? We need more truth finders and we need more people to speak up. If we can get that done in our community the

country is not lost. Censorship isn't the answer! Great job Sam!

PETER CENTINEO  
Rapid City

### One other person is glad to find Kooiker guilty

When it comes to Alderman Kooiker being judged by a jury of his peers (City Council) on being accused of investigating why managers are covering up or withholding information, answering questions by city employees and keeping those of us informed that elected him to do so, and for questioning the City Council travel budget and other monetary expenditures, I for one hoped they'd find him guilty!

DEBBIE SMITH  
Rapid City

### Can't wait for outdoor campus to come to life

My wife and I recently attended the library's Lunch and Learn meeting with Chad Tussing from the Game, Fish & Parks Department as guest speaker.

Wow! He explained the new outdoor campus coming to Rapid City with enthusiasm and energy. We're in for a great new, free, outdoor activity. You can call him for information.

BOB YIRKA  
Rapid City

### Billboard owners: Pay attention in Meade Co.

Do you have a sign or billboard in Meade County?

I urge you to get a copy of the Revised Ordinance No. 24 - An Ordinance of Meade County, South Dakota for the Placement of Billboards and Signs that will have the second and final reading at the Meade County Commissioners meeting at 11:15 a.m. on Wednesday, March 3. Believe me, you will not like the restrictions, permitting process and exorbitant fees.

ANN BECKHAM  
Piedmont

YOUR LEGISLATORS



**U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson**  
136 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
202-224-5842  
800-537-0025  
in Rapid City  
405 E. Omaha St., Suite B,  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
341-3990



**U.S. Sen. John Thune**  
U.S. Senate SR 493,  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
202-224-2321  
866-850-3855  
in Rapid City  
1313 West Main St.,  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
348-7551



**U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin**  
331 Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
202-225-2801  
in Rapid City  
343 Quincy St., Suite 102  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
394-5280

EDITORIAL BOARD

**Publisher** Brad Slater  
**Editor** Michael LeFort  
**Online Editor** Todd Williams

The Rapid City Journal editorial board meets each Thursday.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

**Mail:** Rapid City Journal, Box 450, Rapid City, SD 57709.  
**Phone:** 394-8427

**E-mail:** letters@rapidcityjournal.com  
**Fax:** 394-8463  
Letters limited to 200 words and must

include full name, address, phone number and signature. Two per month. Letters may be edited.