



Adler

By David Adler

For those advocating constitutional government, the rule of law and the Bill of Rights, and justice, freedom and liberty, submission to President Donald Trump's authoritarian tactics is not an option, which is precisely why Sen. Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.) and Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell are examples of leaders who have risen to meet the challenges of the moment. Trump's acts of perfidy represent coercive demands for silence, acquiescence and disregard of their statutory duties, institutional responsibilities and oath of office.

The price they would pay for abandoning the rule of law and submitting to Trump's demands is surrender of conscience, dignity, integrity and self-respect. What, then, in the voices of philosophers since Socrates, Confucius and Kant, is left of such a man?

Sen. Kelly, a decorated combat veteran and astronaut, with more experience and gravitas than his nemesis, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth can ever hope to acquire, continues to serve his nation, as well as veterans and active-duty members of the military, by reciting the law of the land and defending the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech. The Trump Administration has attacked Sen. Kelly for reminding those who have served, and those who continue to serve, that, "Our laws are clear: You can refuse illegal orders.... You must refuse illegal orders." This principle, drilled into the minds of students at the service academies, was trum-

~~ We the People ~~

"Acquiescence to Trump's Perfidy Cannot Save the Rule of Law and the Republic"

peted by the Supreme Court in early 19th Century rulings. Sen. Kelly has brought a lawsuit against Hegseth for violating his rights under the First Amendment and the Speech and Debate Clause. His fight against the Trump Administration for its efforts to censure him and penalize him by demoting his military rank, is a fight to protect other veterans' rights to speak freely against the government without fear of retaliation for expression of opinions that are not aligned with Trump's. In World War II, readers will recall, American soldiers fought fascist regimes that prohibited freedom of speech.

Sen. Kelly's lawsuit, therefore, is bigger than the specifics of his own case. His defense of freedom of speech, which is essential to our constitutional democracy, is part of another great cause: to prevent the president from coercing service members to carry out illegal orders, which they would be forbidden to ignore, challenge or discuss. That is not the American Way, it is not the Constitutional Way, and it is not the Democratic Way. Rather, it is the Authoritarian Way. If Sen. Kelly were to lose his lawsuit, then the U.S. military becomes answerable, not to the Constitution, military law and the laws of the land, but to Donald Trump.

Sen. Kelly's lawsuit assumes greater importance considering the revelation that the Pentagon used a secret aircraft, painted to look like a civilian plane in its first attack on a boat that Trump said was smuggling drugs, which killed 11 people in September. The U.S. is not engaged in an armed conflict with suspected drug runners, but even if we accept the administration's dubious claim to the contrary, the laws of

war prohibit "perfidy." Indeed, the laws of armed conflict bar combatants from feigning civilian status to fool adversaries into dropping their guard, which is a war crime. In this context, the administration's orders may well have placed servicemen in legal jeopardy.

In the Constitutional Convention, James Madison stated that "perfidy," even apart from the battlefield, would warrant impeachment of the president. The deliberate breach of faith, trust or loyalty, justified removal of the executive.

Chairman Powell, like Sen. Kelly, has courageously refused to acquiesce to President Trump's demands, and is fighting back—vigorously—in the name of the rule of law and the statutorily defined independence of the Federal Reserve Board. Unable to coerce Powell into lowering interest rates, Trump's Justice Department has issued subpoenas to the Fed Chair and threatened a criminal investigation purportedly grounded in his testimony to Congress last summer about the cost overruns associated with the renovation of the Federal Reserve building. Accountability for construction overruns is always a fine idea but does not require a criminal investigation. If it wishes, the GOP-controlled Congress can continue its inquiry. In a video, Powell bluntly characterized the threats of criminal charges as "pretexts" to undermine the Fed's independence.

At this juncture, America needs more leaders like Kelly and Powell to speak truth to power.

*Sponsored in part by
Humanities North Dakota*

Dakota Gardener

Crocus - plant of the year

Crocuses are the first sign of spring, bringing joy for the change of seasons



Knutson

By Kelsey Deckert,
Horticulture agent
NDSU Extension –
Burleigh County

The Lunar New Year starts on Feb. 17, and this coming year is the year of the fire horse. The horse represents energy, independence and adventure. The element of fire represents passion and intensity. Sounds like 2026 could be a fast-paced journey!

For the past few years, I have started my New Year's Dakota Gardener column off with National Garden Bureau's Plant of the Year. This year, one of the Plants of the Year is the crocus. The crocus symbolizes fresh beginnings, joy, hope and rebirth in many cultures. For many, crocuses are the first sign of spring, bringing joy for the change of seasons! Don't confuse it with the prairie crocus, which is commonly found in pastures and hilltops in early spring.

Crocus is a genus of the iris family and is hardy in zones 3-8. They are one of the first flowering plants in the spring, and they even push through snow. There are many varieties of crocus that can be added to the garden if you enjoy varying hues of purple and yellow. You can even find different varieties of white crocuses.

Growing crocuses is quite simple. Choose a site that receives



Crocuses will self-seed in undisturbed areas and gradually spread, creating beautiful clusters of color every year. (pixabay)

several hours of direct sunlight. Plant crocus bulbs in the fall, about six to eight weeks before the first frost. This will give the plants enough time to establish roots before winter sets in. You will want to plant them 3-4 inches deep with the pointed tip facing upward. Make sure to space each bulb 3-4 inches apart. Water thoroughly once planted, and after that, they don't require much care unless an extended drought occurs.

Crocuses generally are resistant to pests, but occasionally, a rodent may dig up the bulb. Con-

sider planting in an undisturbed area, as the crocuses will self-seed and gradually spread to create beautiful clusters of color every year.

Being a horse owner myself, I must say that I believe that crocus is an excellent choice for Plant of the Year! Just like horses, crocuses offer natural beauty, and they are resilient and dependable.

For more information about crocuses, contact your local NDSU Extension agent. Find the Extension office for your county at www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension-county-offices

North Dakota Democrats announce state convention in Bismarck



Attendees at the 2024 Democratic-NPL convention in Fargo vote on resolutions. The party is holding its 2026 state convention March 6-8 in Bismarck. (Photo by Jeff Beach/North Dakota Monitor)

The North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party will hold its state convention March 6-8 at Bismarck State College.

All official business will take place March 7 at the college's Advanced Technology Center.

The party will seek to endorse candidates for U.S. House, attorney general, secretary of state, agriculture commissioner, tax commissioner and two candidates

for Public Service Commission. Candidates have not yet been announced. At the 2024 convention, Democrats did not field candidates for all state offices, which are held by Republicans.

The party also will vote on the Dem-NPL Party platform and resolutions.

"This convention is about leadership rooted in hope, action over cynicism, and unity as the engine

of lasting change," North Dakota Democratic-NPL Secretary and Convention Planning Chair Kari Breker said in a statement.

Delegates to the state convention are elected at their legislative district conventions. If a district does not fill its slate of delegates, it may allow the district chair to appoint people.

More information is available on the event website.

Gov. Armstrong to give State of the State to kick off special session



Gov. Kelly Armstrong smiles while giving his State of the State address Jan. 7, 2025, at the Capitol. (Kyle Martin/For the North Dakota Monitor)

BY: ND MONITOR STAFF

North Dakota Gov. Kelly Armstrong will kick off the special session of the Legislature next Wednesday with a State of the State address.

Armstrong will speak to lawmakers as they convene in Bismarck to allocate federal Rural Health Transformation Program funding, Armstrong's office announced Wednesday.

The address will begin at 10 a.m. CT Jan. 21 and will be live-streamed on the governor's office website and on the legislative website.

Armstrong is expected to address his executive order that convened the special session and the federal rural health funding, awarded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as part of the One, Big Beautiful Bill Act that was signed into law in

July.

North Dakota will receive at least \$500 million in rural health funding over the next five years, but could receive up to \$1 billion. The \$199 million award for the first year of the program is about average compared to other states but is one of the largest per-capita awards in the country.

'Paint Badlands Watercolors' workshop coming to Chateau de Morès State Historic Site Jan. 31



MEDORA, N.D. — The Chateau de Morès State Historic Site is hosting "Paint Badlands Watercolors," a landscape watercolor painting workshop on Saturday, Jan. 31, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. MT.

Before brush meets paper, participants will seek inspiration from the watercolor works completed by Medora, the Marquise de Morès (1856-1921). She is best known as the namesake of an 1883 boomtown founded by her French husband, the Marquis de Morès. While here, the accom-

plished artist painted beautiful watercolors of the area's Badlands. The couple's hunting lodge is now Chateau de Morès State Historic Site.

This workshop is open to ages 16 and older. Participants will be guided through basic watercolor techniques, then create their own one-of-a-kind watercolor masterpiece. All supplies will be provided.

Registration is required by Friday, Jan. 23, at BadlandsWatercolors2.eventbrite.com. Tickets are \$10 plus taxes and fees.

For more information, contact Site Supervisor Keshna DeJesus, shschateau@nd.gov or 701.623.4355. The Chateau de Morès State Historic Site is managed by the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The Chateau de Morès Interpretive Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. MT, and closed Sunday and Monday. The Chateau de Morès home is closed for the season. Find information about upcoming programs of the State Historical Society at history.nd.gov/events.