

Say 'yes' to kayaking

It was so tempting. "You really should get out there, so you can have a first-hand experience," said Jessica Peterson, vice president of the South Dakota Canoe and Kayak Association, at the conclusion of our interview Saturday morning.

Her plea for me to get "out there" meant boarding a kayak and maneuvering it around in the DakotaDome pool, just as a dozen other people had done that morning during a training session sponsored by the association.

"I can almost guarantee that you won't get wet," she added, as her gentle pleading continued. She even offered to let me use her kayak and her paddle, which includes drip guards that help keep the water away.

For a moment I pictured myself boldly maneuvering my way across the pool – so brave, in fact, that in my mind I still had my camera around my neck so I could snap photos of kayak training session participants from a unique perspective.

But, mastering a kayak seemed a lot like learning to ride a bike. To me, at least. Soon childhood flashbacks of my "bike learning" experiences entered my mind. Let's just say I was not a quick learner with my Schwinn, and I was pretty confident I would end up gloriously tipping a kayak, without even trying.

So, I politely declined Jessica's offer.

While leaving the DakotaDome for my next task of the day, I was struck with Jessica's passion for the sport. She talked about how her first experience in a kayak was on a small lake. "Within about two minutes, I wanted to go bigger, farther – all of that stuff," she said.

I grew up on farm. Near a small lake. And all of us – my folks, my brothers – remained landlubbers.

Oh, we'd walk to the lake with fishing poles to try our luck. But, there was never an interest in navigating on the water. My folks never went boat shopping. Boating was the last thing on their minds. And even though my brothers and I took swimming lessons during our youth, that experience for me was a lot like learning to ride a bike. Except for one thing. After

failing numerous times on a bike, I did eventually master it. I never did master swimming well enough to feel safe in the water.

There was a time, however, so long ago. At least 25 years ago. Maybe more. My youngest brother, Steve, was still on our family farm, and he was "boat sitting" for friend who had left his small rowboat at the lake.

We had finished all of the chores on that perfect June

evening when he told me to climb into his pickup. Soon, we were heading to the lake, and before I knew it, the two of us were in that small rowboat, cruising on the water.

This was one of those perfect, early summer South Dakota evenings. The sun was slowly sliding toward the horizon, casting a golden hue over everything.

There was no wind. The water was like glass, and I was seeing and hearing things from a perspective I had never experienced before – even though I had spent a good portion of my life on the shores of that lake.

We startled a coot, which did its crazy dance across the water to get away from us rather than simply take flight. We watched as a muskrat, which had been in the reeds near our boat's path, simply chose to quietly swim past us.

Gnats and mosquitoes buzzed near the water's surface, and now and again, a small splash could be heard, followed by a ripple – the sure sign of a fish breaking through to bite on a bug.

My brothers and I continue to share unique times together, but Jessica reminded me of just how wondrous my experience on the lake with Steve had been.

So, if you are offered a chance to go kayaking, don't be like me.

Say yes.

You can learn more about the sport by logging on to <http://sdcka.blogspot.com/>.

BETWEEN THE LINES



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Do you know a mouse potato?

Every so often, words are added to the English dictionary, mirroring the times, like "ringtone," "mouse potato" and "spyware." While some may know these terms new to Miriam Webster Dictionary, others may need a little help.

A mouse potato is someone who spends a lot of time on the computer. Couch potato? Mouse potato? Get it?

Just about everyone knows a "ringtone" is the sound a cell phone plays for incoming calls.

The Merriam-Webster people just got around to placing "spyware" in their lexicon. Spyware, which has been around for a while, is software that installs itself on your computer with no help from anyone, except, of course, those who are spying on you. Spyware secretly gathers information about your Internet use, passwords – you name it, just about anything saved on your PC.

The latest from pop culture newly entered are "soul patch" and "supersize." Soul patch is a mini-beard trimmed to a little patch directly below the lower lip and above the chin.

With 50 million people eating fast food daily and with the proliferation of fast food advertising, most people know what it means to "supersize." However, for cave dweller out there, "supersize" is a verb used by McDonald's Restaurant, meaning "make it an extra-large portion."

More new terms include "label mate," "Ollie" and "wave pool." A "label mate" defines a singer or musician who records for the same company as another singer or musician.

An "Ollie" is a skateboarding trick where the rider and board simultaneously leap into the air in a "Look, Mom, no hands!" moment.

A "wave pool" is a specially designed swimming pool that generates waves as big

MY STORY YOUR STORY



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one drama queen in our lives. A "unibrow" is when a person's eyebrows are connected by facial hair between eyebrows, forming what looks like one long eyebrow.

"Agritourism" is a favorite of mine. This is an agriculturally-based business that attracts visitors and charges them a fee to visit farms and ranches. "Big-box" stores are major retail chain stores. And then there's "aquascape," which is underwater landscaping.

When I first heard the term "sandwich generation," I thought of fast food. But I was dead wrong. The sandwich generation is a generation of people who care for their aging parents while supporting their own children. According to Pew Research, more than one in eight Americans ages 40 to 60 are raising children and caring for parents. Perhaps you are in the sandwich generation or know someone who is.

If you have a texting youngster around, you already know what "BFF" means (best friends forever).

Surprisingly, there are those who have never heard of "Craigslit." It's a free online classified ad service.

More terms just included in the dictionary:

as ocean waves. Really? Now that's a pool I want to try!

Plus, get a load of these trendy terms your parents or grandparents probably didn't use 20 or more years ago, but are now searchable in Webster:

A "drama queen" is someone who uses excessive drama by overreacting in everyday situations.

Most of us have at least one drama queen in our lives. A "unibrow" is when a person's eyebrows are connected by facial hair between eyebrows, forming what looks like one long eyebrow.

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"Geocaching" is a treasure hunt game on the internet. "Multitasking" is the ability to do more than one thing at a time.

In our increasingly health conscious lifestyle, "organic" is becoming popular in supermarkets. This type of fruits, vegetables, eggs, milk, cheese, meat and fish are produced without drugs, hormones and synthetic chemicals.

Some of you may have demonstrated "road rage" or have been a victim of it. Road rage is when a driver loses his or her cool. It's common in big cities, like Los Angeles, New York and even in little big cities, like Omaha.

"Speed dating" is a matchmaking system where singles are brought together to meet a lot of possible dates in 10-minute intervals or less over a short amount of time.

If you say that you want to give a "shout-out," you're giving a greeting over the radio or TV to someone in the listening or viewing audience.

Recently, I've heard some terms you won't find in any dictionary but could someday, like:

"Marmagedon" describes the current scarcity of marmalade on Australia. "Stalkarazzi" is an aptly given nickname for the paparazzi.

One that made me chuckle came from a college student who, when describing an unpleasant task her mother gave her, quipped sarcastically, "I was 'voluntold' I had to do it."

As we create words to keep up with our changing times, we are developing a method for dealing with life itself.

Looking back through old dictionaries could serve as a carbon dating, of sorts. Only instead of examining decaying carbon-14, we would be studying the vocabulary of humankind.

PLAIN TALK POLL RESULTS

Who do you believe will be the likely Democratic general election candidate to oppose Republican Mike Rounds for the U.S. Senate?

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Stephanie Herseth Sandlin | 59 |
| An unknown candidate | 30 |
| Brendan Johnson | 28 |

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Total Votes | 117 |
|-------------|-----|

To participate in the Plain Talk's weekly poll, log on to plaintalk.net.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Plain Talk encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the Plain Talk will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters to the Editor, 201 W. Cherry St., Vermillion, SD 57069, drop off at 201 W. Cherry in Vermillion, fax to 624-4696 or e-mail to david.lias@plaintalk.net.

Guest commentary:

'Spring cleaning' for state government

By Gov. Dennis Daugaard

As the weather warms and snow shoveling becomes lawn mowing, many South Dakotans take on spring cleaning projects to ready their homes for the busy, social summer months.

In the past two and a half years, your state government has attempted a spring cleaning of its own. Starting in April, your state agencies pore through statutes and administrative rules looking for unnecessary or confusing laws that can be "cleaned up."

I am pleased to report that the efforts have been successful. To date, we have identified more than 800 sections of code totaling more than 81,000 words that can be removed or simplified in our codified statutes. In many cases, the sections were unnecessary and served only to clutter our law books.

Further, our state agencies identified more than 1,300 administrative rules that could be eliminated. This reduction in administrative rules will make it easier for businesses and citizens to navigate the rules that surround

our laws. In total, nearly 170,000 words were stricken from our state government administrative rules.

Leading our "spring cleaning" effort have been the departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Revenue, Human Services and Social Services. Those state agencies, among many others, should be commended for their strong work in reducing red tape and simplifying the laws that govern all South Dakotans.

Too often, lawmakers and governments feel that they are only productive if they create new laws. They feel that effectiveness is measured by bills passed or programs created. This should not be the case. Good stewards of state government realize that often the best thing government can do is get out of the way.

It is my goal that our statutes be arranged so that any person in South Dakota can find and understand the laws that govern them. It is a necessary component of a healthy and transparent government.

While I am governor, we will continue our annual spring cleaning of laws and rules in South Dakota.

Daugaard right to focus on China trade

Gov. Dennis Daugaard was the first South Dakota governor to visit China in nearly two decades when he first visited the country in March 2012, and this week he is in China again with a considerably larger delegation of private industry representatives than when he first went. This seems to us wise and far-sighted when only Canada and Mexico are bigger importers of South Dakota goods.

The governor has apparently had other invitations from countries in Europe and South America after his 2012 China trip, but he prefers to focus on China rather than spreading the state's resources too thin.

Again, this seems to us a good use of state resources. We have an established trading partner and a good rail line to the Pacific. China is the bird in the hand.

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