

VIEWPOINTS

Dear Mike: Let's get real

Dear Mr. Rounds:
May I call you Mike? I know you're busy right now, with a jam-packed schedule. Being part of a political campaign is hard work. You have to travel a lot, making appearances at Lincoln Day dinners, popping into school classrooms, and, of course, going from one fundraiser to the other.

I know you have a lot on your plate as you campaign for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Sen. Tim Johnson. We're proud of Tim, a Vermillion native, who has decided not to seek re-election.

And far be it for me or my colleagues to be highly critical of the use of stock photos in advertising. Newspapers all across South Dakota, including the Plain Talk, use stock photos all of the time as we build ads for our clients.

But, I couldn't help but see your first TV ad that you released last week on YouTube—because you sent it directly to me via e-mail.

I also couldn't help but notice all the attention it received just a day or two after you released it,

BETWEEN THE LINES



DAVID LIAS
david.lias@plaintalk.net

picked up the story (<http://atr.rollcall.com/mike-rounds-new-tv-ad-features-paris-woman/>) and soon the entire nation knew that while you were saying very nice things about me and other fellow citizens in South Dakota, you weren't featuring people from our state in your commercial footage.

According to Roll Call, the ad features you standing in a park (in South Dakota, I hope) and, with the video camera rolling, you say a lot of glowing things about our state and its people.

when it was revealed by Cory Heidelberger, a political blogger, that the photos you decided to use while describing South Dakotans weren't of South Dakotans.
Roll Call

"We've done it right around here, and Washington can learn a lot from the people of South Dakota," you say at one point.

As you're talking, a variety of photos are shown: a roofer, a father and son fishing, three people at a meeting, a playful family, a guy checking boxes, a woman at a meeting, and father and son washing their car.

Each of the photos in the ad are available for purchase on stock photo sites like Getty and Shutterstock.

At least one was definitely not photographed in South Dakota, according to Roll Call. The "woman at a meeting" photo was taken at the Getty Images office in Paris, the England-based photographer who shot it confirmed in an email to CQ-Roll Call.

When reached by CQ Roll Call, Democratic and Republican media consultants with experience in South Dakota doubted that any of the people in the photos were from the state and were surprised to see so many stock photos used in an introductory TV ad by a top

Senate candidate.

I really wished you had given us a call. We could have helped you avoid this mess.

I just quickly went through my photo files, and found these images: Vermillion teenagers painting a fence, a Bull-a-Rama volunteer standing straight, hand over heart, as the pledge of allegiance is recited, a joyful, energetic scene of fans screaming during a sporting event at the DakotaDome (it may have been when the Coyote football team faced the Jackrabbits from our alma mater, Mike), a young 4-H'er showing livestock at our county fair, and civic leaders turning shovels of dirt to symbolically celebrate the start of work on building that will house a new business here.

I took these photos myself. I can vouch that they all feature real South Dakotans doing real things.

I know that featuring photos of real people in a political ad likely would mean extra effort for your campaign staff. Even if I quickly e-mailed you my photos, you likely would have to get permission from the individuals in each image to be part of your ad. That's a lot of work, trying to

track down all of those people. And some of them may say "No."

Just think, though. If you had used photos of real South Dakotans instead of stock photos of people from who knows where, there wouldn't have been all of this negative attention. You wouldn't have had to pull your ad from YouTube.

You would have appeared much more genuine. I can understand why you decided to remove the ad. It was not easy to watch after it was revealed that the "we" you are describing in the ad doesn't make up the collective "we" that makes up South Dakota.

I viewed the ad a couple times shortly before you removed it, and all I could think, as I tried to listen to what you were saying, was, "The roofing guy isn't a South Dakotan. There's the woman from Paris. I wonder where the dad and kid washing the car live?"

It was pretty distracting. I won't take up more of your time. It's campaign season, and you're busy.

But, if you need photos of real South Dakotans, give me a call.

Thanks,
Dave

Capitol Notebook:

Daugaard's position against raising taxes won't benefit roads

By Bob Mercer

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – Time after time, a Republican or Democratic lawmaker tried during the 2014 legislative session to make it easier for counties and townships to spend more money fixing roads and bridges.

Each time, someone from Gov. Dennis Daugaard's administration sat waiting as the only opponent. All six different bills eventually lost.

This governor's general philosophy is he won't allow taxes to be raised at any level without a vote of the public.

We saw it in his only veto this year. He blocked the addition of \$1 for Deadwood's lodging occupancy tax.

We also saw it in 2011, when he vetoed increases in license-plate prices.

That time, the Legislature overrode his veto.

The two rounds of increases took effect in 2011 and in 2013. Once in full use this year, they are expected to generate \$32 million annually for counties, cities and townships.

The governor's chief of staff, Dusty Johnson, cited the \$32 million when he testified against one of the bills this session.

Johnson's point is all sides need to let the money settle in and let the local governments put it to use, while a discussion takes place, involving all sides, about what is really needed for highways in South Dakota.

"I think we'll probably have more of those conversations in the next 12 months than in the last 12 months," Johnson told the Senate Local Government Committee.

Since 1997, local governments have lived under a state restriction that they can increase their property tax revenues by no more than 3 percent, other than from growth in the property tax base.

Some places impose wheel taxes. Some went to property tax opt-outs. Both can be challenged to a local vote.

Rep. Burt Tulson, R-Lake Norden, wanted to allow townships to add a levy of 50 cents per \$1,000 of taxable value. The money was to pay for roads, culverts and bridges.

The idea was that township members could vote at their annual meetings and save the step of a public vote on an opt-out.

The House of Representatives voted 48-20 to approve HB 1140, but the Senate Taxation Committee killed it 5-2.

Rep. Susan Wismer, D-Britton, wanted to allow county road improvement districts to be formed so they could levy up to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of taxable value and could borrow.

Another Wismer bill would have expanded the legal uses of an existing county-road tax and put it outside the 3 percent limit. Currently the tax can be used only for matching federal highway grants.

Tulson tried to put townships' snow levy outside the 3 percent limit.

Rep. Dennis Feickert, D-Aberdeen, wanted \$5 million of state general funds for the state Transportation Commission to start a local bridge-replacement program.

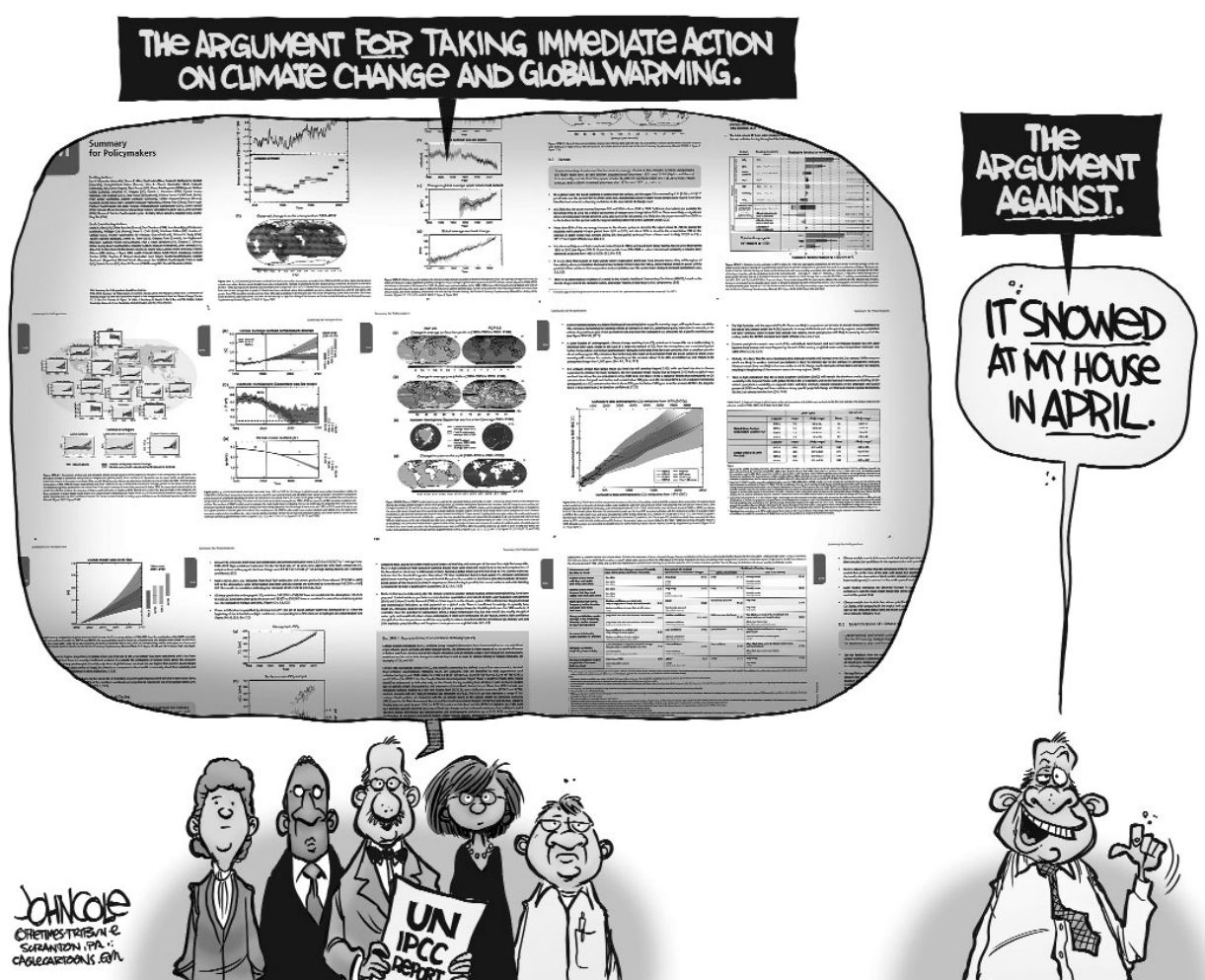
Sen. Ryan Maher, R-Isabel, wanted to allow counties to add \$1 of tax per \$1,000 of taxable value for county road and bridge improvements.

Later he changed it to install a piece of the Wismer bill allowing the expanded use for an existing county-road tax.

The governor opposed all.

All failed. Maybe county commissioners need to take him for rides during his Capitol For A Day events.

And Governor: Accept only round trips.



Lingering revolt against time

Some would call this a waste of time, me sitting here at the kitchen table, repairing torn pages of children's books – favorites we'd sit and read just before bedtime or when the kids were tucked out from constant play.

Once registrars of a soft newness my motherhood delivered, these dingy books now stand as dusty ledgers, tucked away in time, recording the learning of new words and old tales more than 25 years ago.

Who in their right mind would bother? Why even take the time to piece pages, patching covers and searing spines back to a semblance of their original selves?

Not a soul would think twice about pitching these old volumes – the likes of which could be purchased today on eBay, Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble. Easily. And in much better condition to boot.

"Tales of Oliver Pig."
"My First Pop-Up Book of Opposites."
"Anatole Over Paris."

Not to mention our many volumes of Mercer Mayer's books – "Just Go to Bed," "Just for You" and the like.

Beset, I think this is more of a matter of inquiry than an exercise in preservation, pursuing the past I ask myself where time has gone. How the years passed.

Tattered kids' books echoing a musical dialogue of yesteryear—an improvisation with intonations of isolated moments lost forever.

Treasured times with one toddler on my lap, another at my side, singing the rhymes in the Golden

MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON
paula.damon@iw.net

Baby and me."

Recalling the alliterative narrative in "Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose." An endearing story about a kindhearted moose, through and through, Thidwick can't say no while moseying along, "Looking for nice tender moose-moss to munch."

By and by, just about every creature crossing his path asks to hitch a ride in Thidwick's broad, spacious antlers.

"I'm happy my antlers can be of some use. There's room to spare, and I'm happy to share," Thidwick chirps cheerily. All told, a bingle bug, tree spider, zinn-azu-bug, his wife and uncle, a squirrel family, a bobcat and turtle nested in Thidwick's rack.

Dog-eared and spilled over, "Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose" hasn't been read for years. Yet, I steady my fingers, following the rips with gentle, restorative precision.

Brightly, I am wishing to reclaim the economy of these weathered artifacts from their legendary days – forever locked away.

My harbored ambition to bring them back to life becomes sequestered under pages and pages of faded texts and crackled illustrations.

How I treasure the exchanges I had with my young children facilitated by this pile of forgotten stories. Here lies a whimsical currency – a fantastical majesty capable of turning rainy afternoons and snowy evenings into brightly colored kingdoms.

Not minding all of the smudges and smears and spills, I press on with a weightless compulsion – harmonic and tranquil, I am overcome with inscrutable illusion of creating a trophy for my mothering – a memento for a curriculum I can't go back and reteach.

What am I doing here? Miserably studying a place in time that has disappeared forever – save these relics?

I am taking a long melancholy glance back to when my parent training and testing happened concurrently with practice sessions to no avail.

Examining my own rationale for dwelling herein, admittedly, I am engaged in an exercise in futility.

My restorative efforts – a revolt against time, a fight opposing my own aging process – my gray hair, my wrinkled skin, my tired bones, my weakened muscles, my faded energy.

Hovering with my hands fluttering and waving about, I feverishly disarm the present, longing to relive the past with this brand new roll of Scotch tape.

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Vermillion Plain Talk Staff

News Staff: Travis Gulbrandson.

Advertising Director: Michele Schievelbein

Advertising Sales Rep: Carol Hohenhaner

Composing Manager: Kathy Larson

Composing Staff: Rob Buckingham,

Mathew Wienbar & Sally Whiting.

Reception Office Manager: Penny Aschman

Distribution & Circulation Manager: Mike Hrycko