

VIEWPOINTS

A Rite Of Passage

By Shauna Marlette
shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net

As a child growing up in South Dakota, a child of educators no less, I remember walking the halls of my school looking up to the upper classmen, envying the events and activities they got to take part in: the sports, the classes, the plays. But most of all, I remember walking in the Alexandria Auditorium as the juniors were setting up for prom.



Shauna MARLETTE

I remember the excitement and the comradery that these, primarily young women but a few young men, as well, shared. Seeing them work together to transform something that I had spent uncountable hours sweating in, cheering in,

almost living in (my dad was a basketball coach for Hansen High School at the time, so I was always there) and watching them make it a living fantasy was something I wanted to be a part of. Those students spent hours hanging balloons and streamers, setting up tables and runners. All for an event I was not sure about.

That evening, walking into the gym for grand march it was unrecognizable. Then to see all of the dresses and tuxes, the pride on their faces, the smiles and laughter, I honestly couldn't wait for it to be me.

Fast forward a few years, I remember walking into the dress shop with my mom my junior year of high school and being so excited. I think I tried on a hundred dresses before choosing the second one I had tried on.

I also remember the look on my mom's face. It was one of pride, and at the same time it was a bit sad.

I never understood why. This year, I understand. My daughter is a junior and will be attending her junior prom this weekend in Yankton.

I will never forget seeing her face light up when she tried on a dress she was sure she would hate, and seeing a look of dawning understanding that she is beautiful. To hear her whisper, "I look so pretty" honestly, made the tears in my eyes fall faster.

For me, I have always known she is gorgeous (motherly bias not withstanding) but to hear her realize that behind the sweat-shirts and jeans, the T-shirts and ponytails, that she is more than just a student, a daughter - she is a young woman, was, to say the least, tear jerking.

I now understand the look of sadness on my mother's face, as well, because standing in that dress shop; I realized my baby has grown up. Even more than when she took her ACT test this spring, it brought home to me: I only have one more year left before I have to let her fly.

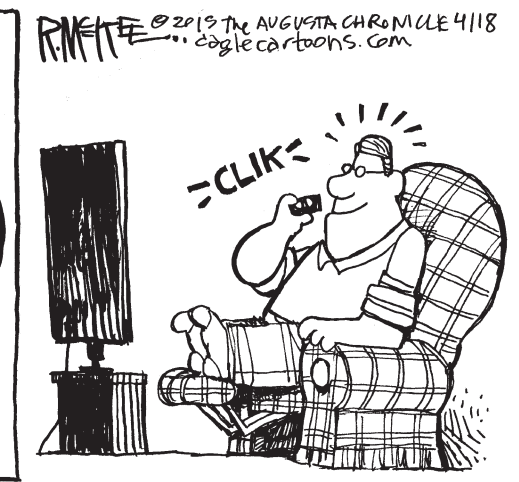
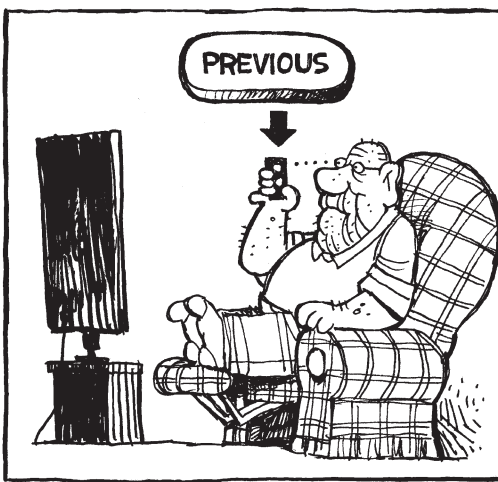
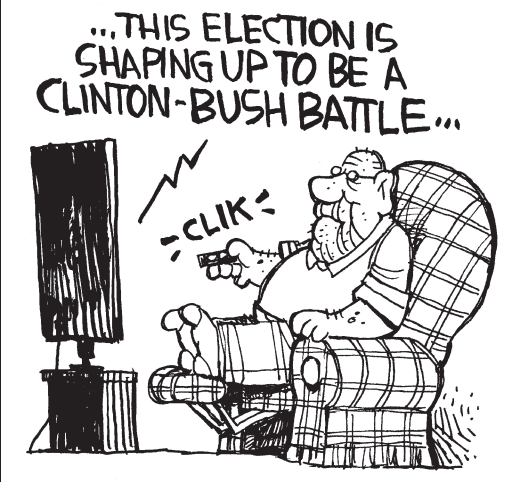
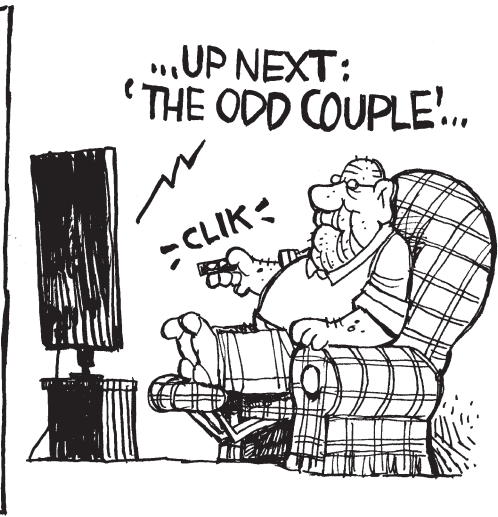
What a moment. The tinge of sadness was personal, but the pride was undeniable.

This week has been nothing less than a blur. Between dress fittings, deciding hair styles, after prom issues and more, I have hardly been able to process what this means for our family.

I have come to understand that, for me, junior prom is a rite of passage. It is one that every student and parent can share, but it is also a moment of separation. It is that first step to watching your child become an adult and step out on their own.

Vermillion High School celebrated their prom last weekend, and I am sure, there were similar moments for parents all across town as they saw their children take that first step to their final year in high school.

I can't wait to see all the dresses and tuxes Saturday, but at the same time, I know I am going to be able to look around the gym to my fellow parents and see a bit of sadness behind the smiles.



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Nebraska's Best-Kept Secret

By Paula Damon
paula.damon@iw.net

Around this time of year, when a hint of summer time get into my bones, my heart turns toward planning a summer vacation in Western Nebraska.

This is when I turn my thoughts westward to the Nebraska National Forest, not far from the Wyoming State Line, where...

...pine ridges stretch heavenward.

...temperatures are milder.

...air is clean and dry.

...the pace is slow and quiet.

...and people tend to be good natured.

Most, in fact, don't hesitate to strike up conversations with total strangers.

You'll know this on the way simply by spotting what I call the "Nebraska Wave" while motoring west on Highway 20 as you near the Sand Hills.

It's a noticeable salute from drivers of oncoming traffic, consisting of one index finger slightly raised above the steering wheel, acknowledging all honorary nameless sojourners as welcome guests.

Mosey through any town along the way and you'll make new friends with passersby.

That's when you'll discover what the world has been searching for all along:

...a friendliness you trust,

MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON
paula.damon@iw.net

...an openness you believe,
...and a sincerity you embrace.

All qualities embodied in Weland Wild, a modern-day cowboy I met one year.

His ranchland covered thousands of acres.

His herds were so large he had to check on them from high above in a single-engine airplane.

His cattle roamed with antelope.

Weland taught me the difference between a grassy knoll and a weathered butte.

And he informed me with a raspy chuckle, "No, those ain't rocks; them are cow pies."

Gazing in a southerly direction while nodding at the noonday sun, he pointed down a long dusty lane named after his great-great grandparents, original homesteaders in these parts.

Then, with a prideful tone, he directed my attention over yonder to a one-room schoolhouse. Whitewashed it had a matching outhouse toward the rear of a corner county plot. Up until a few years ago that old

schoolhouse was where children were taught to read and write, to be friendly and trustworthy. The same place Weland learned his three R's more than a half-century ago.

A similar sense of freedom and security can be easily detected by scanning police reports reprinted in the weekly hometown papers.

They usually go something like this...

9:26 a.m. Caller...advised his phone had gotten flushed last night at the above location.

7:37 a.m. Caller...advised this morning she noticed that someone had gotten into her vehicle last night. Stated nothing seems to be missing but they sure made a mess.

5:37 p.m. Caller advised that his sister had come into his home and was pretending to be his wife.

4:49 p.m. Caller advised there were two females and one male sitting on a couch in the alley and appeared to be watching houses.

Caller requesting they be checked.

I imagine if I were to make a report, the log would say: 7:01 p.m. Caller advised Western Nebraska is a national treasure. Caller requesting to maintain this as a best-kept secret.

Brushing off the lingering chill of a northerly April wind gust, I fight off any hint of winter by reserving my westerly summer place nestled on a pine ridge in a cabin constructed by hardy hands of the Civilian Conservation Corp eager for work back in the 1930's.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To CAFO Or Not To CAFO

As Clay County public officials address the issue of CAFOs, I would urge them to take the necessary time to allow the water studies mentioned in last week's Plain Talk to be completed. South Dakota has what so many envy: clean air, land, and water and rewriting CAFO language without serious attention to these three things would seem to be irresponsible.

Several years ago, a citizen committee in Union County spent months revising language on the county ordinances, and the section on CAFOs was particularly contentious. Language on a rigorous process of permitting, limits on CAFO size, and an appropriate distance from residences was a compromise eventually acceptable (more or less) to all involved. Contrary to all the enthusiastic rhetoric on economic development, CAFOs are not necessarily benign industries.

Reducing setbacks and allowing an unlimited number of animals makes for a stinky mess in what is supposed to be rural peace for producers and residents alike.

I doubt that unlimited expansion of CAFOs will entice our young people to stay in Clay or Union Counties or South Dakota in general. More legislative action on increased funding for education, higher teacher salaries, even a higher minimum wage would seem to be better enticements than wading around in a CAFO - just a thought.

A few more months of robust debate will save years of resentment and hostility. Public officials, take your time and represent all sections of your constituencies. You will sleep better! Thanks!

LIZ MERRIGAN
UNION COUNTY

Tennis Parents Asking For Your Help

The Vermillion Athletic Boosters have established a "capital campaign" with the purpose of upgrading some of Vermillion's public school facilities. The new electronic sign in front of the High School and the new flagpoles are some of the already-completed projects. Another project is the rehabilitation of the VHS tennis courts—to provide the community with an "eastside" tennis facility and the VHS tennis team with courts at the high school.

In support of the VHS tennis program, the owners of the Main Street Pub, the Radigan family, will hold a "Tennis Appreciation Night"

on April 28th at the restaurant. The Main Street Pub will donate a portion of the evening's proceeds to the tennis program. This is a very generous gesture, and the 30-students who currently play tennis are grateful for the Radigan family's continued support.

We would like to encourage members of the community to join the players and their families on April 28th to support the tennis program. It will be good food and good community support for our student athletes.

DAVID AND LYNNE DAY
VERMILLION

Suffering From A Springtime Schnozzel

By Richard P. Holm, MD

Spring is the time of the year when people come into the clinic because of a plugged proboscis, a stuffy schnozzel, a nasty nose.

An obstructed nasal airway becomes particularly troublesome when we are trying to sleep and nasal passageways deny us enough air to achieve that forget-about-it-all state in order to drift off into dreamland. Luckily, even with a totally plugged upper airway, adults can open their mouths, allowing breath to come in an alternate way, which is an option not available to infants, I should add... but that is another story.

A seasonal allergic cause for stuffy nose happens when prairie winds blow pollen into our homes and sleeping spaces: from trees in spring, grasses in summer, or weeds in early autumn. Symptoms of such an allergy include itchy and watery eyes, sneezing, congestion, runny nose and wheezing that generally last for more than two weeks.

This is in contrast to a stuffy nose from a viral infection or cold, which starts with a sore throat, full-body-aches for one to two days followed by nasal-passage swelling and a dry hacking cough that can last for one to two weeks.

So, what are we to do about a stuffy nose? I suggest only blowing the nose gently since

forceful blowing can and will cause painful packed sinuses. Hot liquids like lemon-honey tea can be helpful. Almost all the drugs we used to prescribe for allergies are now available over-the-counter. Long-acting non-sedating antihistamine tablets or nasal spray steroids and antihistamines can help for both causes, but are particularly helpful when the cause is allergic. These are gentle medicines and they take a while to kick-in, so be patient.

My favorite advice is for continuous stimulation of the most powerful nose and throat clearing substance: saliva. This is best done by stimulating salivary glands with lemon or cough drops.

Some warnings: Short acting and sedating antihistamines like Benedryl are no more effective than the long acting type. The decongestants like Sudafed can cause people to become jittery, agitated, and can irritate the heart, so use them very judiciously. Decongestant nasal sprays like Afrin can cause dependency and should not be used more than twice a week. And remember, whether a viral infection or an allergy is causing the stuffy nose, antibiotics rarely will help, and can be harmful.

So when your noble nose becomes a shut-down schnozzel, there are methods you might use to bring you safe relief.



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