

VIEWPOINTS

Baseball: The greatest game

The Vermillion Red 13-14 Teeners were crowned state champions on Sunday.

The Vermillion Post 1 Legion team came within a whisker's width of upsetting Groton to claim the first place crown in the State Class B American Legion Baseball Tournament in Webster on Tuesday.

So, it seems only appropriate to pause and reflect on the Great American Pastime. Baseball indeed is, for many, the greatest sporting endeavor that men and women may pursue.

There is also something about this game, this activity most of us were introduced to when we were still quite young, that inspires awe and wonder and a treasure of human expression.

• I see great things in baseball. It's our game – the American game. – Walt Whitman

• Every day is a new opportunity. You can build on yesterday's success or put its failures behind and start over again. That's the way life is, with a new game every day, and that's the way baseball is. – Bob Feller

• Baseball is the only field of endeavor where a man can succeed three times out of 10 and be considered a good performer. – Ted Williams

• Do what you love to do and give it your very best. Whether it's business or baseball, or the theater, or any field. If you don't love what you're doing and you can't give it your best, get out of it. Life is too short. You'll be an old man before you know it. – Al Lopez

• A baseball game is simply a nervous breakdown divided into nine innings. – Earl Wilson

• I think about baseball when I wake up in the morning. I think about it all day and I dream about it at night. The only time I don't think about it is when I'm playing it. – Carl Yastrzemski

• One of the beautiful things about baseball is that every once in a while you come into a situation where you want to, and where you have to, reach down and prove something. – Nolan Ryan

• People ask me what I do in winter when there's no baseball. I'll tell you what I do. I stare out the window and wait for spring. – Rogers Hornsby

• This is my first season ever coaching, and I had this idea that I was going to talk to them, and they were going to learn from me, and I was going to give signs over at third base, and that was going to be my job," he said. "What ended up surprising me so much is the connection – I love these kids, man. I feel like I'm best friends with every one of them. Late in the season, when stuff was happening on the field, I was feeling emotions with them because I we have become so close. – Caleb Miller, head coach of the State A Champion Vermillion Red 13-14 Teeners

• It was two great baseball teams. Neither one of us wanted to quit. A whole lot of credit to Travis and his boys over in Groton. I wouldn't have asked for a better baseball team to play against in a championship setting. That just goes to show you that American Legion baseball at the B level is alive and well. – Jason Gault, head coach of the Vermillion Post 1 Legion team, which claimed runner-up honors after being defeated by Groton 9-8 in the championship game Tuesday.

• That's a good team that we just beat. We knew that all along coming into the tournament. The more I watched them, the more I was impressed with them. It's too bad somebody actually had to lose this game, because both teams are very deserving of this championship. – Groton coach Travis Kurth, describing the Vermillion Legion squad following their loss to his team in Tuesday's State B American Legion Tournament in Webster.

Two local baseball seasons have just ended in grand fashion. Vermillionites would be wise to take in the few remaining games of the Vermillion 16 and under Teener squad, which, as I write this, are in the midst of regional tourney play. Tuesday night, they defeated Elk Point in a game here in Vermillion. Here's wishing them luck tonight (Wednesday) as they continue play with another game at Prentis Park.

Don't miss the waning seasons of local baseball teams in Vermillion. You'll be missing out on, well, life.

• Baseball is a lot like life. It's a day-to-day existence, full of ups and downs. You make the most of your opportunities in baseball as you do in life. – Ernie Harwell

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.

BETWEEN THE LINES



DAVID LIAS
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A little secret between you and me

Coming from near and far-off places, the rumbling of Harley-Davidson motorcycles cuts through early August air.

Awakening our tired summer souls, the sound of bikers is as a mocking bird rousing us well before the reconciling dawn and continuing long after the forgiving night fall.

Trickling in from points east, west, north and south some arrive early for first dibs on cribs and camping spots – head starts on breathing room before tens of thousands crowd into Sturgis, SD, for the annual biker rally.

Collecting in every nook and cranny of these otherwise sparsely populated parts, our visitors can't help but make a scene: columns upon columns crisscrossing highways and byways, traveling here from big cities and wide spots in the road, from farm communities and megalopolises, from villages and capitals, from boondocks and bedrocks, from acreages and ranches.

Like a rapidly flowing river pouring into a grand spillway, men and women of all walks, faiths and colors channel forth to this place. Decked out from head-to-toe in leather and sterling studs, their uniform attire perhaps embodies alter egos ordinarily kept hidden at the office, on the farm, in the neighborhood or with the family.

Eager with anticipation, sunbaked riders with their wind sheered hair twisted and knotted, form simultaneously rhythmic parades – rolling marches sprawling forth on shiny metal hogs.

MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON
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While most are strangers to us, feelings of kinship tingle down our spines as battalions of road-weary guests rumble into town.

“Long time, no see,” our hearts shrill and rise to our throats with the hearty thrust of embracing a

long-lost friend. Loneliness surely would have paid us a visit if it were not for this August birthing, soothing our mourning cries, enlivening our days way past quitting time.

Happily disrupting our tranquilly, if only for a spell, this welcome invasion of sojourners seems more like our brothers and sisters.

Before they soldier on in a clean sweep across the land, we let them in on the grand simple life we have here, smack-dab in the middle of nowhere.

And then before they take off, we politely ask they please keep secret our vastly diverse and tranquil environ divided by the Mighty Mo: East River – untouched prairies, pristine vistas, endless farmland perfectly rowed with corn, beans, wheat, sunflowers, alfalfa, sorghum and the like, fields of promise nurtured along for centuries by golden hearts, rock-hard hands and determined spirits; West River – wide open spaces and unending ranches, moonscapes of

rolling treeless hills all the way to the horizon and back, jagged shale and red granite quarries and further west over a million acres of forested mountains!

“Keep quiet,” we whisper with soft-spoken grace into the bent ears of new friends, tourists whose names we may never know. “Keep it to yourselves the virgin innocence you see in these smiling eyes. Don't tell a soul of the real kindness that spilled out all over the minute you stepped foot into this place made sacred by trust.

“Yes, it is true! The generosity you quit believing exists lives here. The peace you stopped searching for inhabits this space, which lies well beyond your skyscrapers, high-rises and blacktop jungles.

“That humanity you thought was forever lost is full to overflowing in our towns – all the way down our Main Streets and carefully tucked throughout our dusty grids.

“That quietness that leaves you breathless, those endlessly blue skies that stun you and the piercing hue of sunsets that make you a believer again are as a doxology for your journey and a praise song for our richly humble, hard-to-reach existence.

“No snitching, now,” we warn new friends whose names we may never know. “Keep to yourselves the virgin innocence you see in these smiling eyes. Don't tell a soul of the real kindness that spilled out all over the minute you stepped foot into this place made sacred by our trust.

“Shhhhhh!”

Aug. 7 is Purple Heart Recognition Day

By Larry Zimmerman
Secretary, SD Department of Veterans Affairs

At a time when American troops are bravely serving their country, we are reminded of the sacrifices of previous generations of Americans who risked or gave their lives for the freedom we all enjoy today.

August is full of opportunities to honor our veterans. This year legislation was enacted designating Aug. 7 as “Purple Heart Recognition Day” – a working holiday dedicated to remember and recognize those members of the Armed Forces of the United States who have earned the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in combat.

So, as Aug. 7 approaches, let us not forget the men and women of our armed forces who have received the Purple Heart and who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to preserve our freedom.

Another great opportunity to thank our military personnel, our veterans, and their families is to attend Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair on Aug. 29. This is a special day to recognize the sacrifices and successes of those who have served in the armed forces, both past and present.

At 10:30 a.m. there will be a “Salute to Veterans” on the Northwest Energy Freedom Stage (Recreation Avenue). Representatives from the South Dakota

Department of Veterans Affairs, the veteran's service organizations and the county and tribal veteran's service officers will have an informational booth in the Veterans Building on Flag Avenue. This booth will be staffed throughout the span of the fair and will give veterans an opportunity to talk to experts about benefits and programs available to them.

Veterans attending school this fall at one of South Dakota's universities or technical schools, please remember to make contact with the school's certifying officials. They are a great resource to assist you in transitioning from soldier to student.

South Dakota is fortunate to have more

than 75,000 veterans – 75,000 men and women who have proudly served this country and deserving of benefits they have earned. I challenge each of you to reach out to veterans in your family and ask them, “Have you ever visited with your veteran's service officer to see if you qualify for any benefits?” Encourage them to make that contact.

A listing of the veterans service officers can be found at http://mva.sd.gov/vet_service_officers.html.

It is important that we honor the men and women in uniform who have made tremendous sacrifices in the defense of our nation and who remind us of their valor and service.

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