

VIEWPOINTS

The best way to build a winner

By Alan Dale
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I knew this guy back in the early part of the 21st century.

He was a basketball coach and he was pretty good at it.

After a few years of being a head varsity coach he wanted to take a break so he moved to a smaller school and joined its girls' program as an assistant.

Then because of a hole in the staff he was forced to coach a freshmen-laden junior varsity team.

A group of freshmen that had never won a game in three years of playing together 0-50-something were now going to play against older girls.

Doh!

So what did this guy do? Well after driving past the nearest liquor store about 100 times before going in, he decided to do what he did best:

Coach winners.

He shared with me how he walked in and basically trained them like the championship teams he had worked with. He raised the bar higher and he pushed the envelope.

Instead of telling them good job girls after they lost by 50, he wondered aloud what was wrong with them when they missed a layup in practice.

EVERYTHING had changed.

Well needless to say, after he took this team of wounded non-warriors over a squad that never lost a game by closer than 40-or-so points previously to meeting this acquaintance of mine it didn't take long to see what raising expectations can do for one's morale.

Or a whole team.

That team went 9-9, finished fourth in their league, and would make up a large portion of a state, final 16 team three years later.

How do I remember this? Well, if you saw the look in his eyes when he told the story no one would forget.

The point is, building a winner is never easy. It is much more difficult if you are faced with building from the ground up. So, no, I am not talking about coaches like Urban Meyer whose only season without Tim Tebow or a squad laden with someone else's recruits was an average 7-5.

I am talking about men

and women who raise the bar with the carrot dangling at the end and tell their teams, come get it. I speak of the coaches and leaders who when their players or charges get so close to taking a nibble, they raise the carrot higher and say, "I won't make it easy for you."

The greatest things earned are the ones that never came easy.

This doesn't just apply in sports. It applies in business, personal relationship with others, and most importantly the one-on-one everyday dealings with yourself.

For you must see that face more than anyone else and learn to live with it.

It is ownership, it is work ethic, it is a desire to be better every day and delivering on that desire which measures a true accomplishment.

Nothing handed to us is worth celebrating, because in the end it was given over already in full splendor.

All we do after that is enjoy the view.

But what if we could take a lump of coal and turn it into a pot of gold?

As the fall sports season commences there are teams at Vermillion High School and the University of South Dakota which aim to turn the corner and make their teams not only relevant, but significant.

They are doing this by not settling with what was before them, they are dealing with whatever it takes and giving even more.

Ladies and gentlemen of Vermillion, celebrate those who have come in and demanded more.

Take those to heart who see what's around them and expect more from themselves every single day. Embrace anyone who believe being better is the right way and not being just the best of the bad is good enough.

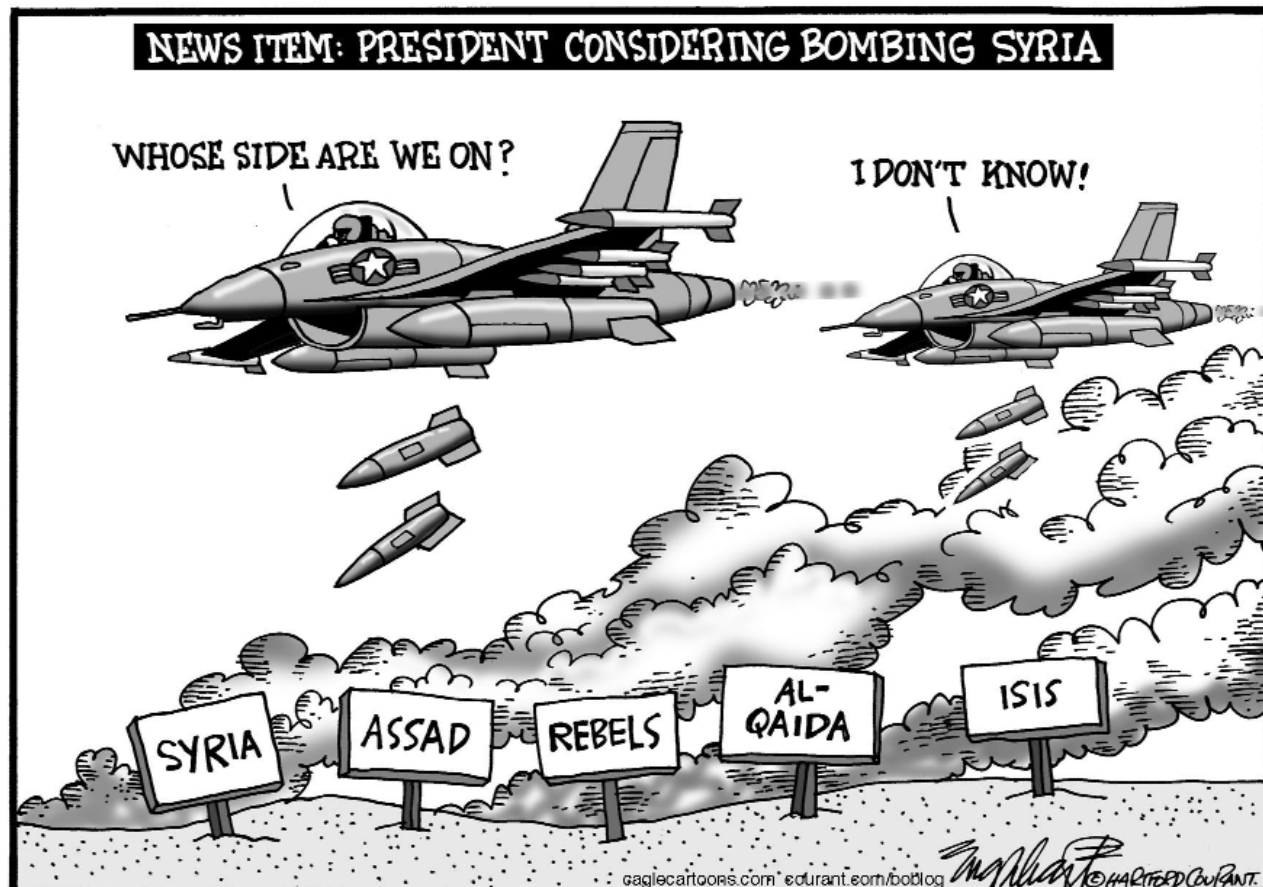
The temperatures will cool, competitions will rise, and expectations will wax and wane.

Yet it is fall and we enter a new time of an old routine:

Celebrate expectations and give respect to everyone who doesn't settle.

In the end it's that effort that will catch your eyes first.

The success? That's the gravy.



Venerable compilation of this and that ...

Treasured /'treZHər ed/: keep carefully, valued highly, cherish, hold dear, prize, adore, love, venerate.

I liked how his old white pickup truck, completely loaded down with junk and all, slowly sailed out of the parking lot of a local secondhand store. I liked how the clutter of papers, slips, envelopes, tickets, tags and wrappers, fluttered about the dash, flapping in the breeze as the truck cautiously rolled forward.

That layer of white, yellow and sun-bleached reds and blues that lined the inside of the windshield, created a gibberish only the elderly driver, all rough around the edges and sedated by his discoveries, would understand.

With his elbow perched out the open window, he rode along, leaning in the same direction, as if he had made the inside of the door a resting post for his tiresome collecting life.

A cluttered truck bed, an armada of one, floated behind where he sat in the cab at the helm of this, his ship. Armed with an air of confidence and might, the bed was a traveling exhibition of an interior calling to gather and horde, gather and horde. From the looks of it, he just couldn't seem to get enough.

Packed plumb full, it was a quiver of plumbing parts, bundles of wood trim, stacks of electrical boxes and light switches, plus scraps of laminate flooring.

Stuffed in there tightly was a

MY STORY YOUR STORY



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thought it would land on this motorized heap, tired and flat on its back in a final resting place with its underbelly sticking straight up for all to see.

Underneath, a layer of metal pieces, some twisted, others nearly straight, dangled over the rear bumper. Piled on the heap, a jostling commode with a missing seat, road slumped sideways.

Squinting in abundant sun, the old man momentarily took his wrinkly eyes off the road and glanced at me gawking at his alloy. But to him, master of the find, it surely was a ship awash with treasures.

An overwhelming sight to behold!

Speaking of treasures, toilet bowl brushes are certainly not. An item most people don't flock to stores for, toilet brushes are usually hidden.

However, my 22-month-old grandson Cecil, apparently views toilet brushes quite differently from the rest of us.

maze of lumber, boxes of nails and cans loaded with screws.

Atop was a dated coffee table that once sat quietly in someone's living room, where it tolerated spills and kicks and irreverently dug in heels. Who would've

The other day, he became ecstatic when he spotted a toilet brush, of all things, while shopping with his mother, my daughter, Vanessa.

"Oh, Mommy, toilet brushes!" he exclaimed, pointing to them. "I could have my very own toilet brush! Oh, my own toilet brush! Please, Mommy! Please, oh, please." [I've heard Cecil beg like this. It's pretty darn cute and irresistible.]

Overhearing Cecil's exuberance, a nearby female shopper softly injected from the corner of her mouth, "Please buy it for him. Some woman will thank you one day."

Noticing the expensive price of the deluxe brush, Vanessa replied, "We'll have to buy you one at the dollar store."

"You're the best mommy!" Cecil exclaimed.

The marvelous treasures abundant in nature are often taken for granted. Consider the Great Horned Owl, whose auditory system is 10 times greater than human hearing, allowing this fine feathered friend to zero in on prey it can't see.

The owl's dish-shaped face directs sounds to its ears. The owl then uses the asymmetrical location of its ears – the right is higher than the left, allowing sounds to reach one ear before the other – to pinpoint coordinate its prey.

And all along, we thought it was just keen eyesight that made owls such good hunters.

S.D. senator led Congress to Labor Day

By Bob Mercer

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – Remember James Kyle?

He was South Dakota's most improbable U.S. senator. Officially an Independent, he served his first term with the Democrats and his second with the Republicans.

During that first term, Kyle sponsored the federal law in 1894 creating a new national holiday.

His legislation designated the first Monday of September as Labor Day.

Seven years later, Kyle was dead. So too, the Independent movement that first elected him.

At a memorial service in the U.S. Senate the next spring, the man who succeeded him noted Kyle's accomplishment of enshrining Labor Day on the nation's calendar.

"For all time will this day be recognized and observed by the laborer and his friends," said U.S. Sen. Alfred Kittredge.

"Labor never had a better friend than Senator Kyle, and no one better understood its needs or

extended a more sympathetic and helping hand," Kittredge continued.

What made James Henderson Kyle such an improbable winner of a U.S. Senate seat?

Kyle was the minister at Plymouth Congregational Church in Aberdeen and finance officer for Yankton College in 1890 when, at a Fourth of July gathering at Aberdeen, he was asked for a speech.

That led the Independents – a true third party at that time and second only to Republicans in political strength in many parts of South Dakota – to nominate Kyle for election to the state Senate.

He won a desk in the Legislature and headed to Pierre for the January start of the 1891 legislative session.

In those days the state's senators and

CAPITOL NOTEBOOK



BOB MERCER

representatives in the Legislature decided who got South Dakota's two seats in the U.S. Senate.

After South Dakota achieved statehood in 1889, the Legislature selected the original pair: A temporary two-year term for

Gideon Moody of Deadwood and a full six-year term for Richard Pettigrew of Sioux Falls. Both were Republicans.

Legislators at the 1891 session, with Kyle among them, needed to choose someone for a full six-year term for the seat Moody held.

Republicans had one more state senator than Democrats and Independents combined. But in the state House, Democrats and Independents had one more seat than did Republicans.

Republicans initially offered Moody again. He couldn't break through.

The three sides deadlocked for a month, voting six days a week

each noon and conducting two ballots most days.

After 27 days and 40 ballots, and many other candidacies that faltered, the decisive tally on Feb. 16 gave Kyle 74 votes, while the Republican replacement candidate, Thomas Sterling, drew 56.

Kyle and Sterling didn't emerge as popular candidates until late.

Kyle won after a shift of at least 10 votes from Democratic candidate Bartlett Tripp over the weekend.

Kyle then aligned with the Democratic caucus in the U.S. Senate in his first term.

Kyle ran for re-election in 1897, again as an Independent. Republican legislators gave him the second term. He then aligned with the Republican caucus in the U.S. Senate.

Kyle died on July 1, 1901, in Aberdeen. He was 47. Friends claimed he was more of a Republican.

Labor Day seems proof of his real allegiance.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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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 alan.dale@plaintalk.net