

# 'Points' should be counted

Back when I was much younger (and quite a bit more foolish) I had a raging case of "Janklowitis."

It isn't some strange disease, although if I could have simply received a vaccination to make me immune to this malady, I would have been first in line at the clinic.

Janklowitis is the term I use for my propensity, years ago, to speed once I got behind the wheel. I was living in a small town at the time, and I always had a good excuse to go beyond the speed limit once I hit the wide-open roads of eastern South Dakota.

I had deadlines to meet, places to go, people to see, copy to drop off at my production office, a photo to take.

On free weekends, there was a young lady living in Madison I liked to visit (she would eventually become my wife, even though while we were dating the Janklowitis was at a fever pitch).

I was no brilliant evader of law enforcement. I had no "fuzz buster" in my car, no CB radio. Another sign of my rather dumb attitudes regarding highway safety: the small community I was living in at the time was the home base of a SD Highway Patrol trooper. It wasn't enough to stop me.

I think he eventually knew to keep his eyes open for the tiny blur of my subcompact car going down the state and county highways in his jurisdiction

He stopped me. Quite a few times. And wrote a lot of speeding tickets. And I begrudgingly paid each one.

And kept on speeding. I didn't really think of it much. Never did a mental exercise on how I was able to keep on driving, and keep on speeding, even after receiving several tickets in the span of only one year.

I guess I figured that paying the fine for each ticket was simply good enough to keep me in good standing.

What I've never realized is that you can be a repeat offender in exceeding the speed limit in South Dakota and it doesn't cost you any "points."

The "point system" is something most drivers are well aware of. In South Dakota, you can commit such traffic offenses as reckless driving or running red lights and be assessed points.

Get too many points, and you can lose your license. But

speeding is explicitly excluded from the points system. The exclusion occurred sometime in the 1980s, perhaps before I began terrorizing local highways with my lead foot.

Rep. Steve Hickey, R-Sioux Falls, said last week that he will likely try once again to add speeding to the list of offenses that assess drivers points on their licenses.



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Under his proposal, speeders would receive between one and three points for each offense. Before you get all worked up please consider this: It takes 15 points in 12 months or 22 points in 24 months before a license is suspended.

It could be argued that those penalties are rather weak. But last year, the South Dakota House rejected a similar bill.

Back in the 1980s, when speeding was excluded from the point system in South Dakota, the speed limit on just about every highway, including the interstate roadways, was 55 miles per hour.

Shortly after the December 1995 repeal of the 65/55 mph National Maximum Speed Law, South Dakota raised its general rural speed limits to 75 mph on interstate highways and 65 mph on other roads along with 70 on a few four-lane highways, such as Highway 50 that runs right past Vermillion.

It means that people who speed in South Dakota these days likely may be traveling faster than I was back in the day when I would occasionally push my car to 70 mph on a highway with a 55 mph limit, only to find flashing red lights in my rear-view mirror.

I don't have any statistics available to determine whether speeding is a growing problem in our state. I would hope that the higher speed limits we've enjoyed for some time would cut down South Dakotans' propensity to speed.

Those who do choose to exceed posted limits, especially on interstate highways, can easily reach very dangerous speeds.

That's why we believe Hickey's proposal has merit.

WHAT DO YOU CALL A DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT WHO MIGHT LOSE HIS LIFE IN THE LINE OF DUTY?



TEACHER...

2012  
CAGLE CARTOONS

# End times? Not so fast

"Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering 'it will be happier'..." — British poet Alfred Tennyson, 1809 - 1892

Shrouded in promise and mystery, the New Year struts ahead of you, as a flirt with a lilted stride, gleaming eyes and all. Not quite yet through, December has rounded the bend; yet, you are ready for the whole month to be over.

Dangling with a look of delight, January boldly grins. Winking right out in the open for all to see, she cranks open her frozen canopy of hope, taunting — this year will be better.

Even though your legs are tired, your muscles are cramping, your head is splitting and your heart won't stop aching, you break into a sprint and run ahead. Elbows bent, arms swinging, reaching hard, you chase tomorrow as though airborne.

Although, in all honesty, it's not January you're after. Not really. It's just that you have to make it through January to reach February and then — on to March.

Tapping your foot impatiently, you check off each day as it nears and then departs, counting down to when spring's return, like a proud and grand parade high-stepping it down Main Street: tubas and trombones blaring, snare and bass drums pounding, flutes and piccolos whistling, trumpets and clarinets tooting.

The month of March will storm in from the South, commanding the heavens to flash and rumble. Ah, and then April, when earth finally sweats off her frosty crust and newness bolsters upward, seeking life.

Past cheerless winter, once muted birdbaths splash-splash with friendly fowl,

## MY STORY YOUR STORY



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lighting to quench and cleanse. Beyond this year's end, you reminisce, summery moments, like a tender brief romance long ago, swelling in your bosom, unutterably calling, giving you courage to stare down the New Year with quiet resolve...

...Sweet aroma of gentle sultry breezes ushering through the screen door.

...Late evenings on the front porch watching time go by.

...Long moonlit walks down shadowy lanes.

...Dew kissed mornings with songbird choruses heralding daybreak.

...Lazy Sunday afternoons napping in the hammock.

...Bare skinned toes dangling at water's edge.

With springtime newly minted in your breast pocket and planting season, stalwart and trustworthy, at your side, you traverse onward, taking the lead from longer, brighter days ahead.

When warmth does retrace its path, you surely will embark, light-footed, your head held high, sleeves rolled up, following the sun as it stretches long life-giving rays far into the evening.

Your spirit hollers, "Be gone, old dried out yesteryear. Shoo! Fly away from here. And, take your tattered edges and scuffed heels with you!"

Peering out into a wintry mix, you

whisper, "Hasten, new leaf." Growing louder, you coax, "Hurry, return fresh and supple vegetation." Now shouting with gladiatorial might, "Do not dally. Arrive today!"

Giggling and half-drunk on what could be, you toast and silently wish to do better and to be happier. See? You truly are a Genesis story, rebirthing, renewing while you embrace tomorrow.

Therefore, proceed, will you, please? With hope and prayer, you can and will out slug any demon that may beset you.

Yes, most definitely there is space for you — and plenty of it for all of your grand plans in the New Year. See there, a spot is reserved with your name on it, between the sanctuary entrance of your existence and the altar of your gloriously blessed future.

Among chanting cicadas and leaping frogs, the bells toll for you to carry on.

Don't delay.  
Be resolute.  
Persist.  
Persevere.  
Stay the course.  
Don't give up.

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A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Bosco Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her writing has won first-place in competitions of the National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women. In the 2009, 2010 and 2011 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contests, her columns have earned eight first-place awards. To contact Paula, email [boscodamon.paula@gmail.com](mailto:boscodamon.paula@gmail.com) and follow her blog at [my-story-your-story.blogspot.com](http://my-story-your-story.blogspot.com) and find her on Facebook.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Please buckle up

I read the front-page article headlined, "Icy interstate factor in 3 fatalities Tuesday." I do not know why the article was not headlined, "Not wearing seatbelts factor in 3 fatalities Tuesday." Last Tuesday the roads were icy. There were many skids, fender-benders and cars in ditches. This will always happen, particularly in the winter. It may happen to you tomorrow, and it may happen to me.

The difference is, those of us wearing seatbelts are far more likely to survive the event than those of us who do not wear our seatbelts. There is a reason that they are mandatory by law, and this tragic spate of fatalities should serve as a reminder to all of us. Please, please, wear your seatbelt every time you get in the car, not matter the distance you plan to drive.

Kevin O'Kelley  
Vermillion

## SOUTH DAKOTA EDITORIAL ROUNDUP

The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal: Dec. 18, 2012

### Reality TV takes a look at state

While we won't admit to being fans of what's called "reality TV," we are familiar with the genre and can see the appeal to viewers and TV producers.

Viewers get to see real people doing real things and talking about real problems — that's why it's called reality TV.

For producers, it's cheap. No actors, no writers and no sets. If there's an audience, advertisers will buy ads, and the show makes money.

That's entertainment. Now a Los Angeles television producer and casting director hopes to develop a reality-based TV series called "Men of South Dakota." Charisse Simonian is looking for a few good men, or at least a few "manly" men, from South Dakota who work

outdoors at difficult or dangerous jobs.

No one wants to watch someone sitting at desk all day, she said. Simonian's production company is looking for anyone who is a "survivalist, ranger, sheriff, cowboy, rancher, hunter or tracker" or who works at any other outdoor-related job. Not all of those are jobs, but we get her point that someone who is not a desk-jockey makes for more interesting television.

"The Dakotas are hot now. It's kind of like the last great frontier of television that no one has really tackled yet," Simonian told the Journal.

Simonian said she's looking to cast her show mostly with men from western South Dakota because West River landscapes are "going to look better."

We've said the same thing about West River for years.

If Simonian can interest a network in her concept, the

show would likely cast four men and be shot as a documentary, following them around in their jobs and lives. "A day-in-the-life kind of situation," she said.

Other states such as Alaska and Texas have had their star turns. Now it could be South Dakota and its people with its own TV show.

We're ready for our close-up.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell: Dec. 19, 2012

### Mo. River history is repeating

Funny how history repeats itself, and especially on the Missouri River.

Just a few years ago, Oahe Dam, near Pierre, was so low that once-useful boat ramps were hundreds of yards from the nearest water.

Then came 2011, when record flooding nearly sent water over the top of Oahe's huge wall.

And now, heading into 2013, we're back where we

were — low water levels due to drought conditions.

The Daily Republic recently published a report that outlined how some governors and members of Congress are pleading with President Obama to issue an emergency declaration that would force the Corps of Engineers to send Missouri River through the dams to aid the Mississippi River shipping industry.

Federal law does not mandate that the Missouri be managed for the benefit of the Mississippi, so for now, there's not much that can be done. That is, unless Obama buckles to the pressure of those who represent downstream business.

After the terrible floods of 2011, it seems odd to say this: The water levels of the Oahe Reservoir are too precious to be wasted on downstream interests.

Fishing use of the Oahe Reservoir corresponds to

water levels. According to the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks, anglers visit the river about 200,000 to 250,000 times during normal and higher-water years, but only about 100,000 to 150,000 times during low-water years.

When the water level is low, pushing water downstream could be catastrophic to upstream fishing and recreation industries that rely upon the Missouri. It also could mean more costs to the state, which would once again have to make renovations to infrastructure along the river so people can access it while its level dips ever lower.

South Dakota's tourism and fishing industry is so vital to our economy. We do not pretend to know the economic importance of Mississippi River shipping, but we do know that its survival should not come at South Dakotans' expense.

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