

VIEWPOINTS

The Best Way...to be completely irked

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

Quite simply, the whole issue with the Vermillion Assisted Living situation is a total disaster. That might be putting it mildly. For one, according to everyone I have spoken to, the building, located at 809 N. Norbeck Street, needs to be put out of its misery. It's old, it's worn, and for all intents and purposes, it hasn't been truly taken care of for a long, long time. It sure doesn't appear that Ward Enterprises had any real immediate need to give the residents a place of comfort. Sure anyone can make a home for themselves out of a bed of sticks, but that doesn't mean that people need to live on them just because they are willing to do so. In some of these residents' cases it appears that even living in a run-down facility such as this beat the alternative.

That also didn't give Ward Enterprises license to take liberty with knowing this. Did they actually go out and purposely not provide a better housing situation? That we don't know and most likely that was not the case. But does incurring nearly a million dollars in debt show negligence? You betcha.

So we have heard the story for a few weeks now about how 11 residents were suddenly finding themselves displaced as Bare Assets LLC, the company that took over the mess the Ward left behind realized that the job of rebuilding Vermillion Assisted Living was just too cumbersome.

I would have to agree. According to the facility's staff and some residents, Bare Assets LLC and its main representative of the facility, Brad Halver, did make the attempt to get them out of debt.

Yet, as we all learn in our own lives, if we have a debt that is yay big and you only have so much money, you may cut into that debt, but the debt does not go away. To wit, if you don't have the additional funding to take care of the rest of the problem, that problem can become even bigger.

That's what it sounds like when talking to Halver: They did their best, but their best couldn't compete with the tremendous hole they inherited.

So, yes, Bare Assets LLC has every right to close down the facility. Absolutely, do.

They also have the right to give the residents one month's notice, which Halver said he believed his on-site administrator Kate Lynn Lee did.

That's where things get sticky. According to staff and residents no such letter arrived on the morning of Dec. 1. I believe them. Some have insinuated that the residents may have gotten it wrong or as Lee has been quoted as saying: maybe they all got mysteriously taken off all the residents' beds.

Yeah, probably not. So how come a staff of about four or five people and 11 residents would just up and lie? I met some of these residents and they came off as genuine, emotional, and troubled by all this. The whole group showed a large amount of courtesy and appreciation for my arrival there.

So is Bare Assets going to tell me that over a dozen people lied?

After my one run in with Lee, when she picked up a phone at the facility not knowing who would be on the other end, she immediately got defensive, and yes, wasn't the easiest person to converse with.

Halver on the other hand, despite his misgivings with how a lot of the media has represented him and his company and the handling of this situation, was very cooperative in two conversations that combined, took 90 minutes of our time.

He didn't come off as cute and cuddly, but he did come off as genuine, and believable.

My question is: If he believed Lee took care of business and the residents and staff swore she didn't, then who is misleading who here?

Is Halver's name being thrown under the bus when he indeed truly felt all things were handled correctly? Is Lee being caught in the middle because a mob of residents and staff decided to launch a full scale, class-action lie? What sounds more believable?

I believe it when I hear Lee was taping eviction notices on the doors of residents in the hours of 1-7 a.m. It also came at a time where the media scrutiny was at its apex.

Something doesn't smell right here, but there are some factors that need to also be understood.

Life can stink sometimes and for some of these residents, being made to move and find a new home in such quick time is a challenging and frustrating situation. But it happens.

Some of them will have to make adjustments to their requirements and make do for now. If not, they could find somewhere else to live and take the chance it may not be as accommodating as a new assisted living facility. They can also choose to go homeless if they are too stubborn about 'what they need.'

This is a harsh reality. Bare Assets has borne the brunt of bad business dealings perpetuated by Ward Enterprises, but I believe they have done the best they could, unfortunately failed and realized it's time to go.

I get that. People and staff are mad that they are being displaced during the holidays. But, when is this type of situation ever good? It's either too cold, too hot, too Christmas, too Easter, etc.

It's bad no matter what. But one thing is certain, someone from Bare Assets dropped the ball in the lines of communication and failed to deliver the message properly and with some type of empathy.

Too many have said the same thing for there not to be truth to this.

So when the dust settles and everyone is set up in a new home, some of the residents may need to take inventory on what really matters to them if indeed this happens - hopefully not - again to them.

And some who are working in this field, and working with these particular people, may need to look at how they handle this type of job. And displace themselves...



The greatest gift is health

BY Paula Bosco Damon
National Award-Winning Writer

Everything about adjusting to life after hip replacement surgery seems difficult.

What was once familiar...now gone.

The things I used to do with ease and speed are painstakingly slow. Standing, sitting, rolling over in bed, getting dressed and showering take enormous effort.

You may be wondering. I am learning how to walk all over again.

Before babies begin to navigate their world on their feet, they first use their hands and arms to push up from the floor, onto their knees and eventually to a standing position.

They then learn how to move their feet while holding onto to a chair, a couch or a table.

Much to my surprise, figuring out how to walk with a new hip is very much the same. It requires the use of my hands and arms leaning into and pushing a walker in front of me.

As I relearn which foot to lead with and when to advance the walker, I become overwhelmed by this sudden loss of being able to move whenever, wherever.

Once again, I find myself in the cross-hairs of growing old, or as I like to call it a crash course in Aging 101.

MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON
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As difficult as my post-op life has been, there are silver linings. Like relying on my husband to put on and take off my shoes.

As he completes this tedious task on his knees, while I extend my foot, it's the closest I've come to feeling like Cinderella - a humbling experience mingled with a sense of honor and gratitude for his efforts.

Since my mobility is still somewhat limited, I clumsily drop things on the floor, requiring someone to retrieve them. I also get a break on doing laundry. That's kind of nice. And, he's been washing the dishes and putting them away.

The doctor says that's good for him.

Using a walker in public has taught me that humans can fly on their own volition.

Like the two young men who saw me approaching the double-doors of a restaurant and took flight with their feet urgently lifting from the floor,

their arms reaching long and hard to quickly open them.

This simple act of kindness choked me up.

Others go out of their way to act like they don't notice. While stealing glances at my walker or cane or noticing my slow methodical gate - they quickly look away, avoiding eye contact all together.

I don't mind how family and friends are insisting on handling matters for me, like preparing meals, running errands and deciding if I need bedrails, since I broke my hip falling out of bed.

In the early days of my recovery, my loved ones, who rallied their assistance around me in a tag-team of support, would refer to me indiscreetly in second person singular as "her" or "she."

It was an odd and jolting experience to be in the room with everything happening around me as if I were not actually there.

Beset with gratitude over the generosity and caring during my convalescing, I'm still not sure what to make of it.

While I appreciate their efforts, I'd gladly welcome back my old rickety hip any day, along with all those chores.

Fearing death is dangerous

By Richard P. Holm MD

What happens after we die? Of course, that is the great mystery about which every religion has wrestled since the dawn of time.

This short essay will not have the answer either ... but as a physician who has experienced a lifetime caring for people, I have some observations about fearing death.

Although it must be a survival advantage taking precautions to avoid danger and an early death, I have watched how the fear of death can sometimes bring it on. For example one woman observed a relative with cancer suffer a miserable

death. Because of her fear of a similar fate, the woman avoided appropriate and effective treatment for her own breast cancer, resulting in a premature death.

I have also watched how the fear of death can sometimes greatly reduce the joy of life during the time that they had left. For example one man with the diagnosis of cancer sank into a black hole of funk and sadness so deep, he avoided visits from his family who loved him, and eventually slipped away still immersed in fear and regret.

Whether young or old, and especially during this concentrated time at the

end of life, I have seen how the fear of death is not only dangerous but also reduces the quality of life in the end. So why does this happen?

Is this because humans do better embracing a hopeful spirit? I know we like a happy ending and not a sad one. Of course a hopeful message about death seems to make it easier to help people and their families who are facing death, but does being hopeful mean we have to pretend it is not going to happen?

I have watched folks facing death with courage and hope, by fixing unresolved issues and regrets, expressing and

embracing their love for friends and family, savoring the moments of time they do have left, enjoying a sense of humor, and being thankful for the blessings they do have. Then, when death finally happens, they greet it with ease.

If you or someone you love is facing death, I recommend the book Final Gifts by Hospice nurses Callanan and Kelley. Their words give great comfort about the dying process.

Although what happens after we die is beyond understanding, the dangers of fearing death should be a lesson to us all, whether or not we know our own timetable. By facing death, we are better prepared for life.

CHAMBER CHAT

CHAMBER BUSINESS
*The VCDC will be closed Wed. & Thurs., Dec. 24 & 25 for the Christmas Holiday. On behalf of the VCDC staff, we wish you a Merry Christmas!

*The VCDC Special Events Committee would like to thank everyone who participated, sponsored, and volunteered their time to make Vermillion's Parade of Lights, Stockings for Soldiers, Lunch with Santa, and Pictures with Santa a huge success! Congratulations to the Parade of Lights winners:

- 1st Place - Maloney Real Estate and J & M Real Estate Solutions
- 2nd Place - WNAX and Passing with Flying Colors
- 3rd Place - Miss SD USA and Miss SD Teen USA - Future Productions, LLC

THIS WEEK'S HAPPENINGS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- *Stop in and browse the exquisite mosaics by Nancy Losacker, a Vermillion-based artist. Her art is on exhibit at Cafe Brule, Dec. through Jan. Pieces can be purchased through DavidArtCompany online at this email address: michele.mechling4dac@gmail.com. For sales and service by phone contact Michele Mechling at 605 670-2945.
- *RING BELLS TO HELP OUR LOCAL EMERGENCY FUND!!! We are excited to give you the

opportunity to add to the Christmas spirit and raise important dollars for the Vermillion Emergency Fund. We need one or two ringers (or a whole family!!) at each of our stations around Vermillion (Wal-Mart, Hy-Vee and Ace) on weekends and some evenings. Every moment of bell-ringing translates into the possibility of real help for one of your neighbors. You can sign-up to ring at our UCC website (www.uccvermillion.org) or by calling the church office 624-3120.

*The December meeting of the Alzheimer's and Memory Loss Caregiver Support Group has been cancelled. The next meeting will be Jan. 26, 2015.

*Veteran Holiday Relief Drive Benefiting homeless and at-risk Veterans and Military Families: Please join the Department of South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary and Autumn Simunek, Miss Oahe and partners in providing a comfortable Holiday Season to our Veterans and military families in need throughout SD. Contribute an American Legion Auxiliary Buddy Basket filled with household items, a single household or hygiene item, winter apparel, shopping gift cards, or monetary donation through January 10, 2015. Monetary Donations can be mailed to ATTN: VETS RELIEF DRIVE: American Legion Auxiliary Unit #1 c/o Marie Anne Ben 16 East Bloomingdale Street Vermillion, SD 57069-3071 For additional locations/information: Email Autumn.Simunek@gmail.com.

Drop-Off Locations: The Broadcaster/Plain Talk 201 W Cherry Street or Main Street Center 320 West Main Street

Buddy Basket(s) Home-warming Welcome Recipe: Assemble a Laundry Basket/Waste Basket filled with: Paper Towels, Bathroom Tissue, Window Cleaner, Scrubbing Cleanser, Rubbing Gloves, Cleaning Sponges, Dust Pan w/Hand Brwels, Light Bulbs, Shower Curtains w/rings, Bath Towels, Laundry Detergent, Eating Utensils, Dishes, Dish Soap, Dish Towel Set, Frosted with clear wrap/bow and greeting tag/card.

Single Items(s) of Need or Substitute Items Welcome: Bed Sheets (all sizes), Sleeping Bags, Alarm Clocks, Household Kitchen Items, Hygiene Products (shampoo, deodorant, shaving cream, etc.); Buddy Basket Items, Shopping Gift Cards, Winter Coats, Gloves, and Hats (all sizes) or Monetary Donations to build Buddy Baskets or provide assistance to South Dakotas Veteran Outreach Centers or South Dakota Operation: Military Kids.

*Vermillion Area Community Foundation (VACF) updated grant application information: Beginning this year, there are only two grant periods: The second Thursday in April and the second Thursday in October. Grant guidelines can be found at: <http://vermillion.sdcommunityfoundation.org> or applications can be picked up at the VCDC, 116 Market Street.

Vermillion
PLAIN TALK

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