

The Best Way...to Enjoy the Holidays

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

So many people, so many backgrounds, so many faiths, so many lifestyles. This is the month where so many spend time thanking those that mean so much to them while embracing their own individual faiths and religions.

It's a great time for being good and holy. In this case, I would rather use the time to just be grateful.

It is a time of year that comes at such a perfect break in the action for myself, even if the work itself never stops.

So in order to be holy I thought I would bring my thanks and praise to the people who walk among me on a daily basis. From people in the City of Vermillion to the people who work around me all week to help make The Plain Talk the number one news source for this place anywhere.

It's been a collective effort of people who have so many different lives and expectations.

I wanted to recognize that.

My thoughts for the people of Vermillion...

Five months in and you are still surprising me every day. You have been very good to myself and our newspaper and even when it's not business related, I just continually run into kind people who are fun to talk to and I learn a lot about this area quite quickly.

I hope that this holiday season and 2015 bring you less lawsuits, more results that improve the city of Vermillion and a warmer December!

My thoughts for the students of Vermillion...

Everywhere you go there are always good kids that you appreciate for being who they are.

I have to say Vermillion is no different and there are a lot of good high school kids, junior high students, and elementary pupils that have been nothing but respectful.

I appreciate how cool they have been and how easy it is to talk to them and get help where need be.

I hope that this holiday season and 2015 brings you faster cell phone wire services, text messaging where you can think and it types your words for you, and Instagram pages that can transmit all over the world so you can be planetary famous.

My thoughts for the people of USD...

From President James Abbott to athletic director David Herbst to the sports personnel for the Coyotes and more, kudos for your fine work with The Plain Talk.

The Alumni Association was great in helping us put together our Heritage edition dedicated to Dakota Days. The sports information director and his staff have done a great job helping us make sure we can do the best job covering Coyote sports.

And Joe Glenn? Come on, man...top notch fella.

I hope that this holiday season and 2015 brings you all NCAA Tournament bids after winning every Summit League title available and top spots on ESPN so your draft eligible players make serious coin in professional leagues all over the world or at worst get great jobs with greater diplomas from USD.

My thoughts for the people behind The Plain Talk

It really does choke me up to see how far we have come in such little time.

Consider that not one person on the staff, be it full time or just part time, has worked in this town for over six months doing what we do.

Not one. Yet, I have seen the great growth of some incredible new writers. Name many writers better than Sarah Wetzel or Katie Clausen who have improved so much with just hard work, good ears, and better talent. How about Thomas Hatzenbuehler's ridiculous photography that competes with some of the best? We have Mark Upward a retired teacher who wanted to dabble and has become a solid contributor. Anne La Brake has come on strong and we have some newer writers on board we are excited to see.

Don't forget some of those Teen Gazette writers who we hope stay a part of this family long after they graduate from their respective high schools.

Then we have the wonderful help from the fine professionals in Yankton and the Press & Dakotan. From Kelly Hertz's great leadership to the dynamic sports duo of James Cimburek and Jeremy Hoeck. How about the ladies behind the scene including Micki, Melissa, Tera, and Shauna?

Beth is the woman behind the keys of our internet successes and we also have publisher Gary Wood and his influence that carries over.

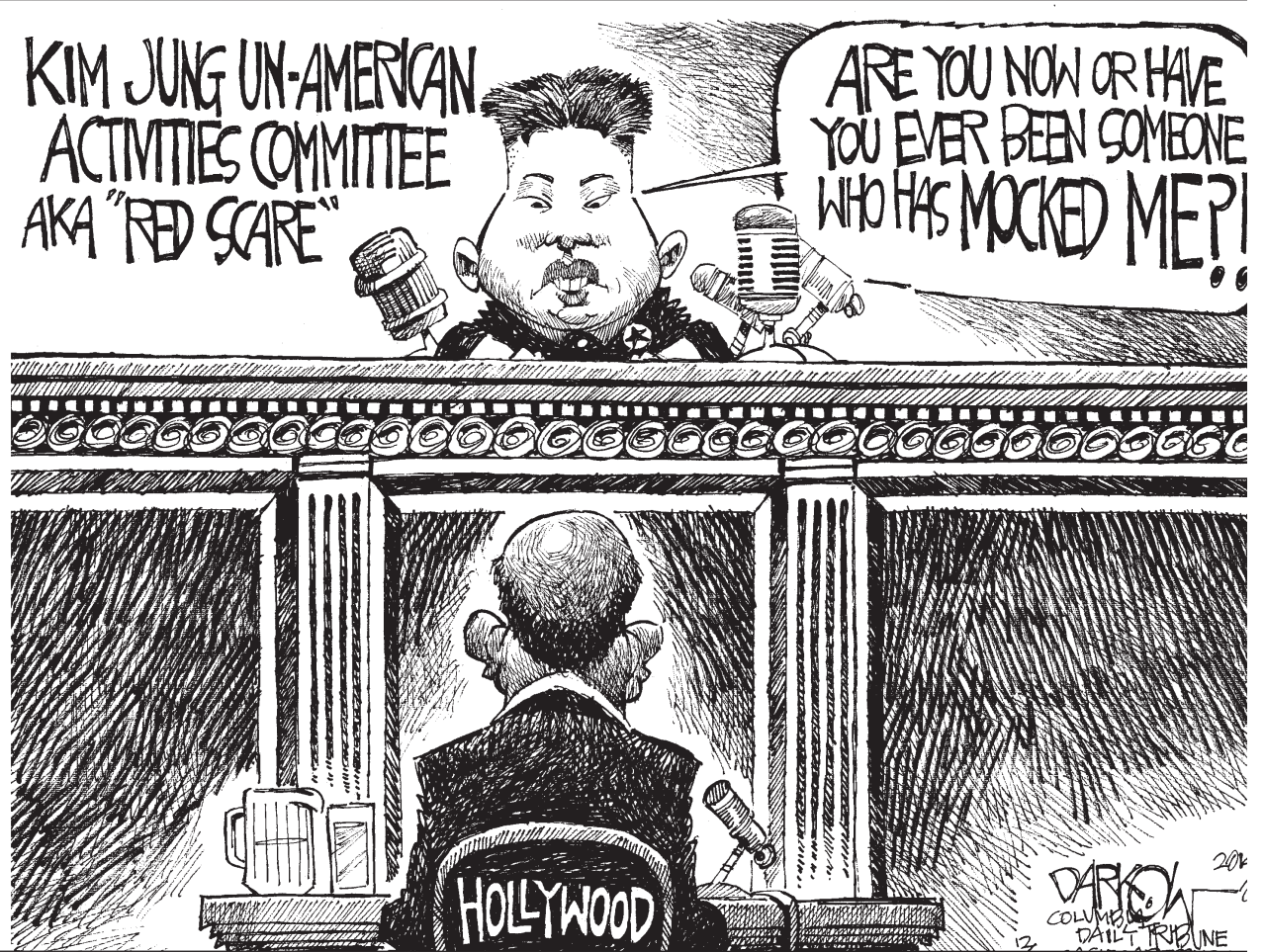
Last but not least, there is my little team over here in Vermillion. Thanks to Penny, our backbone, Angela, our incredibly talented woman behind so many of our graphics, to Jackie who outworks everyone.

You all rock.

I hope this holiday season and 2015 just brings you all more success and that it parlays into us remaining number one in what we do in the town and the region and then let's add to that:

Let's be number one at what we do... anywhere.

Works for me!
Happy Holidays and Greater New Year, to you all!



The song for my neighbor

BY Paula Bosco Damon
National Award-Winning Writer

When stepping outside to place some cards in the mailbox, I waved to the driver of a side-dump loader, as his big rig rounded the corner.

Shouldering his arms to crank hard on the steering wheel, he raised one hand, nodded and returned my greeting.

My eyes followed him two doors down on the other side of the street, where I could see, much to my surprise, house number 622 was totally gone.

Earlier, I had heard loud and heavy rumbling, rocking and rolling along with sounds of crashing, crunching and cracking, but the barrier of our tall blue spruces prevented me from seeing what was going on.

I didn't pay too much attention, figuring it probably was the ruckus of our next door neighbor's new house construction, and went on with my business.

Neighbors come and go. There are nice neighbors, and we've had plenty of those.

There are polite neighbors who salute when passing, and there are distant ones whose names we may never know.

Every once and awhile, you come

MY STORY YOUR STORY



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across the type of neighbor you wish would move away and become someone else's neighbor. And then there are great neighbors. The kind you want to live forever. The caliber of people who adopt you as their own. They look after you. Brood over you. Cheer you on. Think of you. Bake for you. They even harvest, can and freeze for you. This kind of neighbor – the great ones – they take time to visit. Chat about the weather. Ask about the kids. And tell you how much they love you. They're hard to come by these days. People are so busy hauling kids and groceries they hardly have time to get dinner on, let alone spend a moment visiting with the people next door or across the street. Back when Lloyd and Nancy lived at 622, their little bungalow

flourished with day lilies and trumpet vines and an outpouring of neighborliness.

There wasn't a Christmas or Easter that went by when they didn't leave a basket of goodies at our door.

When August rolled around, we were well stocked with fresh sweet corn, tomatoes and cucumbers from their garden.

Lloyd was a Country-Western crooner, who often would play and sing a tune when we'd stop by.

So much has changed since they've been gone.

Hung up in repossession since they passed, the Thompson's once well-lit house has sat abandoned for several years.

Chinese elms literally took over the place, growing beyond the roofline in some spots, creeping around the porch and covering the siding.

Someone threw rocks through the windows and the once always latched front door was swung open for stray animals to freely come and go as they pleased.

Lloyd and Nancy loved animals as much as they loved people, so they might not have minded that.

Even in its compromised state, an eyesore to most, their house did provide some solace as a reminder of what neighborly love is.

A blueprint for some repairs

By Richard P. Holm MD

We don't always appreciate the wonderful healing capacity of our bones.

I was on call a few years ago and the ambulance brought in a young college-age gentleman who had fallen three stories off a roof and onto the cement below. Apparently he landed first on his feet and fell forward. As he landed, like a row of falling dominoes, broke parts of his feet, legs, knees, hands, wrists, elbows, jaw and nose. The orthopedist who came in to help counted

something like 26 fractures and the ENT specialist estimated the patient was going about 35 miles per hour when he hit the concrete.

We ended up sending the young man to the trauma center in Sioux Falls, but what was amazing was how his brain and vital organs had been protected.

He had not lost consciousness, remained perfectly awake, and his heart, lungs and gut were just fine.

But the best news came with how eventually, after a lot of rehabilitation, his

bones repaired themselves. A year later he walked into my office without a limp and shook my hand firmly to thank me for helping him that fateful night.

Most people have the concept that our bones and joints are continuously wearing out and deteriorating over time. It's common to think that if we simply live long enough, we will end up as a slumped over pile of soft bones and frozen joints. This doesn't have to be.

Instead, our bodies are constantly remodeling and repairing bones and joints; taking apart, breaking

down and then rebuilding anew.

Small injuries are always happening along the way, and maybe it happens more so as we get older, but there is a continuous remodel-and-repair process always going on throughout your whole life.

The key point to remember is that the blue print for the remodel comes from the daily motion and activity we ask our bodies to perform. Rehab is always going on, especially as we get older.

We shouldn't have to fall three stories to realize the value of movement.

CHAMBER CHAT

CHAMBER BUSINESS

*The VCDC will be closed Wed., Thurs., & Fri., Dec. 24-26 for the Christmas Holiday. On behalf of the VCDC staff, we wish you a Merry Christmas!

TUESDAY, JAN. 6

*The 32nd Annual Dakota Farm Show is Jan. 6, 7 and 8 at the DakotaDome. Hours will be from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Tues. and Wed. and from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on Thurs. As always, the admission and parking is free. Hundreds of vendors will be there along with approximately 25,000 visitors. The VCDC will have a booth with information about the Vermillion area including attractions, eateries, Vermillion Visitor Guide and more. Chamber Members – If you would like your brochure, flyer, menu, etc. included in the VCDC booth, please give us a call at 624-5571 or drop it off (approx. 300) at the VCDC office at 116 Market Street by Fri., Jan. 2.

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 DavidArt-Company online at this email address: michelle.meichling4dac@gmail.com. For sales and service by phone contact Michele Meichling at 605 670-2945.

*The December meeting of the Alzheimers and Memory Loss Caregiver Support Group has been cancelled. The next meeting will be January 26th, 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, Rubber Gloves, Cleaning Sponges, Dust Pan w/Hand Brush, 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.

SATURDAY, DEC. 27

*Overeaters Anonymous: Sat. Dec. 27 @ 9:00 am. Location: Newman Center-USD Campus, 320 E. Cherry, across from the MUC at the corner of Rose & Cherry St. (West Door-straight through double glass doors on left & first door on left, North Door-down hall to left & first door on left). Description: Overeaters Anonymous is a 12 step program for people with eating disorders & struggles.

NEXT WEEKS HAPPENINGS:

SUNDAY, DEC. 28

*USD Mens Basketball vs UW-Milwaukee, Sun., Dec. 28 at DakotaDome @ 2:00 pm

MONDAY, DEC. 29

*Vermillion Parks & Rec Dept. host Holiday Fun & Games at the Armory during the day Mon. through Wed., Dec. 29-31 for kids to come play basketball or soccer unless another group has reserved the building. For more information, call 605-677-7064.

*Wrestling: Sioux Falls Lincoln, @ 11:00 am (T)

*Boys Basketball: Parkston Classic, Mon., Dec. 29 @ 12:00 pm (T)

*Al-anon meeting at St. Pauls Episcopal Church, Mon., Dec. 29 @ 7:30 pm. For more information, call 624-9764.