



**David Lias**  
*Between The Lines*

## A lifetime of significant weather

It's times like these, after encountering a blizzard of near-epic proportions, as we just experienced over the Christmas holiday, that you expect to hear some old-timers at the local cafe sniff and say, "Yeah, it almost reminded me of the storm back in nineteen-aught-three. Now THAT was a blizzard that these young whipper-snappers wouldn't know how to deal with..."

Guess what? When it comes to significant weather happenings in South Dakota, I suddenly fit the definition of old-timer. Because, if I really wanted to, I also could sit over coffee and regale some helpless university student about all of the storms I remember.

It's not exactly a pleasant experience to suddenly be made aware that you have been around long enough to experience most of the major weather happenings in the state since people began keeping record of storm totals and intensities.

As my daughters would say, "Geez, you're getting old."

See if you remember these significant bouts South Dakota has experienced with Mother Nature over the years, according to the National Weather Service:

The blizzard of Jan. 10-11, 1975, was widely considered to be the worst blizzard of the century in this area. There was only seven inches of snow measured at Sioux Falls, but wind gusts were up to 70 mph, wind chills were down to 70 below zero, and visibilities were below a quarter mile at the airport for 24 straight hours. There were eight deaths in South Dakota during the storm, but only two can be attributed directly to the storm. Two college students from Sioux Falls died from exposure when their car stalled three miles east of Sioux Falls. A 2000 foot high broadcast tower east of Sioux Falls collapsed due to the storm. Livestock loss was an estimated 10 to 15 thousand head.

Another blizzard of note for areas west of Sioux Falls was the famous April 13-14, 1986 blizzard in much of South Dakota which caused some of the worst livestock losses in history.

The biggest snowstorm in our history was 32.2 inches snowfall from Feb. 16-18, 1962 with 26.0 inches in 24 hours from Feb. 17-18. This storm also contributed to the snowiest month on record with 48.4 inches for February 1962.

The snowiest winter in history was 94.7 inches from 1968-69 with a real whopper snowstorm on Dec. 21-22, 1968 of 17.7 inches getting the (snow)ball rolling. This storm caused 16.6 inches in 24 hours and snowdrifts up to 10 feet in the area. This winter was followed by all-time record high river stages for the Big Sioux River at Sioux Falls in April 1969 all due to the snowmelt.

The earliest heavy snowstorm was the famous Halloween 1991 snowstorm from Oct. 31 to Nov. 1 with a foot of snowfall and blizzard conditions on the Nov. 1. The latest heavy snowstorm was around 11 inches on April 28, 1994. Another snowstorm of note was March 3-4, 1985 which overall was one of the most widespread heavy snowfalls in South Dakota history. There were widespread two foot plus snowfall amounts from west to east across the state except the far southeast (where Sioux Falls had 11.1 inches of wet snow, sleet, and freezing rain).

Other South Dakota snowstorms/blizzards of note include on March 2-5, 1966 and two storms late in March 1975, and basically the whole winter of 1996-97.

Worst icestorm of the century - Nov. 15-16, 1996 with two to three inches of melted precipitation in the form of freezing rain, sleet, and some snow in the Sioux Falls area.

One of the worst cold waves ever was in December 1983, which ranked as the fourth coldest month ever. There was a record eight days in a row from Dec. 17-24 when the temperature stayed below zero and numerous daily low records were set. Blizzard conditions existed from Dec. 23-24 with wind chills down to 80 below zero at times. The coldest month on record was Feb. 1936 with an average of 0.5 degree and the coldest winter was 1978-79 with an average of 8.0 degrees from December thru February.



The Christmas 2009 blizzard will always be remembered by my daughter, Andrea. She has never witnessed so much snow at once in her rather brief lifetime.



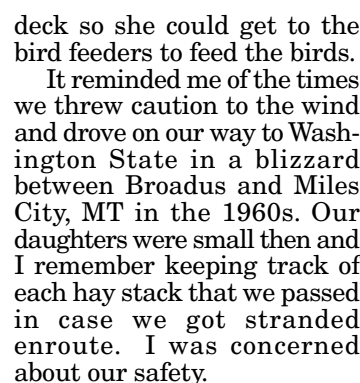
## Bob has thrown caution to the wind during blizzards

In my 87-plus years — mostly spent in South Dakota — I have seen lots of storms that qualify as blizzards. The National Weather Service says a blizzard consists of sustaining winds of 35 miles per hour and blowing snow lasting upwards of three hours.

By all rights the storm at Christmastime in 2009 was a doozy!

Because I am wheelchair-bound, I had to look out the window at the four-foot drifts at our place. I had the greatest urge to take up a shovel and attack the piled up white stuff — but I couldn't without falling on my behind in the drifts.

I had to be content to watch through the window as Phyllis tackled the job of clearing our



**Bob Karolevitz**  
*Writer At Large*

deck so she could get to the bird feeders to feed the birds.

It reminded me of the times we threw caution to the wind and drove on our way to Washington State in a blizzard between Broadus and Miles City, MT in the 1960s. Our daughters were small then and I remember keeping track of each hay stack that we passed in case we got stranded enroute. I was concerned about our safety.

When we got to Miles City we went directly to the Elks Club there knowing they would put us up for the remainder of the night. It was our first real experience in such a storm.

We have been known to venture forth in the worst kinds of weather. Once I had a speech in Marshalltown, IA. It was snowing to beat the band when it was time to leave and the only way we could get

out of our driveway was on the back of a tractor — which was another of our experiences in a blizzard.

Since then, our blizzard troubles have affected our animals more than us. When we were still on the farm, we had to call on the township board to bring in their heavy equipment to clear a path to the hay field so we could get hay for our cattle. On a lesser problem, one of daughter Jill's 4-H Bantam chickens got out in a storm and its leg feathers were frozen in the ice and snow. Fortunately, it survived.

Those were some of our blizzard experiences — but none were as bad as the Christmas storm of 2009.

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## If you tell me yours, I'll tell you mine

I read that 40 percent to 45 percent of American adults make one or more New Year's resolutions each year.

Among the top resolutions are losing weight, increasing exercise and quitting smoking. Next in line are better money management and debt reduction.

Even if people swear on a stack of Bibles that they will stick to their resolutions, their resolve seems to be short-lived.

I did some research on this and according to one study, 75 percent keep their resolutions after the first week, 71 percent after two weeks, 64 percent after one month and only 46 percent of those who make New Year's resolutions are hanging in there after six months. Eventually, only 7 percent of all resolutions are ever kept.

Television advertisers are most certainly tapping into this apparent soft spot in the American psyche. If I see one more weight loss ad or stop smoking commercial, I am liable to start binge eating or, worse yet, light up.

Another problem when making New Year's resolutions is

### MyStory YourStory



**Paula Damon**  
*Columnist*

Am I the only one who thinks making New Year's resolutions and keeping them has lost its luster?

I remember a time when making resolutions on New Year's Eve was a central and important year-end tradition. Do you remember the thought and care we used put into it?

I've made resolutions to be a better person, to spend more time with my husband and to do a better job of dusting my house.

Unfortunately, part of the problem is that too many New Year's resolutions do not involve full disclosure. Most of the time, they are kept in a shroud of secrecy, making it easier to slip up.

Another problem when making New Year's resolutions is

that there is no plan or support system to help us tow the line and to hold us accountable.

Nowadays, I just think about what it is I want to improve, stop or start doing and hope for the best.

Once in awhile, I reveal my resolution and then I'm stuck. I have to either to keep it or spend the whole year making excuses for why I failed to keep it.

What is it about this age-old tradition that has fallen by the wayside in our disposable age, where "short-term" is the end of the week and "long-term" means the end of the month?

I am looking for a few sojourners in that 7 percent who have made and kept New Year's resolutions. Just to know that resolutions aren't empty prom-

ises gives rise to hope and promise.

When it comes right down to it, we probably have more control over our lives than we are willing to admit. Just think how much better the world would be if more people kept their New Year's resolutions.

People would be healthier and happier. They would be less agitated and more peaceful. At least, I'd like to think so anyway.

A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her columns have won first-place in National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women Communications Contests. In the 2009 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contest, Paula's columns took three first-place awards. To contact Paula, email pauladamon@iu.net, follow her blog at www.my-story-your-story.blogspot.com and find her on Facebook.

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### PULPIT REFLECTIONS

By Pastor Robert Grossman  
*Providence Reformed Church*

As we think of the changing of the year from 2009 to 2010, many of us will make resolutions about improving various aspects of our lives. For many, this is just an amusing pastime, but for others it is a very serious matter of truly trying to overcome some bad habit, such as spending more than we make, or solidly establishing a good one, like setting aside some savings every month. Now while New Year's resolutions can be a very good thing, they often demonstrate a basic approach to life that is in itself less than effective because it is reacting to some problem or bad habit we have discovered in our lives. What we are doing is sliding through life's normal events and then reacting by the seat of our pants when something bad (or good) shows up, and ending up wondering why the cure is so often worse than the problem, or turns the good thing into a bad one.

This business of living by reaction has become a way of life not only for individuals, but also for government in our society. Government seems to be consumed by solving "problems," especially social problems, usually by spending our tax money on so-called "solutions," that almost always have unintended consequences that are very bad. Whether we think of single-parent families, or family farms, government has a program to "help," programs that have

produced more, rather than fewer, single-parent families, and resulted in such expensive farming costs that new farmers who did not inherit a farming operation from their parents have become extinct (something we ought to be far more concerned about than polar bears, who in spite of their growing numbers have been lobbied into being called an "endangered species").

The point is that living by reaction is a dead-end road because only someone who knows everything and is perfectly righteous, which none of us is, could pull it off. The Holy Bible has a much better way, a way that our grandparents found to be very effective and successful for the first 175 years of America's existence. This biblical way is founded on having sound principles of work and respect, and of right and wrong. When we live by such principles, we will not only avoid most problems, but we will be able to handle the problems that do arise, not by reaction, but by applying wise principles that we know are right because they come from God. King Solomon did that when confronted with two women with one live baby and one dead baby. His principle was to get the live baby to its true mother, the right thing to do. His wisdom sought out the weakness of human nature, envy, by offering to cut the live baby in half. The wrong mother said "OK," the right one said, "No, give it to her." Problem solved!

Now, the main point of this is that such right principles of life are found today, as

they were by our grandparents, not in religions of violence, or in atheism, but in the Holy Bible. As our parents attended Christian churches, read their Bibles and prayed, they found that David's program in Psalm 1 was the best way to live, personally and publicly. David said, "How happy is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful," but, "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." Real happiness is a byproduct of understanding and following God's laws. It is not found in doing our own thing, something the Bible calls and condemns as "doing what is right in our own eyes."

True happiness is not found in drugs, or adulterous sex, or winning football teams. True happiness is found in a life that knows where it came from, from God, that knows what we are doing here, seeking to live a moral life toward God and our neighbor, and that knows that the answer to sin is God's forgiveness for ourselves, and our forgiveness for those around us. America in the past has produced great people and great leaders, men and women who founded our nation, freed the slaves, and overcame tyranny in World War II, all by living the God-given principles of Psalm 1, a fact that even our history books today avoid mentioning. Our future and our nation's future depend upon choices we will make in 2010.

Vermillion  
**PLAIN TALK**  
Since 1884  
Official County, City and School District Newspaper  
201 W. Cherry, Vermillion, SD 57069  
Publication No. USPS 657-720  
Editor: David Lias  
Published weekly by YANKTON MEDIA, Inc.  
Periodicals postage paid at Vermillion, SD 57069.  
Subscription rates for the Plain Talk by mail are \$27.56 a year in the city of Vermillion. Subscriptions in Clay, Turner, Union and Yankton counties are \$41.34 per year. Elsewhere in South Dakota, subscriptions are \$44.52, and out-of-state subscriptions are \$42.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Plain Talk, 201 West Cherry Street, Vermillion, SD 57069.  
Vermillion Plain Talk Staff  
Advertising Director: Michele Schielvelbein. Advertising Sales Rep: Jennifer Newton. Composing Staff: Heidi Henson, Kathy Larson, Tara Portillo, and Matt Richardson. Reception Office Manager: Penny Tucker. Distribution & Circulation Manager: David Jeffcoat.