

VIEWPOINTS

Life As A Hymn

By Paula Damon

MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON
paula.damon@iw.net

When it comes to church humor, I really like the one about the pastor who announced to his congregation the need for more money to help pay for utilities and expenses of running the church.

He asked everyone to consider giving a little extra in the offering plate that morning and said whoever gave the most would be able to pick out three hymns.

When the offering was presented, the pastor noticed a one-hundred dollar bill in the plate.

He asked the donor to come forward. Sure enough, little old Gertrude sitting way in the last pew got up and slowly made her way to the front.

Now, Gertrude was up in years. She never married but had not given up on finding a mate.

Thanking her, the pastor asked Gertrude to select three hymns. Her eyes brightened as she looked over the congregation.

And then, pointing to three of the most handsome men in the building, she said, "I'll take him and him and him!"

Do you know what the problem is with selecting h-y-m-n-s? It's not as easy as Gertrude made it seem.

Recently my pastor asked me to choose four Christmas hymns for which I would research their back stories and then write and deliver a message for Saturday and Sunday worship services while she took a much needed vacation.

DID I HAVE A TIME!

I first selected "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Longfellow composed it in 1864, a year before the end of the Civil War, when our country was divided against itself. This explains why his lyrics address the dire state of the world at that time.

The song focuses squarely on hope and deliverance, not despair – something we could all use today.

Then I chose "I wonder as I wander" by folk singer John Jacob Niles, who wrote this piece in 1930. I included it because I know I've been wondering as I've been wandering through life.

Next was the 12th century carol "The Friendly Beasts." I used to sing it to my kids when they were little, even though I couldn't carry a tune – poor dears.

I really like the way this song imagines the gifts animals may have presented to the Baby Jesus.

The best part was that our congregation sang these hymns together.

Did you know that singing is healthy for your heart and your lungs?

I don't know about you, but when I sing, it makes me feel really good all over.

That's probably why singing has been known to correct some health issues, like it did for England's King George VI. His extreme stuttering was curtailed by singing short passages of speech.

Did you know that stroke victims who can no longer speak are able to sing entire songs with ease?

In the case of British orchestra conductor Dorian Edwards, music helped his recovery from a brain hemorrhage some years ago. He now runs "Sing Healthy" choirs throughout England.

I imagine that most people have songs in their hearts at one time or another. Just look around. Notice their faces, listen to their words and you'll know if it's a happy or sad melody.

Whether they are singing "Happy Days Are Here Again" or warbling a song of constant sorrow, be patient, listen, show understanding.

What's the song in your heart today?



Thank You, North Korea

By Tom Purcell
CagleCartoon.com

Thank you, North Korea. Your alleged cyber attack on Sony has, I hope, awakened the American people.

America is not doing so well, you see.

Sure, we are No. 1 in self-esteem — we are No. 1 at being indignant about a variety of perceived slights — but we're not much good at understanding the real problems we face.

Consider our debt. It recently exceeded \$18 trillion — that's \$18 million times 1 million, says economist Stephen Moore. Writing for National Review, Moore explains that we haven't yet felt the full weight of our debt because interest rates are historically low. When they increase to normal levels, America is going to be in a world of hurt. But few Americans understand or worry about that.

Here's another threat Americans are ignorant of: cyber attack. Few have any idea that our country has been under attack for years or that our adversaries have been very successful stealing from us.

Though industrial espionage has been around a long time, the fact is that our smartphones, social media sites and Internet applications have opened up unprecedented opportunities for skilled adversaries to penetrate

company systems and hide in the background undetected so they can swipe all kinds of proprietary information.

One industrial espionage expert told CNN that hungry, emerging economies see advantage in appropriating technology innovations, engineering designs and other intellectual property — ideas that took private companies in advanced countries lots of years and billions of dollars to develop.

If a country wants to really harm America, why drop a bomb when a proper cyber attack could shut down our electrical grid or our banking system, creating far more damage.

These threats are very real. China has been cleaning our clock for years. Thankfully, our government is finally coming around.

According to The Washington Times, the Pentagon established the U.S. Cyber Command in 2010. It consolidated the intelligence and cyber warfare capabilities of the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines.

The Cyber Command was the primary developer of the Stuxnet computer worm that struck Iran's nuclear computers, causing significant damage to centrifuges, says The Times. Cyber warfare tactics continue to come in handy as we shut down the systems through which terrorists are

attempting to communicate.

So my hat goes off to the dinky communist country North Korea for shedding light on the challenges America is up against.

Look, the world is a competitive place and there are nasty people out there who wish to do America harm. It's long been time to quit squabbling over the perceived violation of our many perceived rights and put our big boy pants on.

We need to get debt and government spending in order. We need to restructure our tax system. We need to get millions of people off the dole and back to work. And we need to unleash our pent-up economic genius to produce the wealth we need to pay our bills. To wit: we need to get serious about serious matters.

Because if we don't get more serious in a very serious world, we may lose our status as the largest economy in the world.

Oops. I forgot. China overtook America as the No. 1 economy a few weeks ago.

©2014 Tom Purcell. Tom Purcell, author of "Misadventures of a 1970's Childhood" and "Comical Sense: A Lone Humorist Takes on a World Gone Nutty!" is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc. For info on using this column in your publication or website, contact Sales@cagle.com or call (805) 969-2829. Send comments to Tom at Purcell@caglecartoons.com.

Our Relationship With Food

By Richard P. Holm, MD

Why does food satisfy the appetite? If we could understand what tells us when to stop eating, then maybe we could understand the cause for obesity.

We know that a hormone called ghrelin delivers feelings of hunger to the brain and that two hormones called cholecystokinin and leptin bring feelings of satiation. So far, however, scientists, and especially those of the pharmaceutical industry, have failed in efforts to safely manipulate these natural signals to stimulate or suppress hunger.

Another direction of research comes with understanding how certain foods like oatmeal, boiled potatoes, or fresh fruit fill you up, while others like donuts, French fries, or even dried fruit do not. It is interesting to note that drinks of any kind seem very poor in providing feelings of fullness or satiety. It makes perfect sense then that if one is struggling with obesity, foods that do not satisfy hunger, especially those that are highly caloric, should be avoided.

And what about eating too fast? We know it takes time for the food we eat to stimulate our satiety hormones. We all know it is not very satisfying when we shove fast food into our mouths and swallow it down with a big gulp. No one can argue that the obesity epidemic could be related to oh-so-convenient fast food, which seems to match the fast-paced, unsatisfying rush of modern life.

In contrast, there is the Slow Food movement founded in Italy in the 1980s. Slow Food asks us to preserve regional cuisine and local flavors, and to promote local gardens and local family farmers. Slow Food asks us to shop the farmer's markets, raise our own gardens, teach our children to cook, take time around the supper table to eat slowly, savor the food and enjoy the company of family.

Bottom line, and the pun is intended: all the rush, with our busy frenetic modern lives, and especially with all that fast-fast food, has left us weighing more and satisfied less. It is time to slow down and savor our food and our lives.

CHAMBER BUSINESS 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 (appx. 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 DavidaArtCompany online at this email address: michele.mechling4dac@gmail.com. For sales and service by phone contact Michele Mechling at 605 670-2945.
- 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.

FRIDAY, JAN. 2

- Boys Basketball: Tea Area, Fri., Jan. 2 @ 2:00 pm (T)
- Ladies Hospital Auxiliary meeting, Fri., Jan. 2 @ 2:00 pm, Sanford Vermillion Board Room
- Girls Basketball: Tea Area, Fri., Jan. 2 @ 4:00 pm (T)
- USD Mens Basketball vs Omaha, Fri., Jan. 2 @ 7:00 pm at DakotaDome

SATURDAY, JAN. 3

- Overeaters Anonymous: Sat., Jan. 3 @ 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:

MONDAY, JAN. 5

- No classes at Vermillion public schools, Mon., Jan. 5 – Teacher In-Service. Classes resume Tues., Jan. 6
- Al-anon meeting at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Mon., Jan. 5 @ 7:30 pm. For more information, call 624-9764.

TUESDAY, JAN. 6

- Vermillion Rotary Club meeting, Tues., Jan. 6 @ 12:00 pm in the Al Neuharth Media Center conference room. For more information, visit: www.vermillionrotaryclub.org
- Wrestling: Elk Point/Jefferson, Tues., Jan. 6 @ 5:30 pm (T)

THURSDAY, JAN. 8

- Gradeschool programming (Lego Club), Thurs., Jan. 8 at Vermillion Public Library, 3:30-5:00 pm
- Boys Basketball: West Central, Thurs., Jan. 8 @ 4:30 pm (T)
- Girls Basketball: Canton, Thurs., Jan. 8 @ 5:00 pm (H)