

VIEWPOINTS

The Best Way... To Respect You

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

When my friends and I were in high school and college we used to have a mantra that we took to heart and lived by:

Any time we were at an event, gathering, or party we swore we would always leave while having the most fun.

Why would we do that? Because, quite simply, we wanted to always leave when things were going the best, because at that point you were always guaranteed a letdown.

Sure we didn't leave early enough at times — sometimes we weren't having enough fun to begin with and were either hopeful or stubborn — and saw our fair share of crazy and dealt with plenty more 'memorable' negatives. Yet, all in all we made the right choices and my memories of those days are great.

I have carried that mantra through my adult years and still believe in it today.

That's how I hope to run The Plain Talk. I want us to continue to provide the best coverage in news reporting and feature writing like we do now without letdown.

So, on that note, we have some news for you.

The Art of Success series has been well received, much greater than we ever envisioned. Every week each story tends to be in our top three most popular for the next week or two.

Readers tell our employees how much they look forward to the next story and that overwhelms us.

So, first we really want to let you know... WE LISTEN to you. We hear you, we know what is working and what can be better.

We cover the stories that matter to Vermillion.

On that note, this week you will read the last of the Art of Success series and for a good set of reasons and a handful of surprises.

For four months response to each story has been strong. What better way to wrap than with a story that celebrates First Dakota National Bank, the longest serving bank in the Dakotas, and the business that has played a role in Vermillion life longer than any other (see story on 1A).

It is time to leave that party at the peak of its success because everything has a shelf life and we dread writing the one story that brings people to wonder "what were they thinking writing that?"

So, we will put to bed a series the staff enjoyed doing and you obviously found a fun read.

But do not fret. We have listened and we want to do more for you.

It's time to start more parties and have a great time at each one for the proper duration of celebration.

Quietly, you may have noticed we have indeed built on the popularity of The Art of Success by bringing in other series. You saw Katie Clausen's wonderful In the Kitchen series and her current set of lovely pieces, The Heartbeat of Vermillion.

These exist because of you, the readers.

Sarah Wetzal, a powerhouse of a young reporter, has begun her Lil' Bits series and that promises to be a strong set of pieces about Vermillion's children.

Also if you recall, we introduced you to your newly voted for or re-

lected government officials. We are currently doing the same for the city council and there are plenty more series like that coming.

That's not all. The Art of Success will now evolve into a new type of series coming very soon. The Art of Vermillion will spotlight different people, businesses, and happenings that best illustrate what this city is all about.

We are in talks about coming up with some even more entertaining series such as In the Life Of, Landmark Vermillion, and even one that may explore some of the more darker things in our midst.

The staff is so serious about this that we have planned dinners to get together and brainstorm on creating more and more and more.

This is how a newspaper behaves. We produce, because you expect us to, and your time and money invested in us should never be wasted.

Also, we are going to tease you a bit, by announcing here that we have the grandest idea for a series on the sports side that we know for a fact has never been accomplished here in Vermillion. We are going to do it, because we know we are the only ones who can pull it off.

Be sure to read the Jan. 30 print edition of The Plain Talk for details.

There are many reasons to do a series of stories like these.

First off, they are stories that readers want to read, that's obvious.

Secondly, I personally love these types of stories because it helps me learn more about our community. Many of them a combination of historical context or simple mechanics of day-to-day life.

I have only been here six months but I feel we have done some amazing things in a short time. Imagine when we actually know something, how much better we will be for you?

Last, in the case of The Art of Success, we wanted to provide motivation. If just one person out there read this series and the words of people who have made an impact and earned longstanding success, we believe there was something to be learned.

If more businesses can be born from those articles and words of wisdom, maybe you can become a future success.

Then who knows, we could write your story too?

Don't let anyone fool you: A newspaper is a community's product, not that of the individuals who run it or work for it.

We give you local stories that inform and educate. We publish more copy in just one weekly newspaper than others who publish as many as three, four, and five papers in a week. We do it all in one paper and make it easy to read about you, about our community.

Simply put? It's our job to do so.

It's also our obligation to hear you.

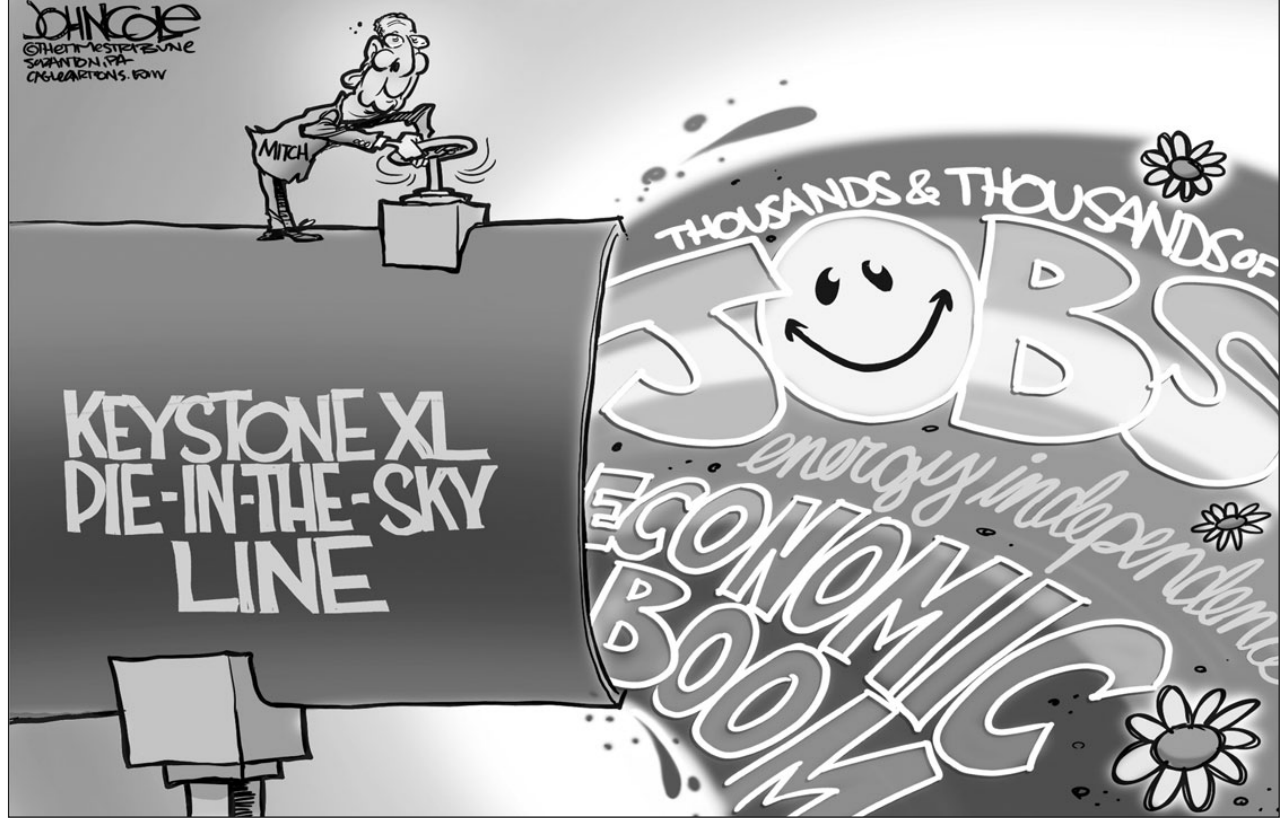
We have and because of it we will continue doing what we do and hopefully do it even better.

Because that's what you demand and deserve.

If any of our readers believe there is a series idea out there, don't be shy. Contact us at alan.dale@plaintalk.net or call us at 605-624-4429.

Since it is your paper, your ideas should always be welcome.

Don't you agree?



Unspoiled love measures eight-by-eight

BY PAULA DAMON

Webster defines the word "picture" (pik-sheer) as a design or representation, such as a painting, drawing or photograph.

Another way of putting it — a description so vivid that it could suggest a mental image or give an accurate idea of something — anything.

Synonyms for picture are portrait, portrayal, illustration, depiction, likeness, representation, personification, embodiment, epitome, essence, quaintness, perfect example, model; an impression of something formed from an account or description, concept or idea.

The definition of a "wall" is all together different.

A wall can be a continuous vertical structure made of brick, wood or stone, enclosing or dividing an area of land or serving in most cases as a means of support.

Other terms for wall are barrier, enclosure, screen, divider or weight-bearing reinforcement.

When it comes to the picture-wall in our family room, there's an entirely new meaning.

Taking up the southeast corner and measuring eight-by-eight, all totaled this tapestry of years stretches across our lives: driven by the hope of a newborn suckling a mother's breast and propelled by the determination of an underdog —

MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON
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the new family room. That was 24 years ago.

Bathed in a haze of time disappeared, you could call it an open book, slightly dimmed by a dusty hew, laced loosely by cobwebs someone forgot to sweep away.

Although having weathered well many long nights of nothing but worry and tendered suffusion of making it another year, our picture-wall remains a verdant field of intertwined lives.

This mosaic of framed smiles, stalwart stances and steady glances embodies agelessness.

Notice how any overtures of change or loss or sadness — palettes of emotions — remain hidden.

As hard as we try to live the past, time has fervently and willfully robbed

gritty and drenched in sweat-equity, bound for triumph.

Even on gloomy gray days, our picture-wall can lift old souls like mine. And when it's out of sight, I still can see it.

Founded on nothing but pure love from the start and spanning 40 years, this used to be in the kitchen, until we added on and moved it into

what's represented here: a chain reaction of inaugurations — first births, first smiles, first words, first teeth, first steps, first days of school, spilling into that bottomless pool of departures — heading to kindergarten, entering high school, moving out, going away to college, getting married.

Gone for good, or so it seems. Thundering beneath the surface of our picture-wall is a deafening devotion, a nonperishable might, a fresh and unspoiled love whose currency banks on strong hugs, cleansing belly laughs and nourishing prideful meals made from scratch.

Oh, yes, and honesty — no matter how hard it hurts.

Hanging photo-walls is like love — indulging, redressed in overgrown expectations, resplendently knotted in gaiety, astride with patience and tamped down by acceptance — fully on display.

Shuttling back and forth over the years, this one is a gift — albeit aged with crow's feet and worry lines — our family's carbon dating of sorts.

A best friend to pep us up. A shoulder to cry on.

A tonic to chase away gloom. Devotedly coating our imaginations, this picture-wall, a steady potent reminder of what's really important.

Ritually lining the merest of memories are blanks that have unkindly taken up residence — uninvited. Picture-wall... a sacred space.

The potential blessings and curses of alcohol

By Richard P. Holm MD

We need to be aware that alcohol can be a blessing and a curse.

Scientific studies have repeatedly shown that mild-to-moderate alcohol consumption (one to three drinks a day accounting for person size) brings a significant health benefit for most individuals, with reduced death rates from strokes and heart attacks, Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and even some cancers. Say it again: benefits.

Death rates graphed with alcohol consumption becomes like a J-shaped curve: somewhat higher death rate for abstainers,

dropping 25 percent lower for moderate consumers. Here's the problem: then the death rate shoots up much higher for heavy drinkers because when drinking becomes heavy, it becomes very destructive.

The problem is also that the line between moderate and heavy drinking is a slippery slope. For some unknown reason, if there is any drinking for certain people, it turns into a binge.

A young woman was admitted with aspiration pneumonia resulting from inhaling her mouth contents during seizures and then an alcoholic coma while lying in a pool of vomit. I came into her room on the second hospital day of recovery and

found her crying while she was brushing her long ignored teeth. I can't forget the malodorous brown scum as she brushed and wept.

A gentleman came into the hospital emergency room vomiting blood from bleeding esophageal varicose veins because he had alcohol induced liver cirrhosis, which dilated his upper venous system. We placed a special tube down his throat and expanded a balloon to put pressure on the veins, which stopped the bleeding. Drinking and then bleeding recurred again a month later, and that time he died.

The sad consequences of alcoholism affect almost everyone. About 17 million U.S. adults have alcohol use

disorder, costing our country about \$250 billion per year, causing close to 90,000 deaths a year, and accounting for the third leading preventable cause of death. It affects rich and poor alike, and when it catches hold, alcohol can devastate and destroy good people and, what's worse, all those nearby.

Alcohol can be a blessing when in moderation, way more protective than cholesterol-lowering drugs, for example. But it can also be a curse when in excess, more destructive than an unsuspected and ruthless poison.

Be aware. For more information go to <http://tinyurl.com/ljqjcd>.

CHAMBER CHAT

CHAMBER BUSINESS THURSDAY, JAN. 29

Please join us for the Grand Opening Celebration and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Vermillion Wine & Liquor, 820 Cottage Ave., on Thurs., Jan. 29. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be at 4 pm. Everyone is invited to help celebrate the completion of the beautiful new store. Appetizers will be served and beer and wine tasting will be available.

SATURDAY, JAN. 31 AND FEB. 28

Cracker Barrel sessions with our Legislators will be: Sat., Jan. 31 from 10 am to noon at the City Hall Council Chambers at 25 Center St. and Sat., Feb. 28 from 10 am to noon at the City Hall Council Chambers at 25 Center St.

Please join our District 17 Legislators, Senator Art Rusch and House Representatives Nancy Rasmussen and Ray Ring for an update on the 90th Legislative Session. Open to the public and everyone is encouraged to join us for some great discussion. Refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the VFW Auxiliary, Clay County Democrats, Clay County Republicans, and the VCDC Legislative Affairs Committee.

Business after Hours: Are you looking for an opportunity to showcase your business and network with your peers? Sign up to host a Business After Hours event! These events generally run from 5-7 pm on a week-night and the hosting business provides hors d'oeuvres and

refreshments. If interested, please contact Ann at: annb@vermillionchamber.com or at 624-5571.

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.

The Clay-Union Foundation is offering a \$500 community service scholarship to graduating high school seniors from Vermillion or Elk Point-Jefferson high school. The board has also added a new \$500 community service scholarship to a graduating senior from Dakota Valley high school. Applications are online at www.clay-unionfoundation.org or contact the school counselors. This is the 4th year the scholarship has been offered; the applications are due by March 20th. The scholarships are supported totally by donations, the half marathon, and bike ride. Donations may be sent to P.O. Box 665, Elk Point, SD 57025. Contact John Gille at 605-421-5050 for further information, or the school guidance counselors.

The Clay-Union Foundation has made 139 mentoring matches to date. Volunteers are needed, as 5 youth seek mentors in Vermillion, and more are pending. The foundation

has also made donations to the backpack program in Vermillion and Elk Point.

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. 23

Bowling: Yankton, Fri., Jan. 23 @ 4 pm (H)
USD swimming and diving teams vs. South Dakota State, Fri., Jan. 23, 4 pm at Dakota Dome
Girls Basketball: Lennox, Fri., Jan. 23 @ 5 pm (T)
Lakolyapi Exhibition Reception, Fri., Jan. 23 @ 6 pm, John A. Day Gallery at the Warren M. Lee Center for Fine Arts. Megan Yellow Boy has created a series of bilingual language videos to teach the Lakota language
USD Faculty Eunho Kim and Guest Steven Larson Present Violin/Piano Duo Recital, Fri., Jan. 23, Colton Recital Hall at Warren M. Lee Center for the Fine Arts @ 7:30 pm. This event is open to the public at no charge.

Vermillion High School Students to Present Comic One-Act Play of Reed Martin & Austin Tichenors play, The Complete World of Sports (Abridged). This fast paced comedy takes a satirical look at people's obsession with sports. It parodies the ESPN-style television coverage while

poking fun at individual sports and celebrities. This forty-minute, laugh-out-loud presentation can be seen for one night only on the Vermillion High School stage: Fri., Jan. 23, at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free.

SATURDAY, JAN. 24

Overeaters Anonymous: Sat., Jan. 24 @ 9 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.
Wrestling: West Central, Sat., Jan. 24 @ 10 am (T)
Art Story time for ages 4-6 at Vermillion Public Library, Sat., Jan. 24 @ 10:15 am
Movement Story time for ages birth to 3 with adult at Vermillion Public Library, Sat., Jan. 24 @ 11:15 am
All State Band Auditions @ Sioux Falls, Sat., Jan. 24
USD swimming and diving teams vs. North Dakota, Sat., Jan. 24, 2 pm @ Dakota Dome
Liz Pekas presents her junior clarinet recital, Sat., Jan. 24 @ 4 pm, Farber Hall located in Old Main on USD campus. Open to the public at no charge.
Writer Formal Dance @ Vermillion High School, Sat., Jan. 24, 8:30-11 pm
Dance Marathon, Sat., Jan. 24, 11 pm-2 am at Vermillion High School