

VIEWPOINTS

Treat those two imposters just the same

"Are you crying? Are you crying? ARE YOU CRYING? There's no crying! THERE'S NO CRYING IN BASEBALL!"

These are the immortal words of Jimmy Dugan, manager of the Rockford Peaches, a women's baseball team featured in the movie, "A League of Their Own."

Parts of this movie's plot are real – yes, women did play in baseball leagues during World War II. But much of the story is made up stuff. Fiction. Especially the "no crying in baseball" part.

I have had the privilege to closely follow the Vermillion Post 1 American Legion baseball team this season, and I, along with many of their fans, expected only good things to happen as post-season play, specifically the Region 3B tournament, began in Elk Point last week.

The young men on this team had been playing well, and during a quick mental check made while driving to the first

BETWEEN THE LINES



DAVID LIAS
david.lias@plaintalk.net

game, I recalled that during the regular season, Post 1 managed to beat every team that it potentially could face during the double-elimination tournament.

Post 1 had a stellar season record of 14 wins and only four losses – two of those losses came at the hands of teams from Sioux Falls and Mitchell – both bigger towns, with a larger pool of athletes.

Tournament play for Post 1 began last Thursday, and started about as well as a Vermillion fan could hope for. The home team easily defeated Elk Point-Jefferson 12-2 on Thursday. On Friday, they faced Beresford, and once again, winning came easily by a score of 11-1.

Saturday night, Vermillion returned to Elk Point once again, to face Dakota Valley in the championship game. After a slight hiccup – Dakota Valley scored two runs in the first inning compared to Vermillion's single score, and held a 1 point lead until third inning – it looked like Post 1 was destined to, once again, cruise to victory.

It was THE game to win – the victor would be crowned region champ, and would go on to play in the state tournament in Tabor.

But then something happened to the Post 1 team – something that we're all too familiar with. Life happened.

We've all had those moments when life happens. Everything seems very much under our control one moment. The next – total chaos. The magnitude of the happenings that cause such disarray run the gamut, from waking up late one morning because you've forgot to set

your alarm, to sitting at the side of the hospital bed of a sick relative.

Losing something that you've pined for since spring is tough. Saying that it's only a game doesn't really help.

It is what makes baseball such a wonderful sport. It grips both participant and fan alike, but instead of providing an escape of the day-to-day grind, it offers a near duplication of what we humans can expect as we take part in this thing called life.

It is filled with great joy (you should have seen the Dakota Valley players when they defeated Vermillion a second time on Sunday to clinch the championship). There's a sadness, too, that comes with each loss, and yes, there is crying in baseball.

I don't know if the great author, Rudyard Kipling, was a baseball fan. His books were printed by the publishing giant Doubleday & Company Inc., which was started by F. N.

Doubleday, the great-great-grandnephew of Abner Doubleday, the apocryphal "inventor" of baseball.

An aging Kipling penned the poem "If," and dedicated it to Nelson Doubleday, the infant son of a long line of Doubledays that include Abner.

A portion of the poem reads: "If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;

If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster

And treat those two imposters just the same; ..."

Kipling may be writing about life. Or baseball. But I can't help but think he's writing about both, as both the sport and life itself are constantly brimming with the "ifs" we must face each day.

Here's to Post 1, whose great season came to an end Sunday. Here's to a bunch of young men who have learned to meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat them the same.

Guest Column:

Highway deficit is driving nation deeper into debt

By Bob Mercer

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – It must be horrible to live in fear, like so many members of Congress, that a tax increase could cost your job.

Nothing else explains the maneuvers so many of our elected 535 are taking, as Congress tries to avoid increasing the federal motor-fuels tax.

The federal trust fund for highway aid has run on fumes for years. It is forecast to be financially broke again in August.

That is the heart of road-construction season across the northern states. States will get I.O.U.s from the federal Department of Transportation.

As the comic said, "What a country!"

Congress last raised the tax in 1993 to 18.4 cents per gallon. Through inflation, the purchasing power decreased approximately 40 percent.

Just to stay even, the federal tax needs to be increased about 7 cents per gallon.

Recent days in Pierre, convenience stores ranged by about 20 cents per gallon in advertised prices.

That's for what's become the current standard: Regular gas that contains approximately 10 percent ethanol and carries an octane rating of 85 and sometimes 87.

South Dakota imposes its own motor-fuels tax, too. It is 22 cents per gallon for regular gasoline and diesel, and less for blends that mix in ethanol or other bio-fuels.

Members of our Legislature are conducting hearings and holding meetings across South Dakota this summer to talk about the need for more highway funding.

In the next few days the state Transportation Commission begins its annual set of meetings to meet with the public about the proposed highway construction plan for 2015.

The ideas floating from Washington, D.C., don't

call for straight-up increases in the federal tax.

There's one gimmick to encourage U.S. corporations to move more business back from overseas so that more federal corporate taxes can be collected now – and less in the future.

There's another gimmick to encourage U.S. corporations to reduce their pension set-asides now, so that they have more earnings to tax now – and less in the future.

There are more ideas that fit the same category of putting off the hard decision.

But there are many hard decisions coming, because our nation wants less gasoline and diesel consumption, and electric vehicles are gaining popularity.

Less carbon-based fuel that is consumed, equals less carbon-driven taxes collected through the federal and state taxes.

More electric vehicles accelerate that trend.

There was a long period in our nation when federal taxes on motor fuels were set aside at the federal level for highway aid.

That's still how we do it in South Dakota with our state tax.

But Congress crossed the line in the past decade when it began tapping general revenue to supplement demands for more money in the highway program.

That meant a portion of federal highway aid, that wasn't be covered by federal fuel tax and other traditional highway-related sources, began driving up the national debt.

We started building and repairing our highways and bridges using I.O.U.s for some of the work.

States still received aid to pay contractors, but the national debt was growing in Washington, D.C.

And now many in Congress want to make the hole deeper, because they fear the voters.



People will forget what you say

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelo, U.S. Poet Laureate, novelist

Marilyn left this life on Sunday, July 6, 2014, at the age of 81. She died just four days shy of her 82nd birthday.

Since she had fallen ill last October, I had visited her several times in the hospital and nursing home.

Marilyn was one of those church members who always sat in the same place every Sunday – the back right corner. And beware if you ever took her spot – you'd hear about it.

She was a strong woman who not only raised her kids but many of her grandchildren, as well.

I liked Marilyn best for her capacity to call everyone, "Honey." There's something especially kind and welcoming about being called "Honey."

I attended her funeral.

As the organist played Amazing Grace, a column of pallbearers began their funeral walk from the narthex, funneled into the sanctuary and down the aisle to the

MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON
paula.damon@iw.net

altar. The pastor trailed solemnly.

Within that single moment – all of life seemed to come into perfect focus as we somberly and reluctantly celebrated her life and ultimately prepared to let her go.

Indelible images of the deceased – all of her meaningful and trivial moments – ran uncontaminated over time.

As the processional folded into the pews on either side of the aisle, it was as though a master controller had turned on a switch and from that point I was gone.

Even before the "Prayers of the People," my heart broke several times in a melancholy storm: the sight of her descendants – two full rows of them, not counting the pallbearers, waiting in their pews mournfully.

Then, the sharing of many endearing and hilarious stories of her life.

Marilyn had a way of making people feel loved.

Later, as the funeral train of cars rolled away from the church and down the road to the cemetery. Their lights as unblinking eyes, symbolic of her tenacity and hope, as if to say, "Here once strode Marilyn, a lover of life, a good wife and even better mother and grandmother. Now, we bid her farewell until we meet again."

It's not only funerals, but weddings also get to me. The sight of the bride lightly stepping down the aisle turns me into a blubbering idiot.

Even marching bands. As soon as the drum major blows his whistle and begins high-stepping and waving that baton, I go to pieces.

Like a mighty river of life channeling through me, it seems processions are great equalizers, taking discord, smoothing it down to a happy-sad harmonic place in my heart.

What is it about them? Is it the formality? Or the sheer beauty of a maudlin march in lockstep fashion?

Why does this stirring dredge up such clarity and revelation, bidding me come hither?

Vermillion



PLAIN
TALK

Since 1884 • Official County, City and School District Newspaper

201 W. Cherry, Vermillion, SD 57069 • Publication No. USPS 657-720

Publisher: Gary Wood • 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

News Staff: Travis Gulbrandson.

Advertising Director: Michele Schievelbein

Advertising Sales Rep: Mathew Wienbar

Composing Manager: Kathy Larson

Composing Staff: Rob Buckingham,

Angela Steffen & Sally Whiting

Reception Office Manager: Penny Ascheman

Distribution & Circulation Manager: Mike Hrycko