

# VIEWPOINTS

## More, More And More: State Needs Gambling

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – Our state government wants more people to gamble more.

And when people spend more on state-sponsored gambling, our state government can spend more, without taxing more the people who aren't gamblers.

This is free will at its finest and its worst.

I've known gambling addicts. For some their curse was to like much too much gambling on video lottery. They didn't look like addicts.

One was a state judge. I watched him on an occasional Saturday morning. While others nursed coffee, he pushed money into a machine.

Several state legislators I knew couldn't seem to stay away from the machines.

One gave me a ride in his car one day. He reached across to the glove box. Out came a roll of greenbacks, held together by a rubber band.

"My winnings," he said.

Then he added, his voice changing from pride to the voice with which we keep secrets about ourselves from our loved ones, "Don't tell (her)."

For their family's sake, I'm leaving her name out.

But I knew that she already knew.

Eventually they always do. Often, too late.

Anyone who pays attention to the numbers behind video lottery would tell you the same thing: His wad wasn't winnings.

If he had been truly winning, the wad would have been much, much fatter.

Even if he had been only breaking even, the wad would have been about 40 percent thicker.

South Dakota's video lottery businesses are highly effective at capturing money of people who like that kind of gambling.

For every dollar lost in the privately owned terminals, state government takes half of that dollar.

The businesses get the other half of the dollar – and pay the lottery one more cent from that dollar, for the administration of the video lottery system.

For many years the video lottery establishments and the machine owners – and increasingly, the South Dakota Lottery itself – have wanted more opportunities to take in more money from the gamblers.

They want the bet limit raised from the \$2 that's been in place since video lottery began in October 1989.

They want the maximum number of terminals increased from the 10 per establishment that's been in place too since 1989.

The Legislature repeatedly rejected those changes. In the coming 2016 session of the Legislature, the South Dakota Lottery and their business partners will pursue those types of changes again.

The two sides of the partnership also will ask lawmakers for permission to offer a new version of gambling machines known as progressives.

Progressives already are common in true casinos. They offer the additional feature of a large jackpot. The jackpot comes from a slice of each bet. The jackpot amount is prominently displayed to attract players.

Who knows whether this time the Legislature will say yes to the governor.

We'll also see rules changed soon for Powerball, the big daddy of jackpot lotto games in South Dakota.

The winning matrix will be adjusted so jackpots grow bigger faster. Fewer jackpots will be won.

But people, being people, will gamble more to win the bigger money.

Such is our state's official policy.

Let the suckers pay.

# Jeb!

## 2016



BY THE COLUMNISTS OF THE PLAIN TALK  
COLUMBIAN DISPATCH

## About This Flashlight/Radio/Siren

BY PAULA DAMON



PAULA DAMON

Back in the day, this flashlight of Dick's wasn't your typical type.

Now quite dated in weight and design, it once was a super deluxe model, boasting oversized dials, numbers, knobs, a handy shoulder strap and all kinds of gadgets.

The large lettered "Claiborne for Men" logo on one side makes me wonder if the women of the household, his five daughters and wife ordered it for him in exchange for points earned from their many "Claiborne for Women" purchases.

But my husband says he remembers seeing them sold on TV and in the Sunday Parade Magazine insert. I'm not so sure about that.

It has an AM/FM radio powered by three "C" batteries, emergency siren and flashlight.

You can play music, turn on the light and blare the siren all at the same time. I can't imagine Dick ever doing that. He was very reserved, but I'm sure his girls had a lot of fun with it.

It may have gone on the road a time or two, camping and definitely out on the boat, but this old flashlight perhaps spent a lot of time on Dick's work shed.

Suppose that's where he'd go to get away from the lyrical clatter that caused

the house to grow hoarse.

I can just picture him with his "Claiborne for Men" flashlight pushed back on the workbench, with the radio uttering a continuous stream of background noise, eternally resting on the edge of his seemingly pitch perfect life.

All those evenings, he whiled away alone in his shed by the flashlight's glow, while his wife and daughters were possibly off doing their girl things.

The loving manner in which he regarded those girls was always evident by the way he spoke of them.

Anyone could easily tell by the way his head tilted slightly, producing a wide gentle grin that stretched across his face, making his eyes smile.

For at least 30 years, Dick and his family lived only a quarter of a mile down the road from our house.

Although, we never really socialized the way people often do, you know, having them over for dinner and such. Except, like I said, when running into

each other coming and going.

Years ago, we did buy their pontoon so that must count for something. A 20-foot 1974 Weirs with a 25-horsepower black Mercury motor. Nice boat.

When our kids were young, we had great times boating up and down the lake, right past Dick's place. If he was out working around the yard, he'd always wave.

Great memories.

Now, that old pontoon sits permanently grounded in a wooded area below our house. My husband has plans to build a cabin on it someday. God forbid. That'll be the day I move out.

Their youngest, Stephanie, used to babysit our kids. Stephanie did a good job. Very reliable. We always appreciated that in our babysitters.

Over the years, we managed to maintain a bond of friendship between Dick's family and ours.

Today, I can still see his smiling eyes when I look at this "Claiborne for Men" radio/flashlight/siren, which I purchased the day of the estate sale, milling among strangers slowly shuffling in single file, as though passing an open coffin at a wake through the dusty motionless rooms of his past.

## Thankful For Fortunes, Hating Children's Pain

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE

Driving home from the Lewis and Clark Campground earlier this week, my daughter, who tends to be a bit over-reactive, gasped, screamed and grabbed my seat; out of instinct, I slammed on the brakes, only to see a rather large deer stop about four inches from my front bumper, glare at me as if saying "What are you doing you crazy driver?" and scamper to the other ditch.

Needless to say my heart was racing. The near collision caused me to reflect on some close calls our family has had – and some battles family members are currently fighting.

Earlier this spring, my cousin Amy's toddler daughter – a vivacious, bubbly, beautiful little girl – started having crazy bruises and illnesses she just couldn't

get over. My cousin and her husband rushed her to the hospital in Sioux Falls where for the past several weeks they have been waiting for a diagnosis and treatment.

Well the good news, she doesn't have cancer, the bad news, she has an autoimmune disease that is going to require a bone marrow transplant. So, they have transferred her to the University of Minnesota Children's Hospital where for at least the next 130 days, they will have to live, pray and hope that the bone marrow transplant works.

The thought of the pain that this small child is going through tears me apart. The thoughts of how my cousin's family, ranging from a soon to be senior, a freshman, a kindergartener and baby, not to mention parents who both have full-time jobs are going to juggle their lives is some-

thing I cannot imagine.

So, when my phone rang this morning and it was my mom, who started off the conversation saying, "I have your daughter with me, she is fine." But I could hear the tears in her voice, my thoughts went to Amy fearing the worst.

What mom said next floored me.

"Scott's house had a gas explosion this morning. They are all alive, but they had to rush the baby to Minnesota because the explosion was centered in the basement below her crib. She has burns over the majority of her body."

How are you supposed to process something like this? How can you process the fact that a four-month old angel is now fighting for her life?

I have dealt with many issues in my life but all I can say is we have been so

fortunate that our children have always been healthy and happy, from my many cousins to their children, and in a matter of days two of them, the two youngest, are now fighting for their lives at the same Minnesota hospital.

I have been fortunate enough to have many people share their stories of health fights through the years, just this last year we did a series of stories on young cancer patients in the area, several of them were treated at the same hospital where these little girls are now at.

Because of that I know they do great work there, have great successes there, but when it hits home it is indescribable.

So, as I say my prayers tonight I am going to start with thank you for the fortunes you have given my family, and please heal them and take away their pain.

### LETTER TO EDITOR POLICY

The Plain Talk encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the Plain Talk will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

Specific individuals or

entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters to the Editor, 201 W. Cherry St., Vermillion, SD 57069, drop off at 201 W. Cherry in Vermillion, fax to 624-4696 or e-mail to shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net.

## Michels Says 'Be The Cure' In South Dakota

BY LT. GOV. MATT MICHELS  
South Dakota

I currently serve as South Dakota's lieutenant governor, but I have had the opportunity to wear a lot of different "hats" throughout the years. Few have been as formative as my nurse "hat." Nursing exposed me to people from many different walks of life and taught me about compassion, as well as countless other life lessons. But, it also taught me about the far-reaching impact of medical ailments and the importance of doing what we can, as a society, to confront those ailments.

Public health should be everyone's concern. Over the years, the development of new medicines has been vital in helping people live longer and healthier lives. Clinical trials are the primary route by which patients can voluntarily participate in the drug

development process, receive access to unapproved investigational medicines and contribute to the collection of data necessary for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval.

Successful clinical trials require diverse and robust volunteer participation. It is important that people of all races understand the benefits of clinical trials. Different racial groups can be affected by different diseases and may respond differently to certain kinds of medications. Unfortunately, minority groups are typically under-represented in clinical trials, resulting in limited evidence for how effective such treatments may be for those individuals.

As lieutenant governor, I have the opportunity to participate in a bipartisan group called the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA). This year the NLGA is starting a new

program called "Be the Cure." The goal of the program is to increase education and awareness among legislators, policymakers, patients and providers about the clinical trial process, specifically the need for participation of diverse patient populations.

South Dakota is home to people of many different backgrounds, and we need to work to continue advancing medicines that could help all of our state's residents. It is important that we all spread the word about the need for diversity enrollment in clinical trials and the value and benefits of increased participation by underrepresented communities.

I encourage you visit the National Lieutenant Governors Association "Be the Cure" web site at www.nlga.us to learn more about the importance of clinical trials and increased participation by all.



Since 1884 • Official County, City and School District Newspaper

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

Publisher: Gary Wood • General Manager/Managing Editor: Shauna Marlette

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 Schievelbein

Advertising Sales Rep: Jackie Williams

Composing Manager: Kathy Larson

Composing Staff: Rob Buckingham, Melissa Peterson

Assistant News/Sports Editor: Elyse Brightman

Reception Office Manager: Penny Aschman

Distribution & Circulation Manager: