

A treasured flour sack had a variety of uses



Bob Karolevitz
Writer At Large

I was going to write a column about flour sacks, when lo and behold, the mail brought a poem about them from Phyllis' cousins, Alice and Loren Gunderson of Bethalto, Illinois. "Aha," I said. "That would make a good piece to write about!"

The verse by Colleen B. Hubert told about the various ways flour sacks were used in the olden days. In her verse she wrote:

THE FLOUR

In that long-ago time when things were saved,
When roads were graveled and barrels were staved,
When worn-out clothing was used as rags,
And there were no plastic wrap or bags,
And the well and the pump were way out back,
A versatile item was the flour sack.

The sack could be filled with feathers and down
For a pillow, or t'would make a nice sleeping gown.
It could carry a book and be a school bag
Or become a mail sack slung over a nag.
It made a very convenient pack,
That adaptable, cotton flour sack.

Bleached and sewn, it was dutifully worn
As bibs, diapers, or kerchief adorned.
It was made into skirts, blouses and slips
And Mom braided rugs from one hundred strips.
She made ruffled curtains for the house or shack,
From that humble but treasured flour sack!

As a strainer for milk or apple juice,
To wave men in, it was a very good use.
As a sling for a sprained wrist or a break,
To help Mother roll up a jelly cake.
As a window shade or to stuff a crack,
We used a sturdy, common flour sack!

We polished and cleaned stove and table,
Scoured and scrubbed from cellar to gable,
We dusted the bureau and oak bed post,
Made costumes for October (a scary ghost)
And a parachute for a cat named Jack,
From that lowly, useful old flour sack!

So now, my friends, when they ask you,
As curious youngsters often do,
"Before plastic wrap, Elmer's glue
And paper towels, what did you do?"
Tell them loudly and with pride don't lack,
"Grandmother had that wonderful flour sack!"

Amen!

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Lawsuit is waste of sparse resources

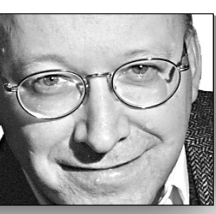
Monday night, as I watched the Vermillion School Board struggle with the potential double-whammy of a slight decline in local enrollment next year on top of measly state aid funding due to head our way from Pierre, officials in our state capital — specifically South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley and his staff, were getting ready to surprise all of us.

On Tuesday, the ink couldn't yet have dried from President Barack Obama's signing of the long-debated health reform bill passed by Congress when South Dakota officials announced that we, along with a dozen other states, are suing the federal government.

Because we South Dakotans evidently don't believe it's right to require people to have health insurance.

Here's the exact wording from the part of the lawsuit that tends to get to the heart of things. What's referred to as "The Act" is the health reform bill:

"The Act represents an unprecedented encroachment on the liberty of individuals living in the Plaintiffs' respective states, by mandating that all citizens and legal residents of the United States have qualifying healthcare coverage or pay a tax penalty. The Constitution nowhere authorizes the United States to mandate, either directly or under threat of penalty, that all citizens and legal residents have qualifying healthcare coverage. By imposing such a mandate,



David Lias
Between The Lines

the Act exceeds the powers of the United States under Article I of the Constitution and violates the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution.

In addition, the tax penalty required under the Act, which must be paid by uninsured citizens and residents, constitutes an unlawful capitation or direct tax, in violation of Article I, sections 2 and 9 of the Constitution of the United States.

The Act also represents an unprecedented encroachment on the sovereignty of the states."

It's sort of ironic in a way. I don't remember any South Dakota official asking us if we should become part of this lawsuit. And the timing just seems troublesome. We're joining in a lawsuit against the federal government at the same time we, as a state, are waiting (and hoping) that South Dakota will receive an additional \$36 million in revenue from the federal government so we can balance our state budget.

I must admit my legal expertise is a bit lacking. I certainly don't know the law as well as our attorney general does. I, too, can understand how state officials may be concerned with what just

happened in Washington.

Gov. Mike Rounds railed against the bill on economic grounds when the Senate first passed it in December, saying the law would add as many as 48,000 South Dakotans to the state's Medicaid rolls and drain \$53.7 million from state coffers in the next nine years.

We don't take Rounds' concerns lightly. But at a time when our state can barely keep its fiscal house in order, we wonder if it is wise to become involved in a multi-state lawsuit that likely has little chance of success.

We would have preferred that Rounds had taken a stance similar to Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire. Washington is part of the lawsuit against the federal government, a development that has received no support from Gregoire. She calls her state's actions an effort to gut the bill.

"There is no reason why we need to spend taxpayer money in the state of Washington to join this suit, when it's going to be litigated no matter what," she said.

It's hard to disagree with Gregoire. South Dakota, like Washington, really doesn't need to be a part of this lawsuit, and, in fact, after watching our school board do some collective head-scratching as it ponders the fiscal challenges our school district will face next year, I can't help but think we could find better ways to spend sparse state dollars.

LETTERS TO THE 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 350 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, P.O. Box 357, Vermillion, SD 57069, or e-mail us at david.lias@plaintalk.net.

Slim Jim wrappers and beer bottles in my bag

I came home the other day smelling like booze. No, I hadn't been drinking, but I was picking up after someone who had been drinking and driving. Does that little bit of evidence worry you as much as it does me?

I have read about people being fined or going to jail for DUI and other offenses but never for littering. Maybe we ought to get tough on litterbugs and send them to jail, too.

The mindless, selfish act of littering really boggles my mind. I'm trying to do my part by picking up after others. I also keep a plastic bag in my car to dispose of tissues, wrappers and whatnot. This doesn't make me a better person; it just means I care a lot about the environment.

I received my lessons in childhood from an environmentally-minded neighbor. Her name was Phyllis Arrison. We called her Mrs. Arrison, but she didn't mind it if we slipped and called her Phyllis. Mrs. Arrison had all of the kids on the block pick-

MyStory YourStory



Paula Damon
Columnist

ing up garbage long before we knew what a "litterbug" was. She was a good woman and taught us well.

When you think of it, we really do learn just about everything we need to know from our parents, neighbors and the other grownups. Lessons on caring for the environment are no exception. From the looks of it, few are rising to the call. If that's the case, maybe our schools should add to core curricula lessons on how to leave a place cleaner than you found it.

As happy as we all are to get rid of that white stuff, the melting snow is uncovering a mess of empty fountain containers, frozen vegetable bags, Mountain Dew bottles, candy boxes, Slim Jim wrappers, shattered CDs, Wal-Mart bags, chewing tobacco

tins, packaging foam and even dirty diapers. And that's the short list. Is there anything people won't toss on the ground?

Do you find it as difficult as I do to understand how anyone could denigrate the environment by littering? People must be all mixed up about where to throw their trash. Just look at all the garbage littering our super highways, city streets, parking lots and public sidewalks.

What makes more sense: holding onto fast food wrappers, cigarette cartons and the like and throwing them away in a waste receptacle or tossing them out the car window? Maybe that's the problem: people who litter have no sense at all.

I can't think of a single reason why people litter, save stupidity. Who are these peo-

ple anyway? Don't they know Earth has been put in our care and if we don't treat it right, who will? Why don't litterbugs realize that every piece of garbage pollutes our earth, chokes our streams and rivers and eventually poisons our oceans.

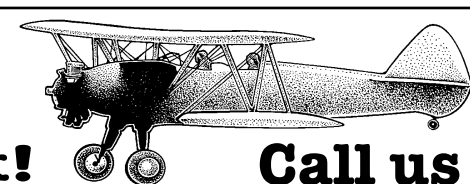
Littering is a shameful act against nature and subsequently humankind. If everyone would just stop littering, the world would be a much better place.

Paula Damon. A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Damon is a national and state 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@iw.net, follow her blog at www.my-story-your-story.blogspot.com and find her on Facebook.

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