

VIEWPOINTS

The stuff that lies beyond human perception

I'll never forget the time a couple years ago when my then 1-year-old granddaughter, Abigail, during one of her visits to our house in Vermillion, grabbed my hand, and practically dragged me to our kitchen.

It is a long, rectangular-shaped room, with lots of space. She pointed to a certain spot on the floor.

"Sit down, please," she asked. Naturally, I did.

She moved to the other end of the room, picked up a ball, sat down, and rolled it to me.

"Give me the ball, Papa," she said.

I rolled it back.

To an adult, it seemed so simple. But I saw the spark in Abigail's eyes as the realization of what was happening dawned on her.

She was taking part in a game, in a sport, actually – one that certainly didn't require the memorization of plays or lots of physical training – but it fulfilled all of the requirements of the limited athletic competition one can have in a kitchen without breaking your grandmother's dishes.

Its simplicity didn't matter. What mattered was Abigail had taken the first step in realizing the relationship between the physical world around her, and the important role of play in that world.

BETWEEN THE LINES



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Perhaps the Greeks, in the time of Plato and Socrates, best grasped that meaning as they recognized that athletic competition and Socratic philosophy both aim at virtue, and human

excellence.

By the time you read this, the South Dakota women's basketball team will be on the verge of facing Stanford in the NCAA Tournament in Ames, IA.

There are journalists and fans who are currently immersed in everything one could think about relating to Coyote women's basketball. They can recite, without missing a beat, the fact that Polly Harrington's 16 points led six South Dakota players who scored in double figures when the Coyotes beat Denver 82-71 March 11 in the championship game of the Summit League Tournament.

They can point out that South Dakota's Nicole Seekamp sank 13 free throws and Bridget Arens contributed 12 points off the bench as the Coyotes beat top-seeded South Dakota State,

72-58 on March 10.

They'll note how they'll never forget the moment, with just a bit over one second left in the Coyotes' March 9 game with Western Illinois, when junior guard Raeshel Contreras hit a 3-pointer to send the Coyotes past Western Illinois, 96-94, and keep South Dakota's Summit League championship hopes alive.

This is the kind of stuff that preoccupies us on the surface. Deep down, we know there's a lot more going on, not just with those who play the game, but those who love sports, period, whether they are watching from the sidelines or conducting a very basic form of sport by rolling a ball to their granddaughter.

Sports remind us of our place in the world, and the way we constantly battle the restrictions it places on us. There is this pesky thing called gravity, there are all sorts of complicated scientific things going on involving physics, velocity, force, and a variety of Newton's laws.

That, in itself, is grand, but the cincher – the thing that keeps my granddaughter Abigail and the Polly Harringtons and the Trevor Gruises of our world coming back with ball in hand time and again is the metaphysical aspect of it all.

There is something about athletic competition that is transcendent, that seems to flow,

at times, in a reality beyond what is perceptible to the senses.

Imagine what was going on in Raeshel's mind, body, and soul as she stood beyond the 3-point arc, a defender in her face, the pressure of time quickly receding, and was able to launch the ball perfectly through the hoop to help her team win.

We can look at the video replays, time and again, and analyze exactly what she did. It's the how that is such a wonder. How many hours of practice did she put in this year? How many years of playing and loving the game, starting with scrimmages on the playground? How many hours of learning plays, of being subjected to complicated diagrams, of running laps, of lifting weights, of waking with burning muscles and creaking knees?

All with the knowledge that a season-ending injury could happen at any moment, and even while at one's peak, there is always the risk of failure. When the final buzzer sounds, the score may not be in your favor.

How athletes are able to face that week after week is a wonder. And a bit of a mystery.

Sports forces us to recognize human fallibility. We watch as the athlete confronts that ever-present risk of failure, and we celebrate when she or he conquers that challenge.

Perhaps we need to be reminded that we humans can control our imperfections if we work hard enough. My granddaughter, at times, discovers that as we play, the ball rolls past her if she doesn't pay close attention. She's learned, as her motor skills develop, that even simple tasks with a ball require the use of one's mind, with a bit of spirit thrown in, too.

This season, the Coyote women have reminded us all that success need not be elusive if you work hard enough. The team members have been motivated beyond measure, beyond human understanding, really, to test themselves. They fulfilled the human desire to learn, train and succeed.

They have felt obligated to challenge themselves, and to challenge others.

This is the stuff that gives a degree of meaning to being human. There is a spiritual aspect to sports, to the challenge of facing head-on the opposition brought on by a fellow competitor and the world itself.

This is why we will watch the Coyote women in the NCAA Tournament Saturday evening. The final score of the game will be secondary. We will watch because, once again, these young women will transcend reality and show us how to win at this thing called life.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A travesty To the editor,

Our governor, with the support of the Republican controlled legislature, has rejected the Medicaid expansion portion of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This is accomplished by specifying what health insurance must provide and by providing assistance to purchase private health insurance. Those with the lowest incomes are to be covered by the Medicaid system.

However, significant numbers of lower income Americans are not eligible for Medicaid benefits, so the ACA expanded Medicaid eligibility. The ACA provides subsidies for those with incomes at the poverty level and slightly above so they can afford to purchase private health insurance in spite of their low income. The ACA does not provide subsidies for those with incomes below the poverty level because the ACA intended for them to be covered by Medicaid.

Unfortunately, people with incomes below the poverty level who are not disabled and are living alone or with non-family members are not eligible for Medicaid. The ACA expanded Medicaid to cover all of these people, and to include those whose incomes are up to 138 percent of the poverty level.

South Dakota, along with several other Republican controlled states, has rejected the Medicaid expansion. By doing so, our state government has denied health insurance to many of our neediest South Dakotans. State Rep. Bernie Hunhoff, in an article in the Yankton Press and Dakotan, says, "a New England Journal of Medicine study says the lack of Medicaid Expansion will cost the lives of 94 South Dakotans."

THIS IS WRONG!!!! Our incumbent Republican legislators supported this travesty and for this they should be replaced.

Sincerely,
Carol Williams
Yankton



Tell me, what good is March, anyway?

March is one of those non-months, like September, serving only as a transition from one season to the next. Sending us through a portal of harbored ambition, this month when daffodils are supposed to bloom, offers us nothing very legendary or momentous, save Saint Patrick's Day.

Or so I thought.

When trying to elevate March, named after the Roman god of war Mars, to a higher stature by giving it some oomph and pizzazz, I learned that it is measurably better than I imagined it to be.

Formerly the first month of the year in ancient Rome, since it is the first month of spring, March is a mixed bag of milestones.

What I previously believed to be a benign set of 31 days under the signs of Pisces and Aries blossomed into a plethora of intriguing historical marvels, facts and commemorations. Takes these, for example:

MY STORY YOUR STORY



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March, which became the third month of the year when the Gregorian calendar was adopted, is when Winston Churchill made the speech on March 5, 1946, that led to widespread use of the term "Iron Curtain." On the same day 10 years later, King Kong made his television debut. That same year, the first commercial helicopter was licensed on March 8.

It's a month of firsts in the world of communication. The first telephone call was made on March 10, 1876. The first transatlantic radio broadcast took place on March 12, 1925.

The first transatlantic phone call between New York and London was placed one year later on March 7. On March 25, 1954, phonograph, radio and television manufacturer RCA made the first color television, and this March, the World Wide Web celebrated its 25th anniversary.

On March 12, 1959, Hawaii was named a state, and the U.S. adopted standard time on March 13, 1884.

Aleksei Leonov of the Soviet Union made the first spacewalk on March 18, 1965. The march from Selma to Montgomery led by Martin Luther King, Jr. started on March 21, 1965.

On March 26, 1845, a patent was granted for an adhesive medicated plaster, leading to the first Band Aid. Jonas Salk announced polio vaccine on March 26, 1953.

The Coca-Cola Company developed its original formula for Coke, which included cocaine, on

March 29, 1886. Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic March 30, 1932.

Basic Facts

In the northern hemisphere, the spring equinox happens on the first day of spring, March 20 - 21

Among the many historical events in March is the Boston Massacre took place on March 5, 1770. Paper money was first issued on March 10, 1862 in the U.S. for the first time. The first United States National Park, Yellowstone, was established by an act of Congress on March 1, 1872. The Star Spangled Banner was made our National Anthem on March 3, 1931.

Come to find out, March is Cataract Awareness Month, Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, Foot Health Month, Frozen Food Month, Nutrition Month, Poison Prevention Awareness Month, Red Cross Month, Social Worker's Month

and Women's History Month, among others.

Many famous people were born in March, including U.S. Presidents Grover Cleveland, Andrew Jackson and John Tyler. Actors born this month include Matthew Broderick, Sarah Jessica Parker, Reese Witherspoon, Vince Vaughn and Bruce Willis.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Frost and Dr. Seuss are notable authors born in March. Among famous singers who have March birthdays are Mariah Carey, Celine Dion, Elton John and James Taylor.

With birthstones of aquamarine and bloodstone, March is just a plain old non-month serving only as a transition from one season to the next. Sending us through a portal of harbored ambition, it offers nothing very legendary or momentous, save Saint Patrick's Day.

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Vermillion



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TALK

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