

## VIEWPOINTS

## Working toward a win-win

Doughy. That's how I've felt for about the past, oh, four months or so. It's my own fault. I sit behind a desk too long during the day, and easily plop down in front of the television at night when I get home.

I could easily blame the weather for my lack of activity – if I had been inspired to take a walk outdoors yesterday, I would have had to battle temps that barely broke the freezing mark.

As I type this, it is a whopping 27 degrees outside. Add the wind, and the “real feel” temperature is 17 degrees.

Welcome to spring in South Dakota. Welcome to my common excuse for my couch potato lifestyle.

I was reminded of my sedentary ways during one of my sit-practically-motionless-in-front-of-the-computer-sessions earlier this week at the office. While perusing my e-mail, I ran across a new release that suggests that it's not just adults like me who are lolling around too much.

The South Dakota Board of Education held the first of four public hearings on proposed K-12 physical education standards

## BETWEEN THE LINES



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Their recommendations were brought before the board for first consideration. Three additional public hearings will be held at state board meetings May 19 in Aberdeen, July 21 in Pierre and Sept. 15 in Rapid City.

The proposed standards provide the framework for what students in grades K-8 and two levels in high school should know and be able to do in the subject area of physical education.

At the elementary level, the focus is on fundamental motor skills. Middle school standards focus on application of fundamental motor skills and finding a balance of activities to

on March 24. A group of 24 individuals, primarily physical education teachers from across South Dakota, participated in the review and revision of the standards.

keep all students engaged. In high school, the standards focus on fitness, wellness and lifelong activity.

Decisions regarding curriculum and instruction are made by local school districts.

The last review of South Dakota's physical education standards was conducted in 2000. The South Dakota physical education course standards for high school graduation were developed in 2006.

It's easy to perhaps be overcome by flashbacks of one's not-so-pleasant experiences in high school P.E. class – Dodge ball comes to mind – but it could be argued that there is no time like the present to stress physical education in our schools.

According to a report researched and written in 2013 by Twyla Steinberger, a first year master of social work student at the University of South Dakota, our state's kids could be in for major health issues as adults if current trends continue.

Nationwide, the number of children in our nation struggling with obesity is alarming. The 2007-2008 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

shows an estimated 17 percent of children aged 2 to 19 are obese. The trends are also cause for concern. Among preschool children aged 2 through 5, obesity increased from 5 percent to 10 percent from 1976 to 2008; and from 7 percent to 20 percent among 6- to 11-year-olds during that same timeframe.

Among 12- to 19-year-olds, obesity increased from 5 percent to 18 percent during the same period. Although South Dakota children are faring better than the national averages, Steinberger notes that childhood obesity is a significant health issue.

It's no wonder that our kids may be having weight problems. We adults have not been setting a good example in recent years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the average American of today consumes 56 percent more fats and oils and 15 more pounds of sugar per year than the average American of 40 years ago.

High-energy foods that contain more calories per bite are widely available. Sugar drinks are also more prevalent. Both fats and sugar are associated with excess body fat in children.

Steinberger's research shows the number of obese children has stayed right around the 16 percent mark for about the last six years. The number rose to 17 percent in 2008-09, and fell to 15 percent in 2010-11 only to climb back to 16 percent in 2011-12.

The South Dakota Department of Health has set a goal of decreasing the number of our youth who are overweight or obese to 14 percent by 2020.

Among the goals being sought with the proposed K-12 physical education standards is to develop “physically literate” individuals.

The technical definition used by educators describes such an individual as someone who exhibits responsible personal and social behaviors that respects one's self, others, and environment.

In the terms of a layman, reaching those goals means teaching our kids how to eat right, avoid risky behavior, and get enough exercise on a regular basis.

It's a win-win – especially if our kids happen to share some of their physical literacy with us adults.

A seasonal poem:  
Out like a lamb

One thing is for certain – March came in like a lion with pummeling sleet and snow over my forsaken lawn. Early March drew a dreary curtain, draping streets and sidewalks with an icy coat, keeping me shut up inside.

My roof and porch railing stood buried and burdened under the weight of that deceivably fluffy white stuff. The heavens surely unleashed a punishing fury, dampening my spirits and ruining all of my plans.

Crying foul as winter had overstayed her welcome; I tired of listening to her soundtrack, howling in darkening skies above. Oh, how I longed to loosen the sashes and let in whistling warm breezes.

But for the time being, my windows were voiceless, and so was I. Layered with sweaters and socks, I was brought down, while relinquishing my wish for warmer days to romp barefoot and sleeveless through sun baked afternoons.

The thought of March makes me want to pry loose springtime, putting away the cold for a long while.

But instead, the snowy forecast became a harbinger with an inexplicable power that merged once hard-wired lines between here and there and disappeared fence lines.

Piling on a thicket of misery, weather maps spelled out an ocean of winter. Repressed, I was saddled once again.

Already returned from southern reaches, chickadees, cardinals and sparrows formed in single file, prepared for one last howling siege. Frenetically, they waited their turns to ravage the feeder in a surefire frenzy, sending seeds in all directions.

Shoppers buzzed in and out of grocery stores, stocking piling their carts with bread, milk, peanut butter and TV dinners, before the storm would cause everything in her path to take a funeral posture.

That dirty old pile of snow – the one that maintenance crews created with their plows? The pile the kids wore out climbing and clawing while playing “King on the Mountain.” It had become a sorry lump in winter's waiting room – a scant image of its former self, sullen and hardly usable. Endangered and shrinking, it was reduced to a mere run-off on the sopped playground.

But early March's entourage applied fresh layers, replenishing its withered complexion. Re-commissioned with a second wind, that old snow pile, returned to its heroic past, appearing taller and fulsome.

And what was to be said of me earlier this month when March roared in? Obliquely, I stared out my window, squinting for signs of life – any movement to defy the odds.

Riding the waves that my comforter made as I tugged it to stay warm were my fading springtime dreams. As though pulling on oars, I elbowed deeper and deeper into slumber, whispering a small prayer: “You, March, surely came in mightily like a lion. Now, go out gently, like a lamb.”

## MY STORY YOUR STORY



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## Capitol Notebook:

## Lawmakers mixed on more gambling

By Bob Mercer  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – The Legislature drew the line against video lottery during the 2014 session. Lawmakers didn't give Deadwood much either.

The only action that made it through was a proposed constitutional amendment. South Dakota voters will decide in November whether craps, roulette and keno should be allowed in Deadwood.

Those games are an expansion of legal gambling. Because they require people to run them, however, it's difficult to predict how many Deadwood establishments will offer them.

They'll also become legal at tribal casinos across South Dakota if voters approve the additional games for Deadwood.

Legislators didn't look kindly at any other expansions of gambling or related activities.

Deadwood hotels won't get round-the-clock alcohol sales and consumption in their casinos, for example.

Deadwood also won't get to charge another \$1 per room of occupancy tax while the rest of South Dakota is \$2.

The Senate killed the 24-hour booze bill that Rep. Tim Rounds,

R-Pierre, wedged through the House of Representatives without a spare vote.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard vetoed the Deadwood-dollar bill from Sen. Bob Ewing, R-Spearfish.

The governor's support didn't seem to help two video-lottery bills that were goals of the South Dakota Lottery Commission.

One would have increased the bet limit to \$5 per play. The House killed that.

Another would have allowed video lottery establishments to have up to 15 terminals, provided that numbers 11 through 15 used new technology.

The House killed that one too.

Consequently, video lottery remains as it has always been: \$2 maximum bet, 10 machines per establishment.

Legalized gambling seems to be at a balance point in South Dakota. It's not going away, but it's not going to get much bigger.

Since the 1986 amendment that changed the South Dakota Constitution to allow lottery, voters have been on the side of gambling all but once.

That defeat came in 1993 regarding more machines and a higher bet limit in Deadwood.

Since then businesses in Deadwood have found creative ways to get around the restriction

of 30 devices per building.

The Deadwood bet limit has been raised, twice, and now stands at \$1,000.

Deadwood's better acceptance among the public puzzles lottery commissioners and people from video lottery businesses.

They spent many hours last year working ideas to get people to play more.

On the other hand, video lottery has survived every time it was put to a statewide vote.

The Lottery Commission meets Monday, March 24. There could be a study in the months ahead on gambling problems in South Dakota. Lottery officials discussed the idea with legislators recently as they tried to increase support.

The Commission on Gaming that oversees Deadwood wants to stay clear of video lottery, however.

“I'm really uncomfortable with us being tied in with them,” Gaming Commission member Harry Christianson of Rapid City said at a meeting Wednesday.

He acknowledged he was an owner of video lottery casinos earlier in his life.

“As well we should,” Chip Kemnitz of Philip, the Gaming Commission's chairman, said in agreeing with Christianson. “It seems like two different houses to me.”

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