

Nothing silly about the state's pickle law

The codified laws in our nation's 50 states can promote some vigorous head scratching. For example, in Connecticut, in order for a pickle to officially be considered a pickle, it must bounce.

I'm sure South Dakota has its fair share of silly laws similar to this, if they haven't been wiped from the books yet.

South Dakota, however, has its own "pickle law," and we urge local people with green thumbs to take advantage of it, especially since it appears winter has finally left us and the outdoor Vermillion Area Farmers Market is once again setting up each Thursday at the Clay County Fairgrounds.

A pickle law, as these measures have come to be known in other states, is a legislative remedy that allows people to sell home processed foods – including pickles – at farmer's markets and roadside food stands without having to meet many of the same state licensure regulations that govern commercial food sales.

Without a pickle bill, the small farmers markets that have existed for generations and others that have sprung more recently in Vermillion and other communities across the state were at risk of breaking state laws.

Back in 2009, for instance, before this law was passed, it was illegal to sell a jar of home canned chokecherry jelly, or a baked-to-perfection loaf of homemade bread or a pint of spicy home-processed relish unless it was prepared in a state-certified kitchen.

The *Rapid City Journal* noted in an editorial last year that vendors at the Black Hills Farmers Market at Founders Park in Rapid City found that out in the summer of 2009, when an inspector from the South Dakota Department of Health showed up to warn them that many of the products they had for sale must be prepared in a certified kitchen, a burdensome regulation that involves a long list of requirements, as well as a \$100 license and other annual inspection fees.

"That doesn't just hurt the vendors' profit margins, it hurts consumers who want to support

local agriculture by buying locally-grown and made products," the Journal noted. We agree with that sentiment.

That's why the Small Farms Committee of Dakota Rural Action, a political advocacy group, worked closely with the state health department in the winter of 2010 to draft HB 1222, a home processed foods bill that allows vendors to sell certain

goods direct to consumers without a commercial food license.

Under HB 1222, people can sell shelf-stable baked goods and home canned goods that are prepared in home

kitchens without a food license. All such products must have a label that lists basic information about ingredients, date it was made, producer contact information and a disclaimer that it was not prepared in a commercial kitchen. In addition, home canned products must be third-party certified as to the safety of their recipe and processing method.

I admittedly am not familiar with all of the details of this law, and exactly what is required of gardeners who want to sell their canned gherkins or tomatoes or jams and jellies at the Vermillion Farmers Market.

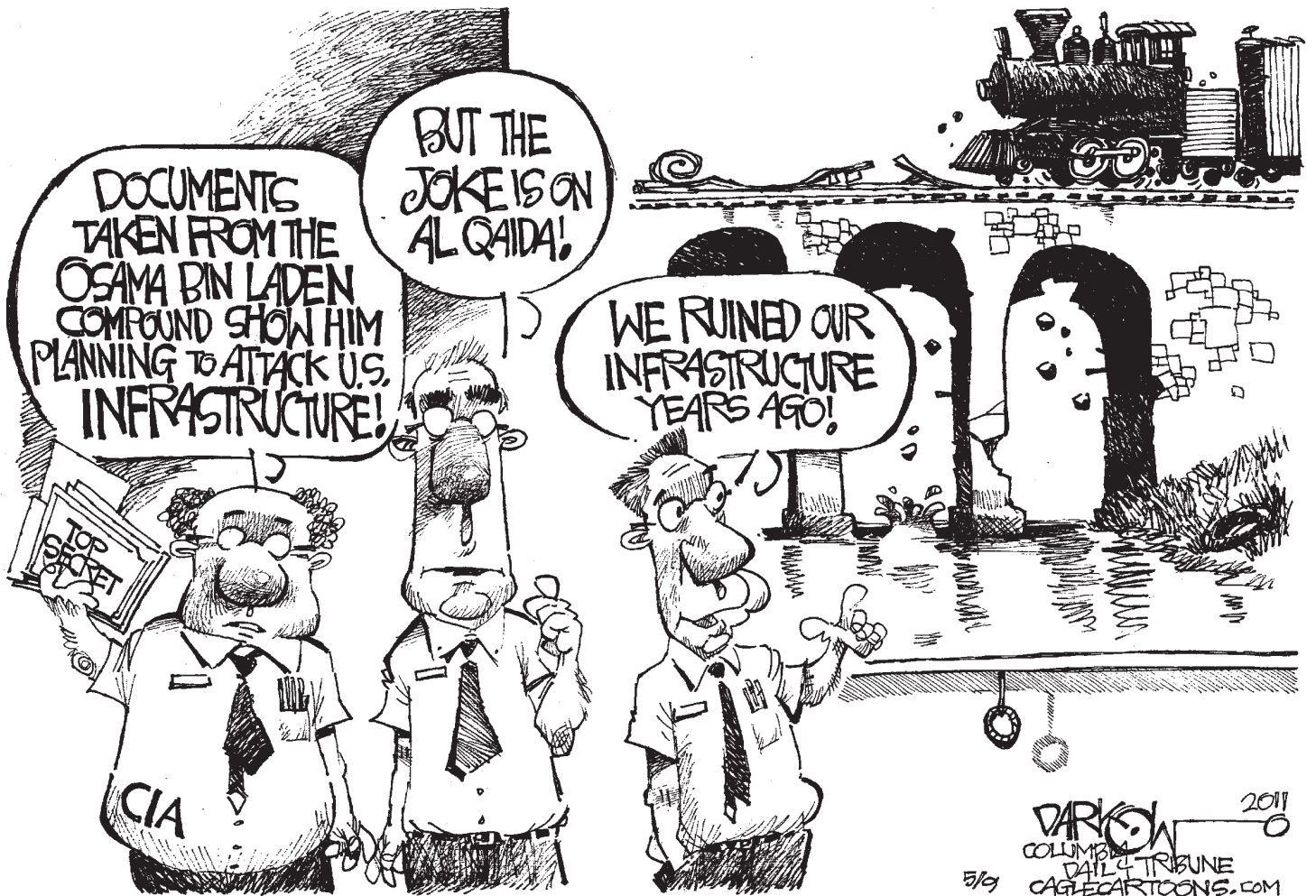
Representatives of our local farmers market, such as Amy Putthoff Schweinle and Grace Freeman, likely will be able to help. And you can learn more about preserving and marketing homegrown produce by attending the weekly workshops being held in Vermillion. Go on line to <http://vafm.wordpress.com/> for the schedule.

Thanks to the South Dakota "pickle law" and the people that help make the Vermillion Area Farmers Market a reality, consumers are given more healthy food choices while the small-agriculture economy of our community is strengthened.

BETWEEN THE LINES



DAVID LIAS
david.lias@plaintalk.net



National Music Museum – a must see

As I set foot inside the National Music Museum in Vermillion, I know immediately that I am in a most unusual place. Here, I sense the spirited crowds of musicians shouldering the weight of history, like a great crescendo, bearing down on my soul.

It's as though I am surrounded by generations of angels and saints, a family of sorts, genetically knitted together with DNA of musical expression.

This is not just any museum. Consider it home to some of "the world's most important collections of rare, antique instruments." Most certainly, the National Music Museum is a tribute to the genius of music making.

At this one-of-a-kind archive, the stories of carefully placed artifacts from antiquity graciously and expertly present themselves in an array of ingenuity and intellect.

Excitedly clutching a Dell touchpad and adjusting the accompanying headset, a necessary tool provided by a most helpful and courteous museum attendant, I begin to stroll nonchalantly through the galleries and hallways on two stories of the three-story circa 1910 building.

At times, I step lightly across the terrazzo floors, methodically processing from one display to the next, tapping the virtual tour-guide touchpad, which carries me along in a rhythmic pattern of encyclopedic discourse.

I am enlightened by the passion of those who took wood, ivory, brass and a sundry of other raw materials to hand-carve and craft these musical gems before me.

Like the ever blissful turning of a player piano roll or the delicate strumming of a harp in sequences of melodic sounds, this ornate place both soothes and serenades my

MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON
paula.damon@tw.net

The Bates Gallery offers a marvelous collection of ancient harmonic instruments, while the Beede Gallery boasts exotic instruments from the jungles of New Guinea, Africa and elsewhere. Here, I spot a mid-twentieth century beaded rattle from Cameroon. It's called a Cabacca and is made from a large hollowed out gourd. There's a West African Plucked Lamellaphra constructed of brass, iron and other metals.

As with all rooms in the National Music Museum, each display showcases unadulterated brilliance of the methods in which humankind has expressed itself musically through the ages.

With the controls at my fingertips, I travel through time, learning sophisticated intricacies of instruments made in Italy, Germany, England, Ireland, Holland, Eastern Europe, Spain, Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, America and a host of other places around the world.

My heart pounds while passing by the percussion section. Studying worn but

sturdy looking drumheads, I imagine timed beats sending messages, like the tap, tap-tap, tap of Morse code, only heavier and louder, across villages and through jungles.

Now, while slowly shuffling through galleries of wind, string and brass instruments, I experience nuggets from the era of Louis XIV. Not wanting this litany of musical history to end, I saunter from European folk to 19th century American Reed Organs, pianos and the grand harmonicon.

On a high note of pleasure, I slowly float through this place, marveling at how all of these innovations came into being, admiring the sustenance and courage of their inventors.

I have come back to this shrine to music again and again. I return to remember who I am, to realize where I have come from and to see where I am headed.

Suspended in time between then and now, I am deeply grateful for the promise embodied here to future generations and for the reconciliatory nature of music – its power to redeem and renew.

A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Bosco Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her writing has won first-place in competitions of the National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women. In the 2009 and 2010 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contest, her columns took five first-place awards. To contact Paula, email boscodamon-paula@gmail.com, follow her blog at my-story-your-story.blogspot.com and find her on Facebook.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Debt of gratitude

The Vermillion Public Library owes a huge debt of gratitude to Dr. Maurine Richardson. Dr. Richardson is retiring from the School of Education at USD and is donating her vast collection of educational resources, cookbooks, children's books, stuffed animals and puppets to the library. Many of the books have been added to the collection. Some were sold at the recent Friends of Vermillion Public Library Used Book Sale, the proceeds of which directly benefit the library and its patrons. Hundreds of the children's

books are in new condition and will be offered as incentive prizes for the Summer Reading Program, along with many of the stuffed animals and puppets.

Dr. Richardson's generosity will have a positive impact on Vermillion Public Library patrons for years to come, especially our young readers. Thank you, Dr. Richardson, for sharing your love of reading, books, and children's literature with our library. We wish all the best to you and your husband in your retirement.

Joyce Moore
Youth Services Librarian
Vermillion Public Library

Wonderful gesture

We just had the pleasure of a three-night stay in our RV at the Lion's Park in your lovely town. Thank you for the wonderful gesture of providing free RV sites. We appreciated it so much. We began our stay at the Chamber of Commerce where a very helpful lady gave us maps of town and information on what to see and do. I did laundry in a clean, well-cared-for laundromat. We enjoyed the National Music Museum, W.H. Over Museum, a walk to the top of Spirit Mound and along the river at Cotton Park.

I participated in the morning worship at the

Methodist Church where there was a special tribute to the graduating seniors. We also want to thank Hy-Vee Grocery Store for the free Wi-Fi, which we were able to access during our stay. Shopping there was an enjoyable experience with its large, clean aisles.

While in Vermillion, I was able to renew my South Dakota driver's license and experienced friendly, helpful staff there. Being residents of South Dakota while being full-time RVers has been great for us and we thank you.

Joyce Space (and Larry Space)
Members of Escapees RV Club

The Associated Press

Aberdeen American News: May 12 Cellphone carrier change should have been smoother

Cellphone carrier change should have been smoother. If you've seen long lines at Lakewood Mall, they might be for the superhero movie "Thor."

Just as likely, they are lines of unsatisfied cellphone customers outside the mall's AT&T store. Why, the lines are so long there, that they've put out a little table with snacks at the door.

What has gone so wrong? Alltel subscribers who are converting to AT&T are finding out the service and quality aren't what they expected.

Customers are complaining about a lack of service. Some are being told they need new phones altogether.

You would think that the changeover would be a little smoother than this. Alltel has merged with Verizon Wireless nationally, seemingly without too much trouble.

The problem started when the Federal Communications Commission ruled that Verizon had to divest of Alltel properties in states where the "Can you hear me now?" network would have a monopoly. That's how AT&T ended up in the picture in South Dakota.

So maybe AT&T wasn't prepared for the changeover of thousands of largely rural customers. But for all we've heard from irritated

subscribers, the communication from AT&T could have been a whole lot better — ironic for a communications company.

And it's not just the general public having trouble — even Public Utilities Commissioner Steve Kolbeck stood in line with his AT&T phone back in late April. But for many, the problems continue weeks later.

The Associated Press reported that some rural customers would experience limited service because of the changeover. Customers in remote areas who relied on roaming coverage from Verizon cellular towers lost that capability.

And the lines get longer at AT&T.

Phones are an important part of daily life, another utility bill that citizens pay monthly. These companies owe it to their customers to get it right the first time.

We expect that AT&T will get through that long line, but it'll take some time.

And there have been reports of other long lines — these forming in front of Verizon Wireless stores, where former

AT&T/Alltel customers are switching carriers.

It seems you'll have to choose between long lines whatever your cellphone solution.

Argus Leader: May 14

Now is not the time for school election apathy

Now is not the time for school election apathy

It's sad that voters typically show scant interest in the city's school board races.

People generally pay attention only when a controversy is boiling or the election is paired with other municipal races.

But with Sioux Falls and South Dakota facing critical challenges in education, the city can't afford any more voter apathy.

The candidate who wins the May 24 race will sit on a board that will lead the city's schools during a critical time.

A reduction in state education funding already is forcing school districts to choose between retaining teachers or cutting programs — among other tough decisions. Sioux Falls is no exception.

And signs indicate that the situation could linger — or even worsen — if the atmosphere in the Legislature doesn't change.

That means it's more important than ever for Sioux

Falls' educational leaders to be equipped to meet extreme challenges.

With the school board election about two weeks away, residents need to learn about the candidates who want to step into this environment.

The Editorial Board is interviewing both candidates — incumbent Debbie Hoffman and former board member Doug Morrison — to help residents gain essential information about them. Residents can watch an online replay of Morrison's interview, which was conducted Thursday, and see Hoffman's pending interview, which will be at 4 p.m. Monday.

There also are candidate bios, short Q&As and a story about the candidates' recent appearance at a voter forum — all information that's available online.

Too often, people use the excuse of not being prepared as a reason for not voting in elections such as this one. However, there is no legitimate excuse to skip the election or fail to be prepared to participate.

Information is available. People just have to care enough to pay attention to it.

And as schools face increasingly difficult challenges, there's no better time than now to make that choice.

Send Letters to david.lias@plaintalk.net

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Vermillion Plain Talk Staff

News Staff: Travis Gulbrandson. Advertising Director: Michele Schievelbein. Advertising Sales Rep: Carol Hohenhaner. Composing Staff: Heidi Henson, Kathy Larson, Matt Richardson and Tera Schmidt. Reception Office Manager: Susan Forma. Distribution & Circulation Manager: David Jeffcoat.