

The fastest, most direct route to the truth

So many things to comment on this week.

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin won't be a candidate in 2014.

President Obama seems to be up to his ears in controversy, with questions being raised about the White House handling of the terrorist attack on Benghazi, outrage over revelations that the Internal Revenue Service targeted Tea Party groups, and charges that the Justice Department secretly obtained two months of telephone records of reporters and editors for the AP in what the news agency called a "massive and unprecedented intrusion" into how news organizations gather the news.

But, it's a beautiful spring day currently in Vermillion — one of the first we've experienced this season. It has me in the mood to focus on the positive, and on the beautiful — right here at home.

The Vermillion Area Dance Organization (VADO) held its spring recital Sunday afternoon in the Vermillion High School Performing Arts Center. It was quite a performance that showcased a lot of hard work and practice and the first steps by young people in the area of mastering this art form.

Most of the dancers were kids — some were very young, just beyond the toddler stage. But much more than kids' play was going on Sunday afternoon. And I, blessed with the ability to barely walk a straight line, am hardly one to comment on why dance is important. I just know it is. And I hope the community will agree that it is, too.

Maybe this will help. I'm sharing excerpts of a piece written by the late choreographer Gabrielle Roth, who notes:

"Dance is the fastest, most direct route to the truth — not some big truth that belongs to everybody, but the get down and personal kind, the what's-happening-in-me-right-now kind of truth. We dance to reclaim our brilliant ability to disappear in something bigger, something safe, a space without a critic or a judge or an analyst.

We dance to fall in love with the spirit in all things, to wipe out memory or transform it into moves that nobody else can make because they didn't live it. We dance to hook up to the true genius -- to seek refuge in our

BETWEEN THE LINES



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originality and our power to reinvent ourselves; to shed the past, forget the future and fall into the moment first. Remember being fifteen, possessed by the beat, by the thrill of

music pumping loud enough to drown out everything you'd ever known? We love beats that move faster than we can think, beats that drive us ever deeper inside, that rock our worlds, break down walls and make us sweat our prayers. Prayer is moving. Prayer is offering our bones back to the dance.

Prayer is letting go of everything that impedes our inner silence. God is the dance and the dance is the way to freedom and freedom is our holy work.

We dance to survive, and the beat offers a yellow brick road to make it through the chaos that is the tempo of our times. We dance to shed skins, tear off masks, crack molds, and experience the breakdown — the shattering of borders between body, heart and mind, between genders and generations, between nations and nomads. We are the transitional generation."

I took a ton of pictures at Sunday's concert, and I've posted them in our Spotted gallery. Log on to spotted.plaintalk.net and you'll find images of local faces falling "in the moment feet first."

Go on, do it now. State political issues can wait. So can the latest news on Benghazi.

Take a moment to simply "get into the spirit" of dance.



Her favorite color was green

This is Mother's day. My 39th and I'm searching for my mother's heart, wondering what drove her, what inspired her, what led her on the way to the 59th Mother's Day she endured before her death in 2005.

Mom didn't linger long, and during the years before she fell ill, I was far too busy raising my own brood to even contemplate these things about her, let alone formulate questions with the right words, in the right place, at the right time that would produce viable and meaningful answers from her, other than, "Oh, you never mind!" or a polite and speechless dismissal of herself from the room.

My mom was tight-lipped. Her heart was clamped shut. She went to her grave never expressing her longings, her dreams, her fears and other complexities that comprised her.

Oh, I do know she loved coconut cream pie. Her favorite color was green. She preferred her potatoes baked over fried. She liked to sew her clothes rather than buying them off the rack. My mother viewed monumental domestic chores, like cleaning and cooking, as relatively easy tasks, which she preferred to do herself, rather than watch someone else not do them as well as she could.

While stoic to the point of being robotic, Mother was extremely self-conscious, spending hours in front of the mirror preening her hair and refining her makeup

MY STORY YOUR STORY



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church would flock to the house or call her on the phone

Mom would listen to them for hours, whispered pearls of advice and they'd leave or hang up breathing sighs of relief, feeling hopeful and much, much lighter.

My mother's smile was as pretty and refreshing as a slice of key lime pie, but she rarely showed it off. There was a sullen grace about her. She was quite soft-spoken unless her children were under attack, and then she would become as defensive as a mother bear protecting her cubs and watch out!

I never heard her swear, except for "Damn it!" once in a while. When she'd holler, "What in the Sam Hill are you doing?" I always thought she was cursing but eventually learned she was not.

— not because she liked the way she looked but quite to the contrary.

Yet, she had a following. No matter where my mother was, she had a magnetic field around her that seemed to draw needy women 10 to 20 years her junior. Weeping, seeking shelter in the rare wisdom and faith she imbued so effortlessly, co-workers and young ladies from

Today when I think of her, I see a locked room. I am not sure what gladdened her heart more — watching her children come forth in life or seeing them go, because she didn't say much either way.

And, I'm mystified why she tore up our baby pictures, kneeling there over the cedar chest in the boys' walk-in closet on the second floor of my childhood home.

By then, I had already married and moved away to Iowa. That old wooden chest with a hinged lid was the closest thing we had to treasure chest. In it were family keepsakes: Mom's alligator shoes, her wedding dress, scrapbooks, postcards Dad wrote from his U.S. Navy post in Puerto Rico, baptismal gowns, black and white baby photos of her six children, lots and lots of baby photos.

It was around that time the bank was foreclosing on the house. Except for the two suitcases she had packed, everything in the century-old Victorian house would go. Many years later, my siblings told me that was when Mom had a nervous breakdown and ripped our baby photo to shreds.

I want to think it was because she was protecting us. I reason that she merely didn't want all those precious images of our innocence landing in some thrift store or garbage heap.

She couldn't take them with her, probably didn't think of shipping them to a relative, so she destroyed every last one.

SD EDITORIAL ROUNDUP

Capital Journal, Pierre, May 12, 2013

Johnson is right: Taxing Internet sales is matter of fairness

Sen. Tim Johnson is right: the Marketplace Fairness Act that has breezed to easy passage in the U.S. Senate would help put retailers and small vendors in states such as South Dakota on an equal footing with sellers who haven't had to worry about collecting the same taxes. It may have been difficult at one time to collect taxes from remote purchases, but that's become easier and easier in the age of the Internet.

If Main Street retail space is to compete with Cyberspace, there's no reason Congress shouldn't pass this bill; and U.S. senators apparently agreed when they voted 69 to 27 in favor of it on May 6.

With that said, it's not at all certain the bill will become law. A website called govtrack.us gives bills a prognosis, and it calculates that this one has a 0 percent chance of passage.

Retailers who worry about losing customers to out-of-state Internet vendors should weigh in on this. Let Washington know what you think.

The Associated Press

LETTER 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 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 david.lias@plaintalk.net.

Guest commentary:

Infinite variety in South Dakota

By Gov. Dennis Daugaard

It has been said that South Dakota is the land of infinite variety. Our weather in the past month has certainly proven that to be true.

Fortunately, the description of our variety also extends to South Dakota's geography. We are home to wide-open grasslands and lakes, mountains and streams, and the beautiful, flowing Missouri River.

Because of our diverse landscapes, a wealth of state parks are scattered across South Dakota.

Whether you are interested in a day at the beach at Sandy Shore near Watertown, a fishing trip at Indian Creek by Mobridge or a getaway weekend in our beautiful Black Hills, let South Dakota's parks be your host this summer.

Few states can compete with the number of options that our state park system provides to South Dakotans and those who visit us, and we will continue to improve. This year, we enacted a bill that created our first new state park in 41 years — Good Earth State Park, at the Blood Run National Historic Site in Lincoln County.

The new park will be located near one of South Dakota's fastest growing

areas, southeast of Sioux Falls. The beautiful scenery will be preserved for visitors to enjoy for years to come. I invite each of you to visit South Dakota's newest state park.

As you make your Memorial Day and summer vacation plans, I hope you will consider exploring the beauty in our own back yard. In fact, this weekend is Open House weekend from Friday evening through Sunday (May 17-19), where all state park entrance admissions are free.

In addition, May 17-19 is free-fishing weekend, allowing all South Dakotans to fish from Friday through Sunday license-free. These events coincide with our celebration of Kids to Parks day, a national promotion linking our young people with the great outdoors.

This weekend, and all year round, making arrangements to camp, hike, hunt or fish has never been easier. Our citizens can now visit www.campsd.com or download the South Dakota Outdoors smartphone app to get directions, book a campground, buy a hunting or fishing license or just learn more about all that our state park system has to offer.

I think you will be pleasantly surprised at what you find here in South Dakota.

SD EDITORIAL ROUNDUP

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, May 11, 2013

Use creativity to attract events

Visitors to Sioux Falls in the coming months and years will have more hotels to choose from and more entertainment options with Sanford's new sports complex and the city's events center, currently under construction near the Arena.

Those entertainment venues will draw more visitors to the city and hopefully spur continued development.

That positive news, however, is offset by concerns raised this week about the city's ability to attract and grow its convention business.

To attract larger regional and national conventions, the city needs additional small group meeting spaces and hotels that are near the convention facilities, says Teri Schmidt, executive director of the Sioux Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau. The shortcoming is becoming more apparent when she and her staff go to conferences and try to sell Sioux Falls conventions.

The assessment from Schmidt was surprising to some, given all the positive development projects underway in our city. But if the lack of adequate hotel rooms on or near our convention center is hurting our ability to draw more regional conventions, then it's worth our time to study possible solutions.

We have close to 5,000 hotel rooms now in the city, with several new properties going up. But only the Sheraton, with its 242 rooms, is attached to the convention space, limiting the draw of groups in a city where walking could be dicey in the winter and a great concentration of restaurants and bars is a few miles away in downtown Sioux Falls.

To alleviate this room and meeting space shortage, several questions will need to be answered: Is there a way to make the 1,000 hotel rooms near the convention center more attractive to potential groups who balk at having to walk or drive to activities? Are there ways to use the convention center, Arena and new events center in creative ways that would please visitors? Are there events to book at the new events center that would provide entertainment and a draw for convention guests, too?

We are not naive; clearly there are complex issues involved here. It is not unusual for a city our size to wrestle with those concerns.

But as a growing city, Sioux Falls should be a draw for state, regional and some smaller national conventions. Conventions bring money into the economy and fuel further economic growth.

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