



South Dakota Newspaper Association (SDNA) President Charley Najacht presents the 2013 SDNA Distinguished Service Award to Parker Knox on April 26 at the SDNA's 131st annual convention held in Rapid City.

(SDNA photo)

# These were 'the good old days'

By Parker Knox

In the final episode of "The Office" earlier this month, the character named Andy Bernard spewed forth a bit of profundity when he said, "I wish there were a way to know you were in 'the good old days' before you left them."

I, for one, did. I am fortunate in that I realize that the six years I am now ending have been the most fun years I could have imagined. My "good old days" will always be the years spent in Vermillion but which will have ended by the time May is history.

I'll miss the community theater summer musicals and the announcer's booth at Prentiss Park and live music on the patio at Razel's. I'll miss fireworks in September after the VHS homecoming coronation and cinnamon rolls on the lawn outside Concordia Lutheran during the Dakota Days parade and the trains rumbling through town with their whistles blowing at every single crossing.

I'll miss watching the surging power of the current in the river out at Clay County Park and the night each summer when they let everybody's dogs into the swimming pool and our own all-sports radio station. I'll miss thrilling basketball wins over SDSU and the Sound of USD marching band and a university president who has time to stop and chat while out walking his dog.

I'll miss the ever-changing physical landscape at USD and soccer games at Cotton Park and chasing squirrels and rabbits with Oliver on the campus. I'll miss Spirit Mound and evenings at Pro's when Matt, Jesse and Mike were the bartenders, and the tower of the UCC church.

I'll miss Rhythm in Red and the sight of the Dome from many miles away and the organ in Aalfs Auditorium. I'll miss Jack Powell's Sunday morning coffee and the Al Neuharth Media Award programs and Rotary Club meetings.

"There's a lot of beauty in ordinary things," said the character of Pam Halpert on "The Office" the other night, "and isn't that the point?" Yes, but more than all these things, there have been the people here. I'll miss so many of them most of all.

I'll miss my UCC church family from Steve Miller and Jill and their family to the office staff to the choir to master musicians Anthony and Gretchen Burbach

to the Wednesday night kitchen crew to everybody else who worships there. I'll miss my USD music department family from the professors and Laurie in the office to the talented students, all of whom welcomed me into their midst for five years and with whom it was an honor to make music. I'll miss my Vermillion baseball family from the parents and grandparents of the ballplayers to the coaches to the boys on the teams, especially those awesome kids who gave me four state championships about which to write.

I'll miss Nace and Lea at Hy-Vee and all the staff at the public library and the VHS coaches who were so much help in my covering Tanager sports. I'll miss Jim Merrigan in the Prentiss Park concession stand and the boys of the Paradise Fears band and the guys at Bob's Sinclair and the good folks out at Dalesburg Lutheran.

I'll miss Greg Merrigan's voice in the Dome and Kari Jensen's voice at VHS games and Dylan Fischbach, the epitome of a dedicated athlete. I'll miss the guys at Rasmussen Motors who saved my 2000 Taurus from certain death numerous times and Dave Lias who gave me the chance to keep being a sportswriter and Jack and Phyllis Noble.

I'll miss courtside seats at Coyote games with Nancy, Molly, Ann and Doris and the special treat of being here during the basketball careers of the likes of Dylan Grimsley and Eric Hall and Dustin Little and Amber Hegge and Louie Krogman and Alexis Yackley and Charlie Westbrook and Trevor Gruis and the Hoffman twins and Jodie Boss and Tyler Cain and Annie Roche and Mitch Begeman and Ricardo Andreotti and many others.

And all the other so-very-nice people of Vermillion. I'll miss you, too. People like Ardell and Rula Hatch, a very elderly, very delightful couple, always smiling, always cordial despite their advancing ages. And Nick Severson, a loyal "cheerleader" at Coyote games even when the students aren't. And so many others just like them, both old and young.

As Carol Burnett sang at the end of each of her TV shows, "I'm so glad we had this time together; Just to have a laugh and sing a song; Seems we just got started and before you know it comes the time we have to say, 'So long.'"



# Pale legs, arms, midriffs, too

"Long stormy spring-time, wet contentious April, winter chilling the lap of... May; but at length the season of summer does come." — Thomas Carlyle, writer, philosopher

This time of year, we indulge. We abandon stale and stuffy and tease with fresh and frilly. We replace grays, browns and blacks in our wardrobes with yellows, purples, pinks and baby blues. Pushing to the back of our closets dull scratchy wools and heavy polyesters, we pull out lively polka dotted shirts and flowered skirts; striped pants and pedal pushers.

This season beckons us to sport sneakers, sandals and straw hats. We imagine ourselves in bangles and bows. Donning Bermuda shorts and sleeveless tops, we show off pale legs, arms, sometimes midriffs, too.

Our play extends with the daylight into shortened evenings lit by slow sunsets. The twinkles in our eyes return, as we gaze romantically at moored boats and beach toys, knowing soon we will float as on air into softly lit horizons.

While springtime fades into summer, life moves outdoors. Voices carry through open screens. Rounding the corner, laughter dances on sidewalks, chatter floats on bikes and trikes and travels on down the lane.

Sweet aromas of suppers frying and desserts baking telegraph messages of

MY STORY YOUR STORY



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The tenor of the sky changes from howling to rumbling. We do not think it strange to watch hard crusty hail tumble from the heavens, like a rebel, who first politely knocks and then bangs on our roofs, heralding summer's bravado entry.

Earth bursts with life as we sweetly encourage every blade of green as a blessed event.

We are in a season of miracles and exuberant firsts. Chipper, we conduct the inaugural mowing as though leading an orchestra, cultivating oohs and ahs over the lush emerald carpet that will tickle feet and lift spirits.

Our once dismal outlook peaks with excitement, as we dust off sills, gladly wipe down railings and shake rugs.

Backyards, front yards and side yards transform into well-manicured playgrounds for the young and young at heart.

No more do we feel our age but go forth with a lilt, reborn, newly baptized by this rhapsodic awakening.

Our song is renewed and grip strengthened, as we pluck and pull and plant, praising such work with the thrill of a first assignment.

Expectantly, we watch robins fly about in chaotic mating pirouettes. Later, we observe them heaving while sucking earthworms from the ground, as a magician pulls a rabbit from a top hat.

Stalwart whistles of male cardinals ring like church bells, reminding us that summertime is not an insincere friend here today, gone tomorrow, but a loyal companion who will remain in our midst for a measure of time, at least.

Soft cooing of mourning doves soothes our rising. We are privy to the sight of a strolling pair of Canada Geese trailed by — count them — one, two, three, four perhaps more goslings bobbing faithfully behind, their soft down camouflaged in virgin grass.

Summer, an extravagant embrace in which we are consoled and empowered.

Come, beloved Summer. You who gladly intervenes, converting our once cold, now-swelling hearts.

## SD EDITORIAL ROUNDUP

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, May 23, 2013

### No thanks, FEMA, we're good

Sioux Falls has a history of being self-sufficient and generous. This is a place where we don't ask for help unless we really need it.

That's what makes a discussion over whether Sioux Falls should refuse federal money for an April storm cleanup so interesting.

The storm caused millions of dollars in damage in the area, and Sioux Falls city officials have done a fantastic job of cleaning up an astounding amount of tree branches. In addition, people in the city voluntarily have helped neighbors and strangers who needed an extra hand to get their yards cleared of debris.

Because the county was named a disaster area, officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency have been in the area this week to figure out what cleanup costs are eligible for reimbursement. Using a formula, the city of Sioux Falls could get paid up to 75 percent from the federal government and 10

percent from the state for some of those expenses.

We urge the city to turn down the money.

We can and have taken care of ourselves after this storm. And we've done a good job. The city can afford to pay the costs associated with the cleanup because we have \$40 million in reserve funds. We recently came up with ways to spend \$1.8 million in capital surplus funds, including \$63,000 for a digital projector at the State Theatre.

This country has financial problems, in part, because cities have just taken the money. Little by little, just because someone qualifies, the federal government provides help even if a city such as Sioux Falls can afford to take care of an emergency by itself.

There are projects, some such as Lewis & Clark Regional Water System, that desperately need federal money to deliver water in the area. All we have to do is look at the tornado in Oklahoma to realize there are weather-related emergencies that are far, far worse than our ice storm.

Even Minnehaha and Lincoln counties, which also have applied for federal aid for storm damage expenses, may be justified to take the money. They are financially in a different position than the city.

We, however, just don't need the money in Sioux Falls.

We can be independent. We're just fine.

Capital Journal, Pierre, May 22, 2013

### It's another title for Title Town

Chances are you've already read the sports story on our front page and maybe on our sports section before you got to this part of the newspaper, because sports is once again the big news of the day. For the third time this year, T.F. Riggs High School has claimed a state championship for its athletic programs, in girls' golf this time.

It's the first time the Lady Goves have won the state AA golf title, but no one should be surprised. After all, Pierre's girl golfers came in second in last year's state

tournament, and they're led by Hallie Getz, who has just won the title as the state's best golfer in girls' competition for the second year in a row.

The team was in second place on Monday, but rallied in Tuesday's play as Getz cruised to her individual title.

What has seemed remarkable all year is how well the team performed for being without a course for so long after the flood of 2011 kept people off the course for all of 2012.

The golf title is a nice addition to the hardware the T.F. Riggs program's collected this year for winning the state A wrestling tournament and the state AA boys' basketball tournament. It's a great recommendation for the quality of the sports programs in the capital city, and the quality of our athletes.

People with ties to Riggs High School will remember 2013 as the year it rained titles.

A standing ovation for everyone involved.

The Associated Press

## PLAIN TALK POLL RESULTS

Should the blood alcohol level for drunk driving in South Dakota be lowered from .08 to .05 percent?

No	41
Yes	28
Undecided	1
Total Votes	70

To participate in the Plain Talk's weekly poll, log on to [plaintalk.net](http://plaintalk.net).

## 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](mailto:david.lias@plaintalk.net).

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