

## VIEWPOINTS

## No better time than now

One role of a community newspaper is to inform. That's sort of a no-brainer.

There are other important ways, however, that publications can serve their communities. They can be an advocate for change. They can serve as a cheerleader of sorts.

We'd feel a bit remiss if we didn't shout a loud "Rah!" in response to the week-long Earth (Every) Day activities held in Vermillion from April 22 through April 26.

Organizers and those who participated in the host of activities held during those very busy days in Vermillion gathered Monday, April 28, for a pot luck supper and a forum to catch their collective breathes and reflect on what had been accomplished during the prior week, and what lies in the future.

We are particularly excited about the future. There are organizations – players, so to speak – that are focused on capturing the momentum from the Earth (Every) Day accomplishments with the goal of seeing that energy grow.

Those players range from the Clay County Commission and the USD Environmental Safety

## BETWEEN THE LINES



DAVID LIAS  
david.lias@plaintalk.net

and Health Department, to the Vermillion Farmers Market, Clay County Historical Preservation, and the Sierra Club's Living River Group.

"We'd like to bring to the table the idea of coalition building and the thought of possibly having a non-profit 501c3 organization," said Meghann Jarchow, an assistant professor of sustainability at USD. "Some of us on the Earth (Every) Day planning committee have been thinking that it would be useful for us to have a more formal coalition to get established so that there's an active umbrella among these various organizations that you've been hearing about."

A recognized goal of such an organization is to provide \$10,000 annually to allow the Vermillion community to continue to work toward

reaching goals of sustainability, particularly in late April when Earth Day's arrival helps bring such a concept to the forefront.

We realize that the economy remains somewhat sluggish yet, and household and government budgets are tight. We urge that a collective approach be taken to reach the funding goal for the proposed new non-profit organization.

In other words, we hope that not only individuals give to this organization, either monetarily or through volunteer efforts, but also local entities. In particular, we call for local government entities to find room in their future budgets to help with this effort.

About seven years ago, the state of New Jersey recognized the importance of sustainability, and its findings and observations are worth sharing.

New Jersey officials Jorge Reyes, Martin Rosen, and Athena Sarafides noted then that sustainable development is a program needing both local and global action.

Those observations may have been made years ago, but still make perfect sense today.

New Jersey officials concluded that the growing consensus among experts and organizations working for sustainability is that sustainability must be accomplished at the local level if it is ever to be achieved on a global basis. As individual communities become successfully sustainable, the global community also progresses toward sustainability.

When one reflects on which level of government is most efficient – federal, state or local – one can't help but conclude that local is the most responsive to people's collective needs.

For example, when economic development is community-based, it is more likely to be viable because it helps keep economic benefits and resources within the community, and it supports existing local businesses that tend to be more responsive to local needs and more likely to support the community.

That, in turn, helps build social capital – the capacity of people to work together for the common good.

The New Jersey report notes that environmental and social

sustainability are not traditional economic goals for communities, so current markets do not directly support them, except through regulations.

At the same time, the demand for ecosystem services is growing rapidly as populations, developed areas, and standards of living increase.

A report in the New York Times this week notes that, according to scientists, "The effects of human-induced climate change are being felt in every corner of the United States, with water growing scarcer in dry regions, torrential rains increasing in wet regions, heat waves becoming more common and more severe, wildfires growing worse, and forests dying under assault from heat-loving insects."

There is no better time for sustainability efforts to be continued on the local level in the Vermillion community.

*The Vermillion Plain Talk editorials reflect the opinion of Plain Talk editor David Lias. You may contact him at david.lias@plaintalk.net.*

## Capitol Notebook:

## A second of goofing goes digital, forever

By Bob Mercer  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – South Dakota doesn't have a politician so avid at promoting himself as U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock of Illinois.

But we have now heard of him. He injected himself into South Dakota politics when he posted a photo showing himself with Kristi Noem.

The expression on her face isn't what you expect to see from South Dakota's only member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Not from someone who's 42.

In an instant, she became a caricature, mugging for the photo like someone who's 12, or maybe 22, on a vacation.

Not on an official trade trip by a congressional delegation visiting the Great Wall of China.

Now she has to live with this image, forever, because of Schock.

He's 32, single and obviously proud of how young he is and how good he looks. Just read his biography on his U.S. House website. Here are the first two sentences:

"At the age of 23, Aaron Schock was simultaneously the youngest school board president in history and the youngest Illinois State Representative. He is the first Member of Congress to be born in the 1980s."

Read a little further and you find he has a seat on the "highly coveted" House Ways and Means Committee. A little further, and you learn that in his first term in 2009-2010 he was appointed to the "coveted" Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

That's a lot of coveting for a doctor's son who grew up in Peoria, Illinois. He took courses at Illinois Central College while in high school and completed a bachelor

degree in business at Bradley University there in two years.

He bought property at Peoria at 18. He was elected to the Peoria school board at 19. He was 23 when elected to the Illinois Legislature and was its youngest member through 2008.

He turns 33 on May 28. He's clearly in sync with modern social media such as the Instagram photo website. One picture he placed on Instagram shows him poised, posed and shirtless atop a surfboard during the delegation's stop in Hawaii.

There isn't a cornstalk in sight. Instagram is where Aaron Schock put the photo with Kristi Noem.

People who post words and photos on Facebook and Instagram and Twitter and other Internet sites want them to be seen.

And when those words and photos can be used against a person, they often are.

We have tried and tried to drive that lesson home to our children and friends and relatives and co-workers and job prospects during the rise of these Internet sites in the past decade.

Put the wrong thing on the Internet and bam – you've shot your reputation or, in this instance, someone else's.

This was a mugging far beyond Noem's expression. Consider the photos and words in the current issue of Sioux Falls Woman magazine about Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, the Democratic congresswoman whom Noem defeated in 2010.

Everyone should be so fortunate to have a profile piece as Herseth Sandlin is portrayed. The photos are modeling-agency quality, not goofy selfies.

They show her at her best. She's not mugging in any of them.



## Will life ever be the same?

"Cancer can take away all of my physical abilities. It cannot touch my mind, it cannot touch my heart, and it cannot touch my soul." – Jim Valvano, former college basketball coach, broadcaster

Note: Studies show there are no proven ways to prevent prostate cancer, but there are dietary modifications that help reduce the risk, such as eating more fruits and vegetables, eating less animal fat and dairy, drinking green tea and eating more fish and plant-based fats. I invited a lifelong friend Ralph Webb to share his journey through the disease. This is the fourth and final in a series of Ralph's reflections "Notes from My Journey through Cancer."

My treatment has ended. My fight goes on. I'm letting the doctors take care of my body, God take care of my life and I will take care of my moods. Having a diagnosis of cancer changes you. It is hard to think my life will ever be the same again. Every ache and pain gets my attention and makes me think of the end of life.

There are things I want to do I've been putting off. I want to see my kids and grandkids more, spend more time with the people I care about. And, I don't want to have conflict with my kids over things that really don't matter in the grand scheme.

Through the lens of cancer, there really aren't as many big deals in life as I thought there were. I have come to learn what letting go really means. I don't have any fear of dying, but I do worry more about how those who are close to me will cope with my death.

I wonder how the patients I met at the cancer center are doing. Have

## MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON  
paula.damon@iw.net

better make the best of it. I am not going to wait to die; I am too busy living. Not only that, I have promised my grandchildren a trip to Disney World when I retire in a couple of years and it's a date I plan to keep.

Going through something like this, I've had a lot of random thoughts, like the fact that I've been divorced for a great deal of time and feel remorse and regret for not providing my children a traditional family with a mother and father. Over the years, we have not spoken much about this, but I can see the effects it's had on them. They've suffered and have paid the price.

Seeing other families huddle in support of one another through cancer treatment makes me sad that I'm going through this alone. In my younger years, I didn't understand the importance of developing a spousal relationship that would endure – establishing a companionship and providing a home our adult children could return to and celebrate life's events.

There will come a day when I'll need help completing tasks and

they been successful in their fight?

My prayer life has changed. I pray now for trust that I will be taken care of. What else can I do?

When I woke up this morning, I was the oldest I've ever been and the youngest I'll ever be, and I

taking care of myself. My friends have spouses to rely on. I wish such wisdom would have come to me earlier in life.

When my parents passed away a few years ago, I realized they took a lot of family history and memories with them. I've shared family information with my children but wish I could remember everything my parents said. I've come to yearn for that one last phone call with them.

Before losing his battle with cancer, Randy Pausch, a former computer science professor at Carnegie-Mellon University, gave his last college lecture, titled "Achieving Your Childhood Dreams." In it, Pausch shared lessons learned and advice on how to achieve your dreams and enable the dreams of others.

At the end of the video, he tells the audience that while they may have appreciated his talk, the lecture was what he calls a "head fake." He really gave the final lecture for his children, so they would know him after he died.

This series on my journey through prostate cancer has been a "head fake" of sorts. While I'm gratified that readers may have benefitted from it, I'm doing this for my children. And hopefully, I will have many more chapters to share with them.

End of Part 4 and final in a series.

SOURCES: Facing Forward Life After Cancer Treatment; Randy Pausch Last Lecture; www.mayolinc.org

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Generous help To the editor:

At the last minute, I was asked by a friend if I could help move some furniture for an event for Earth Day, which would require a trailer. I asked Ace Hardware if they could donate one. Ace very graciously agreed. With the help of some volunteers from USD and Ace, we got the job done.

Local businesses are constantly asked to donate money or services for local organizations. With local businesses' cooperation, these organizations are able to accomplish their tasks.

I want to thank Ace Hardware and other businesses for their generous help in providing for a successful Earth Day week.

Thank you,  
Roger Hale  
Vermillion