

VIEWPOINTS

President, People Show One Another Respect

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

WATERTOWN – President Barack Obama showed respect for something South Dakota treasures – our people’s work ethic – with his speech at the graduation ceremony Friday night for Lake Area Technical Institute.

In turn, his first visit to South Dakota as president forced many South Dakotans to show respect for him.

He is the president of our nation. We are nothing if not patriotic.

We proved we can be cordial when we should be – and when it doesn’t involve politics.

The Democratic president learned in 2008, and again in 2012, and again in 2014, that he isn’t a natural fit in South Dakota politics and that South Dakota politics isn’t a natural fit for him.

He lost to Hillary Clinton in South Dakota’s 2008 Democratic presidential primary, but he won his party’s nomination.

He lost to Republican nominee John McCain in the 2008 general election, but he won the White House.

He lost to Republican nominee Mitt Romney in 2012 in South Dakota, but he won re-election to the White House.

And in 2014, the candidates for the Republican nomination to a South Dakota seat in the U.S. Senate focused their political derision upon him, vowing to overturn Obamacare and to authorize the Keystone XL pipeline.

It’s now May. Obamacare remains the law of our land. He vetoed the Keystone XL pipeline authorization passed by the Republican majorities in Congress.

He indeed is still the president of our nation.

And when you look at the decisions made by South Dakota voters in the previous 10 years – moving aside the Democratic Senate leader Tom Daschle for Republican John Thune, replacing Democratic U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin with Republican Kristi Noem and seeing Democratic U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson retire with Republican former Gov. Mike Rounds taking the seat – there comes a question.

Is South Dakota out of step with the nation, or is the nation out of step with South Dakota?

President Barack Obama didn’t spend much time on the ground Friday. A little more than two hours, from touchdown to takeoff. He didn’t taste the food, breathe the air, touch the soil. He saw a regional airport and a high school gym.

But he also saw the small manufacturers clustered in the industrial development next to the airport, and he saw many of their employees, who stood in the parking lots and along the road ditches to watch him go by.

And as the motorcade made its way through Watertown’s north side, with its working-class homes and student rental houses, he saw the roots of why Lake Area Technical Institute is so important to the city and the region.

President Obama found in Lake Area Technical Institute something truly important to respect about South Dakota: Our people want to work, and they want to succeed. They are willing to put in the time and pay the cost to learn how to do so better.

He referred to the “tiny” school in the “tiny” town. He did so twice. His point seemed that, in a place where it might not be expected, something very important has been happening, and continues to happen, something that is essential to the future of our country’s strength.

It is good he respects that. It is good we respect that. It is good we maybe now respect each other a little more, and with better reason, than we had before.

Tiny? And so we are. Our president? And so he is.



Blood In The Garden Shed

BY PAULA DAMON

That was last thing I expected to find when venturing inside the shed for the first time since winter gasped its last dastardly breath and spring had sprung into my veins. A fairly large pool of dried out blood splattered all over the floor. Nearly stepped in it.

Looking above, more blood stains marked in long streaks down the front of our old repurposed kitchen cupboards hanging there innocently in their second life.

Somewhat mystified and very leery, I guessed the mess could have been the expiration of an unusually large wolf spider. Nah. Or a bird? Maybe.

Trying to pay no mind, I proceeded to straighten all that I had jammed packed the previous fall. Lawn ornaments, garden tools and the like.

Once I got enough cleared to gain solid footing, I reached above the cabinet to remove an unusually large pile of leaves, twigs and seat cushion batting that had mysteriously assembled there.

More than a scattering blown in over winter through open pockets under the roof overhang, it was a seriously constructed nest methodically thatched inside an old wooden fishing net.

Carefully removing bunches of it by the handful, I certainly was not expecting to find the body of a dead squirrel stretched out from head to toe with legs entangled in the net. Stiff as a board.

Probably got trapped and starved to death, I figured. Wonder if he tried



PAULA DAMON

to chew off his paws, kind a like whatshisname, that guy in the red rock canyons of Utah.

Reflecting on this picture of nature at its worst, I felt a twinge of sorrow for the little guy.

“It was really sad finding that dead squirrel in the garden shed today,”

I told my husband.

“Sad? Why?”

“He was just lying there, all sprawled out – like he was reaching.”

“Humph, that’ll teach him.”

“Yeah, well, his learning days are all over now. No more lessons for him.”

“Really? I can’t believe you’re sad about a dead squirrel.”

“I suppose he was just trying to make it through the winter, like the rest of us. Doing his best to get by. Who knows? Maybe he was a she seeking shelter for her youngsters.”

“Honestly, Paula, those squirrels are no friends of ours. Every year without fail, they eat most of our apples right off the tree and they just can’t leave our cherries alone. They torment our dogs chattering up a storm, taunting them to no end, working them into frenzy, day after day. Why, they’re nothing but mischievous rodents with the gall to use our window screens as springboards, ripping gaping holes right through them. And remember when they broke into the house looking for food. I’ll tell you it was no fun chasing them throughout the house.

They don’t make screen patches big enough for the damage those nasty little varmints did.”

“Yeah, but a squirrel’s got to do what a squirrel’s got to do,” I defensively stood my ground. “You know what I mean?” It was pretty clear – it was the squirrel and me against my husband.

As my sense of remorse strangely grew, so did my guilt over how I disposed of his or her body. Didn’t even lay him to rest respectfully under a pile of dirt. Instead, I threw ‘em out with the trash. What kind of person am I anyway?

And to think he got caught in that shoddy old fishing net that I never really used to fish with – just kept it around for decoration.

Sitting back, I wondered how long he had struggled there all alone.

Aggrieved, I had no idea, not an inkling that little guy had been fighting for his life, while only feet away I went about living abundantly and carefree.

Mournfully beside myself, I just could not stop thinking about how I found the little critter with his fur still rich golden-brown, his eyes brightly glaring out into space, long bushy tail rendered motionless and his annoying chatter silenced forever.

Obsessed with a hue of ought-ness, I wished I could have done something. I would have set him free quite easily, if I had only known.

“As far as I’m concerned,” my husband chirped over his shoulder, “it’s one less pest to deal with.”

“Yes, it was one sorry sight,” I sighed, searching long and hard for closure.

Breathless: A Symptom Of Many Illnesses

BY RICHARD P. HOLM MD

There is probably no more urgent symptom in general medicine than when people are having trouble catching their breath. This accounts for about five percent of all Emergency Room visits and occurs during about 50 percent of all admissions to the hospital. Most challenging is that breathlessness may be anywhere from a low risk problem to one life threatening.

The business owner came into the emergency room with the feeling of impending doom, chest pressure radiating into his neck, down his left arm, and he couldn’t catch his breath. The blood clot in his coronary artery was diagnosed

by history, with a little help from an electrocardiogram, and his breath came back after a clot busting IV drug.

The college student came to the ER dramatically short of breath, and had a normal lung exam, CXR and blood tests. She was emotionally overwhelmed by impending finals and when we walked her in the hall, she felt better and her breathing calmed down.

The trucker had noticed his legs swelling for a week, and now he couldn’t catch his breath. The life threatening pulmonary emboli or blood clots from leg to lung were proven by lung CT and effectively treated with anticoagulation.

The teacher had a remarkably pale white face and was extremely short of

breath. Profound anemia was proven by blood test and leukemia by bone marrow test. She lives a normal life now twenty years after her bone marrow transplant.

The twelve-year-old struggled with deep and rapid breathing, the air around her smelled fruity, her lungs sounded clear by stethoscope, the blood test found a high blood sugar, and her blood pH that was acidic. Diabetic ketoacidosis was resolved over eight hours with insulin, and her breathlessness went away.

The lifetime smoker came down with influenza given to him by his non-immunized four-year-old grandson, and his usual breathlessness occurring with any exertion worsened

to the point that he was breathless just lying there. He died after three weeks of intensive care, steroids, antibiotics, and even breathing assistance on a respirator.

I was a grade school kid having difficulty breathing and sleeping at night as the blossoming tree pollen blew across my bed. It was my prairie doctor from DeSmet who heard my story, listened to my heart and lungs, correctly diagnosed asthma, and provided the inhaler medicine that gratefully allowed me to sleep.

The causes for breathlessness span almost all the organ systems of the body... one symptom potentially due to many problems. If you can’t get your breath you need to get some help.

LETTER TO 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 shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net.

GLUTEN-FREE

I enjoyed Amber Margheim’s piece on living a gluten-free lifestyle in Vermillion.

Although I’m not allergic to gluten myself, I went gluten-free for a couple of months to experience it first-hand. And yes, it was quite difficult.

So, I know why Cassandra Keller is so appreciative of restaurants that accommodate her. We’ve offered a gluten-free menu at Chae’s since 2010 and our customers share that same appreciation (especially those over 21 years old, as we also offer gluten-free beer).

Sincerely,
Ted Wilharm
Owner, Chae’s

CHAMBER CHAT

CHAMBER BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENTS

•Save the Date: Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Co. Annual Golf Social for you, your coworkers, friends & family-4 Person Best Ball Scramble Golf Tournament at The Bluffs Golf Course, Mon., June 22. Registration & team photos begin at 11:45 am. Shotgun start at 1:00 pm. For more information, call the Chamber @ 624-5571 or email annb@vermillionchamber.com

•The 2015 Vermillion Area Visitor Guides have arrived! Please contact the VCDC office at 624-5571 or stop by and pick them up at 116 Market St. Also available

are the 2015 statewide SD Vacation Guides and the SE SD Travel Guide. FREE!

•Business after Hours: Are you looking for an opportunity to showcase your business and network with your peers? Sign up to host a Business After Hours event! These events generally run from 5:00-7:00 pm on a week-night and the hosting business provides hors d’oeuvres and refreshments. If interested, please contact Ann at: annb@vermillionchamber.com or at 624-5571.

THIS WEEKS ANNOUNCEMENTS
•Tastefully Simple Online

Fundraiser for Heartland Humane Society (HHS) through May 15th. Stock up on some of your favorite desserts, soups, etc. with HHS receiving 100% of the profit from every sale. To order: http://tinyurl.com/nvfaqdx. For more information, call 951-707-7124 or 605-664-4244.

• Main Street Center 4th Annual Walk of Memories at 320 W. Main St., Fri., May 22-Mon., May 25 (Memorial Day week-end). To participate in the Annual Walk by sponsoring a flag honoring a veteran, contact the Main Street Center @ 605-624-8072 by 1:00 pm, Wed., May 20. All proceeds benefit the Main Street Center.
•Summer 2015 Exhibit at

National Music Museum: “Band-ing Together: The American Soldiers’ Musical Arsenal.” Exhibit of instruments used by the military from the Revolutionary War through the War in Iraq. Rare original photographs, posters, and other rare war-time memorabilia will also be on display from May 23-Sept. 7.

• USD & National Music Museum (NMM) selected as one of fifty-two sites in the U.S. to host the 2016 traveling exhibit marking the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death. The First Folio is the first collected edition of Shakespeare’s plays published

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