

VIEWPOINTS

Spotting A Storm

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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Growing up in South Dakota, I have always had a fascination with storms. I kind of love them. One of my earliest memories is of being in a car watching two tornados joining together to form one large one. I will never forget my Mom and Grandma Stemper in the front seat exclaiming, "What is that? Is that a tornado?" and my answer being, "There is another one." Then the ensuing race back to my aunt's house to run to the basement and climb under the pool table. To a five year old, it was high excitement. Maybe not so much for Mom and Grandma.

I think from that point on my attraction to watching and listening to storms was born.

Maybe I am just weird but I honestly enjoy camping during storms - laying there in a tent listening to the rain and the thunder has always been something I look forward to each year.

I have always joked with people that I am kind of a storm magnet, having seen more than my fair share of tornados in my life. So, when I heard about the Severe Weather Awareness class hosted by the Clay County Emergency Management (EMS) Department and led by National Weather Service meteorologist Todd Heitkamp, I was very excited to attend.

Let me begin by saying this evening was everything I had hoped it would be and more.

My one disappointment was that more of the Vermillion community didn't take the opportunity to learn more about the different storms that can and will at some point affect their lives.

In speaking with EMS director Layne Stewart a few days before the class, he had hoped that the tornado that hit Delmont the previous Sunday would draw in a few additional people, however Heitkamp said the 40 or so there were typical for when he hosted the classes around the state.

The information presented by Heitkamp was entertaining, educational, scary, hilarious and, honestly, something I will take with me moving forward.

The educational aspect of the class, learning how to read the clouds, identify things such as wind shear and the elements needed to produce violent storms, was something I had never heard before.

I am not and do not now claim to be an "expert" but maybe this summer I won't be so quick to dismiss an ominous looking cloud or the sound of thunder when sitting at the river or for that matter at home.

The hilarious aspects of the evening were the real life examples of, let's call them, not so smart people and how they reacted to serious weather coming at them. Perhaps it was so funny, because I could in reality put myself in their situation and say I had done similar things. Maybe not standing next to a trailer house watching a tornado bear down on me and think, hmm this is cool I should stay here. But, rather, as Heitkamp suggested, not taking shelter immediately in a situation that could potentially harm my family.

I hope for those of you who didn't take the opportunity to attend the class there is one bit of knowledge I can share with you that you will remember: if the sirens sound in your area or a severe weather warning is issued, it doesn't mean go outside and see what is going on. It means there is imminent threat to the community you live in and you and your family need to take shelter, immediately.

I have always had the utmost respect for the work that storm spotters and trained officials do in going out in inclement weather, putting themselves at risk in order to protect the community. However, after Thursday's class it is even more pronounced.

For those of you who didn't take the opportunity to attend the class this spring, when it is offered again next year, I hope you take advantage of the free opportunity to learn just what is going on in the sky. It was honestly one of the most enjoyable meetings I have ever attended.

Best of all, I am now a trained weather spotter. You could be too, if you attend next year.

AN INVITATION TO JOIN

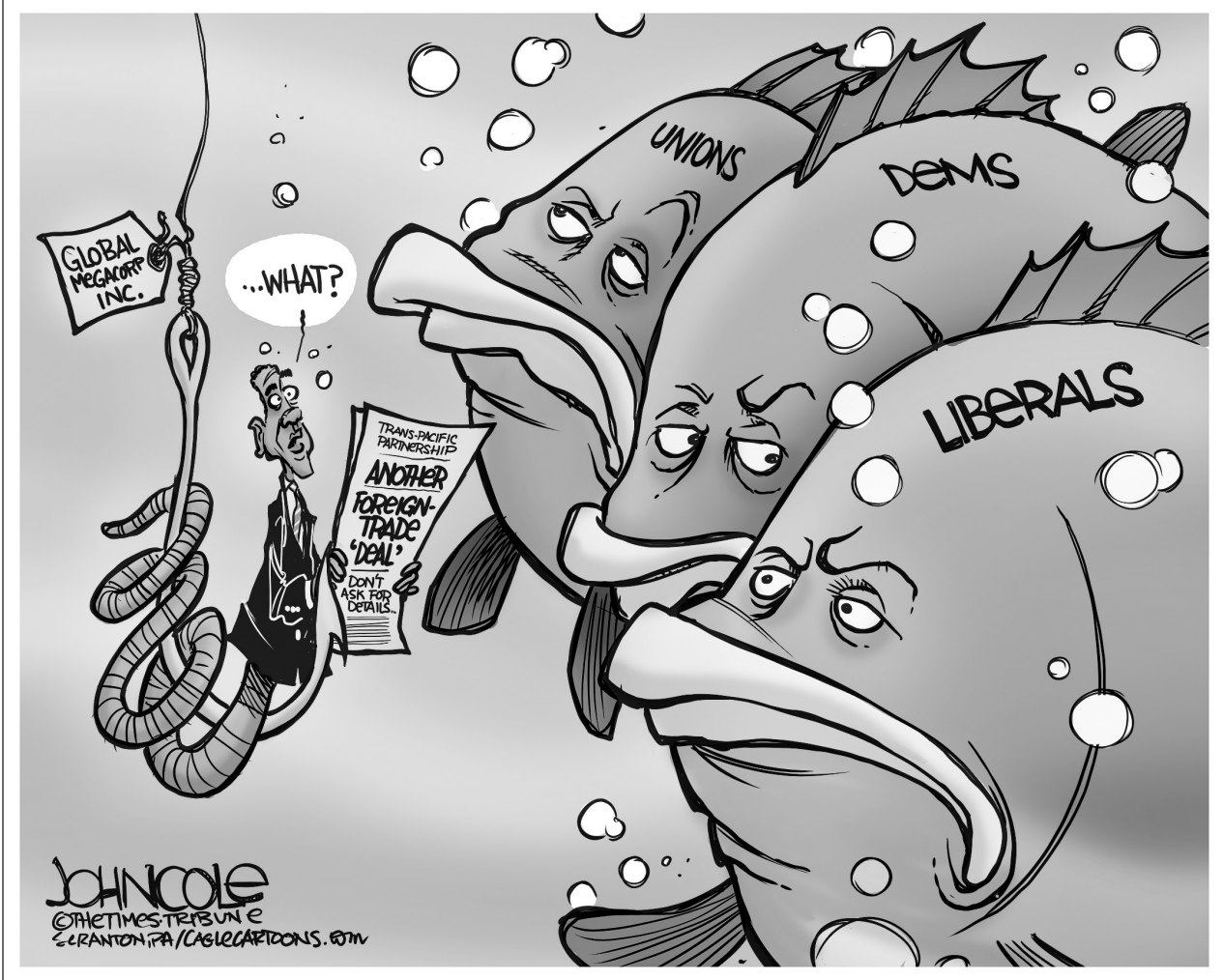
Memorial Day is the day Americans set aside to honor the brave men and women who met tragic ends during times of war. Use this day to honor their sacrifices, to pray for their families, and to bow our heads in recognition of their service.

You have seen their faces, know their names, and maybe even heard their voices — those who gave the ultimate sacrifice during all wars. This Memorial Day, local American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Unit members would like to invite area residents to join us in remembrance of our nation's fallen heroes and those who have fought for our freedoms.

The ALA is the world's largest women's patriotic service organization, with nearly 800,000 members and 9,000 units in communities across the nation, serving nearly one million veterans every year. South Dakota auxiliaries continue to help mitigate the challenges our veterans face and deliver upon our mission by organizing multiple events throughout the year to support veterans and their families in civilian life.

For nearly a century, ALA members have dedicated themselves to meeting the needs of veterans, active military and their families, both here and abroad. They volunteer millions of hours yearly, with a value of nearly \$2 billion. As part of the world's largest women's patriotic service organization, Auxiliary volunteers across the country also step up to honor veterans and - through K-12 school programs, annual scholarships and with ALA Girls State programs, teaching high school juniors to be leaders grounded in patriotism and Americanism. To learn more about the Auxiliary's mission or to volunteer, donate or join, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org.

**American Legion Auxiliary District 8
Gingrich-Dixon Unit 13, Wakonda, South Dakota**
Donna Henriksen, Chairperson
Louise Gregoire, Secretary
Pat Girard, Treasurer



When Ordinary Reverences Extraordinary

BY PAULA DAMON

"If tears can build a stairway and memories a lane, I'd walk right up to heaven and bring you home again."
- Author unknown

It's Memorial Day. Hordes head in droves to cemeteries, forming an unlikely parade of mourners. The back seats and trunks of their vehicles overflow with bouquets of flowers and flag-laden wreaths destined for graveyards across this land.

Solemnly, their heads bob up and down as buoys riding the open waves in an ocean of by-gones, paying homage to the fallen, whispering prayers of regards and regrets to deceased loved ones.

Like no other day of the calendar year, Memorial Day is the one time ordinary reverences the extraordinary - for the bravery and uncommon courage that marched right onto battlefields of every kind.

While traveling along Highway 12 between Verdigris and Burt one Memorial Day, I witness a scene play out before my eyes....

A middle-aged woman, her car parked nearby, navigates an embankment alongside the road.

Columns of sunlight warm the chilly May air as she carries a bouquet of



PAULA DAMON

flowers in one hand and grabs onto loose clumps of grass with the other.

Attempting to gain solid footing, the earth beneath her feet gives way. She slips and falls.

Not frazzled, she boldly springs back on both legs and resumes scaling the hillside, seemingly undeterred from paying tribute.

Almost like a sprinter poised for the gunshot start of a race, she aims for a weathered make-shift cross I can see planted several arms-lengths before her.

With fondest memories in tow - some sharp, others faded - she reaches once and then again. Her body language telegraphing that nothing, absolutely nothing will keep her from placing those flowers.

It all seems planned, meant to be, as my mother would suggest. For me to see such willingness, struggle and loss.

Sadly, I notice; for what reason I am not sure, the very place the woman is digging with her feet, planting her hands, plying with her heart.

A soul most likely was tragically

killed there suddenly, unexpectedly in an accident?

Not just anyone, though, a loved one, I imagine - a child, sibling, spouse or a maybe a friend.

It happened right there - a once monotonous now sacred patch where larcenous death halted life, thwarting dreams.

I am certain that Memorial Day rituals like this, quietly carrying out by the thousands on provincial stretches of highways and byways, represent the exception to standard graveside vigils.

No taps play or bugles sound here.

No waving flags or formal rituals.

Yet, the bereaved sojourn sharp bends on turnpikes, blind thoroughfares on secondary highways, unmarked intersections on dusty gravel roads, to place homemade gravestones, vowing never to forget.

After this glimpse from my car speeding by, I wonder where that woman will head next with dirt under her nails, mud smeared on her palms, her knees red and sore from kneeling too long - a metaphor for her life since the hour, the day when this scrappy spot along Highway 12 became an immortal reminder.

I wonder.

Are Vitamins And Supplements Vital To Health

BY RICHARD P. HOLM, MD

More than 50 percent of adult Americans take a dietary supplement or vitamin. We spend something like \$35 billion dollars a year on non-regulated pills, powders, or patches hoping to lose weight, to improve function in sports or the bedroom, or just to prevent illness.

But what are we getting for our money? Stephen Barrett, MD, head of a non-profit organization to prevent health fraud, states that, "Consumers often fall victim to products and devices that do nothing more than cheat them out of money, steer them away from useful proven treatment, and sometimes do more bodily harm than good."

This important warning

should not subtract from the fact that there are important benefits from vitamins and minerals, and there is a rich history how scientists studying malnutrition brought us to understand the value of vitamins and minerals.

Vitamin C deficiency was discovered while analyzing a deadly diarrhea illness called scurvy, which effected British sailors. It was the limes and lemons containing vitamin C that helped the British "Limeys" avoid scurvy and win battles on the sea.

Vitamin B1 or thiamine deficiency was discovered while analyzing a neurodegenerative illness called beriberi, which affected Japanese sailors after they switched from brown rice to white. By removing the brown coating,

they unknowingly had removed the vitamin laden protein coat. In the early 1900s, scientists discovered the vital-amine on the rice coating that would prevent the neurologic illness beriberi. Now all white rice is fortified with thiamine, the vital-amine, which is also the source for the word vitamin.

Micro-mineral iodine deficiency was discovered while analyzing both goiter, a thyroid enlargement condition, and cretinism, a childhood condition of mental deficiency, each occurring in land-locked areas without exposure to iodine-laden seaweed and deep-sea fish. By iodizing salt we prevent goiter and demented children in millions throughout the world.

But too much can be

as bad as too little. Later scientists also discovered too high of a dose of iodine, and other minerals, as well as fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and other supplements can be dangerous. For example certain supplements like chaparral, coltsfoot, comfrey, yohimbine and others can cause liver damage, heart trouble, and increased risk of cancer. Obviously the whole nutritional supplement story is very complicated, and we should be careful not to swallow everything advertisers promote.

When it comes down to it, the best plan should be to eat a balanced diet with enough fish, nuts, fruits and vegetables, and maybe to avoid joining the British or Japanese Navy.

Losing Before The High Court Wasn't Defeat

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE - The population of Pierre, our state capital, is somewhere north of 13,000. As a news reporter, that means your path often crosses with the people about whom you report.

When the South Dakota Supreme Court last week unanimously rejected my request for records regarding the investigation of Richard Benda's death in October 2013, Justice Janine Kern wrote the opinion.

When Gov. Dennis Daugaard chose Janine as the newest member of the state's highest court last year, to succeed retiring Justice John Koenkamp, I thought, "Great pick."

I still think that. Her dad was a circuit judge. She worked in the state office of attorney general for years before she was appointed as a circuit judge serving in Rapid City. She focused much of her time on juvenile justice matters.

And, back when she lived in Pierre, she nearly became our neighbor when we still lived in the little blue house on

Oak Street. I was delighted when she arrived next door one evening and waited for the real estate agent at the yellow house on the corner.

She waited and waited. The agent never came. The yellow house sold to a different party. Eventually, because of what became of the yellow house, we bought it when it came up for sale again.

We would have been so pleased to have Janine as our neighbor. Pierre is a small town. I have a tee shirt that began existence through another Supreme Court member. The blue shirt bears the slogan "Re Elect Lori S. Wilbur Circuit Judge".

I had known Lori for nearly all of the 28 years I've now lived in Pierre. I didn't support her campaign - as a reporter, I couldn't - but she has been a fun person to know, as was her late husband, Brent.

If memory is right, that tee shirt came from the campaign year when Lori and another circuit judge, Kathleen Trandahl of Winner, came through the Oak Street neighborhood one day knocking at doors.

Circuit Judge Trandahl ruled against me in the Benda case. I don't think any

less of her or Lori. I had watched their solid work through the years in the big courtroom at the Hughes County Courthouse.

I've known Chief Justice David Gilbertson for years both casually and professionally. He speaks for the state's Unified Judicial System on matters of policy and budgets.

I've enjoyed many conversations through decades with Justice Steve Zinter. Once we were in the same fantasy baseball league. For ethical reasons, he stopped playing. We still love talking baseball when we can.

Nor do I hold anything against Hillary Brady, the state hearing examiner who initially denied my records request.

When a decision was slow in coming, I contacted her a year ago. Turned out she was suffering from back troubles. Eventually the decision came.

She had ruled in my favor years earlier regarding then-secret tax refunds for large business projects.

I could be disappointed in losing last week. I'm not. In a small town, you come to know integrity, because you see it. I do wish I had won.