



David Lias
Between The Lines

Let's focus on what we can do

After watching the proceedings of the Vermillion City Council Monday night, it may be easy for some people to conclude that there is some type of anti-business, anti-development sentiment in our community.

That isn't correct, of course. There were factors that city aldermen had to consider Monday that eventually lead to their decision to not grant a rezoning request in a residential area that would pave the way for a new fast food restaurant in town.

We believe everyone in the Vermillion community can readily agree that our community desperately needs added business development. But it needs to do it in the proper way, and frankly, trying to plop a fast food restaurant in the middle of a residential area is likely not going to be successful, even though the lot being considered is located in what will soon be one of the heavier populated areas in our community.

There are lessons to be learned from Monday's meeting. The city council may have had to say no to the proposed restaurant developers, but that action should lead to a follow-up question — what role should the city play in attracting new retail business to Vermillion?

Much of the focus of the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce and Development Company has been on industrial and entrepreneurial development in the community.

And much of the talk at Monday's meeting centered on Vermillion's comprehensive plan, and how zoning plays an important role in that plan and our community's development.

When the time comes to once again tinker with the city's comprehensive plan, Vermillion also needs to develop a comprehensive strategy for attracting more stores to the city and helping those already here grow their businesses. We are hopeful that the economy will eventually begin to show signs of improving. That means the time is right to position the city to boost its retail sector.

We realize there are programs in place to encourage such growth. A look at the transformation that has taken place in downtown Vermillion the past three years is evidence that something good is happening here.

We just wish that Monday's zoning discussion could have morphed into talk about what the city could do, rather than couldn't do, to help people who want to start a new business franchise here.

The possibilities really are endless. But they need to be thought out well. For example, we don't believe the city should simply get into the business of offering incentives to new retailers in hopes they will locate here. That will only tend to hurt stores that have been contributing jobs and taxes to the local economy for years.

But sending shoppers to Sioux Falls or Sioux City doesn't help our schools or local shopkeepers. And when shoppers don't think they can find the variety of merchandise they want here, they will go elsewhere.

We'll throw out an idea here — one that has shown to be effective in some cities. It's called the "substitution effect." New retailers take business away from existing stores, so only about half of their sales actually grow the local retail base. Any city incentives need to take that into account.

Perhaps a city incentive for a new business — say a new fast food franchise — should only amount to half the projected growth in the sales tax base that would follow. If a new store sells \$1 million in merchandise and half of that — \$500,000 — represents growth in the retail sector, the sales taxes on half of that — \$250,000 — could be rebated.

We offer this purely as an idea. A starting point. We're not economists; none of us here hold an MBA who can make a thorough analysis of whether this thought has a snowball's chance here in Vermillion.

But, it's better than simply saying no to a prospective new businessman. Isn't it?

Cream separator cranks out tales of woe

Don't ever buy a birthday present for your wife without first thinking of the consequences of that purchase.

In a brief weak moment, I bought an old-fashioned cream separator at an auction sale. The price was right and I thought maybe Phyllis might like to have one as a memento of her youth.

Wrong!
When I finally got the thing home (I scratched up the pickup bed and almost undid my hernia-hemstitching in the process) I discovered forthwith that I had made a poor choice of gift. Like giving Brillo pads at a wedding or Denture Crème for a lady's birthday.

Fortunately for me, two agrarian delights which I somehow managed to escape in growing up were milking and cream separating. Not so Phyllis! When I drove into the yard with the present I had so thoughtfully acquired for her, she gave me that woe-begone look of a cocker spaniel and proceeded to tell me that she NEVER wanted to see the underside of a cow or turn a cream separator AGAIN.

As she is wont to do, she proceeded to elaborate on both subjects. I suggested she write her own column about



Bob Karolevitz
Writer At Large

her experiences on the farm. We could call it "Phyllisophically Speaking" or maybe "One Thing or an Udder," but she cut me off coolly and went on with her recitation.

I heard sad tales of her pioneering days when she trudged through the snow in the pre-dawn darkness, pail in hand, enroute to the twice daily ritual in the cow stall. I shed a sympathetic tear as she related the intimate details of the drudgerous task.

It tore at my heartstrings to hear how a 10-year-old girl hobbled the old Leopard Cow, a cantankerous animal, tied down the tail so she wouldn't be slapped in the face and then mounted the unsteady two-legged stool to begin the production process.

First though, the bovine faucets had to be cleaned off and then the squeezing and pulling began. That part, Phyllis said, wasn't so bad because the warmth from the cow heated up chilled fingers and adding Bag Balm had a

soothing effect. Holding a large bucket between youthful knees (garbed in long black stockings) was an arduous ordeal, especially as the pail got heavier with each jet-like squirt.

The morning sun glistened through the frosty air as the three milkers (Phyllis, her father and sister Marie) finished, rose from their milk stools, fed lingering cats and bawling calves and pitched steaming manure outside the door.

But was that the end? There was even worse to come!

The buckets of foaming liquid were toted to the milk house and dumped into the separator as the incessant cranking ensued. Once the centrifugal action took over the turning was easy, and finally rich cream trickled out of the spigot.

I tried not to let Phyllis see me touch a handkerchief to my eyes as she came to the climax of her heart-rending

saga: washing the separator when no running water was available.

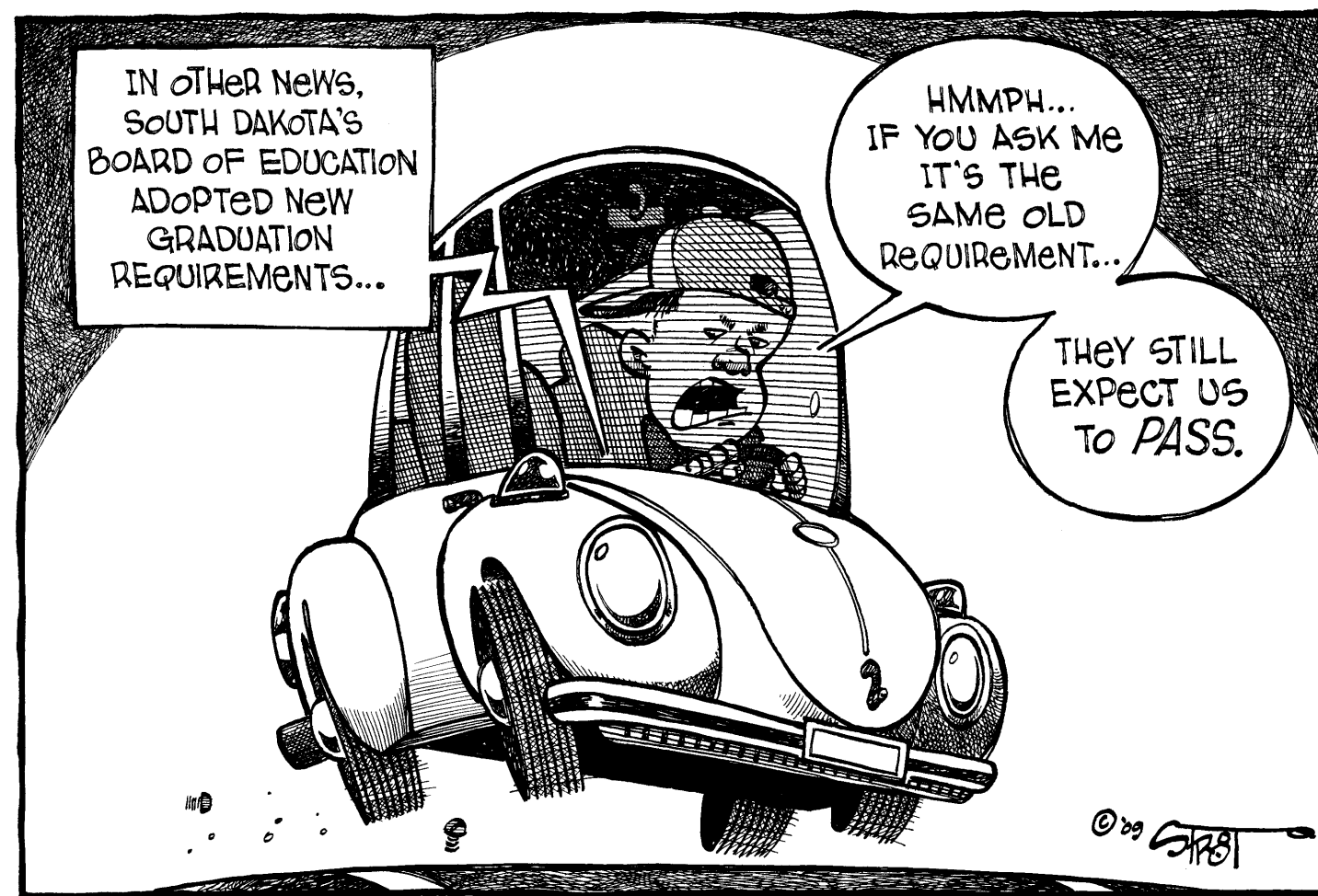
It seemed the infernal machine broke down into eight million parts and each had to be washed to be ready for the next milking. And the skimmed milk hauled to the slop barrel for the hogs.

By then, my frau continued, it was time for the rickety school bus to arrive and Phyllis and Marie had to run up the road a quarter of a mile with lunch buckets and books, replacing milk pails in their tired hands that still had a faint hint of barnyard even after diligent scrubbing.

They worried too, about the aroma in their hair where heads had pressed up against the flanks of the cows. No showers or spray-on deodorants — mercifully their peers didn't seem to mind because almost everybody else smelled the same!

By the time she reached this stage of her story, I was sobbing uncontrollably as I shared vicariously in Phyllis's past. I was so shaken, in fact, that I even poured my own milk for lunch. After all, that poor gal had been through too much already!

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LETTERS

Bellringers needed

To the editor:
It is that time of year again, another Christmas is coming and so is the Salvation Army Bell Ringing Campaign. This year we are presented with another great opportunity to make a difference, to remember the reason for the season. With every dollar put into the kettle, 90 percent will be staying in our community helping those facing hardship. We have an ambitious goal of \$5,000 and together we can reach it.

We need your help in two ways — first by giving into the Salvation Army kettles located at Hy-Vee, Walmart, and Jones' and second — offering your time to ringing the bell for this year's campaign. So far, many community groups have signed up, but we are still in need of some more bell ringers.

We especially need groups of people on Friday Nov. 27, Saturday, Dec 5, and Saturday, Dec. 19. If those dates don't work we have a variety of other times available to

ring. The funds brought in will help provide utility assistance, nourishment, and shelter for Vermillion residents all year long. We expect an even greater demand for services this year, and need your support more than ever.

By donating to the red kettles or offering your time to bell ring, means next year we can give a renewed chance or even a brighter future for many in our community. If you have questions about Salvation Army services or are able to bell ring, please contact Devon Davoux at 624-8809 or email djd117@msn.com.

May God bless you!

Sincerely,
Devon Davoux
Bell-Ringing chairperson

Be safe

To the editor:
As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, I'm sure you are thinking about family gatherings and turkey dinners. I'm asking you to make seatbelts and highway safety part of your holiday planning.

Five people died in high-way accidents in South Dakota last year during the Thanksgiving weekend. The year before, seven people were killed in car wrecks in our state during the holiday. That was the deadliest Thanksgiving on record. Nearly all of those deaths could have been prevented if people had followed basic highway safety practices.

It's up to you to keep high-way crashes, injuries and deaths from marring the Thanksgiving holiday. If you have been drinking, please don't drive.

When you travel, allow extra time for holiday traffic. And always buckle up — every trip, every time. Be responsible for making sure others in your vehicle do the same thing. Seatbelts are the best tool you have for keeping you and your family safe on the road.

Have a safe and pleasant Thanksgiving.

James Carpenter
South Dakota Office
of Highway Safety director

Enjoyed pink paper

To the editor:
Thank you all for the beautiful cards for our 60th wedding anniversary.

It was a big surprise. We were confused when some mentioned the paper. Then our daughter gave us the "pink" Plain Talk. The October pink paper was so clever. Bob has leukemia and prostate cancer (not breast), but it was a double meaning.

Bob enjoyed and read every word. The evening of our anniversary our Army soldier and Kiley were married. Our son also was married. It was Don and Susie's 33rd anniversary.

Thank you all so much.
Bob & Opal South
Sioux Falls

Stealth game brings out the Mission Impossible in us

Secret Santa starts this week at work. Just in case you've never participated in this holiday experience, let me explain.

Secret Santa, also known as Kris Kringle, is a five-week gift exchange game. Players' names are drawn from a hat. You are a Secret Santa for the person whose name you draw, giving gifts anonymously until the very last one. Bestow as many gifts as you'd like, but the total value must not exceed \$15.

Be sure to sign gift tags Secret Santa, S.S. for short or leave them blank. To ensure anonymity, some change their handwriting or ask someone else to sign for them. Finally, in the last week, reveal who you are by signing your name on the last gift or by hand-delivering it.

Part of the challenge is figuring out how to deliver gifts in an undercover operation without letting on it's you. If your place of employment is a large complex with multiple buildings, try sending gifts through interoffice mail.

Serious Secret Santas are an unusual breed of undercover givers who make "Mission Impossible" look like child's play. They devise clandestine plans for gifts to suddenly appear on recipients' desks without a trace or trail.

With a North Pole twinkle in their eyes, the people at my work are really into

MyStoryYourStory



Paula Damon
Columnist

Secret Santa and look forward to it all year.

Last year during the fourth week of S.S., I realized the level of seriousness when I stopped by the office of my recipient, a Secret Santa die hard and organizer of the annual event. I wasn't conducting reconnaissance. I had a legitimate reason for being there.

On the windowsill behind her desk were all the gifts I had given her, displayed for everyone to see. With poorly disguised curiosity, I gawked and quickly passed judgment on my Secret Santa efforts. There on the ledge were a Dollar Store box of chocolates, a cheesy Christmas ornament, a blah pair of cotton winter gloves and a gaudy pair of earrings.

Because she was showcasing my Secret Santa acumen for all to see, I thought maybe I'd better step up my game, but quickly settled myself down with a little self-talk. It's anonymous, silly. You old worrywart, nobody knows it's you! Whew, I felt better.

This year, I am changing my strategy a bit. For some

months now, I have been stockpiling clearance items that were marked down to under \$5. I may even drop by my new recipient's office for casual surveillance. Plus, I'm thinking about how to cunningly deliver each gift under the radar just like Saint Nick himself.

If you haven't been a Secret Santa, you may want to consider tossing your name into the hat. It could be one of the most magical holiday games you'll ever play.

A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her columns have won first-place in National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women Communications Contests. In the 2009 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contest, Paula's columns took three first-place awards. To contact Paula, email pauladamon@iw.net, follow her blog at www.my-story-your-story.blogspot.com and find her on Facebook.

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