

Frank Warren shares secrets at PostSecret event in Vermillion

By Travis Gulbrandson
travis.gulbrandson@plains
lk.net

Everybody has a secret. Frank Warren found this out when he started PostSecret, a project that allows strangers to anonymously design a postcard that tells a secret about themselves, which Warren then posts on his Web site, PostSecret.com. In eight years, Warren has received a half million postcards, and his Web site averages 7 million visitors per month.

"We all have secrets, and every day I think we make a choice about what we do with our secrets, whether we box them up and bury them inside of us and forget about them, or bring them out into the light and share them with the people we trust," he said.

Warren discussed his project on a visit to the University of South Dakota on Wednesday, Nov. 14.

During the program, he discussed how PostSecret began, showed some of his favorite postcards and gave the audience a chance to share some of their own secrets.

The secrets Warren receives range from lighthearted to deeply serious and arrive each day in his mailbox or his e-mail inbox.

One that he shared last week came from an airport baggage handler. It read, "You called me an idiot, so I sent your bags to the wrong destination. Whoops! I guess you were right!"

Another wasn't a card, but an e-mail telling Warren that its sender had made a card, but the finished product had made them feel horrible,

so they tore it up and decided no longer to be the person who carries that secret.

"I love that story," Warren said. "I love how it shows the transformative power that secrets have over us, but also how it demonstrates that sometimes when we think we're keeping a secret, that secret is actually keep us. And it can undermine your relationships with other people. It could be blocking us from being who we truly are in ways we can't see or identify until we face that part of ourselves that we're hiding."

Warren began PostSecret in November 2004, when he printed up 3,000 postcards and drove through Washington, D.C., handing them out to strangers.

While he concedes the idea sounds crazy, it wasn't long before he knew he had hit on something.

"That first week, I had maybe 100 visitors to the PostSecret Web site, the next week 1,000, the next week 10,000, and soon the idea began spreading virally across the country and around the world," he said.

Since 2004, Warren has released five books filled with PostSecret cards and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the National Suicide Hotline through his Web site.

After the project caught on, Warren said he "realized that I had accidentally tapped into something that had been there the whole time, something full of mystery and wonder that I still don't fully understand to this day."



One secret he received three months into the project reinforces this idea for him. It is a simple photograph of a door with several holes in it, with the inscription, "The holes are from when my mom tried knocking down my door so she could continue beating me."

"(The day I posted it) over a million people visited the Web site, and I started getting e-mails from young people ... around the world telling me their stories, sending me pictures of their broken bedroom doors, one after another," Warren said.

There was soon a column on the Web site that featured 20 of these pictures.

Warren said that while he received some criticism for posting these, he also received messages from people who had been abused who said the pictures helped them understand they were not alone.

They also helped Warren understand he was not alone. He had

two such doors growing up, he said.

"For the first time I realized there are two kinds of secrets," he said. "There are the kinds of secrets that we keep from other people, and the kinds of secrets that we hide from ourselves."

Warren said he now sees his own secret as the impetus for beginning the project.

"It was only through the courage and strength (others) were showing me with their secrets that I was able to uncover a secret I had buried in my life years ago," he said.

AAA offers 'Topsy Tow' for Thanksgiving

There comes a time when discretion is the better part of valor. When that time comes for those consuming alcoholic beverages over the Thanksgiving holiday, AAA South Dakota hopes they'll call the auto club for a free ride home for themselves and their vehicle.

"If you've been drinking, why take a chance and drive? We are offering a safe, free alternative," said Marilyn Buskohl, spokeswoman for AAA South Dakota. "We know alcohol is going to be consumed at holiday parties, whether at a friend's or relative's house or while out on the town. When the party's over, we just want to make sure the roads are as safe as possible for

everybody."

If you feel unsafe behind the wheel after drinking, AAA will give you and up to one more person – plus your vehicle – a free ride home within a 15-mile radius of point of pick up in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Mitchell and Yankton. Topsy Tow services are being offered from 6 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 21, until 2 a.m. Monday, Nov. 26.

"The number to call is 1-800-222-4357 – which translates to 1-800-AAA-HELP," said Buskohl. "Write this number down and keep it in your car's glove box. When you call, tell the AAA operator, 'I need a Topsy Tow,' and a truck will be on its way."

You do not need to be a member of AAA to call for a Topsy Tow.

Tell them you saw it in the Broadcaster!
201 W. Cherry • Vermillion, SD
624-4429



Home FOR RENT
By Burbank, SD
2-Bed, 1 Bath

Fully furnished except your clothes and toothbrush. This energy efficient 2 bedroom home is like new with, new heat pump, insulation, cottage outside, log home inside is ideal for a small family sleeping 4. Induction cooking with appliances, cookware, new washer dryer, bosch instant never ending hot water heater and more. \$700/month, lease negotiable.



Call 605-741-0095 or 702-333-2550 • bobjankovics@gmail.com

M&S Trenching
Electrical ■ Footings ■ Water Lines



Mike Seiner, Owner
Vermillion, SD
605-999-5218 ■ 605-624-5594

Call for a FREE irrigation wiring estimate.



Forkfly

Download ForkFly on your smart phone **or** find us at forkfly.com from your phone's browser. No smart phone? No problem. Visit us online to print your favorite coupons.

Live Local. Spend Less.
We're forking out the deals at Forkfly!

www.forkfly.com

PRESS & DAKOTAN

MISSOURI VALLEY SHOPPER

PLAIN TALK

Broadcaster Press