

# VIEWPOINTS

## EXPLORING SOUTH DAKOTA



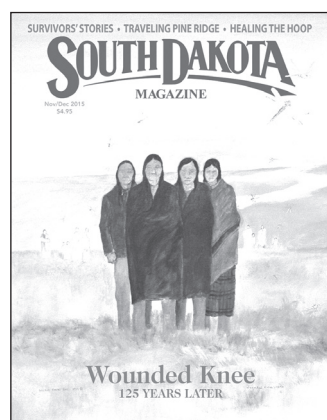
By Katie Hunhoff  
Editor at South Dakota Magazine

### Remembering Wounded Knee

BY KATIE HUNHOFF

The massacre at Wounded Knee occurred when our state was just one year old, yet the effects of that cold winter day still reverberate throughout our state and our country. Dec. 29 marks the 125th anniversary of Wounded Knee. To remember, we dedicated much of our current issue of South Dakota Magazine to the tragedy.

We began by visiting Pine Ridge to find descendants of Wounded Knee survivors. We met Leonard Little Finger, who lives near Oglala. Both of Little Finger's grandfathers, along with more extended family, were survivors of Wounded Knee. He is a direct descendant of Big Foot, whose band was decimated in the massacre. Little Finger had 39 relatives at Wounded Knee. Only seven survived.



Before the massacre, Big Foot and nearly 400 men, women and children were living on the Cheyenne River Reservation. Some were from Sitting Bull's band, and had fled to Big Foot's camp after Sitting Bull was killed farther north on the Standing Rock Reservation. Black Elk, in Black Elk Speaks, recounted that only about 100 of the almost 400 were warriors.

The rest were women, children or elderly. But all were starving and cold. Big Foot was ill with pneumonia, but still decided to meet with Oglala Chief Red Cloud on the Pine Ridge Reservation to help work on a peace agreement with the federal government.

Soldiers had heard they were on the move and were on lookout. Big Foot's band was known to have embraced the Ghost Dance, a new religious movement circulating among tribes. White soldiers saw it as a sign of disobedience and trouble because federal law prohibited any exhibitions of Native religion on reservations. But the weak, cold and hungry people that those soldiers met on Dec. 28 were not rebellious. Big Foot was taken by ambulance to the cavalry's camp on Wounded Knee Creek, and his band was escorted to a nearby valley and instructed to set up camp.

Soldiers seized guns from the Lakota the following morning. The Lakota complied, but the cavalry believed that there were more guns that were being hidden and a search was ordered. Warriors gathered in the camp's assembly area, and the soldiers began to individually search them. Although there are various stories on how the massacre began, our managing editor John Andrews writes that it is widely believed that it began when a young, deaf Lakota named Black Coyote held his gun over his head, proclaiming it had cost him money and he wasn't going to give it up. As a soldier tried to seize the weapon, a bullet discharged. Both sides panicked, and the massacre began. It is generally believed that over 300 Lakota died. About 90 were men; the rest women and children. Most of the men were killed in the assembly area, but soldiers pursued the Lakota relentlessly as they tried to escape camp.

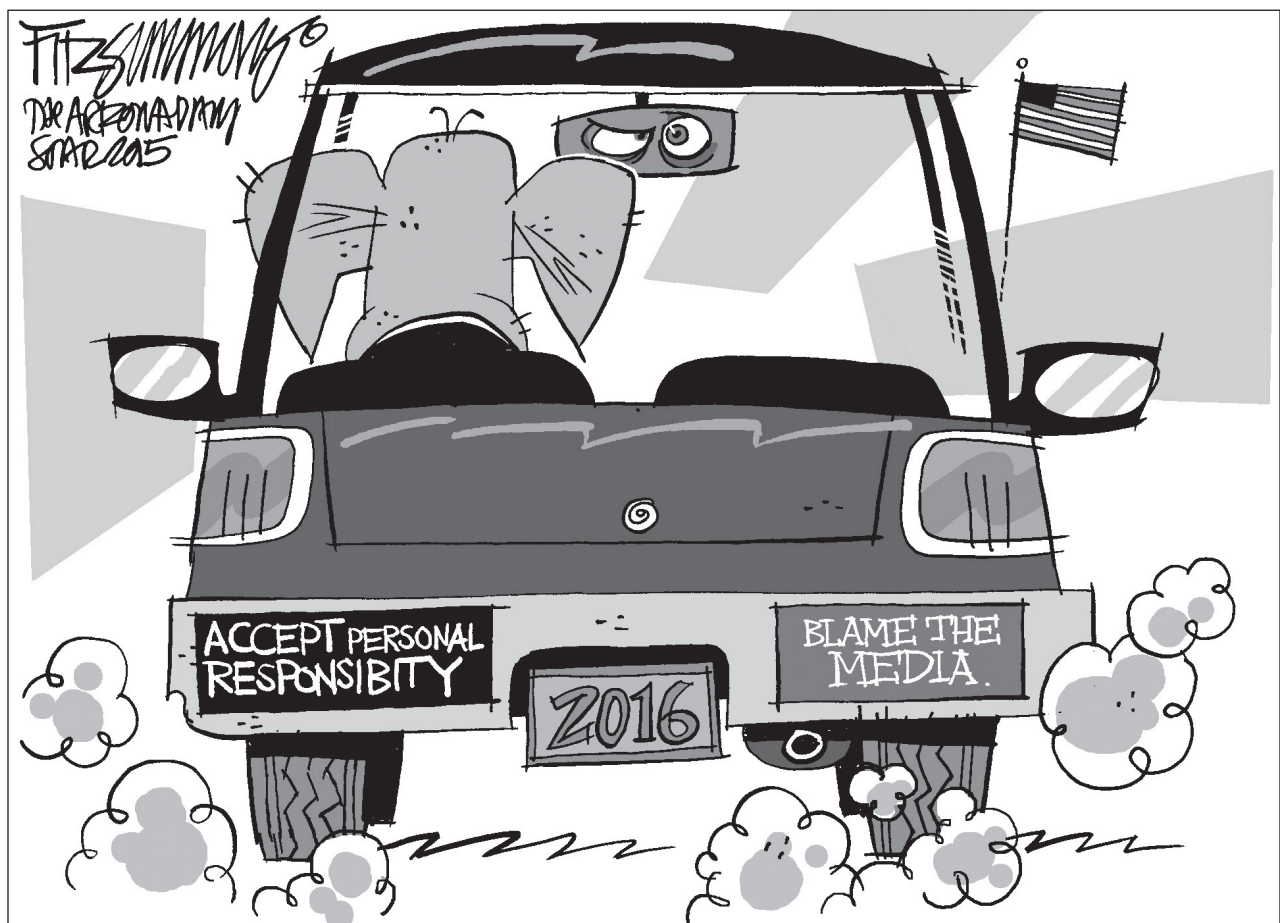
Little Finger believes it is a responsibility of tribal elders to pass on the traditional knowledge of what happened, and that the knowledge of each generation can formulate a response to the tragedy.

"Let's say you look at time as a cloth," Little Finger told us. "Then along comes some violence and tears it. You can stitch it, but you can never tear the threads that consist of that fabric. I come to that every day."

It's not easy to search for meaning in something like the Wounded Knee massacre, but it was in that spirit that we collected the stories for this issue. Besides seeking stories from descendants of Wounded Knee survivors, we also asked Native American leaders Elsie Meek and Craig Howe to discuss what Wounded Knee means today. We explore artistic interpretations of Wounded Knee and wrote a travel guide for our readers who might like to visit Pine Ridge. We also pored through photos of the massacre aftermath, debating which we should print and if they were too shocking. John Andrews studied the massacre from many sources and points of view to create the best accounts I have read of what happened on that terrible day.

In the end, I hope we did some justice to the Lakota experience and that we provide perspective on our state's greatest tragedy.

Katie Hunhoff is the editor of South Dakota Magazine, a bi-monthly publication discussing the people, places and culture of our state. Visit [www.SouthDakotaMagazine.com](http://www.SouthDakotaMagazine.com) for more information.



## Rules To Live By. Not.

BY PAULA DAMON

I imagine my husband did the happy dance when I went away recently on a nine-day vacation.

It's not that he didn't miss having me around. It's just that my absence was a vacation from my book of rules.

You know what I mean. The sundry of mission-critical measures we women put in place to prevent total chaos at the Okay Corral.

Here's how my instructions went down before I left home...

I always like to change out the hand towel in the bathroom on a daily basis. I bet you didn't know that, did you? Well, I do.

While we're on the bathroom topic, remember to cover the sink when you're shaving. This prevents unwanted clippings from clogging the drain. And you know how I hate it when that happens. You can use the dirty hand towel to cover the sink, then be sure to put it in the hamper when you're done.

Don't leave the toilet seat up, either. [Although, now that I think about it, he hasn't left it up for decades. Oh, well, a little reminder never hurts.]

Pick up the bath mat so you don't trip over it on your way to the toilet.

And dust-bust the dog hair on that white ceramic tile. Not sure why on earth we chose white - it shows everything.

At least once while I'm gone, could you please wipe down the bathroom mirrors? Use that spray bottle of vinegar and water I keep under the kitchen sink.

Now, let's discuss the kitchen.



PAULA DAMON

Please, whatever you do, wash your hands before digging for food in the fridge. And definitely wash them before putting away the dishes.

Oh, and when emptying the dishwasher, could you put the dishes completely away? Leaving them on the counter above

the cupboard where they belong really doesn't count as "putting them away."

Speaking of dishes, don't let the water run when rinsing them before placing them in the dishwasher. It's a total waste of a precious natural resource. Someday you'll thank me for this when everyone else has to ration water and we don't. [He says we won't have any more water than anyone else. But what can I say? It's my train of thought.]

Be sure to scrub the counters at least twice daily. Otherwise, they'll get crusty.

Whatever you do, don't sort the mail on the kitchen counter or on the kitchen table for that matter. Do you know how many germs you introduce to the house when you do that? Right where we prepare and eat our meals? Tracking bacteria from all over the place! Makes me sick just thinking about it. Honey, whatever you do keep the mail on the desk.

When doing the laundry, don't cheat and throw lights in with darks. This makes the lights dingy. Keep them separate. And by the way, don't

run super large loads. It's hard on the washer and will wear it out sooner than you think.

While you're in the basement, remember the dehumidifier needs to be emptied at least every other day.

Oh, and the dog do-do out on the yard? Pick it up daily. With our three Dachshunds, it adds up quickly.

When you let "Little Bit" out, stand right by the door. She's fast and within a couple of minutes she'll be barking to come back in. You know how that bugs the neighbors. Or at least one certain neighbor who remains unnamed.

Now, I know this is your least favorite rule, but could you please, please, take off your shoes when coming in after working in the yard or the garden. Think about it. With the dogs and the geese, there's lots of opportunity to track you know what everywhere. It's just common sense.

I know you like to organize your stuff in piles. Sometimes scattered piles. This just doesn't work for me. Why not try to be a little more tidy while I'm gone and straighten things up a bit.

Tomorrow, we'll go over the rest of the list.

It shouldn't be too difficult to follow. Should it, Honey.

Ho-n-n-e-e-ey? Where'd you go?

Paula Bosco Damon is a national award-winning writer whose columns appear weekly in regional newspapers in the Upper Midwest. The author conducts readings of her works and writing workshops for beginning writers. For more information, email [boscodamon.paula@gmail.com](mailto:boscodamon.paula@gmail.com).

## Facing Changes

BY RICHARD P. HOLM, MD

As summer wanes, autumn falls upon us, and winter shovels in, we are reminded that to survive we must face change.

I attended two funerals this last month and wondered how both surviving 80-plus year old men/widowers were going to handle the loss of their spouses and all that is about to change. No question, survival depends on their capacity to change. I hope that they would, over time, take the opportunity to connect more with friends, their grandchildren, the people in their church, and spend more time with new or long put-off hobbies, while appropriately mourning their loss for a time... and then moving on. But then again, the death of a wife and the adjustments needed to go on might be too daunting, and could take one or both of them out in short order.

It is not an uncommon story that after the death of a spouse, the elderly partner dies within the month. Sometimes this comes as the result of a particular type of heart failure that follows severe emotional loss, sometimes from malnutrition and dehydration when depression causes one to stop eating, sometimes there is no explanation, and sometimes the remaining spouse dies from suicide.

Some may perceive the spousal team dying so closely together as a romantic elderly Romeo and Juliet-like love-story; so poignant and heart warming. But the truth

is that it may be an unnecessary death that could have been prevented.

No caring and compassionate person would want their partner to follow them so closely into the grave. When love is true, then they would want the one left behind to see that change is an opportunity to continue on in another way, to find fresh interests, to discover new joy.

Other life changes can be similarly challenging, such as having a new diagnosis of cancer, moving out of a home in which one had lived for many years, suffering a financial crisis, and so on.

We know that the ability to handle change is like working and stretching a muscle. If you don't use it, you will lose it. Stagnation can cause rigidity, weakness, dependency, death, but movement can cause flexibility, strength, happiness, life.

As winter shovels in, we are reminded that to survive we must face change, and then we can be alive to see spring again.

To hear more from Dr. Holm, visit his website, [www.PrairieDoc.org](http://www.PrairieDoc.org). On Call with the Prairie Doc is produced by the Healing Words Foundation in association with the South Dakota State University journalism department and airs Thursdays on South Dakota Public Broadcasting Television at 7 p.m. CT, 6 p.m. MT, and streams live at [www.PrairieDoc.org](http://www.PrairieDoc.org).

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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](mailto:shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net).



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Vermillion Plain Talk Staff

Advertising Director: Michele Schievelbein

Advertising Sales Rep: Jackie Williams

Composing Manager: Kathy Larson

Composing Staff: Rob Buckingham, Melissa Peterson

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