

# Are you smarter than an eighth grader?

The students who attended Clay County's rural schools decades ago had to bring their own lunch, in some cases had outhouses instead of indoor plumbing, and used pencil and paper (and no doubt, erasers) rather than computers.

It would be easy to believe that, since those times seem simpler than today, that students of that era faced a much less demanding curriculum than today.

True, today's students are challenged as they strive to meet university admission standards with class work influenced by everything from No Child Left Behind to a host of standardized testing that today's pupils must take.

While waxing nostalgic about the good ol' days of country school, however, it would be a mistake to conclude that those days were less stringent for students. Below is a test that all Clay County eighth graders had to take and pass to graduate and move on to high school.

How would you do? Are you smarter than an eighth grader? This test is part of the CD "Clay County Rural Schools Scrapbook," provided to the *Plain Talk* by the Clay County Historical Society as we gathered information for this week's Heritage Edition.

Sorry, a list of correct answers to this test wasn't included on the CD. You're on your own. But just think. You may try to Google the correct answers. That's an option rural school students didn't have decades ago. Have fun!

## 8TH GRADE FINAL EXAM Grammar (Time, one hour)

1. Give nine rules for the use of Capital Letters.
2. Name the Parts of Speech and define those that have no Modifications.
3. Define Verse, Stanza and Paragraph.
4. What are the Principal Parts of a verb? Give Principal Parts of lie, lay and run.
5. Define Case, Illustrate each Case.
6. What is Punctuation? Give rules for principal marks of Punctuation.
7. Write a composition of about 150 words and show

therein that you understand the practical use of the rules of grammar.

### Arithmetic (Time, 1.25 hours)

1. Name and define the Fundamental rules of Arithmetic.
2. A wagon box is 2 ft deep, 10 feet long, and 3 ft wide. How many bushels of wheat will it hold?
3. If a load of wheat weighs 3942 lbs., what is it worth at 50cts/bushel, deducting 1050lbs. for tare?
4. District No. 33 has a valuation of \$35,000. What is the necessary levy to carry on a school seven months at \$50 per month, and have \$104 for incidentals?
5. Find cost of 6720 lbs. coal at \$6.00 per ton.
6. Find the interest of \$512.60 for 8 months and

### BETWEEN THE LINES



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- 18 days at 7 percent.
7. What is the cost of 40 boards 12 inches wide and 16 ft. long at \$20 per meter?
8. Find bank discount on \$300 for 90 days (no grace) at 10 percent.
9. What is the cost of a square farm at \$15 per acre, the distance around which is 640 rods?
10. Write a Bank Check, a Promissory Note, and a Receipt.

- ### U.S. History (Time, 45 minutes)
1. Give the epochs into which U.S. History is divided.
  2. Give an account of the discovery of America by Columbus.
  3. Relate the causes and results of the Revolutionary War.
  4. Show the territorial growth of the United States.
  5. Tell what you can of the history of Kansas
  6. Describe three of the most prominent battles of the Rebellion.
  7. Who were the following: Morse, Whitney, Fulton, Bell, Lincoln, Penn, and Howe?
  8. Name events connected with the following dates: 1607, 1620, 1800, 1849, 1865.



# Halloween — what's not to love? Winning!

What is it about Halloween that brings out alter egos in adults? It's something I can't quite put my finger on.

For years, I've observed the peculiar nature of both men and women, but mostly men, as they prance around in attire they wouldn't be caught dead in any other time of the year. At parties, at home or at the office in the days, adults permit their inner child, gender or monster to come out, or so it seems.

I can't figure out why any adults would want to show up at someone's doorstep wearing a diaper and sucking a pacifier. There's so much that's wrong with this picture that I don't know where to begin.

And what's with the mild mannered actuary who wobbles through the office in stilettos, wearing mascara and lipstick, his beer gut hanging out, sporting a tight top, baring chest hair and an even tighter mini-skirt? Thank goodness for dress codes the remaining 364 days of the year!

No, I'm not complaining about the guy who dresses up as Dick Tracy in a trench coat and fedora, as long as he's wearing clothes underneath. No flashing, please.

Halloween has always been a time for creativity and fun, and I'm good with that. It's the drama queens and the closet vampires that make me twitch.

Like the quiet guy down the street you don't hear a peep out of all year, except on Oct. 31. There he sits on his front porch wearing a monster mask and using

### MY STORY YOUR STORY



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his monster voice, scaring all the little children away.

People, let's not forget the true origin of wearing costumes this time of year. Originating from Celtic tradition, the holiday we know today as Allhallows Eve was called Samhain. Celtic people believed that on Samhain the spirits of the dead would

mingle with the living before traveling to the afterlife.

The Celts held festivals, celebrations of sorts, and dressed in animal heads and hides to help the good souls on their way to the afterlife and to keep bad spirits away.

O.K, I admit I've never gone out and bought a costume for myself. Instead, I have pulled together outfits with items pooled from just about every closet in the house. Nothing obnoxious, though. Dressing as a rag doll, a clown or a good witch, like Glinda in the Wizard of Oz.

I suppose you're wondering what the most popular costumes are for adults. According to a National Retail Federation Survey, the most popular choices are a witch, pirate, vampire, zombie, cat, vixen,

ghost, nurse and some sort of scary mask.

The Green Lantern leads the list, says costume retailer Spirit Halloween, followed by Lady Gaga, New Jersey reality star Snookie, the Smurfs, Batman, Angry Birds and Charlie Sheen rank at or near the top. Winning!

Author Deanna Joseph states in her article "Psychology behind Halloween Costumes" [BellaOnline], "Halloween offers us the opportunity to safely explore a different aspect of ourselves, and in psychological terms this process is called sublimation."

Happy Halloween, and, remember, whatever you decide to dress up as, your disguise will be telegraphing your inner child, vampire, witch or superhero. Boo! Boo, hoo!

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A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Bosco Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her writing has won first-place in competitions of the National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women. In the 2009, 2010 and 2011 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contests, her columns have earned eight first-place awards. To contact Paula, email [boscodamon.paula@gmail.com](mailto:boscodamon.paula@gmail.com), follow her blog at [my-story-your-story.blogspot.com](http://my-story-your-story.blogspot.com) and find her on FaceBook.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Thank you, Clay County residents

I want to thank the people of Clay County who met with my staff assistant, Erik Nelson, during his recent Outreach Day in Wakonda and Vermillion. Erik has updated me on the information and feedback he received from the Clay County business and community leaders that met with him.

Having my staff conduct Economic Development Outreach Days helps me assess the resources available in local communities, as well as identify potential areas of growth and long-term development. Each community faces unique challenges and opportunities for growth and looking at local trends helps me focus on the things I can do in Washington to better serve the Main Street business community in South Dakota.

As always, if there are any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my Sioux Falls office at 605-332-2824 or toll free at 1-800-537-0025.

Sincerely,

Tim Johnson  
United States Senate

The Associated Press

### The Daily Republic, Mitchell: Oct. 18 Johnson deserves legislative criticism

It appears that Jarrod Johnson is loose with the public's money, and that's frustrating to members of the state Legislature.

It's also frustrating to us, after reading the account of how Johnson doled out raises to members of his staff after vowing to legislative leaders that he wouldn't.

Johnson was criticized recently by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Appropriations, which oversees the budget for the Office of School and Public Lands. Johnson is the elected commissioner of that office.

According to a report in a recent edition of The Daily Republic, Johnson has now twice violated the Legislature's no-raise policy, which has been in effect throughout state government for three years. The policy is in place to help counteract unprecedented deficits within the state budget.

After Johnson gave raises last year, Sen. Larry Tidemann, R-Brookings, said Johnson promised to not do it again this year. Johnson didn't dispute Tidemann's account.

We can understand the frustration felt by members of the committee after Johnson gave 3 percent raises to three employees and a 20 percent raise to a fourth. His office employs six overall.

Johnson defended the raises by telling the lawmakers that his office still achieved the 10 percent cut in his office's general-fund spending. The members of the committee, however, were not sympathetic.

"I am more than offended," said Tidemann.

Sen. Deb Peters, R-Hartford, said she was "appalled."

Johnson is paid \$78,363 annually to oversee the little-known Office of School and Public Lands, but he apparently has a lot to learn about business. Handing out raises to employees in times of economic difficulty is a touchy practice, and especially after being told not to by those who oversee the budget.

We wish everyone could have a raise every year, but South Dakota's fiscal reality makes that impossible. Raises are tough to come by in the private sector, and they should be equally difficult to achieve in the economic environment that today dominates state government. Elected leaders are there to lead and make wise decisions with taxpayer money. Those who do not do that must re-evaluate why they ran for office in the first place.

Some state government employees have taken pay cuts. Gov. Dennis Daugaard cut his own pay by some \$15,000 annually at the same time he was making hard decisions about the salaries of other state workers. Now that's leadership.

Johnson shouldn't have granted those raises — not only because he should be smart enough to be frugal with taxpayers' money in tough economic times but also because it's unfair to employees of other government departments whose leaders are abiding by the Legislature's no-raise rule.

But mostly, Johnson shouldn't have granted those raises because he told lawmakers last year that he wouldn't give raises. He should have kept that promise.

### Watertown Public Opinion: Oct. 17 No-raise policy ignored

It's not too often we hear anything involving the state's School and Public Lands Commission. And, other than election time every four years, it's also not too often we hear anything about the person running that office. Throw in the fact most South Dakotans probably can't tell you who the commissioner of that office is and it's not too surprising there hasn't been much concern over the years about how that office is being run. There should be.

Commissioner Jarrod Johnson, who has twice been elected to lead the School and Public Lands Commission, is in hot water with the Legislature's Joint Committee on Appropriations — again. Johnson recently appeared before the committee which oversees his office's budget. Members of that body told him they were offended

by his decision to grant raises to his staff. Sen. Larry Tidemann, R-Brookings, said Johnson has twice violated the Legislature's no-raise policy that's been in general effect for three years because of state budget deficits. Tidemann said Johnson promised after the first occasion that he wouldn't do it again. According to a report by Capitol correspondent Bob Mercer, Johnson didn't dispute Tidemann's account.

Maybe the fact Johnson is in his last go-around as lands commissioner is why he ignored the no-raise directive. State law bars him from serving more than two consecutive terms in office and this is his second term. But for the life of us, other than sheer arrogance, we can't figure out why Johnson thinks his office should be treated differently than any other state office. Keep in mind, after the majority of state employees were denied raises for the last two years of Gov. Mike Rounds administration, Gov. Dennis Daugaard continued that policy and made it three consecutive years with no raises for the majority of state workers. On top of that, Daugaard cut his own salary and that of all his cabinet members as an example that all state employees are in the same boat.

Apparently, Johnson thinks those sacrifices don't extend to his office. He gave raises of 3 percent to three employees and 20 percent to a fourth employee in his six-person office. His defense? He

said he still delivered on the required 10 percent cut he was asked to make in his office's general fund spending. Plus, he repeatedly claimed the raises were necessary to keep trained staff on the payroll at key times. The only person who threatened to leave the office, however, was the recipient of the 20 percent raise which went to Johnson's deputy, Justin Ohleen, whose annual salary currently is listed at \$60,000. If Ohleen was so unhappy with making \$60,000 a year, then why not let him leave and find another \$60,000-per-year job? Apparently if he was willing to leave, there must have been one or more available to him.

What makes Johnson's decision so bad is he violated the governor's directive twice — once under Rounds and again under Daugaard. Plus, the lands commissioner oversees leasing of state lands for agriculture, mineral and oil and gas production purposes. Revenue from that is distributed to schools, universities and other state institutions. The money he gave his staff in raises should have gone to those programs and benefited the many instead of the few.

We realize we're not talking about a significant amount of money. The point, however, is Johnson ignored a governor once and then, after promising not to do it again, did it again. What kind of leadership is that? Remember that the next time Johnson runs for office — if he does.

Send Letters to the Editor to [david.lias@plaintalk.net](mailto:david.lias@plaintalk.net)

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