

NEUHARTH

From Page 1

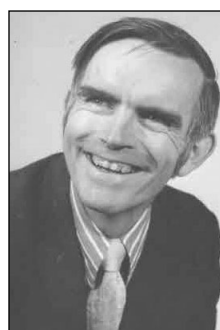
of the award's recipients. "I've never been more delighted and thrilled than to welcome my former boss back to win this award," he said. For her part, Hagerty jokingly said she wondered why he waited until she was 86 years old to bestow the honor upon her. "I don't have much time left," she said. In all seriousness, she added that the experience was "overwhelming." "It's such a thrill to be back, and it's unbelievable to be honored this way," Hagerty said. Following her receipt of the award, Hagerty joined Neuharth onstage, along with Jack Marsh, president of the Al Neuharth Media Center, her son James Robert "Bob" Hagerty of The Wall Street Journal and her granddaughter Carrie Sandstrom, a freshman journalist at the University of North Dakota.

During the post-award conversation, Marsh and Neuharth both marveled at Hagerty's continued high rate of productivity. "You're as active as any journalist I know, writing five columns a week at age 86," Marsh said. "Where do you get your energy?" "Well, it doesn't take much energy to sit there and punch around on the computer," Hagerty said. "But, it's what I like to do." Neuharth said most people don't realize the hard work that goes into composing a single column, much less five. "You don't understand how difficult that is," he said. "I sweat and spend hours writing one column a week, and if I had to write five ... there's no way I could do it." "You could go to the Olive Garden," Hagerty suggested.

OBITUARIES

DR. ROBERT E. LITKE

Dr. Robert E. Litke, 84, of Vermillion, passed away on Saturday, Oct. 6, 2012, at his residence. A committal service with military honors was held at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 11, 2012, at the Greenwood Cemetery in Council Grove, KS. Robert was born on Oct. 15, 1927, Marion, IN, to Emmett and Ethel (Fisher) Litke. He moved on to Modesto, CA and graduated from Modesto High School in 1945. After high school Robert served in the Korean War in an anti-aircraft unit.



LITKE

Robert spent many years as an educator at the collegiate level. He taught hearing audiology at South Dakota State University from '58-'66 and at the University of South Dakota from '66-'98. Robert is survived by his son, Kevin Litke; and spouse, TJ Litke, of Tallahassee, FL; his grandson, Nicolaos Litke; his granddaughter, Perri Litke; and his son, Keith Litke of Spearfish. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Compassionate Care Hospice, 3415 North Potsdam Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57104. Services have been entrusted to Kober Funeral Home of Vermillion. Condolences may be posted online at www.koberfuneralhome.com

WILLIAM H. BERGMAN

William H. Bergman, 85, of Yankton, died Saturday, Oct. 6, 2012 at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton. Visitation was from 5 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2012 at Kober Funeral Home in Vermillion with a prayer service at 7 p.m. Funeral service was held in Vermillion at the United Church of Christ-Congregational on Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2012 at 10 a.m. with Rev. Steve Miller officiating. Burial was in BluffView Cemetery, Vermillion, with military rites conducted by Clay Post 3061 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Post 0001 of the American Legion. Bill was born April 3, 1927 to Henry and Nellie S. (Weed) Bergman in Vermillion. He graduated from Vermillion High School, received a B.S. in Industrial Engineering and an M.B.A. from the University of South Dakota, and his doctorate from the University of Northern Colorado. In 1969 he married Harriett (Hanson) Schramm, formerly of Winner. She passed away in 1995. In 1997 he married Mary Ann (McQuaid) Goetz and they were at home at Lewis and Clark Lake, Yankton. Dr. Bergman retired as director and professor of the Health Services Administration program at USD in 1990 after 27 years of service to USD and the state of South Dakota. While at USD he also served 20 years as associate director of the Business Research Bureau and Professor of Business Statistics. Concurrently he founded and was the first director of the State Data Center, was the first executive director of the South Dakota Advisory Council on Vocational-Technical Education, and was the director of the Vocational-Technical Research Coordinating Unit. Prior to joining USD, for 10 years he was employed as service engineer in the Diesel-Electric Locomotive Division of Fairbanks, Morse & Co. and for several years was an industrial division area manager in the machine tool industry with the Mobil Oil Co.



BERGMAN

He enjoyed sports, including golf, hunting, boating, and baseball, and was a running back in football for Vermillion High School. He grew up in the shadow of Inman Stadium in Vermillion and was a life-long USD Coyote supporter. He grew up in and was a member of the United Church of Christ-Congregational where he served as Sunday School superintendent and chairman of the board of trustees. He was one of the founders and served 23 years on the board of directors of the Clay County Park Association. He also served on the boards of Dakota Hospital and Southeast Dakota Nursing Home and the Vermillion Development Co. He was licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard as a charter boat captain and was a past flotilla commander for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. He was a member of Clay Post 3061 of the V.F.W. and American Legion Post 0001 of Vermillion. He was proud of having served 11 years as a member of the Vermillion Volunteer Fire Dept. Survivors include his wife, Mary Ann; step-sons, James Schramm of Winner, Tom Goetz of Kearney, NE, John Goetz of Hartington, NE; step-daughters, Nancy Giessinger of Huron, Mary Kay Kollars of Sioux City, IA, and Cindy Quitsch of South Carolina; eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren; He is also survived by four beloved cousins who reside in California, and his brother, Robert E. Bergman and family of Warner Robins, GA. Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion, is in charge of arrangements. Condolences may be posted online at www.koberfuneralhome.com

Hagerty reflects on unexpected spotlight

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

When she wrote her food column last March, Marilyn Hagerty only intended to review the new Olive Garden restaurant in Grand Forks, ND. To her shock, she became an Internet sensation. The 86-year-old columnist was stunned at the reaction to her straightforward article on the franchise restaurant's menu, decor and service. That day's article had spread far beyond her regular readership in North Dakota and western Minnesota. Like wildfire, the Grand Forks Herald column had drawn more than one million hits. "They said my story went viral, but I didn't know what that meant," she said. "I called my son to see if it was a good thing." It not only was good, but it thrust her into the international spotlight. She has appeared on numerous television shows, including NBC's "Today" and Anderson Cooper's syndicated talk show. She even met with renowned food personality Anthony Bourdain, initially one of her harshest critics. As a result of their meeting, she signed a contract so Bourdain could use material from her Herald columns. On Thursday, Hagerty returned to her alma mater, the University of South Dakota, for yet another prestigious honor — the 2012 Al Neuharth Award for Excellence in the Media. She became the 26th person honored by the Freedom Forum and USD since the Al Neuharth Award program began in 1989. During Thursday afternoon's press conference, Hagerty expressed modesty at her selection. "I don't feel that I quite fit the category or the stature of

people (receiving the award) before me. (Other) people in print, they do the same work I do and are worthy of this reward," she said. "I see it as a recognition of the people who work at the medium-sized newspapers and who enjoy it." Hagerty sat next to Neuharth at Thursday afternoon's press conference. The occasion marked a 65-year reunion, as Hagerty — the 1947 editor of the Volante campus newspaper — gave Neuharth his first writing job at the time. He used the Volante role to launch his career, including founder of the nation's largest newspaper, USA Today. Unlike Neuharth, Hagerty's fame came after she was officially "retired" — and the attention was unexpectedly thrust upon her. Her March 7, 2012, "Eatbeat" column in the Grand Forks Herald simply described her visit to the newly-opened Olive Garden in the city of 50,000 residents. "In Grand Forks, it was big news. We had waited for Olive Garden for years," she said. "There were rumors, they had bought land and they were coming to town. We thought it was a pretty big deal." Hagerty filed the restaurant review, then started hearing that the column had generated a great deal of controversy. "I heard all this stuff about the column being so pathetic, that (detractors) thought I was simple-minded," she said. "But it was only an hour before my bridge club. I thought, 'I don't have time for all this crap, I have to go to bridge club.'" Hagerty was stunned upon returning from her weekly bridge gathering. "I received 18 phone calls," she said. "My computer had emails from all over the country that said things like, 'Don't feel bad. It was a good story about Olive Garden.' I was told my story went viral,

and I didn't even know what that meant. It made me nervous." Hagerty was mocked and harpooned by those who found the column a joke and an insult to fine cuisine. She was revered and defended by those who liked the restaurant, hated the other side's snobbery or just didn't enjoy seeing the onslaught against the elderly woman. "People came to my defense," she said. "They didn't want to see a little old lady from North Dakota get browbeaten. Or they might think I was pathetic, I don't know." She also received immediate celebrity status. "The local TV station wanted me to go with them to Olive Garden, then and now," she said, still not grasping the breadth and width of the reaction around the world. Bourdain quickly emerged as one of her earliest and sharpest detractors. "He was one of my main critics when I went viral," Hagerty said. "But then, he thought about it again, and he thought I wasn't so stupid, this lady from North Dakota that was writing about the Midwest and smaller towns. He found there was a story that hadn't been told." Hagerty met Bourdain for coffee in March, shortly after the cyber-meltdown. "He's very handsome and we had a very nice conversation. He was flattering, and he thought I was half-way intelligent," she said with a laugh. "He was a very nice gentleman, and he sent me flowers. I didn't know who Anthony Bourdain was until I went viral, and now I call him 'Tony.'" The two entered into a working agreement, and Hagerty invited the celebrity to Grand Forks. They haven't scheduled a visit yet, but she remains hopeful. During Thursday's press

conference, Hagerty told USD students that it takes some nerve and a lot of curiosity to become a successful columnist. "I like columns because there's so much freedom. You have the ability to impart a lot of knowledge, and you hope that people have fun reading it," she said. "You have the meat and potatoes of the newspaper, and the columns are the salad." The Olive Garden review gave her worldwide notoriety, but Hagerty said she has found joy in writing about everyday life. One of her favorite columns involved riding a grain truck from Grand Forks to Duluth, MN. "My work really isn't work, it's my pleasure, my way of life. The job, it was never hard for me," she said. "I like talking to people, to see what makes them tick and to ask questions. I like to find interesting things about people." Hagerty found humor in a student's question about her future plans. "I'm 86, and I enjoy the work I do," she said. "I will probably keep on doing it until the Grand Forks Herald fires me or I get a better offer and I move on to the Chicago Tribune. I will continue writing as long as I have my marbles." And Hagerty's ride has become much wilder thanks to the Olive Garden and cyberspace. "It's been so much fun," she said. "It's like this wild dream that will never end. If you tried to make it up, you couldn't." Hagerty's "Eatbeat" column on Olive Garden can be found here: <http://www.grandforksherald.com/event/article/id/231419/> You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf

www.plaintalk.net

phone > data > video > television advertising >



20% of customers give you 80% of your business.

> Put your message in front of customers that matter.

Most advertisers waste plenty of time and money, talking to all the wrong people. If your advertising program is all about quantity, it's time to talk to people who understand quality is what matters: Midcontinent Business Solutions™

We can help you talk to your best customers, and others just like them, with targeted cable advertising, using the networks and shows they're watching. And it doesn't have to be expensive to be effective.



Start marketing your business the smart way. Call our experienced advertising consultants today.



Making Your Business Better.

1.800.888.1300 • midcontinent.biz

Advertise in the Vermillion Plain Talk! Call 624-4429.



Lions Club Pancake Days

Wednesday & Thursday October 17 & 18, 2012

Serving 11:30am - 1:00pm and 5:00pm - 7:00pm at the Nat'l. Guard Armory

Support your community. Support your Lions Club.

\$5.00 at the door. Kids under 8 free.



YANKTON MONUMENT CO.

Family Memorials by Gibson

AMBER LARSON



325 Douglas Ave., Yankton, SD 57078
Office (605) 664-0980 • 1-800-658-2294
Cell (605) 610-6992 • www.gibsonmonuments.com