

Deer hunters: Take careful aim

I don't hunt deer. At least not on purpose.

But I'm making a plea to everybody out there who enjoys the sport.

Please, practice your marksmanship. Harvest as many deer as you legally can this year.

Every fall, I try my best to send out good vibes to every man, woman and child who has plans to go deer hunting. I want them to be successful. I want to publish photos of a proud hunter displaying a fresh kill.

I'd rather that the venison that so freely roams on the hoof in the Vermillion-area countryside be taken by a hunter.

It's a much better alternative than a car-deer collision.

The fear of my car one day colliding with a deer went up a notch or two this week, thanks to what I found in my e-mail here at work.

This notice from AAA, for example:

AAA is warning motorists that this is the time of the year more deer will be on South Dakota's roadways and to be on the lookout for them, especially at dusk and dawn.

"We're entering deer mating season and the time when deer are searching for food to build up fat reserves for the winter," said Marilyn Buskohl, spokeswoman for AAA South Dakota. "Plus, deer populations are high in South Dakota right now – increasing the risk of car-deer collisions. Already this fall, motorists have tragically died in crashes with deer."

Just as I had calmed down a bit after reading that, I stumbled upon this ditty in my electronic mailbox from State Farm Insurance:

"For the sixth year in a row, West Virginia tops the list of states where an individual driver is most likely to run into a deer."

Ok. So far, so good.

"South Dakota moved from third to second on the list. The likelihood of a licensed driver in that (our) state hitting a deer within the next year is 1 in 68. Iowa (1 in 71.9) drops from second to third."

Dang.

The Insurance Information Institute estimates there are more than 1.6 million collisions with deer annually nationwide, resulting in about 150 human deaths, tens of thousands of injuries and more than \$3.6 billion in vehicular damage.

"Keep in mind, deer can run as fast as 40 miles per hour. They may suddenly bolt onto the road, catching motorists off guard," said Buskohl.

Both AAA South Dakota and the Insurance Information Institute offer similar tips on how to reduce the odds of a deer-vehicle confrontation:

- Keep in mind that deer

generally travel in herds – if you see one, there is a strong possibility others are nearby.

- Be aware of posted deer crossing signs. These are placed in active deer crossing areas.
- Remember that deer are most active between 6 and 9 p.m.
- Use high beam headlights as much as possible at night to illuminate the areas from which deer will enter roadways.
- If a deer collision seems inevitable, attempting to swerve out of the way could cause you to lose control of your vehicle or place you in the path of an oncoming vehicle.
- Don't rely on car-mounted deer whistles.

BETWEEN THE LINES



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Buckle up and don't speed. A decrease in speed gives you more time to react.

- Reduce distractions in the vehicle and stay alert. A deer standing near a

roadside may suddenly run across the road. Slow down and use your horn to scare the deer. Never shine or flash your vehicle's lights. This can cause the deer to fixate on your vehicle.

- Look for groups. Deer travel in groups, so if you see one crossing the road ahead slow down, as there are probably others in the area but out of view.

- Never swerve. Instead, slow down and brake. Swerving can cause you to lose control of your vehicle and strike another vehicle or object along the roadway.

- Slow down. If a crash with a deer is unavoidable, AAA recommends slowing down and releasing your foot from the brake before impact. This will raise the front end of the car during the crash and increase the likelihood that the animal will go underneath the vehicle instead of through the windshield.

There's one, nearly foolproof solution to the car/deer collision problem that I wouldn't mind trying someday. The state in which deer-vehicle mishaps are least likely is Hawaii (1 in 6,801). The odds of a driver in Hawaii colliding with a deer between now and 12 months from now are approximately equal to the odds that any one person will be struck by lightning during his or her lifetime.

I like those odds. And, I bet I could get used to the weather in Hawaii during South Dakota's frigid chilly deer seasons.

In the meantime, to all you deer hunters out there: Good luck!



Octoberish little bit of this and that

As the end of the 2012 election season draws near (praise the Lord), I'm counting down to Nov. 6, when as many as 10 political ads per half-hour cease to bombard me during what little TV I actually watch. I've had to listen to so many ads this election I know who's running for Congress in other states and who would get my vote if I lived there. Where's the "Don't Like" button when I need it most.

It doesn't stop there. Retailers like Target are running Christmas ads and there's not even frost on the pumpkin.

Speaking of buttons, I consider myself quite technically literate, copying, pasting, downloading and uploading with the best of them. Although, there are times when the most obvious solutions escape me, like when my camera malfunctioned. Minutes before, all the bells and whistles were working just fine.

Suddenly error messages popped up right and left, and the viewfinder turned pitch-black. Fuming and fumbling over missing perfectly good photo ops, I was downright mystified. Flustered, I furiously tried to figure it out. Battery charged? Check. Camera on? Check. Flash on? Check. Correct menu modes? Check.

Not until I turned the lens toward me, did I realize the problem. The lens cap was on. Hel-lo-oh! Blushing over the obvious, my techie confidence balloon quickly burst big-time.

That same week, when my printer at the office failed, I automatically started troubleshooting. Default printer selected? Yes. Paper jam? No. Correct paper tray selected? Yes. Reboot? Yes.

When all else fails, call the Help Desk. When the tech asked if there was paper in the printer, I thought, what a silly question, of course, there is.

Yanking open that darn paper tray, what did I find? No paper. Terribly embarrassed, I was in no hurry to admit my oversight. Nevertheless, my trusty moral compass kicked in, and I fessed up. Definitely operator error.

In order for the printer to work, Paula, he said condescendingly, it has to have paper. Thanking him, I felt really, really stupid. No problem, he alluded, have a good day. I'll bet he's still chuckling.

Don't even ask about the time I generously helped my daughter's PC run faster by removing "unwanted" programs from the hard drive. Although well-intentioned, I completely iced it.

Speaking of misjudging things, I must confess I think truck drivers barreling down the road in their mega-thousand-pound rigs really don't care much about us little people in cars zipping down the highway. In a collision, we'd be toast.

That was until a lifelong friend who is a trucker said people don't realize truckers spend most of their time on the road watching out for people in cars. Elaborating, he went on, they don't have a clue how much it takes to maneuver let alone stop a semi. Plus, I'm way above them and can see everything. You wouldn't believe how many are texting while driving. Scary, he added with a worried look, very scary.

Sometimes, people misjudge me, too. For example, after my husband and I settled into our seats at a recent 50's and

60's rock concert, the gentlemen sitting next to me wryly asked, are you the type who dances and gets all crazy at shows like this? Because if you are, I want to know about it now.

Even though I've never gone crazy at a concert, surprisingly, I actually had to think about it. No, I reassured him. Thank goodness, he replied sheepishly.

During the encore, when all 2,000 of us in the audience were on our feet, I couldn't help but notice the 70-something man in front of us. Never would I suspect an old guy like him to, well, rock and roll. On his feet, swaying to the music elbows bent and raised his entire body became a playful teeter-totter, rocking from side to side. Slightly off beat to the Beatles' "Hey, Jude," he gingerly shifted his weight from left to right, right to left. Transported back in time, his arthritic bones no longer ached; his hair was no longer gray. He was young again.

That was until the last song ended, and the house lights illuminated every visible crease the years had etched in his face, neck and hands.

Yet, with an entire repertoire of Rock 'n Roll music running through his head, I pictured him twisting and shouting all the way home.

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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, follow her blog at my-story-your-story.blogspot.com and find her on Facebook.

Guest Commentary:

Senator Tim Johnson remembers McGovern's lifetime of service

By U.S. Senator Tim Johnson
(D-SD)

With such a long, accomplished life, it is difficult to fully describe the impact George McGovern had on our world. In each chapter of his life, his contributions to our society were gigantic. His accomplishments have already been the subject of many books, and his legacy will live on forever.

I was just nine years old when George was elected to

Congress. As a young man, I followed his career closely as he became increasingly influential. To see a man from Mitchell become a leading voice on the biggest issues of the day was inspiring to me and many other young South Dakotans. This inspiration continued throughout all of George's life. Even in these last few years, he spent time with South Dakota students, which undoubtedly inspired them to think big about their futures and how they can have an impact on our

world.

Although George's 1972 Presidential Race against Richard Nixon gets a lot of attention, the work he did before and after his time in public office was incredible. George summed it up best last month when he wrote an article for the Washington Post on losing the 1972 Race. George wrote that while the loss was a significant personal setback, "I have acknowledged it, absorbed it and integrated it into the rest of the long life I have been

privileged to lead. Before that race, I had survived 35 missions as a B-24 bomber pilot in World War II; married Eleanor Stegeberg, the love of my life; had five children; completed a PhD in history; and had a successful career in politics and government service."

Instead of lamenting about losing the election, George went back to work. George made our world a better place through his work on many issues, including agriculture and foreign policy. But his greatest public policy

achievement has to be his work on hunger issues. What drove George to work tirelessly to combat hunger worldwide was his recognition that we are fortunate to live in a country with food abundance. He knew that so many individuals across the world were not as lucky. George often noted that hunger is a political condition that is 100 percent curable. In our country and across the world, there are countless individuals who never knew George but are no longer suffering from hunger

because of his work.

It is sad to lose George, but we will be able to see his impact on the world for decades to come. South Dakotans and folks across the U.S. and world are thankful for his long life of service. Personally, I am thankful for George's friendship and advice. And I think I speak for many South Dakotans who grew up following his career when I say that I am thankful to George for showing us that a kid from South Dakota can have a major impact on the world.

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