

## VIEWPOINTS

## Heartbreak And Happiness

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE

Shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net

As a sports participant growing up and a person who loves watching them now, I have always had an appreciation for the complete effort that goes into preparing for a season-long sport. By the coaches, the players, the parents and the community who supports them.

From the first practice to the last game of the season hard work and dedication is required by all involved. So, for me, there is always a sense of bittersweet to the fact that as the season winds down and state tournaments ramp up, for most teams, their season is guaranteed to end on a loss.

Yesterday at the Vermillion girls' soccer game versus West Central was case in point.

As I was standing on the sidelines you could see the determination in both teams – they were not going to lose, they wanted to keep playing.

Now, of all the sports I have participated in, watched and enjoyed, I have to be honest, soccer isn't one of them. It gained popularity after I graduated from high school. However, I can tell you that I was completely entranced by the effort on the field and the pure athleticism and will, shown on the field.

Through the camera's lens you get a different perspective of the field, a close up if you will. You focus on an individual in a team sport. But what I saw were teammates supporting each other, cheering each other on, pulling for effort and sadly in the end falling short, not because of lack of effort, more because time just ran out and one team had to win.

I remember that heartbreak of knowing your final game of the season was done. The tears. The hugs. The finality of it. I have always hated that a season, a game, for some, a life-time of dedication comes to a close on a loss.

But here is the truth of the matter.

That loss is going to make you stronger. It hurts. The community is hurting for you. Life is never easy and the lesson you learned last night is it isn't always fair either. But, the sportsmanship you showed and carried away from that game and your season are going to carry you far in life.

Never forget how hard you worked to get to where you are and the talent you have developed, the teammates who have become your family and the fact that you represented your school and your community with pride and grace.

I am sorry it hurts right now. But I am proud to say the first live soccer game I watched was one where you reminded me of a very important lesson: if you can smile through your tears and hold onto your family and friends in the tough times, there is nothing you can't accomplish.

Congratulations ladies on a great season.

STAR TRIBUNE CagleCartoons.com



'I liked the anti-gay guy, then the anti-Mexican guy, but now I'm giving the anti-Muslim guy a serious look...'

## Berra-ism You Haven't Heard

BY PAULA DAMON

"You can observe a lot by just watching," Yogi Berra

When I got word that Yogi Berra, former catcher for the New York Yankees, had passed away, I felt a twinge of deep sadness commingled with immense gratitude, even though I never knew the guy.

It all started back in the late 1950's when Yogi made a stop at the rinky-dink airport near my childhood home nestled in the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania.

Not sure how old I was, but old enough to remember my father taking a poll of us kids – six in all.

With a boyish sparkle and seasonal enthusiasm, Dad asked, "Who wants to go to the airport to see Yogi Berra get off the plane?"

Raising my hand and shouting "I do," I joined the chorus of siblings, who cast their votes to go and watch some guy named Yogi deplane.

Suppose this event was similar to the time some years later, when Mom piled us into the four-door Chevy station wagon and headed to the airport to watch Bobby Kennedy get off the plane.

I don't think she asked if we wanted to see Bobby Kennedy. It was more of a requirement, something like Holy Communion and Confession.

Or you could compare it to the throngs of onlookers lining thoroughfares to see Pope Francis' motorcade on



PAULA DAMON

his historic first visit to the U.S.

Back to the day when Yogi came to town, I remember anticipating the car sickness I'd suffer while riding in the back seat. Dad at the helm, as though commandeering a massive clipper ship over choppy seas, sailing 'round winding bends, floating over hills and dales.

Didn't really matter though. The gleam of time with my father shone brightly, unlike most days I spent yearning for him to come home off the road, where he made his living.

Apart from a handful of snow days, when the highways were impassable, and in late summer when remnants of hurricanes washed through our area, this was one of the few sunny events in my entire life I recollect having Dad close at hand. And engaged.

On a recent flight home from a trip to the Pacific Northwest, I sat next to a little girl, about six years old. She was traveling to New York City.

After her mother took a selfie of the two of them, the little one said, "Oh, no, Mommy, take another; I didn't look pretty in that one."

Cringing over the sound of her fragile self-image, I couldn't help spouting, "I

bet you look pretty in all the pictures."

The youngster paid me in kind with a bright smile that made her spring in her seat as she cheerily affirmed, "Yes, I do."

Well, that made my day.

"What's your name," she pried with a sing-song lilt in her voice, her legs bouncing like a teeter totter.

"My name's Paula."

Tilting her head and locking her eyes to mine, she shot back, "My grandmother's name is Kathy. She lives in Washington. Do you know her?" as though trying to detect a faint acquaintance.

"No, I don't," I acknowledged, relishing the sweet notion that surely all grandmothers are connected in a familiar bond of love and trust.

Later after we parted ways, I wondered if the mother and daughter duo were on their way to get a glimpse of Pope Francis during his visit in New York City.

Sort of like that glorious, even though nauseating, ride to the airfield with my father. I have Yogi Berra to thank for that.

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

## A Women's Role Should Be In The... Where?

BY RICHARD P. HOLM MD

I believe that equality of the sexes, both in the workplace and at home, should make our society and our families stronger and happier. Although our U.S. society is not quite there, we are a heck of a lot closer than when I was growing up. This is not to say men and women should have the same roles, but I believe the different perspective each provides is of equal value. Say it again, men and women having equal value should not require having the same role.

I was interested to hear about a recent study indicating combat units with a mixture of men and women were not as effective as combat units with men alone. I know enough about how study results can be skewed to show the answer the researcher wants, but still it didn't surprise me that combat units with women might be less effective as killing units.

My Mother and Father were quite different in their roles both in our community and in our family, and yet as far as I was concerned, were of equal value in what they each contributed. My Mom's role was as the peacekeeper to compromise when a balance was needed, while my Dad's role was more rigid, standing for a principle without conciliation. Mom was emotionally apparent, while Dad was more likely to cover his feelings. Dad could open a stuck jar lid, while Mom was not nearly as physically strong. Although she could be brought to an emotional conflict quickly, my Mother was also quick to forgive, while my Dad was slow to anger, yet once incensed, he could hold a grudge. They were different, each had their weak and strong points, and yet together, in my eyes, they were awesome.

I remember how Mom's attitude changed after she was hired at the DeSmet News and her regular income lifted the financial burdens about which our family struggled. It changed her role from staying at home raising children, to equal partner in supporting the finances of the family. It was interesting to see how their arguments lessened and her painting and creative expressive talent blossomed after that.

At least in my family, equality of the sexes should not mean equal roles. Hurrah! for the difference.



Something bugging you?

E-mail a letter to the editor:  
shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net

## Economic Problem Really A Political Problem

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

You often hear inequality has widened because globalization and technological change have made most people less competitive while making the best-educated more competitive.

The tasks most people used to do can now be done more cheaply by lower-paid workers abroad or by computer-driven machines.

But this common explanation overlooks a critically important phenomenon: the increasing concentration of political power in a corporate and financial elite that has been able to influence the rules by which the economy runs.

As I argue in my new book, out this week, this transformation has amounted to a redistribution upward.

Intellectual property rights – patents, trademarks and copyrights – have been enlarged and extended, for example, creating windfalls for pharmaceutical companies. Americans now pay the highest pharmaceutical costs of any advanced nation.

At the same time, anti-trust laws have been relaxed for corporations with significant market power, such as big food companies, cable companies facing little or no broadband competition, big airlines and the largest Wall Street banks.

As a result, Americans pay more for broadband Internet, food, airline tickets

and banking services than the citizens of any other advanced nation.

Bankruptcy laws have been loosened for large corporations – airlines, automobile manufacturers, even casino magnates like Donald Trump – allowing them to leave workers and communities stranded.

But bankruptcy has not been extended to homeowners burdened by mortgage debt or to graduates laden with student debt.

The largest banks and auto manufacturers were bailed out in 2008, shifting the risks of economic failure onto the backs of average working people and taxpayers.

Contract laws have been altered to require mandatory arbitration before private judges selected by big corporations. Securities laws have been relaxed to allow insider trading of confidential information.

CEOs now use stock buybacks to boost share prices when they cash in their own stock options.

Tax laws have special loopholes for the partners of hedge funds and private-equity funds, special favors for the oil and gas industry, lower marginal income-tax rates on the highest incomes, and reduced estate taxes on great wealth.

Meanwhile, so-called "free trade" agreements, such as the pending Trans-Pacific Partnership, give stronger protection to intellectual property and financial assets but less protec-

tion to the labor of average working Americans.

Today, nearly one out of every three working Americans is in a part-time job. Many are consultants, freelancers and independent contractors. Two-thirds are living paycheck to paycheck.

And employment benefits have shriveled. The portion of workers with any pension connected to their job has fallen from just over half in 1979 to under 35 percent today.

Labor unions have been eviscerated. Fifty years ago, when General Motors was the largest employer in America, the typical GM worker, backed by a strong union, earned \$35 an hour in today's dollars. Now America's largest employer is Wal-Mart, and the typical entry-level Wal-Mart worker, without a union, earns about \$9 an hour.

More states have adopted so-called "right to work" laws, designed to bust unions. The National Labor Relations Board, understaffed and overburdened, has barely enforced collective bargaining.

All of these changes have meant higher corporate profits, higher returns for shareholders, and higher pay for top corporate executives and Wall Street bankers – and lower pay and higher prices for most other Americans.

The underlying problem, then, is not just globalization and technological changes that have made most American workers less competi-

tive. Nor is it that they lack enough education to be sufficiently productive.

The more basic problem is that the market itself has become tilted ever more in the direction of moneyed interests that have exerted disproportionate influence over it, while average workers have steadily lost bargaining power – both economic and political – to receive as large a portion of the economy's gains as they commanded in the first three decades after World War II.

Reversing the scourge of widening inequality requires reversing the upward distributions within the rules of the market, and giving average people the bargaining power they need to get a larger share of the gains from growth.

The answer to this problem is not found in economics. It is found in politics. Ultimately, the trend toward widening inequality in America, as elsewhere, can be reversed only if the vast majority, whose incomes have stagnated and whose wealth has failed to increase, join together to demand fundamental change.

The most important political competition over the next decades will not be between the right and left, or between Republicans and Democrats.

It will be between a majority of Americans who have been losing ground, and an economic elite that refuses to recognize or respond to its growing distress.

Vermillion

PLAIN TALK

Since 1884

201 W. Cherry, Vermillion, SD 57069 • Publication No. USPS 657-720

Publisher: Gary Wood • General Manager/Managing Editor: Shauna Marlette

Published weekly by YANKTON MEDIA, Inc. • Periodicals postage paid at Vermillion, SD 57069.

Subscription rates for the Plain Talk by mail are \$27.56 a year in the city of Vermillion.

Subscriptions in Clay, Turner, Union and Yankton counties are \$41.34 per year.

Elsewhere in South Dakota, subscriptions are \$44.52, and out-of-state subscriptions are \$42.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Plain Talk, 201 West Cherry Street, Vermillion, SD 57069.

Vermillion Plain Talk Staff

Advertising Director: Michele Schievelbein

Advertising Sales Rep: Jackie Williams

Composing Manager: Kathy Larson

Composing Staff: Rob Buckingham,

Melissa Peterson

Assistant News/Sports Editor: Elyse Bright-

man

Reception Office Manager: Penny Ascheman

Distribution & Circulation Manager: Jim

Gevens