

VIEWPOINTS

Looking For Answers

BY PAULA DAMON

It's been a week of questions for which I am hard-pressed to find answers. "Na Na, why don't you have an iPhone," my four-year old grandson asked.



PAULA DAMON

"Yeah, Na Na," his two-year-old brother chimed in, "why can't we see you?" You see [no pun intended], we were 80 miles apart. I was at home. They were on their car speaker phone, via Bluetooth technology, as they rode home from preschool. Their father, my son, warned that the boys would be looking for me on video phone. I could have explained that iPhones are expensive. Boys, the iPhone 6 with 64 gigabytes of storage costs a whopping \$399 with a two-year contract. I didn't.

Could have gone round and round about how I do have the money to buy one, but wasn't sure if that's how I wanted to spend it.

Didn't say that either. Could have chuckled and said, "I'm too old for that," a line grandparents often use.

But, I'm not that old. So, I told my grandson, "I'm not sure." Na Na, why don't you have an iPhone? The question kept eating away at me long after our call was over. I didn't have a good response.

That was just the beginning. It doesn't help that I'm naturally inquisitive. So, of course, the questions kept coming...

How is it that the largest bird on the face of the Earth can't fly?

I'm talking about ostriches.

Now, I am somewhat nerdy when it comes to learning new things. But ordinarily, I wouldn't be wondering about ostriches.

Blame it on a recent Public Broadcasting special "Big Birds Can't Fly," which I caught bits and pieces of the other night.

That show got my curiosity going. I did some digging and learned that ostriches anatomically just aren't built for it. Their "flat breastbones lack the keel [to anchor] strong pectoral muscles required for flight."

Not to mention their small wings, which can't even begin to lift their huge bodies, seven to nine feet high and weighing anywhere from 139 to 320 pounds.

There's an answer I can live with.

That wasn't the end of it. Then came the next question...

How can it be that the United States ranks near the bottom of wealthy nations on child poverty?

As one of the richest countries in the world, the U.S. has one in three kids living in poverty.

Twenty-five percent of households with children in large cities are considered "food-insecure."

This computes to more than 16 million kids who are not getting adequate nutrition and struggle with hunger on a daily basis.

The list of questions goes on...

How did we get to a place in our society where news, which is mostly entertainment and hearsay, is considered valid?

As a longtime journalist, trained in the old school style, like all reporters of my era [now I'm sounding ancient], I was required to abide by certain rules.

They were pretty straight forward: report the facts and attribute your information to legitimate sources. Real people you could name. [By the way, a source "close to the White House" is not legitimate.]

One more thing, the lives of the rich and famous? That was not news back in my day.

Like I said, it's been a week of questions, most of which I'm waiting for answers.

SOURCES: <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/ostrich/>; <https://www.nokidhungry.org/problem/hunger-facts>; "Big Birds Can't Fly," Public Broadcasting Service, Oct. 7, 2015; "Child poverty in the U.S. is among the worst in the developed world," Washington Post, Oct. 29, 2014.

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.



OBAMA GETS IT ALL WRONG.

What Causes Glaucoma?

BY RICHARD P. HOLM MD

The second leading cause of irreversible blindness in U.S. is from glaucoma. Three million Americans are affected by this condition, and approximately one in ten will eventually get it, although it is more common in people of African or Asian descent.

The big question is, "What causes glaucoma?" I thought I knew the answer to this question, but the more I looked into this topic the more challenging that question became.

Glaucoma by definition is nerve damage causing loss of vision, which mostly affects the peripheral vision. That is, one can still see what he is staring at, but loses the parts of vision outside that central concentrated spot. We think this is mostly due to an elevated pressure of the fluid within the eyeball and so it is treated by using medications or surgical methods

to lower the pressure. When glaucoma progresses, even the central vision can be lost.

To understand the reason for increased pressure within the eye, one has to first understand the construction of the human eye. Think about an enlarged three-D model.

Begin with a white beach ball and line it with a light sensitive blanket of nerves called the retina. On the front of the ball is a hole called the pupil. The hole looks black since it is usually darker inside the eye, unless a camera flashes. The pupil is outlined by the colorful iris that can constrict or dilate making the hole smaller or larger, allowing just the right amount of light through to reflect on the retina.

Imagine a magnifying glass-like lens smashed up against and behind the hole to focus light, and a smaller clear dome placed over the front of the ball to protect the pupil or hole.

Realize both chambers of the eye are filled with fluid. New fluid is constantly being made inside the big ball, and old fluid flows or drains into the front dome chamber where it's removed.

We think some types of glaucoma happen when the optic nerve is damaged by fluid pressures inside the big chamber becoming too high and tight sometimes because the fluid removing canals are plugged, and sometimes because flow into the front chamber is blocked. And there are several reasons for that blockage. Boy, is this complicated!

And to make it even more confusing, sometimes glaucoma nerve damage happens while the pressures inside the eye are normal. Go figure. Once again physicians and scientists are puzzled and are still searching for the complete answer to the question, "What causes glaucoma?"

WHEN YOUR BRIGHT CHILD STRUGGLES WITH READING

GUEST EDITORIAL BY
FABIANA MEREDITH

VHS Graduate (Class of 1997)

I write this letter to bring awareness to a commonly overlooked, yet profound struggle that affects nearly 20 percent of the population. The struggle relates to a person's ability to communicate through written and spoken language. Since reading and writing always came super-easy to me, I had no idea this struggle existed, nor that it affected 1-in-5 people, until I became the mother of a child with dyslexia.

Early on I knew something was "not clicking," but I did not know what, nor how to "fix it." I saw the struggle in my child. As a youngster, it was easy for her to hide the struggle, and to get by in school. My attempts to find help

through the school system lead to dead-ends, with some eluding to the idea I was fabricating her struggle. "She needs to read more," they'd say, but reading more resulted in a greater dislike for reading. I felt time was running out as my daughter began to hit a wall in school while her younger sister by four years was reading at a higher level. Going out to eat or being in social settings that required reading was extremely intimidating for a young quiet girl. The struggle began to tear at my daughter's self-esteem, her confidence dropped as more and more of her surroundings depended on being able to read. As her mother, it broke my heart.

Feeling frustrated, I was compelled to uncover "the mystery" of what was creating this struggle in my daughter. I was not going to give up, nor buy into

the doubters' claims. The exhausting journey eventually lead us to trying an alternative method of learning to read championed by industry expert Susan Barton and Bright Solutions. Reading immediately began "to click" and was not dreadful anymore! At the time, the idea that my daughter might have dyslexia or not have dyslexia was not as big of a concern as the fact that the Barton method was working! Over-night, my daughter's self-esteem and confidence increased! Reading became enjoyable! There was no more discomfort at the thought of going out to eat and having to read from a menu. Discovering that my daughter's reading struggle was dyslexia – a simple, common reading difference that affects 1-in-5 people – brought a great feeling of relief that the mystery was

solved!

Whether you struggle with reading or are a champion reader, whether you are a school teacher, a sports coach, a police officer, a business owner, or hold public office, please learn about dyslexia.

If you have a bright child that struggles with reading, realize it may be dyslexia, and that the remedy most likely requires a different teaching approach than what is traditionally taught in most school settings. Connect into your local parent-lead Decoding Dyslexia chapter where people with dyslexia and parents of kids with dyslexia collaborate, spread awareness, provide resources, and help each other. Decoding Dyslexia is online. Local chapters exist in every State.

Dyslexia is common and we have the ability to turn each struggle into success!

REFLECTION ON ISSUES

I thought the vote last 30 June to keep the newly enacted wholesale beer tax an outright selfish vote. That's right, people voted for double taxation of a select group of purchasers to pay for projects in Prentis Park. Those favoring the wholesale tax want someone else to pay the bill. A wholesale and a retail tax is double taxation. Do you think coffee drinkers would favor a wholesale coffee tax?

I maintain public facilities that all can use, such as libraries, parks, streets, should be paid for by all tax payers.

Also, the proposed financing is a rip-off. \$1.3 million in interest on bond payments for 20 years.

In the plans is a curb extension out into the street at the southwest corner of Main & Sycamore. This would require east bound

traffic such as snow plows, street sweepers, bicyclists to swing out into the traffic lane creating a safety hazard. Also, it would make turning onto Sycamore from Main more difficult. That curb jut and the two others in the plan are absolutely a waste of money and stupid. Why hasn't any council member questioned these?

Over many years the City has allowed a parking deficiency to occur in the area of Clark & Plum. To alleviate this parking shortage there should be a parking lot in the northwest corner of Prentis Park. I suggest a strip lot mirroring the street parking on Clark. The existing shelter could be moved by a club(s) in Vermillion.

There are other parts of the park plan that should be openly discussed soon.

PAUL M. HASSE
VERMILLION

SILVER THREADS

It's a most wonderful time of the year. Sweater weather, pumpkins on straw bales, bushels and baskets and gardens of beautiful October chrysanthemums, orange and crimson, and gold and yellow leaves are tumbling down. Pie apples are covering the ground.

The fall 5:30 p.m. Dinner, September 24, at Main Street Senior Center, sponsored by Trinity Lutheran Church, was well attended in spite of a continuous gentle rainfall. Ten Sigma Pi School of Business students, wearing Thrivent Financial t-shirts, accented the dining room and did a fantastic job of serving a sit-down dinner. Thank you students. New Trinity Lutheran Pastor, James Fowler, was introduced and gave the opening prayer. Thanks to all, for your continuing support of Main Street Senior Center.

A beautiful Saturday, September 19, for Dakota Senior Meals Rummage and Bake Sale. Thanks to each of you who brought, bought and baked or just came to show support and have coffee with us. We

appreciated.

Plan now, and mark your calendar, November 5, 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Silver threads annual Health and Product Fair – Main Street Senior Center, 320 W. Main, Vermillion. Gather your friends, come and stay for lunch. If you haven't attended in previous years, you are missing out on valuable senior information. Also bake sale, drawings and prizes. A good time to check out what your Senior Center can offer you.

The North Face of the Senior Center has a new look! Two handicapped accessible doors have been installed and a large window with seating bench for those waiting for Vermillion Transit.

The preacher came to call the other day. He said that at my age, I should be thinking about the here-after. I told him that I do. All the time. No matter where I am. Upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement, I ask myself, "Now what am I here after?"

N. FOSTVEDT

THE ZADROGA ACT

I am a South Dakota native, and a 9/11 responder.

The Zadroga Act, which provides needed medical services for 9/11 responders, expired on Sept 30th. It was not included in the emergency spending bill passed on Sept 30th. There has been a proposal to provide these services on a permanent basis in Congress for at least 6 months.

Our members in Congress like to extol the heroism of those who died during the attacks on 9/11. They praise the courage of the responders who risked their lives to do their job. But now when these responders need their help the most, South Dakota's representatives in Washington are letting us down. None of them are cosponsoring this bill. They haven't even confirmed that they

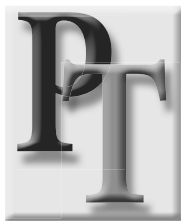
will vote for the bill, ensuring that these responders continue to receive the care we have earned.

This is not a New York issue. It's not even an East coast issue. 9/11 responders live in every state in the nation. We are in all but a few congressional districts. This is a national issue which deserves a national response, from from every member of Congress, regardless of where they are from.

Please contact Sen. Thune, Rep. Noem and Sen. Rounds, and ask them to cosponsor the renewal of the Zadroga Act. Only then will this great nation make sure that those who are continue to suffer from the events of that tragic day get the care we deserve.

RICHARD REZAC
HIGHMORE, S.D.

Vermillion



PLAIN
TALK

Since 1884

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