

VIEWPOINTS

The Best Way ... to have belief

By Alan Dale
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The funny thing about believing in something is sometimes we get caught up in the belief and not see the reality.

I for one get that. It is hard for many to believe that yes, things will get better when everything around them appears bleak.

Of course there are those who have it so good that sometimes they never see the big punch coming that will knock them reeling and off course for years to come.

Belief is just that: believing in something one way or another.

Yet, I learned a long time ago that to believe truly in something I felt comforted in the facts. I never wanted to just believe in something unconditionally.

Why? Because if I surrendered myself to a feeling rather than a tangible fact I feared that there was a better chance of finding myself caught unaware to learn quickly how wrong I was the whole time.

So...I stick to the facts of what I see, what I know, or what many have already confirmed exists.

Thus, I am casting my lot with the Vermillion Tanager football team.

Yes, I know I came here and learned quickly the struggles in recent times of the program.

Yes, I read the reports, the records, and all about the lack of here and there.

Yeah, yeah, I get it. OK so they have struggled in the recent past.

Well, this is today and the past only exists in memory.

The present is today, is now, and is what it is.

The future is about what will be.

Can history be doomed to repeat itself? Yup.

On Friday night, I made the trip – a long needed one from our paper I gathered – to Hartford and gave coverage to the Tanagers against the perennial powers of West Central High School.

Vermillion would lose to a much better team 51-0 in a contest called with just over three minutes remaining.

I was glad I made the trip.

You see, like many, if I had read that score without attending I might have said, "WOW! They got rolled!"

I would have left it at that and become more skeptical of the 2-0 start.

But I did go and so I am not.

YES, West Central were the superior squad, for this there is no doubt.

Yet the thing that bothered me was this:

I felt alone in getting how good the Tanagers might end up becoming.

I watched as the Tanager defense blew away the West Central offense on its first possession and forced an early punt.

Then I stood witness to Vermillion's offensive showcase as Jack Brown slung the ball around like he held it on a string.

I watched Tyler Madsen run through Trojans as if they were gnats – I swear Tyler eats semi-trucks for breakfast, dude is tough!

Then there were guys like Brandon Mockler and Regan Bye and Matt Ouellette who would set the tone by bossing West Central on that first offensive drive.

Yes, boys, you did own them.

I just feel you may have forgotten that after the interception.

A fourth-and-goal pass at the goaline was picked, momentum swung back to West Central. One play and 94 yards later the Trojans led 7-0.

From then on, West Central owned the proceedings. That didn't change the fact that trailing 31-0 at the intermission Vermillion came out strong again on its first drive of the second half and moved down the field with conviction.

Sure they got held and the West Central shutout would hold firm. The Tanagers still displayed a toughness a team down 31 points rarely shows.

They were a team that came out of shadows that cast negative history upon them and owned the defending Class A state champions for the game's first six-plus minutes.

I witnessed it so I believe.

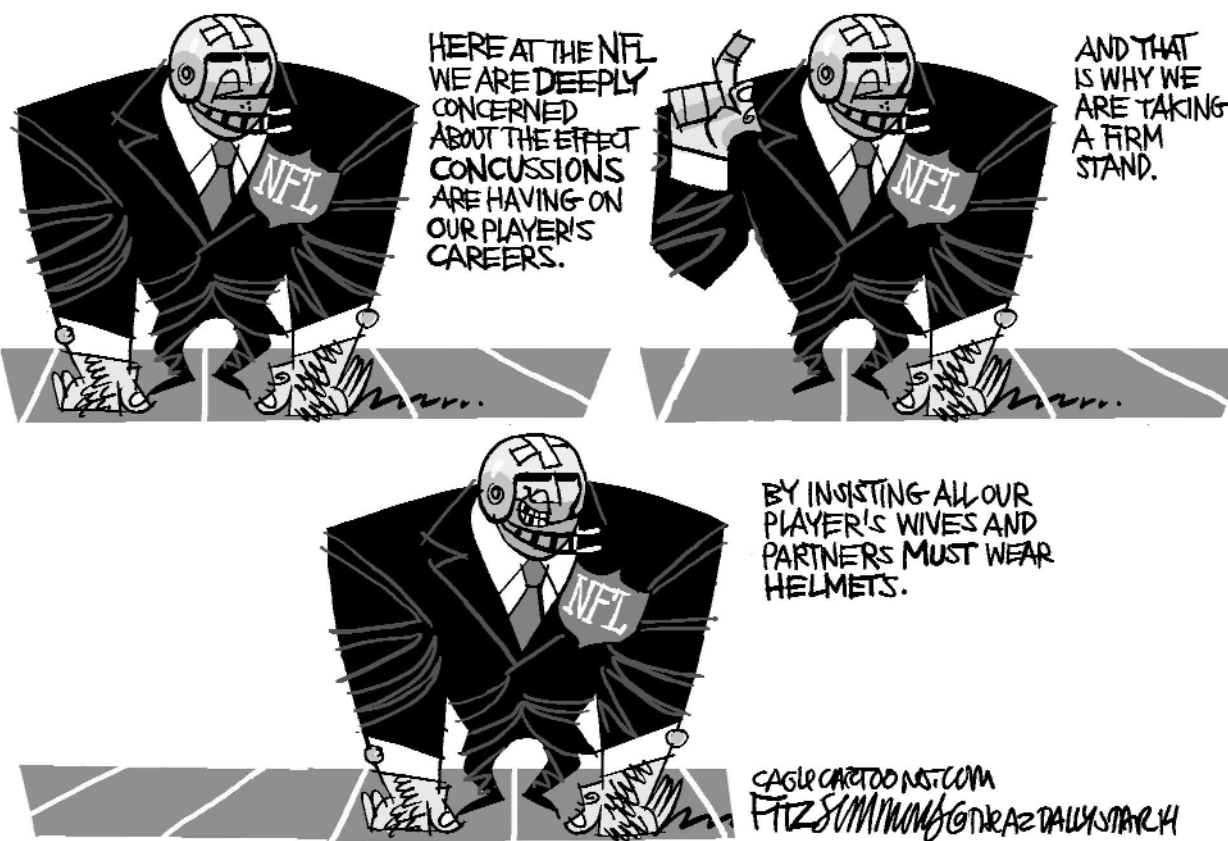
I believe they can be that team that turns it around.

So before their homecoming game Friday night, I want them to join me in believing too.

Tanagers you are a legit football team.

I really believe that and you boys made a believer out of me because I saw what I saw.

I believe and you should too...



That bag was nothin but trouble

When I happened upon those bags of baby clothes and baby things that I had stashed away many, many years ago, I knew I was in trouble.

Long forgotten were the baby blankets for each of our three children: some were hand-sewn gingham patchwork quilts, several were crocheted and others are knitted.

Hardly memorable during all of those years were OshKosh B'gosh overalls, Spiderman PJs and several umpire-waist dresses – blue velvet, lace and orange and yellow percale. A boy's suit jacket, bowtie and black vinyl boy's loafers.

Of course, when I rediscovered these articles of clothing, ever so suddenly I was catapulted into a time warp with images of our children at those tender ages attired in these adorable outfits... swaddled in these blankets.

As hard as I tried to remain unruffled by sentiment and shock over how time had collectively stolen their childhoods along with my young parenthood, I caved to the notion that the kids may want some of this stuff as keepsakes.

So, courteously and with great hope, I fired off an email to all three with a generalized list, asking what they wanted me to keep...

Hey Damon Kids...I'm going through baby stuff from your precious childhoods and found a whole batch of memories.

Let me know what you'd like to

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keep and what you'd like to give away. Here are some of the items...

- Baby quilts and blankets
- Suit jacket
- Bow tie
- Dresses
- Disney sweatshirts
- Spider man PJs
- Infant USD T-shirt and pants
- Pair of "Oshkosh Be gosh Overalls"
- One pair of boy's dress shoes
- Hand-knitted baby sweater
- Infant bunting
- Two sets of corduroy pants and flannel shirts
- Crocheted infant sweater with matching booties and hat

Let me know! Because they're so busy with their own families, I didn't expect an immediate enthusiastic chorus, chanting for me to save all of their stuff.

Plus, the hearts and minds of this younger generation don't well up over the past, like some of us older folks do.

Besides they generally buy everything new, anyway.

However, at best I thought maybe they'd each ask me to hang onto something in the pile.

As the hours ticked away since I had first reached out to them, the collective impact of their mostly silence sent an insoluble tremor of reality through me.

Oh, well. I was grateful for my daughter's reply, asking for anything that would fit our three-year-old grandson. But that was about it.

It's not that they don't care, I reasoned with myself. It's just that they've moved on and their value system is set on other more current things – not so much on the past, right?

Later in the day with still no additional responses, I tried trivializing the pile. But that sorry attempt to remove myself ended up being an all-out emotional skirmish over what to save and what to off-load.

My husband's comment that it would be nice to keep some of the more special items really didn't help much, either.

I think he used the word "cute" – and that pretty much did me in. They were all cute – every last one!

Now, how would I decide? Would I be able to let go?

Quickly and without much effort, I found myself stuck all alone way back in my empty nest, whining about how insufferably fast time passes.

Maybe I'll put it all back now, until I find it once again.

Capitol Notebook:

Is a return for Larry Pressler in the cards?

By Bob Mercer
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Democratic candidate Rick Weiland had the perfect chance to prevent Republican Mike Rounds from being elected as South Dakota's next U.S. senator.

Weiland needed only to write a letter to the secretary of state and declare he was withdrawing before the Aug. 5 deadline.

Instead he stayed on the ballot.

That's not surprising. Admirably, and sadly, Weiland entered the race when no other Democrat would.

Now we have a four-candidate contest. Weiland very likely won't win. Rounds very well might.

So who might have beaten Rounds if Weiland can't?

Larry Pressler, the U.S. senator who lost the seat to Johnson in 1996.

Back then, Pressler was a Republican. Now he is running as an independent.

He is doing surprisingly well.

Consider the results released in the past week from a SurveyUSA poll conducted for the Aberdeen American News, KSFY TV in Sioux Falls and KOTA TV in Rapid City.

The survey found Rounds in the lead with 39 percent, followed by Weiland at 28 percent and Pressler at 25 percent.

Next came undecided at 5 percent and last was Gordon Howie, a former Republican legislator running as an independent, at 3 percent.

Turn those numbers around and 56 percent of the people in that survey supported someone other than Rounds, a former governor.

Scratch the survey results a little deeper and you find two points of interest.

Rounds, Weiland and Howie are essentially one-party candidates, while Pressler has support across the spectrum.

The survey found

CAPITOL NOTEBOOK



BOB MERCER

Pressler with 21 percent of Republicans, 29 percent of Democrats and 31 percent of independents.

The survey asked two intriguing secondary questions. They found that if Pressler wasn't in the race, Rounds would lead Weiland by only 44 to 42 percent.

And if Howie was out of the race, Rounds would pick up four of every five Howie supporters.

The survey didn't ask what would happen if Weiland wasn't in the race.

The assumptions are Pressler would get most of the 56 percent of Democrats who support Weiland; and Pressler and Rounds would split the 24 percent of Weiland's independents.

If the four candidates had submitted resumes as part of an application process, the human resources office probably would look closest at Pressler as the most

qualified.

University of South Dakota, Harvard Law, Oxford. Served in Vietnam. Two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives 1975-79. Three terms in the U.S. Senate 1979-1996.

His past seniority could be important if he won election again. With Senate control up for grabs he would be sought, as an independent, by both major parties.

He's playing that card with his TV ad where he aligns with both Republican President Ronald Reagan and Democratic President Bill Clinton.

At age 72, Pressler is promising to serve only one six-year term in the Senate. Rounds reaches 60 on Oct. 24. Weiland turned 56 on July 26. Howie became 65 on July 23.

Short of some confidence-shattering event, Mike Rounds is the front-runner to win Nov. 4.

But Larry Pressler is this election's big story and big surprise.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the Plain Talk will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

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