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SOUTH DAKOTA

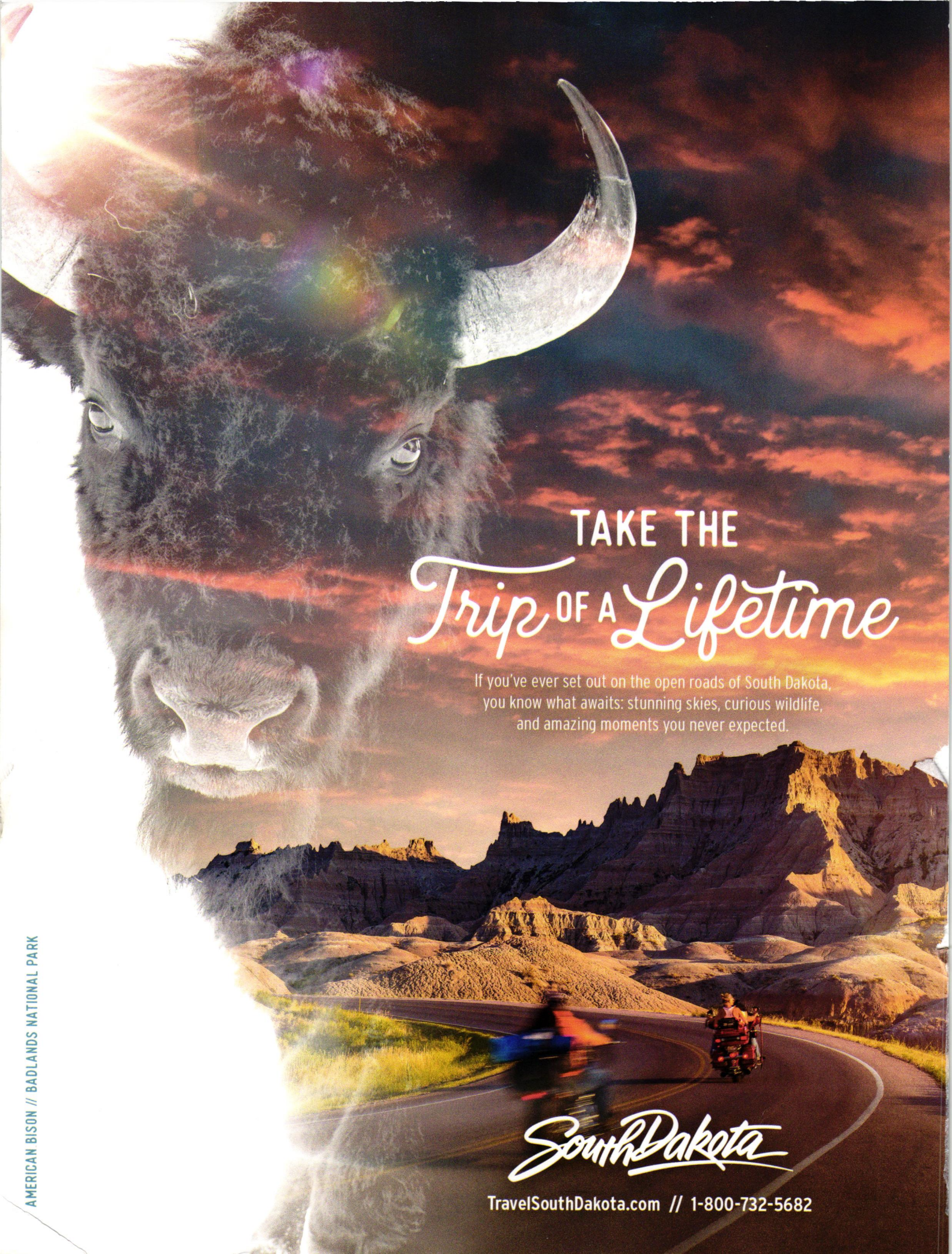
MAGAZINE

September/October 2019
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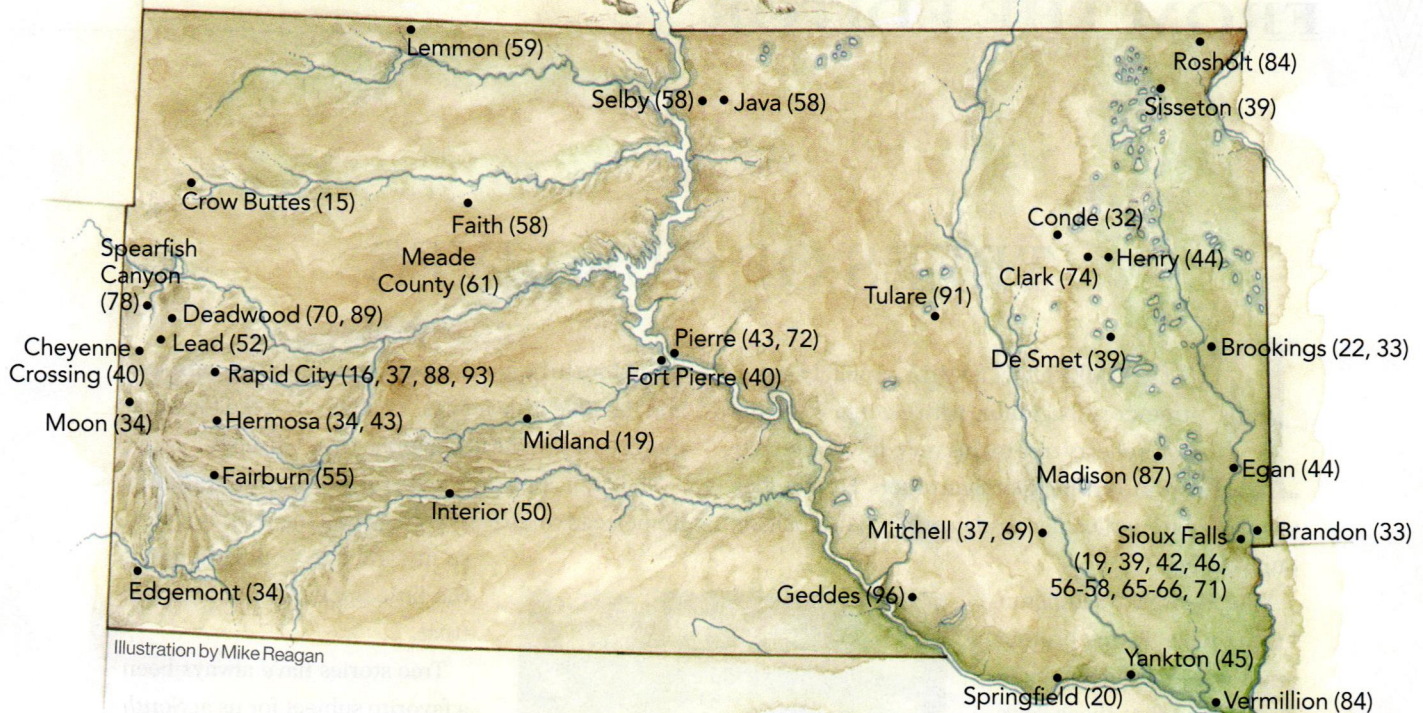
EMILY MEYER

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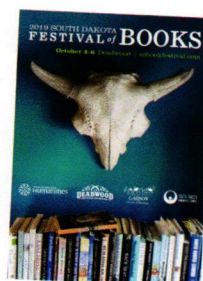
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OUR COVER: The landmark Eminija Tree grows south of Brandon, atop Indian burial mounds. Photo by Christian Begeman

**Inside: your guide to the
S.D. Festival of Books**





FROM THE EDITOR

TREES OF OUR LIVES

EVERY AMERICAN FAMILY probably has a tree story, beginning with George Washington's cherry tree to this very day. Some tree stories are happier than others. I remember when my parents decided to plant a big shelterbelt on our little farm.

Like George Washington, I won't tell a lie: my brother and I were not happy when we realized that those rows and rows of cedars, buffalo berries and ash would need to be weeded and watered. It seems we spent entire summers in the hot sun. There were times when I was tempted to take a hatchet to them, but I already knew how that worked out for the young Mr. Washington.

The oldest tree story in the Hunhoff family involves my great-grandmother, a tough-as-nails woman who was widowed with nine children during the Great Depression. Longing for an apple tree so she could bake pies for her children, she finally splurged and bought an apple tree sapling from the famous Gurney Seed & Nursery Company in Yankton.

As the story goes, Grandma Hunhoff watered and weeded the tree for years. (I know how tiring that can be.) It grew slowly in those dry years of the 1930s, but finally it blossomed and bore fruit. Unfortunately, it

turned out to be nothing but a crab apple tree with sour and inedible little apples. Though she lived for many more decades, she never forgave the Gurneys.

The crab apple tree was still growing on the family homestead when I was young. It was near the hog yard, so my grandpa would often toss the little apples to the pigs as a treat.

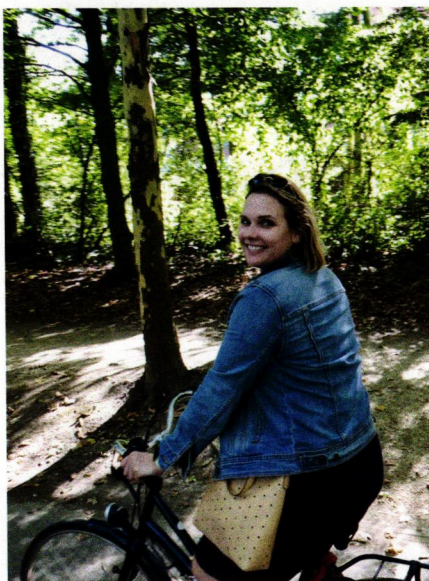
Tree stories have always been a favorite subject for us at *South Dakota Magazine*, even though we live in a state where there are counties with more people than trees. My dad says he was visiting a West River rancher when he noticed a Russian olive tree growing from a crack in the foundation of the man's barn. Dad told the rancher that he'd have to pull the tree before it got much bigger.

He says the old rancher gave him a cross-eyed look and replied,

"I'd sooner move that barn than pull that tree!"

Other states may have more trees than we do, but few have the diversity of trees and the wealth of stories about people who love them. Our managing editor John Andrews made a big effort to find some examples for this issue. We hope you enjoy his findings.

Let's all remember to appreciate the trees of our lives — even the crab apples.



Katie Hunhoff

— Katie Hunhoff

ANOTHER GREAT MEMORY FROM DE SMET FARM MUTUAL



RURAL FAMILIES KNOW THAT FIXING
THINGS IS NOT DO-IT-YOURSELF, IT'S

DO-IT-TOGETHER

I remember the day Dad tried to fix Mom's old clothes dryer. "Do you know if the green wire went to the red wire?" he asked. I didn't know. He paused for a moment; in retrospect, I'm sure he was calculating, "What's the worst that can happen?" Finally he connected the green to the red. Smoke and sparks flew. A week later, Mom had a new dryer, and we were all a little smarter.

"Fixing things" has always been one of the best ways for rural families to bond, so long as no one gets hurt. Our biggest fix-it task came in late summer when we worked as a team to fix our old combine and get it ready for harvest. We chased

the wasps and hornets from the augers and engine, and then dodged them as we cranked and cranked until the motor sputtered to a start. We greased the zerco's, changed the oil, patched the tires and proudly headed for the first field with the wasps flying behind us.

South Dakota families were making and fixing things with baling wire and scraps long before duct tape was invented. Give today's rural millennials a welder, an electric drill and a laptop and they might go to the moon.

As for whether the red wire goes to the green? Now you can google it.

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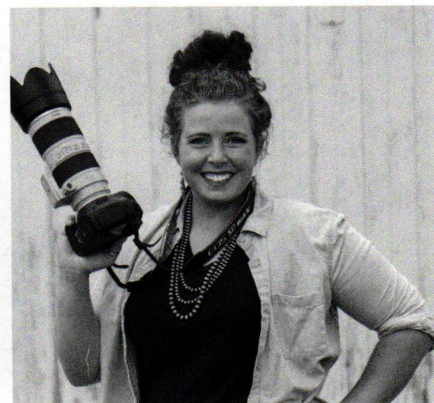
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CONTRIBUTORS

Elsie Fortune

You might say South Dakota's Badlands now has a resident photographer. Elsie Fortune grew up on her family's Fortune Triangle S Ranch south of Interior, and competed in breakaway roping and team roping as a teen. She left for college on a rodeo scholarship and came home with a diploma and a photography degree. Now she lives west of Interior—helping her family raise black Angus cattle, running a business called Elsie Fortune Photography and documenting the unique landscapes of her home country. That's what she was doing in May when she captured an overview of the flooded White River Valley (page 50). She says she'd still be roping, but most rodeos and weddings have one thing in common—they occur on Saturdays, a day she's often busy photographing brides and grooms.



Courtesy Bartlett

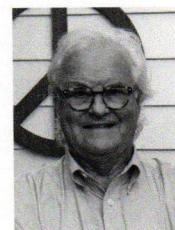


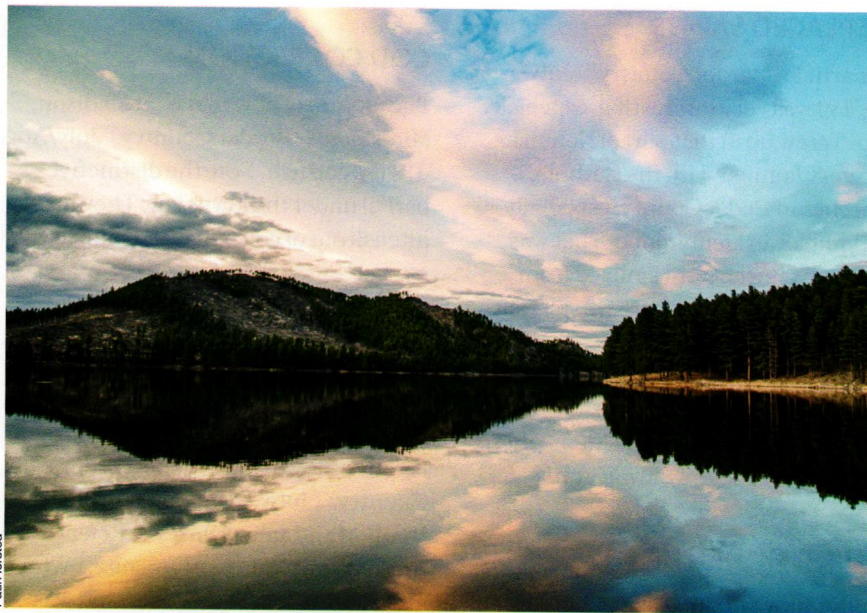
Joan Wink & Missy Urbaniak

In addition to preparing lessons in English, science, math and social studies, Missy Urbaniak's day might also include tending a bee sting or warding off rattlesnakes. Such is life for the teacher at Atall School, a remote, two-room schoolhouse in rural Meade County. In this issue (page 61), Urbaniak and fellow educator Joan Wink take readers inside a year at Atall, one of South Dakota's few remaining rural schools. Wink (top left) and Urbaniak are currently collaborating on a book that stresses the importance of getting books into students' hands, not just at schools like Atall but everywhere.

Robert Christenson

Changes to American society during the 1960s have been well documented nationally, but rural America was also undergoing a transformation—especially in small-town schools. Sioux Falls attorney Robert A. Christenson and his friends were students at Clark High School, where they carried a wheelchair-bound classmate up the steep steps, discovered in *Life* magazine that the son of the hotel owners was in a North Vietnamese jail and watched Sen. Robert Kennedy announce the assassination of Martin Luther King on black and white television, recognizing that the only black person they knew was a running back on the Flandreau football team. Christenson remembers it all in a new book aptly titled *Clark Stories*. He also adds gentle perspective, as you'll discover in an excerpt that begins on page 74.





Paul Horsted

Centennial Trail, the state's longest and most primitive pathway, skirts the east side of placid Sheridan Lake.

TRAIL FRIENDS

We are former residents of your great state now residing in Texas. "Hiking Centennial Trail" (July/Aug '19) brought back precious memories. I was backpacking the trail in the late 1980s and met a wonderful family from Iowa, the Clippingers. Larry, Sandy, Cindy, their dog and their trained appaloosas spent many summers at French Creek Horse Camp, riding and trout fishing. I made camp with them for one night and will never forget their hospitality. Sadly, Sandy passed away in 2008 and Larry in 2017, but I will always remember them among the sacred Black Hills.

*Judie Ostlien
Abilene, Texas*

FAMILY RIVER TIME

Reading Kelsea Sutton's "The Missouri Runs Through Me" (July/Aug '19), I felt like I was reading about myself. My family grew up on the Missouri River in Pierre. We spent every week-

end camping and waterskiing, and also snuck out a time or two on weekdays. With 12 kids and six adults that always wanted to ski — the six of us kids, plus the Dick Parker and Terry Woster families — there were always at least two skiers behind every boat. Once in a while, we even had 12 at a time.


My mom, Carol Mikkelsen, was still slalom skiing with two artificial knees at age 76, but she gave it up a few years ago. The adults in the original group still kayak on the Missouri River even though my dad, Virgil, is now 91 and another is fighting cancer.

I got married and moved away from the river. I settled for a lake but you can never take the river out of your blood.

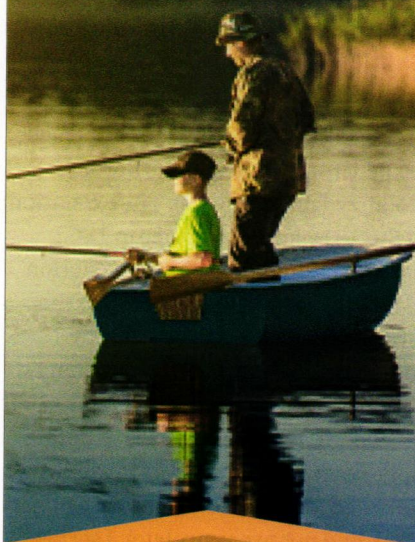
*Lesla (Mikkelsen) Lee
Arlington, S.D.*


PLAINS RICHNESS

That we have six triforniums [places where three borders meet] is a testa-



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ment to our interrelatedness in South Dakota ("Border Country," July/Aug '19). Kudos to you for acknowledging the riches of our neighbors. They make our own state all the richer.

*Nathan Hitchcock
Brandon, S.D.*

U.S.-DAKOTA WAR

For 17 years, I have intensively researched and written on the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 in Minnesota. There are several mistakes in your brief piece "Exiled from Minnesota" ("Border Country," July/Aug '19). The execution of the 38 Dakota took place in 1862, not 1864. This largest mass execution in U.S. history was in response to the largest number of people killed by Indians in the nation's history. That is the flip side of the coin, but it is often left unsaid. Huge actions usually generate huge reactions. Also, Chief Little Crow returned to Minnesota one year later, in 1863, and not two years later. I seriously

doubt if Little Crow was trying to get to St. Paul to see Governor Ramsey.

*Curtis Dahlin
Roseville, Minn.*

MISPLACED SAINTS

Your article "Border Country" (July/Aug '19) was very interesting, especially since I grew up in that part of Nebraska. I am very familiar with the Catholic churches in Cedar County, especially St. Boniface in Menominee. That was my home church until I moved from the area, and I still go there when I visit my parents. But there is a misprint: the church in Bow Valley is Ss. Peter and Paul, not St. Boniface.

*Michelle Kleinschmit
Sioux Falls, S.D.*

LOU T. FISK IDENTIFIED

I really enjoy your magazine, but when you make a mistake, it is a dandy. Let me be probably the 10,000th person to

tell you that Lou T. Fisk is a cod ("Border Country," July/Aug '19). Other than that, keep up the excellent work.

*Verlan Pierce
Milbank, S.D.*

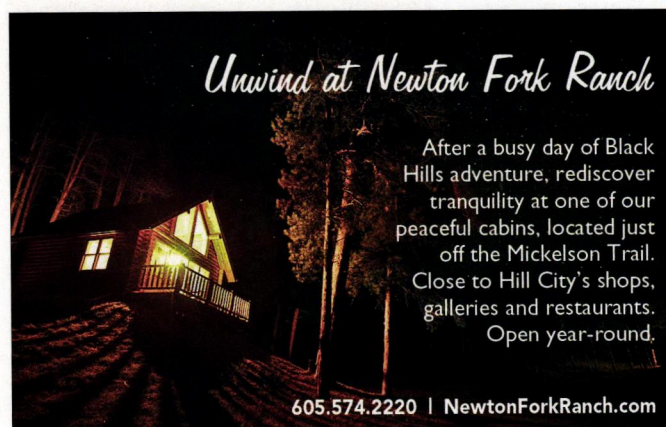
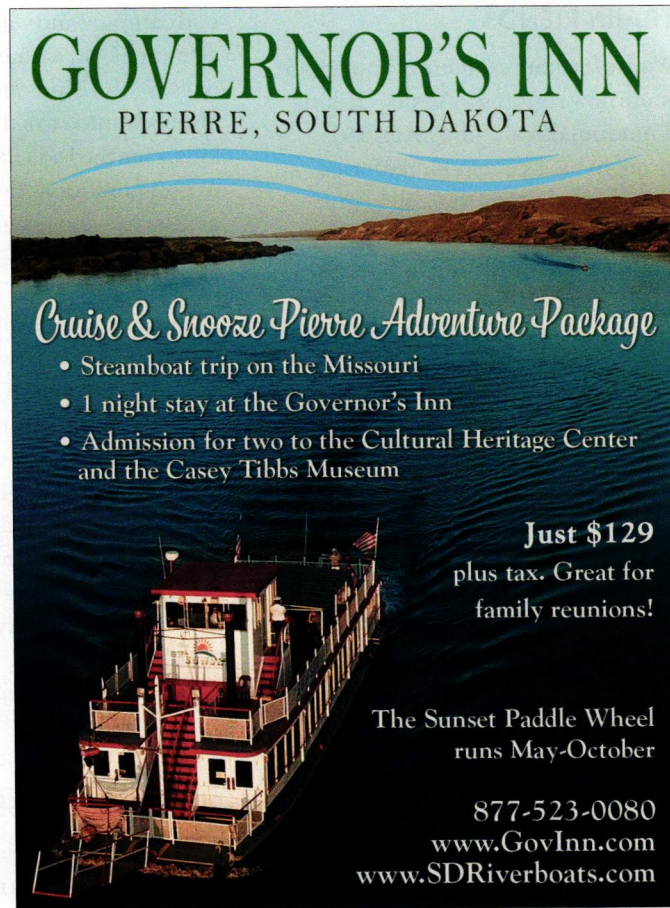
COD CORRECTION

The picture of a "walleye" at Madison, Minnesota ("Border Country," July/Aug '19) is a cod fish. Note the distinctive barbel under the lower jaw. They make lutefisk out of cod, not walleye, at least, not yet!

*Stu Surma
Java, S.D.*

LATITUDE, NOT LONGITUDE

I really enjoyed the article "Border Country" (July/Aug '19) by Bernie Hunhoff and John Andrews. Referring to North Dakota, they state, "We also share a 383-mile border that was drawn on longitude 104°03'W..." I'm thinking they accidentally referred to

the western border with Montana and/or Wyoming. The border with North Dakota is a latitude, not a longitude. It is at 45°56'43"N on the west end, and at 45°56'07"N on the east end (a difference of 36 seconds).

*Rich Heinemann
La Grande, Ore.*

ALADDIN STORE SOLD

The article on the Aladdin Store ("Border Country," July/Aug '19) must have come as a surprise to the Rude family, but probably more of a surprise to Rick and Judy Brengle, who thought they still owned the store, and Trent Tope, who thought he had just bought the store from the Brengles.

*Pam Thompson
Aladdin, Wyo.*

FISHY RECORDS

Your July/Aug '19 "Border Country" article alluded to escaped Chinook salmon from Lake Sakakawea being caught by surprised anglers in Lake Oahe. The second documented salmon in Oahe was caught on May 5,

1980, by my father, Don Driscoll, who fished avidly in the Pierre area after moving there in the late 1940s. His salmon weighed 10 pounds, 9 ounces, and replaced the first state record salmon caught one week earlier by Gary J. McCollar. Dad's record was replaced that August by a 13-pound, 5-ounce salmon caught by Cal Nowell. The record has been broken many times since, and currently stands at 31 pounds, 8 ounces.

*Dan Driscoll
Rapid City, S.D.*

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

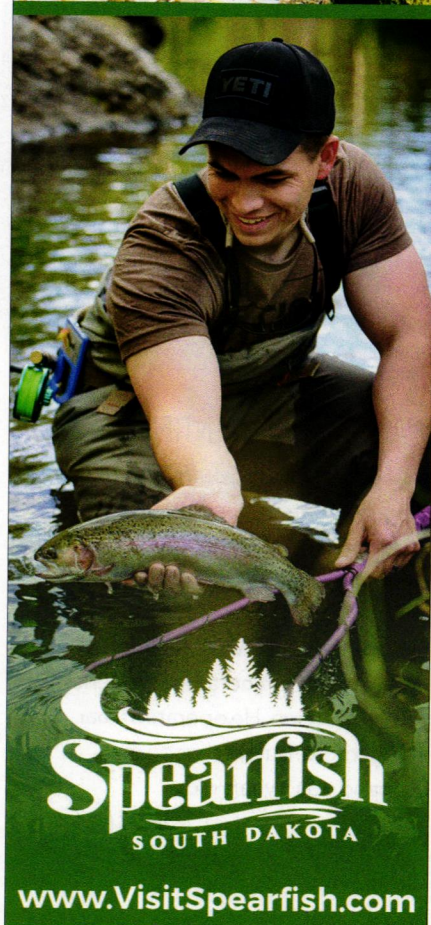
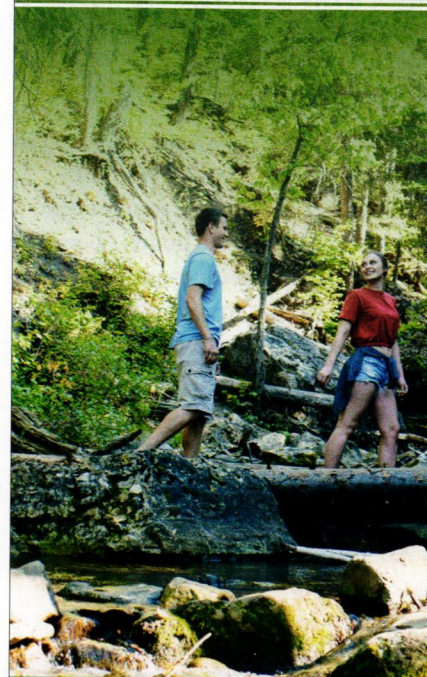
I was delighted to see the story "Border Country" (July/August '19). After all, most of South Dakota's state borders are simply straight lines of longitude and latitude, not cultural and physical boundaries where interesting aspects about people and landscapes drastically change. So why not step across, shake hands and visit your neighbors? By contrast, natural interstate boundaries like lakes and rivers add new topics to explore, such as the

FROM OUR READERS —

A photo of World War II veteran Kenneth Scissons with a bull snake draped around his neck ("The Real Hero," March/April '19) prompted Roma Halvorson, of Wakonda, to send us this snapshot, taken 70 years ago when she and her husband, Bob, were honeymooning in Rapid City. "It was when Reptile Gardens was way up on the hill," she says. "Just a little building, not much to it, just tanks with snakes in them." An employee sweet-talked Halvorson into wearing a "black snake" as a necklace. "He assured me that it would not hurt me. I don't even know why I let him do it!" she says.



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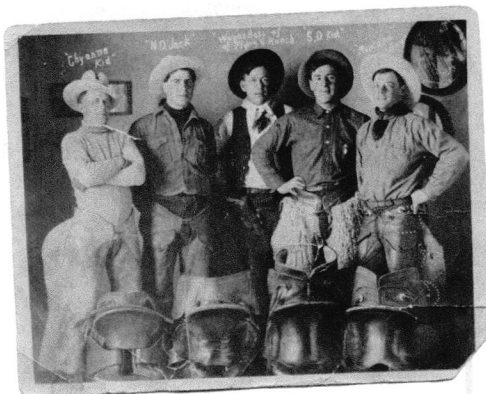
fact that there is geological evidence that the “real” source of the Mississippi River may be the Little Minnesota River, which originates in northeast South Dakota before it meanders into Minnesota.

*Wendell Duffield
Greenbank, Wash.*

NO HOME FOR DINOSAURS

In his article about LaFramboise Island (Our Wild Side, July/Aug ’19), Mark Peacock states that semi-aquatic dinosaurs called this island home. According to my research, dinosaurs lived up until 66 million years ago. The Missouri River was created only about 30 million years ago, and its current course is only about 115,000 years old.

*Lonnie Schumacher
Fort Pierre, S.D.*



WAGON BOSS IDENTIFIED

I just subscribed to *South Dakota Magazine* again after getting back from out-of-country travels and I was surprised to see photos I have in my keepsakes (Mailbox, May/June ’19). The man labeled “Wagon Boss” is my husband’s grandfather, Frederick “Fred” Dobson. He operated a bar in Highmore, but died when my husband was 3 years old.

*Janet Keller
Grants Pass, Ore.*

LOST ANCHOR

As a history nerd, I have long wondered why there has never been an effort to retrieve Lewis and Clark’s anchor, which was lost near LaFramboise Island (Our Wild Side, July/Aug ’19) in 1804. So easy with today’s technology, and it would surely be eagerly welcomed and displayed in the Cultural Heritage Center.

*Joseph Fornwald
Minneapolis, Minn.*

CAFE MEMORIES

I enjoyed reading “Eats of Eden” (July/Aug ’19), Rosie’s Cafe (“Off the Beaten Streets,” March/April ’19), and about all the places around our border I never heard of. I operated a cafe in Lake Preston for 29 years, and the hot beef combo and roast beef dinners were on my noon menu almost every day. I had one guy that would drive 45 miles three to four times a week for a hot beef combo, made with real mashed potatoes, home-made gravy and a dessert. Now that I am retired, I miss all the hard-working guys and farmers that came in for noon dinner.

*James Andrews
Lake Preston, S.D.*

MUSIC MAKERS

What a thoroughly enjoyable article about luthier Josh Rieck (Writers & Artists, May/June ’19). I am another one of the handful of builders in South Dakota, though Josh is a well-trained professional and I am a mostly self-taught hobbyist. We both began building about the same time. The greatest reward is hearing one’s creations in the hands of a talented musician.

*Larry Groon
Arlington, S.D.*

DON'T SHOOT

I grew up in Yankton and pheasant hunting was a fall ritual for our family. My father instilled in us that whatever you hunt and kill should end up on

your supper table. Therefore, I was dismayed to read about the hunting tag that allowed a hunter to shoot a bighorn ram in the Black Hills (“Very, Very Nice Things,” May/June ’19). I understand the reasons behind offering these tags at exorbitant prices so that Game, Fish & Parks can use the money to help manage its conservancy. The same reasoning is used to “manage wildlife” in Africa. Yet in this age of dwindling natural resources, I would choose to admire these beautiful animals in their habitat and not kill them for a trophy on my wall.

*Michael McVay
Highlands Ranch, Colo.*

BULL RIDING IN WILMOT

John Nelson’s letter about riding a gentle bull (Mailbox, March/April ’19) reminded me of an event in my youth. I grew up in the 1940s on a farm near Wilmot. My dad, Tom Harpstead, and nearby rancher Frank Whipple got together and bought a good-quality Hereford bull. Dad put weights on the tips of the horns to make them curve downward for safety as they grew. He was gentle and a fine-looking animal.

When it came time to move the bull to our farm, the task was assigned to Whipple ranch cowboy Ervin Swayze. He saddled a horse, put a rope around the bull’s neck and attempted to lead it, but the bull would have none of that. Ervin’s solution was to ride the bull and lead the horse instead. Everything went just fine.

*Milo Harpstead
Stevens Point, Wis.*

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

We welcome letters, especially when they add information to recent articles. We reserve the right to edit for length and style. Please email letters to hello@SouthDakotaMagazine.com or mail to SDM Letters, 410 E. Third St., Yankton, S.D., 57078. You may also contact us at www.SouthDakotaMagazine.com.



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DAKOTIANA

Observations and Discoveries of Life in South Dakota



Crow Buttes ... As cattle graze peacefully on the grass below, it's hard to imagine Crow Buttes as the site of one of the most horrendous events of the past 200 years. In the summer of 1822, Lakota warriors pillaged a Crow camp. Some survivors fled to the top of the butte, which lies in modern-day Harding County, but the Lakota waited as the Crows suffered and died from hunger and thirst. According to oral history, many of the Lakota then contracted a fever from the decomposing bodies of the Crows. They also died in a nearby valley now known as the Canyon of Skulls. Crow Buttes stands 24 miles south of Buffalo along Highway 85. Scott and Rebecca Sears operate the Crow Buttes Mercantile, a 12-seat restaurant, just a pheasant's flight from the butte. Rebecca says local ranchers still find arrowheads in the grass. The butte sits on private land, so it's not open to hikers.

—Photo by Bernie Hunhoff



MOLDING PERSONALITY

Prouty Pottery of Rapid City reflects South Dakota

Hester Prouty loves time “on the wheel” at her Rapid City pottery shop. She especially loves to “throw a clump of clay” at the wheel and create one-of-a-kind coffee cups. “You can shape them and dress them up to give each its own personality,” she says.

Pottery began as a hobby that outgrew her house. Three years ago, she resigned as a school lunch lady to become a full-time potter. As business grew, she eyed the vacant Landstrom’s building west of downtown Rapid City, envisioning how the old gold jewelry factory might work as a studio. Fortunately, a “space for lease”



sign was posted there just as she began to search for space.

Today she and her husband Joe (who also left his job at an auto body shop) operate Prouty Pottery from a big-windowed studio on Landstrom’s second floor. A coffee shop and brewery occupy the first floor, enabling customers to bring a hot or cold brew when they come to shop, paint or attend classes.

The Proutys host parties and classes for youth and adults, often working 15 hours a day. But nobody’s complaining. “We love

doing this and everyone has been so supportive,” Hester says.

Their pottery is sold at the studio and other locations, ranging from Prairie Edge in downtown Rapid City to ginnys, an eclectic coffee shop in Philip, where Hester and Joe grew up and became high school sweethearts. They also do custom orders, integrating logos and designs.

The Proutys want their pottery to reflect South Dakota, both in substance and design. “Everything we use to make our handmade pottery must be American made, and hopefully South Dakota made,” Hester says.

Historic Dates

In South Dakota

REUNION PHOTO

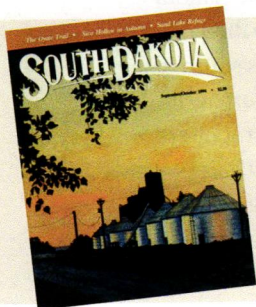
Sept. 2, 1948 ... Rapid City photographer Bill Groethe snapped his widely-reproduced photo of Dewey Beard, High Eagle and other survivors of the Battle of the Little Big Horn at a reunion in Custer State Park.

MEDIA CENTER OPENS

Sept. 25, 2003 ... The Al Neuharth Media Center opened on the University of South Dakota campus. Named for Eureka native and USA Today founder Allen H. Neuharth, the structure houses the media and journalism department, the Freedom Forum, campus media outlets and South Dakota Public Broadcasting’s headquarters.

HOWE DIES

Oct. 7, 1983 ... South Dakota Artist Laureate Oscar Howe died. A Yanktonai from the Crow Creek Reservation, Howe painted murals in the Mobridge auditorium and on the dome of Mitchell’s Carnegie Library for the WPA, but later broke new ground in Native American art with his vibrant abstracts.



BEST QUOTE 25 YEARS AGO

“We were friends with governors and senators and jailbreakers. We mixed with the elite and the homeless. Cowboys who didn’t have any place to stay would always come here.”

—Toots Heumphreus Schriener, resident of the 12-Mile Ranch of Custer, in our September/October 1994 issue.



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SOUTH DAKOTA TRIVIA

Think you know South Dakota? Test your knowledge with this quiz. Answers can be found on page 21.

1 >> Which Glacial Lakes community took its name from the Dakota word meaning, "a nesting place for birds?"

2 >> What institution of higher learning is home to 18 Babylonian tablets?

3 >> Who was South Dakota's first female aviator?

4 >> What South Dakota fort played an instrumental role in making "The Star-Spangled Banner" our national anthem?

5 >> Can you name the Nobel Prize-winning South Dakota native immortalized in the periodic table of elements?



6 >> WHAT HAND COUNTY BURG IS HOME TO THIS LOVELY SPANISH-STYLE CHURCH?

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Maddie Peschong Photography

TOP 7 *Things Abby Bischoff Loves About South Dakota*

Former Huron farm kid Abby Bischoff currently lives in Sioux Falls. She serves as executive director for the Stockyards Ag Experience, connecting people with agriculture through history and interactive exhibits. A photographer, Bischoff operates Flock Studio and preserves images of the state's decaying farmhouses through her "Abandoned: South Dakota" photography project.

Sandstone Wonder

Tucked up near the Slim Buttes in Harding County, the Castles is a big sandstone formation that is worth a detour. This unknown natural wonder kind of blew me away when I first saw it.

Scenic Route

Highway 45 from Kimball to Ipswich has rolling hills and valleys, a few really great abandoned houses (one near Orient in particular) and, if you're lucky, you'll catch a herd of grazing buffalo.

Fair Legacy

The South Dakota State Fair was the best week of the year when I was growing up. My 4-H friends from around the state were on my home turf and my town friends saw me in full cattle and sheep showing mode.

Now it's a place to reconnect, watch my nieces and nephews carry on that 4-H legacy and see our ag producers bring their best.

Sweet Dozen

My school group always celebrated the end of the year with a trip to The Donut Shoppe in Huron. Now I take my nephew there for a carefully-selected dozen to give to the crew working my family's annual bull sale. Not much beats their fresh raised and glazed doughnut.

Vibrant Downtown

Whether catching music at Total Drag or Icon Lounge, enjoying the pancakes and Bloody Mary bar at Ode to Food & Drinks on Saturday morning, grabbing coffee and carrot cake from

Queen City Bakery or checking out Sculpture-Walk, downtown Sioux Falls is always vibrant and friendly.

Gayville Hall

As someone who loves live music, an unexpected concert at Gayville Hall left a mark on me. If you're lucky enough to be there on a night Owen DeJong plays his violin, well, you're lucky enough.

Clichéd Connections

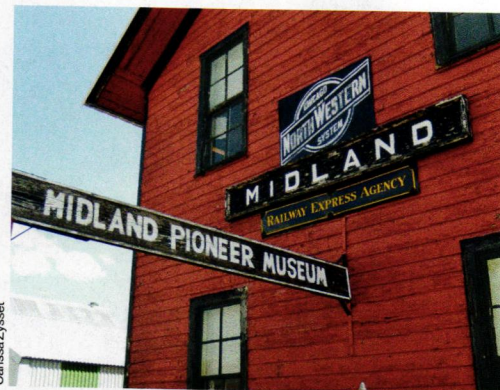
One of my favorite things about South Dakota is a cliché. Rarely can I meet someone who I'm not connected to through family or friends. Our ability to relate to each other through common bonds is part of what makes South Dakota such an incredible place to live.

RAILROAD REVAMP

Haakon County history buffs are preparing to restore Midland's 113-year-old depot, part of the Midland Pioneer Museum since 1973. The depot needs new siding and new windows in order to continue safely housing artifacts.

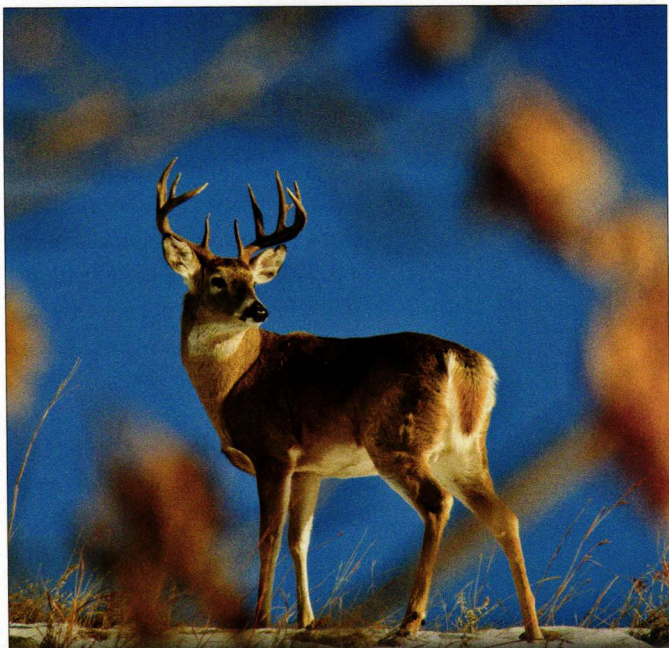
The two-story depot, built by the Chicago & North Western Railroad in 1906, is referred to as a "combination station with living quarters overhead"—a design which allowed the railroad to provide space for freight and passengers, as well as the station-master. Fourteen depots were built in this style between Fort Pierre and Newell; Midland's is the only one still standing.

To raise funds for the restoration, the Midland Pioneer Museum Association is selling 100 limited edition 18-by-24-inch prints of a drawing by artist Ray Kelly that shows the Midland depot in its glory days. Contact Carissa Zysset at (605) 441-0447 for more information. The museum is open June 1 to Sept. 30, Monday through Friday, from 2-4 p.m. or by appointment.



Carissa Zysset

Some of the Midland Pioneer Museum's collections are displayed in the town's 113-year-old depot.



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A Growing Delta

The grassy delta on the Missouri River near Springfield has been expanding for decades, slowly robbing Lewis and Clark Lake of its depth and storage capacity. More than 5 million tons of sandy sediment flow into the lake every year, much of it from Nebraska's Niobrara River. When the bomb cyclone hit South Dakota and other western states in March, floodwater and ice crushed the Spencer Dam in Nebraska, just upriver from the delta. Officials are now trying to gauge the immediate and long-term effects of the dam break, which came just as scientists and government authorities were evaluating the practicality of dredging the seemingly unlimited sand supply for use in fracking, road construction or beach restoration. Meanwhile the sandy and grassy delta grows.



Bernie Hunhoff

Grasses wave in the Missouri River's ever-expanding delta near Springfield. Experts hope to find a use for the sediment.

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OUR STATE IS BLESSED with an abundance of talented people who know how to capture South Dakota's natural beauty with a camera. We share one of their photos, like Linda Tande Waldo's scene of a balancing act between spires at the Needles (above), on our website every Friday. Read more at www.SouthDakotaMagazine.com/photo-of-the-week

Join the Conversation

Readers are still talking about stories from the *South Dakota Magazine* archives that now appear on our website. Mike Hutchinson shared his father's memories of playing basketball in Witten, featured in our January/February 2016 issue:

"My father, who is 85 years old, played high school basketball around 1949-1951 for White River, near Witten. He has told me many times about playing in some sort of building or gymnasium in Witten where there was a working wood burning stove in the middle of the basketball court. Is there anybody out there who might remember this as well?"

Share your comments at www.SouthDakotaMagazine.com/witten-100th-meridian

Trivia answers, page 18: 1. Waubay; 2. Black Hills State University; 3. Nellie Willhite; 4. Fort Meade; 5. Ernest O. Lawrence; 6. St. Liborius Catholic Church is in Polo.

Visit us online to see another side of *South Dakota Magazine*. We feature photos, stories and columns on a variety of topics — travel, food, culture, photography, history and business — all about your favorite state and updated daily.

2

lucky freshmen at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell will be crowned Beanie King and Beanie Queen at Blue & White Days, as part of one of South Dakota's long-standing homecoming traditions. Whether it's Jackrabbits getting hairy for Hobo Day or West River students' pilgrimage to a giant letter, our colleges and universities have their own quirky ways to show off school spirit. Read more at www.SouthDakotaMagazine.com/a-beardless-hobo-and-other-homecoming-traditions



THE LOST 74

A barber in Brookings, a trucker and hundreds of other survivors keep alive the memory of sailors who died on the *Frank E. Evans* five decades ago

THERE ARE WORSE things than being forgotten. Maybe you're halfway around the world, in the dark of night on the South China Sea, when your ship collides with a much larger vessel.

Maybe you're a sailor on a nearby boat that attempts to rescue survivors, but all you see is endless water and an eerie quiet.

Maybe you're a Nebraska farmer listening to the TV news when you hear that the ship on which your three Navy sons are serving has been sliced in half.

Maybe you're a young wife and mother whose father-in-law telephones to say that your husband — his son — won't be coming home. You get a telegram from the Navy con-

firning the news.

A week later, the final note of "Taps" has faded to silence. The burial flags are folded and put away and the sympathy cards have been read and answered; then a lonesomeness settles over great tragedies.

That's when the survivors contemplate the grace of remembering.

Brookings barber Linda Vaa was the young sailor's wife who got that phone call from her father-in-law in 1969 at the height of the Vietnam War. Fifty years have barely softened the pain.

She met Greg Sage in the summer of 1964 at the Knox County Fair in

Bloomfield, Nebraska, just across the border from Yankton and Bon Homme counties in South Dakota. "My sister and I were walking around the fair when she noticed these two boys were following us. It was the day before school started. Finally, we turned around and started talking to them." One was Greg Sage, a farm boy from nearby Niobrara. "Greg was very shy," she says. "We probably dated three months before he held my hand. We were just 17 years old."

Greg was the second of Ernie and Eunice Sage's four sons. Gary, the oldest, was a typical first-born: serious and eager to help people. He was also a thinker who liked to read. As the United States became more engaged in Vietnam's civil war, he told



Linda Vaa, a longtime barber on Brookings' Main Street, strives to preserve the stories of 74 sailors who died 50 years ago.

his family that he felt he should fight for his country.

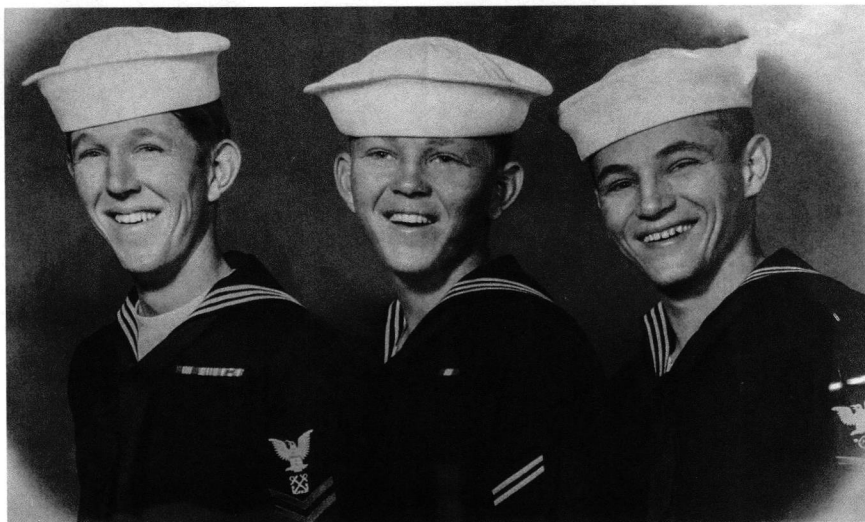
Greg, who played football for Niobrara, was less studious than Gary. Kelly Jo, freckle-faced and artistic, was two years younger than Greg. The Sages' fourth son, Douglas Dean, had barely started school. The boys and their father spent their days hunting, fishing and farming in the hill country of the Missouri River Valley.

Gary enlisted in the Navy after high school. Greg and Linda married as soon as they graduated from high school, and within a year Greg followed his older brother into the Navy. "Their dad, Ernie, encouraged them all to join the Navy because he thought it would be safer," says Linda.

Kelly Jo signed up even before his high school graduation. Gary was on the crew of another ship when Greg was assigned to the *USS Frank E. Evans*, a 376-foot attack vessel commissioned in 1945 and deployed to the Pacific at the end of World War II. Sailors nicknamed it the Grey Ghost because of the way it looked at sea. The *Evans* was retooled in the 1960s for anti-submarine warfare. As fighting expanded in Southeast Asia, it began deployments there.

"Gary's ship pulled into base at Long Beach, California, and he came to live with Greg and I for a while," says Linda. "He taught me how to make a cherry pie. One day, Greg suggested that Gary transfer to the *Evans* so they could be together. About then, Kelly Jo graduated from high school and came to boot camp in San Diego. They asked him where he wanted to go, and he put down the *Evans* so he could be with his older brothers."

Navy policies discourage family members from serving on the same ship, especially during wartime, but it is not expressly forbidden. In November of 1942, five brothers from Waterloo, Iowa, were serving on the *USS Ju-*



The Sage brothers (from left, Gary, Kelly Jo and Greg) posed for this photograph as a Mother's Day gift before they left port in California for the waters off Vietnam.

neau when it was sunk by a torpedo in Guadalcanal in the South Pacific. More than 600 sailors died in that tragedy; there were at least 30 sets of brothers aboard.

The three Sage brothers boarded the *Evans* along with their fellow sailors in March of 1969 at the Port of Long Beach, headed for Vietnam. Gary was 22. Greg was 21. Kelly Jo was 19.

For weeks, the crew of the *Evans* used their firepower to protect American troops stationed on the Vietnamese coast. When they ran short of ammunition, the 2,200-ton ship was sent to the Philippines to restock before it left for training exercises with the Royal Australian Navy in the South China Sea.

At 3:15 a.m. on the morning of June 3, the *Evans* crossed paths with the much-larger *HMAS Melbourne*. Someone described it as a collision between a Volkswagen and an 18-wheeler. The *Evans* was cut in half. Greg and Kelly Jo were off duty and asleep in the lower berths in the bow. There were reports that their older brother, Gary, was on duty on the stern, which stayed afloat.

"Nobody knows for certain what happened because it was total chaos in

the black of night," says Linda. "But it seems likely that Greg was crushed, because he was probably right where the ship was hit. What we've heard is that Gary jumped to the bow to try to find Kelly Jo.

"Gary had a flashlight, and we've heard that he went to the top story. There was a ladder blocking a door there and some officers were trapped inside. A dozen people were trying to get the officers out. Gary gave them the flashlight and then left, we think, to go below to look for Kelly Jo."

Some of the 204 survivors on the stern and witnesses on nearby ships reported seeing arms reaching out from the windows and hearing screams as the bow laid to one side and then, within just three or four terrifying minutes, sank into the dark sea with 74 men trapped inside.

"That is what haunts so many of the men," says Linda. "One sailor told me he came off duty when Greg went on duty that night. He took a shower and put on a pair of my husband's underwear because his were at the laundry. He felt the collision, was thrown around and crawled out from under a mattress. He got to the ladder, but the hatch flew closed. Then, someone who had already got off came back and opened the hatch. At last it was his

turn to climb off. He thinks he might have been the last one off. He jumped or was thrown into the water and he swam and swam until he found something to hang onto. A small ship came to save him but he told them he was OK and they should go save someone else.

"Those are the stories we hear," Linda says. "They still hear the ghosts of the sailors who died."

Ernst Sage finished working the fields of his Niobrara farm on June 3 and went to the house to watch the evening news on CBS when Walter Cronkite reported that the *USS Evans* had been cut in half. Ernst screamed and his wife, Eunice, passed out.

As soon as he was able, Ernst called Linda, his daughter-in-law, who was living in Omaha with her 13-month-old son, Greg Jr.

A week later, the family held a private service in the Niobrara Lutheran Church, and then they joined the entire community at the school for a military funeral that was televised. Officers folded four burial flags; they gave three to Eunice, in remembrance of her three sons, and one to Linda. A photographer from *Life* came to document the terrible grief but the magazine never used the pictures; an editor told the family later that it was just too sad for words or pictures.

Ernst, the father, was quiet and crestfallen. "He was never the same," Linda says. "I think he felt tremendous guilt because he had encouraged them to join the Navy, but it was only because he thought it was safer. He became sad and depressed, so sad that he forgot he had another son at home."

The elder Sage spent a week at a state mental hospital, and then returned to his wife and son but he never smiled again — not until minutes

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before he died in a hospital bed at age 79.

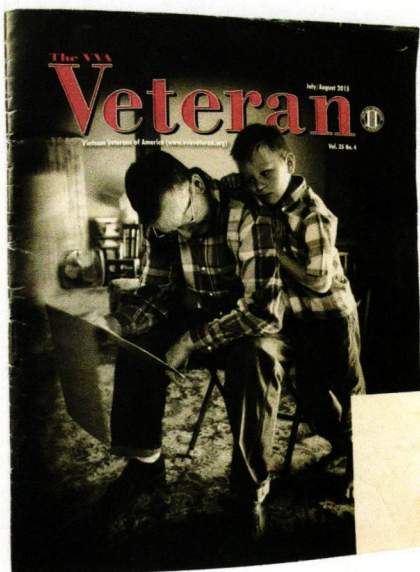
Doug was 6 when his brothers died. “Ernie protected him and wouldn’t even let him drive a tractor or do anything where he might be hurt,” Linda remembers. “He didn’t get to grow up in the carefree way his brothers did, and he had to do naughty things to get his father’s attention.”

Linda says it was hard to return to a normal life. Sympathy letters poured into Niobrara from around the country. News reporters came to write about the little farm town that had sacrificed so much for a war that was growing more unpopular with every passing day.

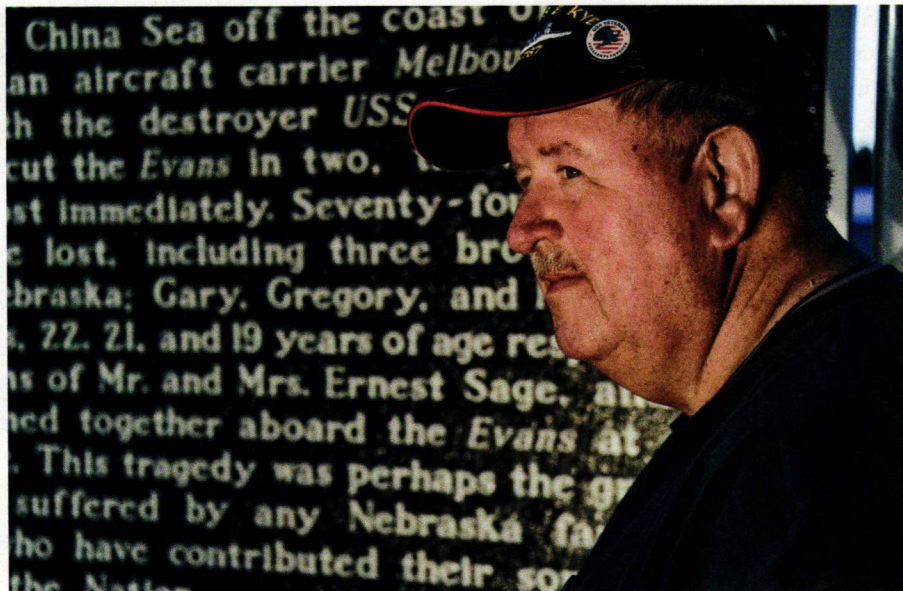
She also noticed that her own toddler, Greg Jr., was being affected. Well-meaning townspeople spoiled him at every opportunity.

Three years after the crash, she and her son moved 120 miles north to Sioux Falls, where she was able to use her late husband’s GI benefits to attend beauty school and barber school.

In 1974, she was cutting hair at the Grange Avenue Barber Shop in Sioux Falls when Spencer Vaa, a Vietnam veteran who was injured in 1969, walked in and sat in the chair for a trim. They married two years later, and adopted a



Doug Sage, 6, the surviving brother, comforted his father in 1969. The family’s grief attracted much media attention.



Darwin Sietsema was among many would-be rescuers who rushed to help the sailors on the USS Frank E. Evans. Now he makes an annual vigil to their memorial in Niobrara.

daughter, Sarah Jane, in 1982.

Spencer’s career with the S.D. Game, Fish & Parks Department led them to Brookings in 1978, where Linda went to work for Brookings Barbers. There, they raised Greg Jr. and Sarah.

South Dakota and Nebraska are 7,000 miles from the South China Sea, but the pain of June 3, 1969, could not be healed by time or distance. “He missed his boys so badly, he could never be the same strong man he was before they were killed,” Linda says of Ernie Sage. However, the father found some solace when he heard about plans for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

“Their dream was to go to Washington and see the names of their boys on the wall,” says Linda, “so when I got a fundraising request for the project I wrote back and said we would help, and I asked for the list of names because I wanted to be sure they got everything right.”

When the list came in the mail, she saw that her husband and brothers-in-law — in fact, all 74 *Evans* casualties — had been omitted. The Department

of Defense had determined that they died outside the war zone. “I had to go tell Ernie,” says Linda. “I would have rather taken a shot to the head than tell him. It was like he lost them all over again. He cried for hours.”

Doug also struggled after the tragedy. “He started out with a big family and then he lost three brothers, and in a way he lost his father,” Linda says. Today he lives in Colorado.

The three Sage sailors’ mother, Eunice, found comfort in her deep Christian faith. She regained her good sense of humor and became a source of strength to others. She was as surprised as anyone when she took on a role as comforter to hundreds of men who survived the nightmare at sea.

That began to happen in 1992, when survivors formed the *USS Frank E. Evans* Association and started to hold annual reunions. Ernie, who died in 1996, never attended the gatherings but Linda and her son, Greg Jr., began to accompany Eunice Sage.

“The first one I went to was in Niobrara for the 25th anniversary,” Linda says. “We met a bunch of the guys then, and I realized they were wonderful people and they really loved Eunice. When they met her, some broke down

and cried and said, 'We're so sorry your sons are dead and I'm alive.'"

Linda says Eunice would hear none of that. "She shook her fingers at them and said, 'Don't ever tell me that again! You're alive to tell me what happened.'"

Eunice became known as the mother of the association. The Navy veterans took up collections to help her with travel expenses. Every time she arrived, someone would politely suggest that she rest in her hotel room, and she would respond, "I want a cigarette. I want a drink. And I want my boys." She often remarked that she lost three boys, "but gained a hundred."

The gatherings taught Eunice and Linda the sadness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). "We could see that they all felt guilty — survivors' guilt. Every year we would all go into a room together, maybe 50 or 100 people or more, and every one of the survivors would tell how they got out of the ship. Every one of them has a story and they

are haunted by their memories. They remember the arms reaching out of the windows or the screams coming from men in the water. They can still hear the ship breaking apart. They hear the ghosts."

She says they all tried to restart their lives, but many struggled with work and relationships. "Many have been divorced three or four times. You would think the reunion would just bring back their worst memories but instead it seems to help because we are the *Frank E. Evans* family. I hug everyone three or four times, and I hug their wives because I know how hard it is for them, too."

She knows a veteran who was a radarman, like Greg. "He doesn't normally like to be around people. He moved to the U.S./Canadian border to be alone," she says. "He has tremendous guilt because he thinks he should have been able to save someone. But he does come to join us."

The 2018 reunion was held in the Black Hills of South Dakota, at the Grand Gateway Hotel in Rapid City. Linda says a familiar theme arose there: Why aren't the names of the 74 *Evans* sailors on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.? Are they to be forgotten?

Darwin Sietsema leaves his home in Ruthton, Minnesota, every June and travels west into South Dakota. He visits a friend in Yankton, and then follows the Missouri River to Niobrara. After midnight on June 3, he parks his gray Chevy pickup at Farnik's Market. He walks across the asphalt parking lot to a modest memorial with 74 names inscribed in stone. There he sits for several hours, in the quiet and darkness, reflecting on what he calls, "The worst day of my life."

Sietsema grew up in Trosky, Min-

Branson, MO



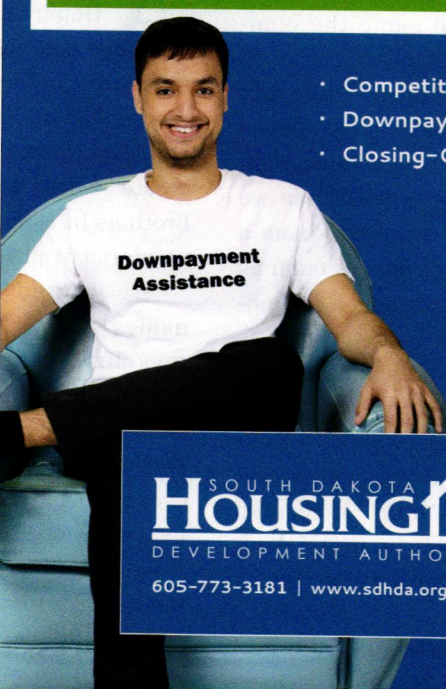
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nesota, where his father operated the grain elevator. At age 18, he joined the Navy to avoid being drafted into the U.S. Army. After basics in San Diego, he was trained as a boiler tender. "It was miserably hot in the boiler room, though, so I worked my way into being an electrician."

In the summer of 1969, he was assigned to join the *James E. Kyes*, a World War II-era destroyer. He had three deployments to the South Pacific. "Basically, we went from Pearl Harbor to the Philippines to Vietnam and back to the Philippines to Japan and maybe back to Vietnam. Each deployment was six to nine months. Our job was to fire our 5-inch guns in support of the troops. We could fire a quarter mile off the beach and our shells could go 12 miles." Sietsema says the North Vietnamese had shore guns that could have reached his ship but the *Kyes* was never fired upon.

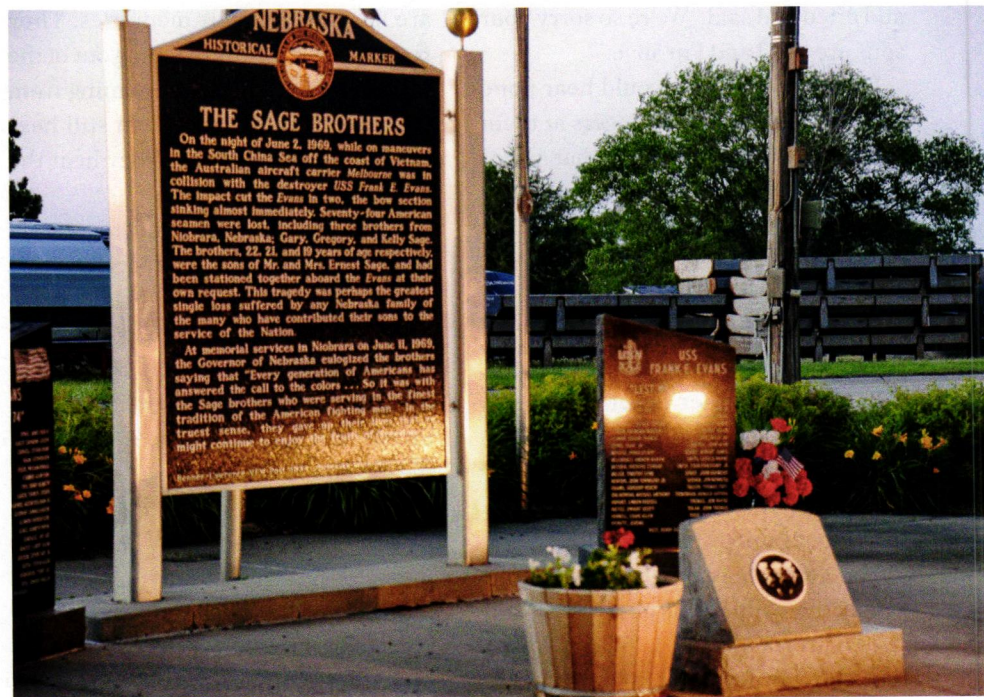
The mission was similar to the *Evans*, and Sietsema says it's entirely possible that he crossed paths with one or more of the Sage brothers while they were all living in California. However, it's a certainty that he was nearby when they died.

"I was asleep lying in my rack," he says of the fateful night. "I thought it was a dream. Then came the command, 'Man the rail!'"

His ship hurried to the accident site, but they found nothing but the silence of the sea. "We didn't even know, right away, what had happened. Then we heard rumors that there had been a collision. But the sea was as calm as glass. Right away we launched our motor whale boats."

As daylight came, the sailors learned the sad news. "On the second day, about a half dozen ships gathered and we had a memorial service at sea. When they played "Taps" it seemed like a haunting echoing sound. I don't know how it can echo when there's nothing out there."

Sietsema remembers that he and his crewmates felt helpless. "There



Residents of the small Nebraska town of Niobrara, which lies on the South Dakota border near Springfield, vow that they'll not allow the 74 sailors to be forgotten.

was nothing you could do. It was over with," he says. But it never really ended, not for him or hundreds of others who were survivors, would-be rescuers, friends and family.

As it became obvious that the Department of Defense was not going to add the names of the *Evans* sailors to the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, the townspeople of Niobrara — who had already created a historical marker to the Sage brothers in 1999 — decided to build a memorial to all 74 in 2016.

"We wanted to make sure their names were on a wall somewhere," says Jim Scott, commander of the American Legion post. "There are still efforts to add the names to the wall in Washington. I don't know if that will ever happen. But these men will not be forgotten here."

He and others raised funds to construct a granite memorial with the names of all the sailors. Their pictures are nearby on a vinyl poster.

An observance of the 50th anniversary of the tragedy was held this year on June 2 at 3:15 p.m., the exact hour of the day when the *Evans* sank (there is a 12-hour time difference between Vietnam and the Central Daylight Time Zone in the United States).

Sietsema was there, along with many Sage relatives, community leaders and dozens of others from South Dakota and Nebraska. The burly Minnesota trucker spoke briefly about that horrible night on the South China Sea, and he lamented that the 74 young men are not remembered on the wall in Washington.

Martha Atkins, the town's Lutheran pastor, offered a prayer. "On this day of remembering, we bring forth 74 souls who were lost in service on behalf of this country," she said. "Lord, we call upon you to embrace those families, those comrades in arms and the many, many friends of those 74 courageous young men into your arms of healing, of comfort and into peace."

Linda Vaa is now in her 45th year as a South Dakota barber, working at the shop on Brookings' Main Street. She gives \$8 haircuts to military veterans on the last Tuesday of every month.

She is a busy wife, mother and grandmother. She has also collected books, newspaper clippings and photographs related to the *Evans*, and she stays abreast of continuing efforts in Congress to add the 74 names to the wall.

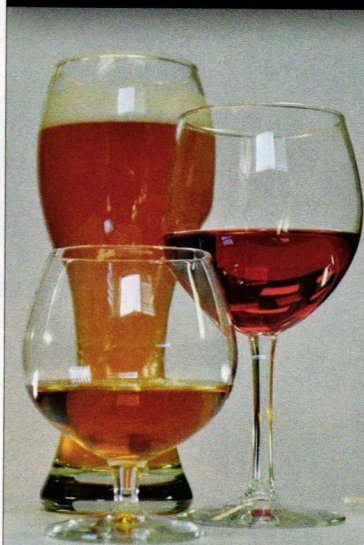
Encouraging news came this summer when Kevin Cramer, a U.S. senator from North Dakota, introduced the *USS Frank E. Evans* Act to require that the names be added. Cramer noted that it's "not unprecedented" to make changes on the Vietnam wall. He said duplicates, misspellings and omissions have been fixed through the years.

The Pentagon continues to oppose such efforts, maintaining its 50-year-old argument that the *Evans* sailors died too far from the Vietnam battlefields to be counted as war deaths. The government's designated combat zone, drawn by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965, did not originally include Cambodia and Laos.

Linda blames President Richard Nixon. "He was losing favor with the country over the war in the summer of '69," she says, so there is a theory that he and his generals were looking for ways to lower the number of casualties. She says she's appreciative of congressional efforts, but she admits to some cynicism after 50 years. "I think it'll take a president's attention to change what started so long ago."

She commends politicians, organizations and veterans who have worked to keep the memories of the 74 alive. "We don't want them forgotten," she says. "Those boys will never grow old, they'll never enjoy their families. 'Lest We Forget' is a motto of the military, and that's the one thing we can still do for them." 🐾

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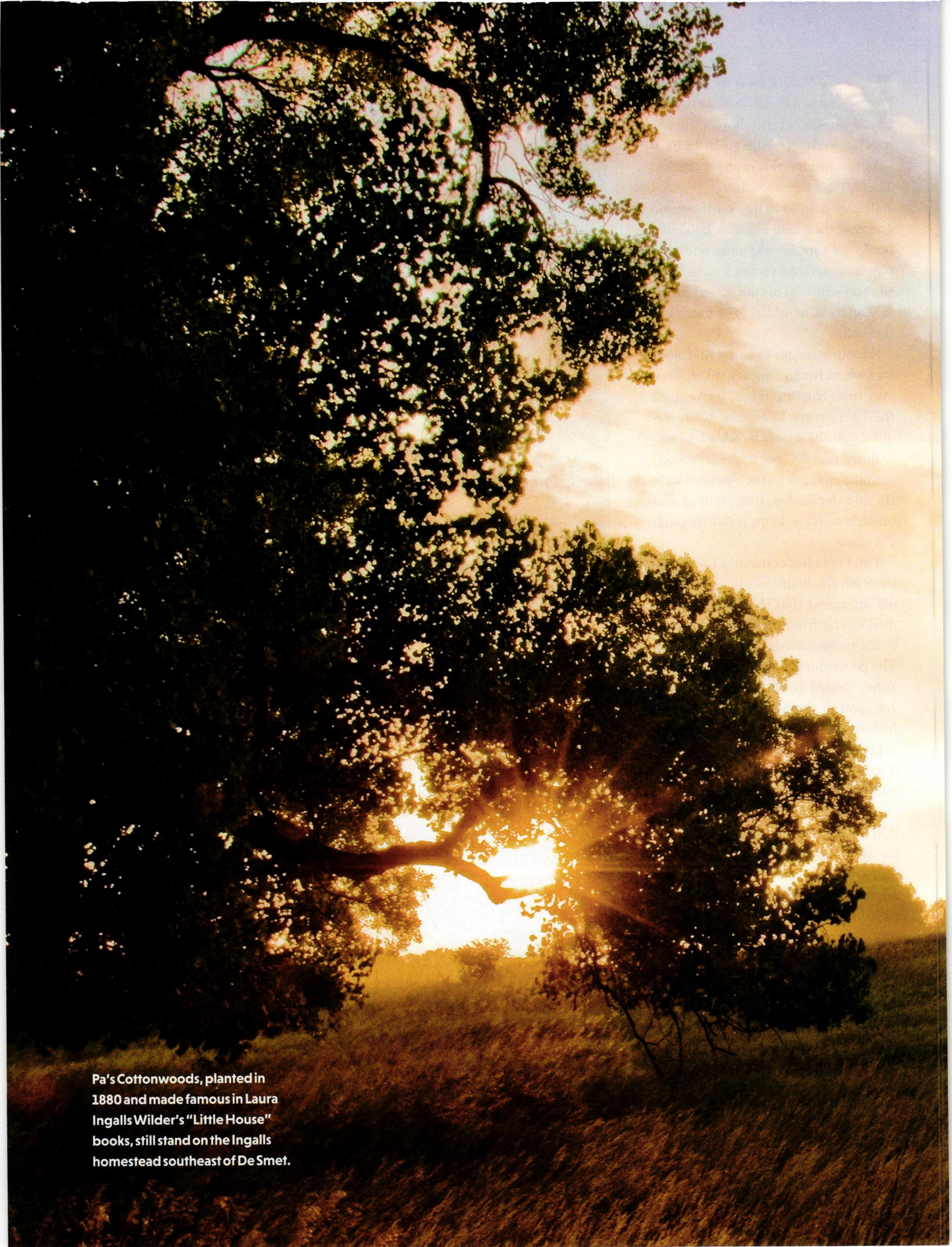
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Pa's Cottonwoods, planted in 1880 and made famous in Laura Ingalls Wilder's "Little House" books, still stand on the Ingalls homestead southeast of De Smet.

ROOTED

The trees of our lives

Story by JOHN ANDREWS

I ONCE NEARLY burned down a tree. Not deliberately, of course. And it was more of a stump — the remains of a tree that had been felled in our yard — by the time of my youthful indiscretion.

It stood about 3 feet high, and slightly less than that in diameter. Half of it was smoothed by a chainsaw. The rest was accented by vertical spiky splinters left when the cutter conceded to gravity and the tree came crashing down.

Those spikes proved a perfect place to detonate Black Cat fireworks. Stick a piece of mini dynamite into a crevice (or two or three pieces), light the fuse and watch the sparks fly. It was wonderful entertainment on a summer's evening.

There was a baseball game that night, so I pedaled across

town to the park. When I returned home, I learned that my parents had looked out the east window and saw smoke rising from the stump, which had to be doused. Though the event was innocent and minor (in my estimation, at least), that stump became forever known as, “the tree John started on fire.”

As it turns out, there are trees like this all over South Dakota. Not victims of unintentional arson, but keepers of stories. They preserve our history and culture. They are neighborhood focal points. Families talk about them, and even gather around them. Just as the cottonwoods, oaks and pines are rooted to the South Dakota soil, our people are rooted to them. Here are a few notable trees and their stories.

Chad Coppess / S.D. Tourism



ROOTED

Spink County Comfort at Bill's Tree

When the children of Howard "Bill" Thomas get together, they venture onto the prairies of rural Spink County and gather around what's known locally as Bill's Tree.

Thomas was born in 1921 and grew up on the family farm southwest of Conde. One day, road crews told Bill's father about plans to build township roads. The elder Thomas objected when he found that one road would necessitate the removal of a young cottonwood that the family had begun calling Bill's Tree.

Plans were amended and the cottonwood is now well over 100 years old — a local landmark and a point of pride for Thomas' seven children and 20 grandchildren. "After Dad died in 2007, it really became more special to our family because it was like a big icon that represented my dad and all his years growing up," says Thomas' youngest daughter Joni Groeblichhoff, who lives in Groton.

In 2015, the family commissioned Milbank artist Shannon Job to paint Bill's Tree (shown at right). "When I saw the photos, I said, 'My God, I've seen this tree before,'" says Job, who spent part of her childhood in Conde. "We always knew it as the Big Tree. We used to ride our bikes to it. We had no idea that it was Bill's Tree."

In the summer of 2018, Groeblichhoff and her siblings met at Bill's Tree. She and her four sisters held hands around the circumference of the big cottonwood and then stepped back to the road to take pictures. "I happened to look up and there was one spot where I could see a branch was missing. There was a knot in the perfect shape of a heart," she says.

From Highway 37, turn west on 157th Street, then south on 403rd Avenue. Bill's Tree stands alone by the side of the gravel road.



Trees Gone By ...

Hansen's Feathering Elm

A stately feathering elm tree planted by Niels Hansen nearly 100 years ago was a campus mainstay at South Dakota State University in Brookings until it succumbed to Dutch Elm disease.

Hansen, the university's famed horticulturalist who traveled the globe in search of plant and tree species that could withstand the harsh Great Plains climate, set the elm in 1920 or 1921 in Liberty Grove, a peaceful green space created by students to honor the 27 State College graduates who died in World War I. Its location just outside the Lincoln Library (now the Lincoln Music Hall) also perfectly framed the building's four fluted columns on the north entrance.

The elm — the most visible and largest of the campus' century-old trees with a girth of more than 15 feet — served as a backdrop for visits by two presidents: Calvin Coolidge in 1927 and Dwight Eisenhower in 1955. Thousands of graduates marched past its broad branches until 1973, when ceremonies were moved from the Sylvan Theater. Students studying in easy chairs on the library's second floor could gaze at the elm, which filled the frame of a large window.

Crews felled Hansen's feathering elm in the summer of 2014.

Courtesy Chuck Cecil

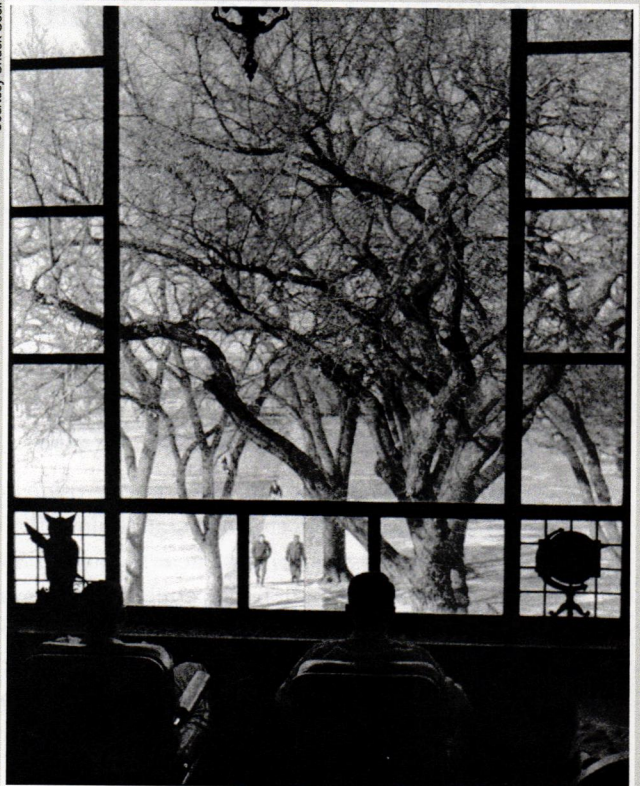


Illustration by Shannon Job

The Eminija Tree

A gnarly old box elder is a favorite of photographers in southeastern South Dakota and also marks a centuries-old Indian burial ground.

The Eminija burial mounds could be up to 1,500 years old. Archaeologists believe they were built between 500 and 1,000 A.D. They originally included 38 mounds, but natural erosion, cultivation and artifact hunters destroyed more than half. Today, 15 mounds remain. The largest of them measure 60 to 110 feet in diameter. They are protected in perpetuity by an easement for historical preservation.

The Eminija Tree is south of Brandon, just north of the junction of Highway 11 and Madison Street.

Christian Begeman



ROOTED

Bernie Hunhoff



Petrified in Edgemont

Fall River County, especially between Hot Springs and Edgemont, is rich with fossils and petrified wood. An example stands in the city park in Edgemont. A large remnant of a petrified tree was found near Horse Trap Mountain northeast of Edgemont and moved into town in 1926.

Hermosa's Council Oak

For hundreds of years, Indian tribes met to trade, form alliances and exchange news at an old oak tree that stands along the north side of Highway 40 about 2 miles west of Hermosa near the junction with Paradise Road.

Locals believe the Council Oak could be 400 years old. Tipi rings were once visible on a hillside behind the oak, which is nourished by the waters of Battle Creek. For years, it was the largest bur oak in the state. It stands 39 feet tall, measures 181 inches in circumference and has a branch spread of 65 feet. But the Council Oak has since been surpassed by a bur oak that stands nearly twice as tall in Minnehaha County.

Moon Tree

Peg Sperlich first visited the ghost town of Moon in the Black Hills while scouting for places to hunt deer with her husband. Later, her sister-in-law took the couple there during a summer four-wheeling excursion. That's when she noticed a Ponderosa pine so large that it stood out even among the thousands of other trees that surround the remote village. She's made it a point to seek out the Moon Tree, which stands 110 feet tall, whenever she's in the area. "The huge size and shape of the thick branches fascinated me," says Sperlich, who lives in Hot Springs. "Many of its branches are as large as full grown pine trees. Some are almost straight, and several are wavy as they reach for the sky. The widest part of the trunk is about 10 feet above ground level."

Moon lies about a mile from the Wyoming border. Jack Moon built a general store there in 1898 to serve local farmers. It also served as the little village's post office from 1911 to 1953. Today, the cabins are occupied only during summers and the fall hunting season.



Bobbie Johnson

**A Ponderosa pine
towers above all others
near the old settlement
of Moon, near the
Wyoming/South
Dakota border.**

Peg Sperlich



ROOTED

Our Biggest and Broadest

The forestry division of South Dakota's Department of Agriculture maintains the Big Tree Register, a listing of the largest specimens of each species. Champion trees are determined by adding the circumference in inches, the height in feet and a quarter of the crown spread in feet, resulting in its total point score. Challenger trees, which meet the minimum circumference requirement of 9 1/2 inches at a point 4 1/2 feet off the ground, are also included on the registry. If something happens to a champion tree, another is selected from the list of challengers.

There are 234 champion and challenger trees representing 57 species on the list. The biggest is a cottonwood that stands along a fenceline 2 miles from the Missouri River in Charles Mix County. It measures 133 feet tall, 27 feet in circumference and has a crown spread of 122 feet, giving it a point score of 488.

The register can be found at sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry. If you think you have a tree that challenges a current champion, request a nomination form by calling (605) 773-3623.



Stephen Gassman

Old, Old Growth

Ponderosa pine trees began growing in the Black Hills around 11,000 years ago, and today they cover roughly 1 million of the 1.25-million-acre Black Hills National Forest. Trees have come and gone through the centuries due to wildfires, insect infestations, diseases and men with sharp objects. But there are some long-term survivors. One location near Mount Rushmore has trees known to be more than 600 years old. Another mountaintop near Hill City features trees at least 750 years old. Forest service officials keep their exact locations secret in order to help safeguard what are easily the oldest trees in South Dakota.

Nathan Powell



The Oklahoma City Maple

Mary Mumford was troubled by the 1995 bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. She thought more should be done to memorialize the dead, especially the young victims who were in a daycare center on the second floor. So she approached the city of Mitchell's parks and recreation department about planting a tree in Hitchcock Park.

"She was in the park quite a bit. She liked to admire the trees," recalls Randy Ahrendt, who served as Mitchell's parks and rec director for 20 years before retiring 10 years ago. "There are a lot of mature trees in Hitchcock Park, which is the oldest park in town, and really the flagship park. She came to me and said she would like to do that. She was a very caring person. So I helped her pick out the tree and we had a little ceremony."

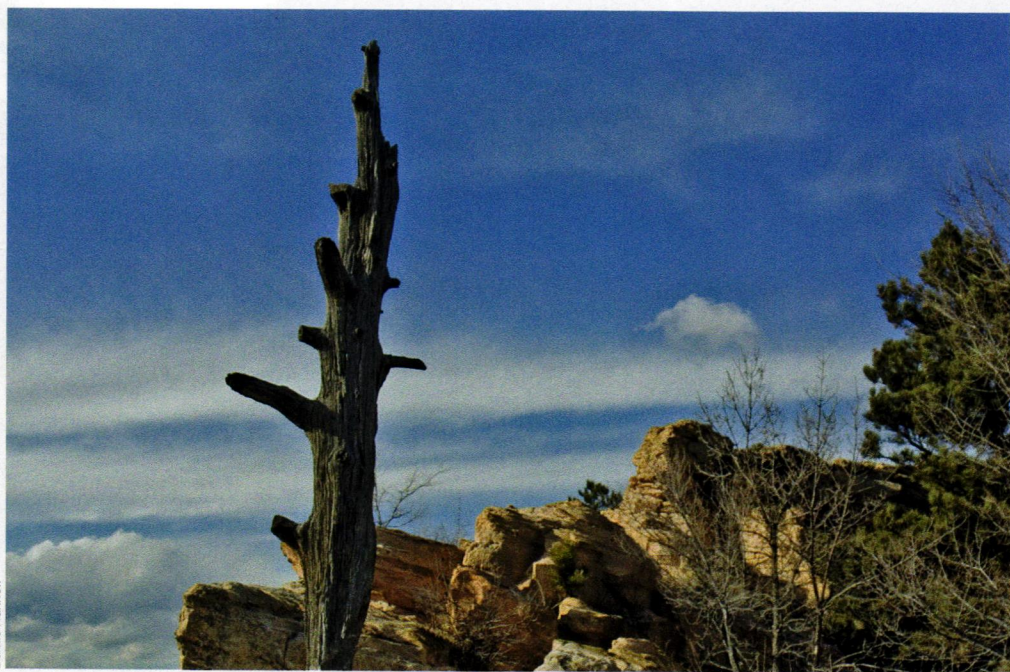
Mumford's memorial maple grows in the northwest corner of the park near the intersection of East Hanson Avenue and South Gamble Street. A plaque reads, "Whispering in the wind / such innocence / in memory of all the / victims and little angels / of the Oklahoma bombing / April 19, 1995."

The Hanging Tree

A haggard-looking stump on a hillside in Rapid City could be the remains of a stately pine tree where three men, one of whom was likely innocent, were hanged for stealing horses.

The stump stands below Dinosaur Park along Skyline Drive, a popular family destination that features seven green and white concrete dinosaurs placed there in 1936. But decades earlier the spot was known as Hangman's Hill, and it's where Louis "Red" Curry, A.J. "Doc" Allen and James "Kid" Hall were executed on June 21, 1877.

There is little doubt that Curry and Allen were guilty. Both had criminal pasts and admitted to the theft. But all contemporary accounts — including pleas from Curry and Allen — suggest that Hall was simply passing through and had accepted an invitation to camp with the men for the night. When a mob bent on frontier justice encountered the trio, they wasted little time finding facts. The horse thieves and Hall were hanged in the



Bernie Hunhoff

middle of the night from a pine tree, which is rumored to have weathered away to the stump that remains today.

In a grisly postscript, the men who collected the bodies the following morning discovered that the lynchers

had been careless in tying the nooses and in judging the length of rope needed to properly carry out the execution. Instead of falling and breaking their necks, the men slowly strangled to death, their feet barely scraping the earth.

ROOTED

Two trees — a spruce and a white oak — were planted decades ago in Sioux Falls' McKennan Park as living memorials to war veterans.



Long Hollow's Whispering Pines

Can trees tell tragic tales? They might in Long Hollow, a notorious high spot west of Sisseton along Highway 10 known for fierce and unpredictable winter blizzards that strand and even kill unsuspecting travelers.

A stand of pine trees lies 2 miles north of a historical marker on Highway 10 that remembers Clarence and Joseph Grey, two Dakota brothers who died in November of 1958 when a snowstorm struck as they were trapping along the Coteau des Prairies.

The Greys had grown up on Grey Lake and were considered expert outdoorsmen, just as their Dakota ancestors had been. But they were unable to escape the unrelenting wind, bitter cold and driving snow of the early winter blizzard. Their bodies were found buried beneath snowdrifts among the evergreens in the spring of 1959. Dakota legend says that when the wind blows through the pines, the hunters can be heard singing hymns in the Dakota language.

McKenna War Memorials

McKenna Park is Sioux Falls' oldest park and is steeped in patriotism. It has featured a replica of the Statue of Liberty since 1943. The first was a wooden carving that had belonged to Sioux Falls pioneer Charles Sells. He said it had been carved as a model by Frederic Bartholdi, sculptor of the statue that stands in New York Harbor. It was eventually removed due to vandalism and replaced with a bronze version in 2002.

The Pillars of the Nation are constructed with rocks from each of the lower 48 states. They were built in 1941 as a sign of unity as the country hurtled toward a possible entry into World War II.

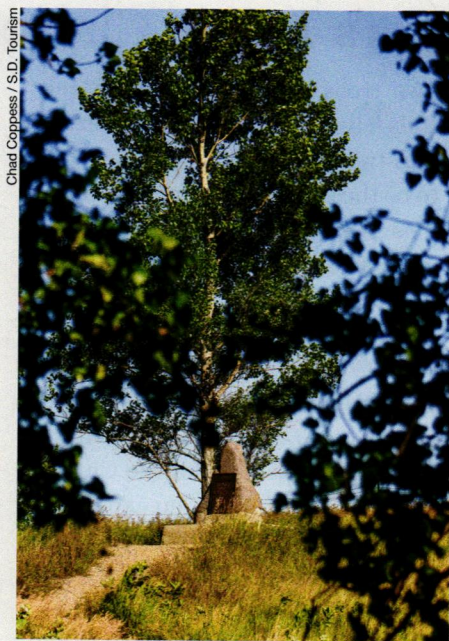
Two trees found near the Statue of Liberty replica were also planted in honor of soldiers who served the country during war time. A large spruce known locally as the Civil War Tree was planted in the 1920s by the Women's Auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic. Nearby, a white oak memorializes the men who fought in World War I. "I've always thought it was interesting because the writing on the plaque says it's dedicated to the soldiers of the great world war, but it doesn't say which one," says Larry Weires, the city's former park development specialist. "This was planted before World War II, and no one thought there would ever be another war."

Pa's Cottonwoods

In *By the Shores of Silver Lake*, Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote about the day her family arrived in Kingsbury County. "A thin silvery line at the very edge of the sky was Silver Lake, and little glimmers south of it were the Twin Lakes, Henry and Thompson. A wee dark blob between them was the Lone Tree. Pa said it was a big cottonwood, the only tree to be seen between the Big Sioux River and the Jim..."

"We'll get some seeds from it to plant on our homestead," Wilder recalled her father saying. Tessa Flak, executive director of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society in De Smet, says it's unclear whether Charles Ingalls actually collected seeds from that tree, but in the spring of 1880 — after filing a claim on 160 acres southeast of De Smet — he planted five cottonwoods in honor of his wife, Caroline, and daughters Mary, Laura, Carrie and Grace.

Nearly 140 years later, Pa's Cottonwoods measure from 60 to 68 feet tall and between 38 and 58 inches in diameter. They stand at the corner of 208th Street and Homestead Lane on 1 acre of the original homestead still owned by Wilder society.



Chad Coppess / S.D. Tourism

ROOTED

Fort Pierre's Riverboat Tree

The late 19th century was the golden era of steamboat traffic along the Missouri River. Photos from the era show steamers plying the water, docked along the shoreline and, in some cases, tied to trees.

Curt Mortenson, a retired lawyer living in Fort Pierre, says he knows of one such photo from the 1880s. The photographed tree is a huge cottonwood that still stands near his home along Frontier Road north of Fort Pierre.

John Mitchell



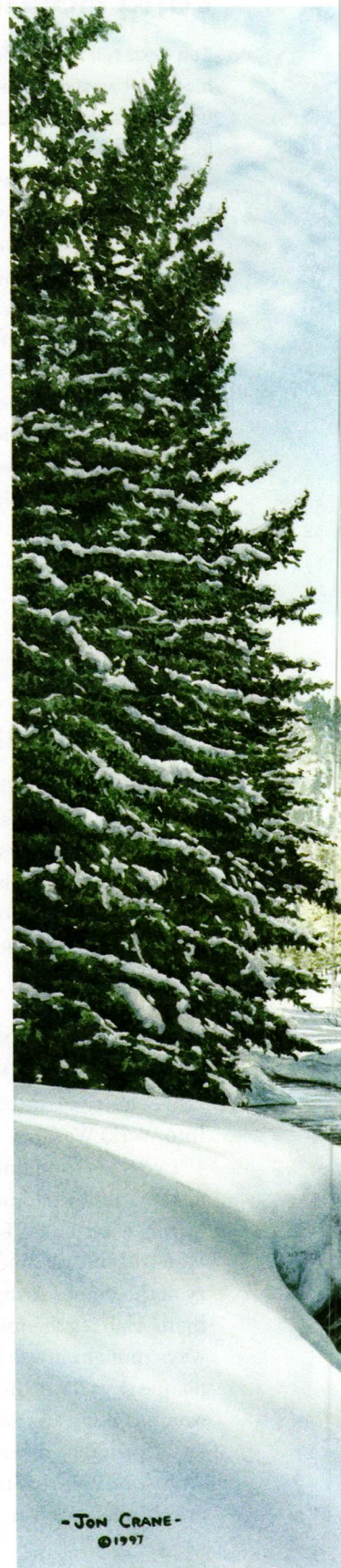
Ike's Tree at Cheyenne Crossing

Two trees harvested in the Black Hills have served as national Christmas trees, and a third was selected to be the official U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree (see sidebar). A descendant of the very first tree to go from South Dakota to Washington, D.C., still stands in Spearfish Canyon.

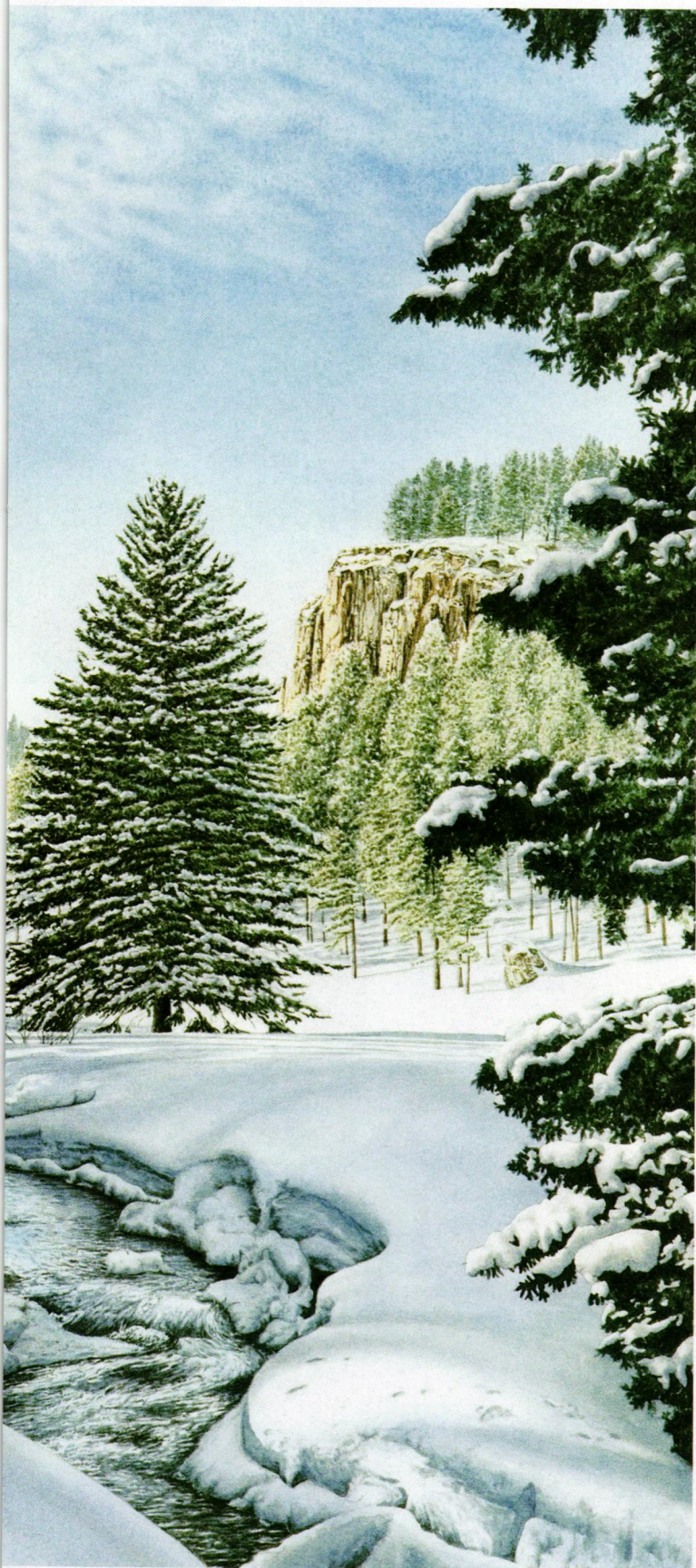
In 1955, crews felled a 65-foot Black Hills Spruce near Rochford that became the National Community Christmas Tree for the Christmas Pageant of Peace, an expanded holiday celebration that began with President Dwight Eisenhower's administration. Boy Scout leader Mike Kelley and his son, a member of his

dad's troop, participated in the cutting ceremony and snipped a sapling from the tree before it was loaded onto a railcar for the long journey east. They planted it in a corner of their yard, where it has since grown into a Christmas tree-worthy spruce of its own.

David Flicek and his wife, June Nusz, are the current owners of the Kelley home. Their property is along Hanna Road, just off Highway 85 about a quarter of a mile past Cheyenne Crossing. A rock wall surrounds the yard and a small plaque briefly describes the tree, appropriately named Ike.



-JON CRANE-
©1997



Our Christmas Trees

Presidents since Calvin Coolidge in 1923 have celebrated the holidays with a National Christmas Tree.

South Dakota State Forester Harry Woodward and Assistant State Forester George Kelley found 1955's national tree — a 65-foot-tall Black Hills Spruce — on land owned by Asa and Rose Nall near Rochford. Asa had grown up on the Nall homestead and was a miner at the Homestake Mine in Lead. Rose ran a bakery in Lead with her sister, Mame. They specialized in pasties, a popular meal option for Homestake miners who could hold the crusts with their grimy hands and then throw them away after eating the delicious meat and vegetable filling.

The tree was placed on the White House Ellipse at the end of the Pathway of Peace, which featured decorated trees representing all 48 states, the District of Columbia and America's territories. President Dwight Eisenhower lit the tree remotely from his home in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, using a golden telegraph key.

Foresters also found the 1970 National Christmas Tree in the Black Hills — a 78-foot-tall Black Hills Spruce cut west of Nemo. Perhaps foreshadowing the trouble to come for President Richard Nixon, the tree experienced myriad difficulties on its trip to Washington. The train carrying it derailed twice while crossing Nebraska. Once it finally arrived and was erected, strong winds blew it over, requiring replacement branches to fill in gaps where boughs had been damaged.

The lighting ceremony took place in a cold, steady rain on Dec. 16, 1970. Around 5,000 blue and green bulbs, along with 750 to 900 yellow bulbs, illuminated the spruce. But a few days later, the bulbs on the lower half of the tree exploded. A liquid fireproofing spray that had been applied to the sockets led to short circuits in the light strings.

Less controversy and more fanfare followed the 1997 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. The 63-foot spruce was harvested in Little Spearfish Canyon in the midst of a blizzard on Nov. 14, 1997. Fifteen South Dakota communities held activities to commemorate the tree's journey. When it was formally lit on the west lawn of the Capitol on Dec. 10, 1997, it featured more than 4,000 ornaments made by South Dakotans. The ceremony also featured a performance by the Capitol City Children's Chorus from Pierre.

Hill City artist Jon Crane painted the 1997 tree.

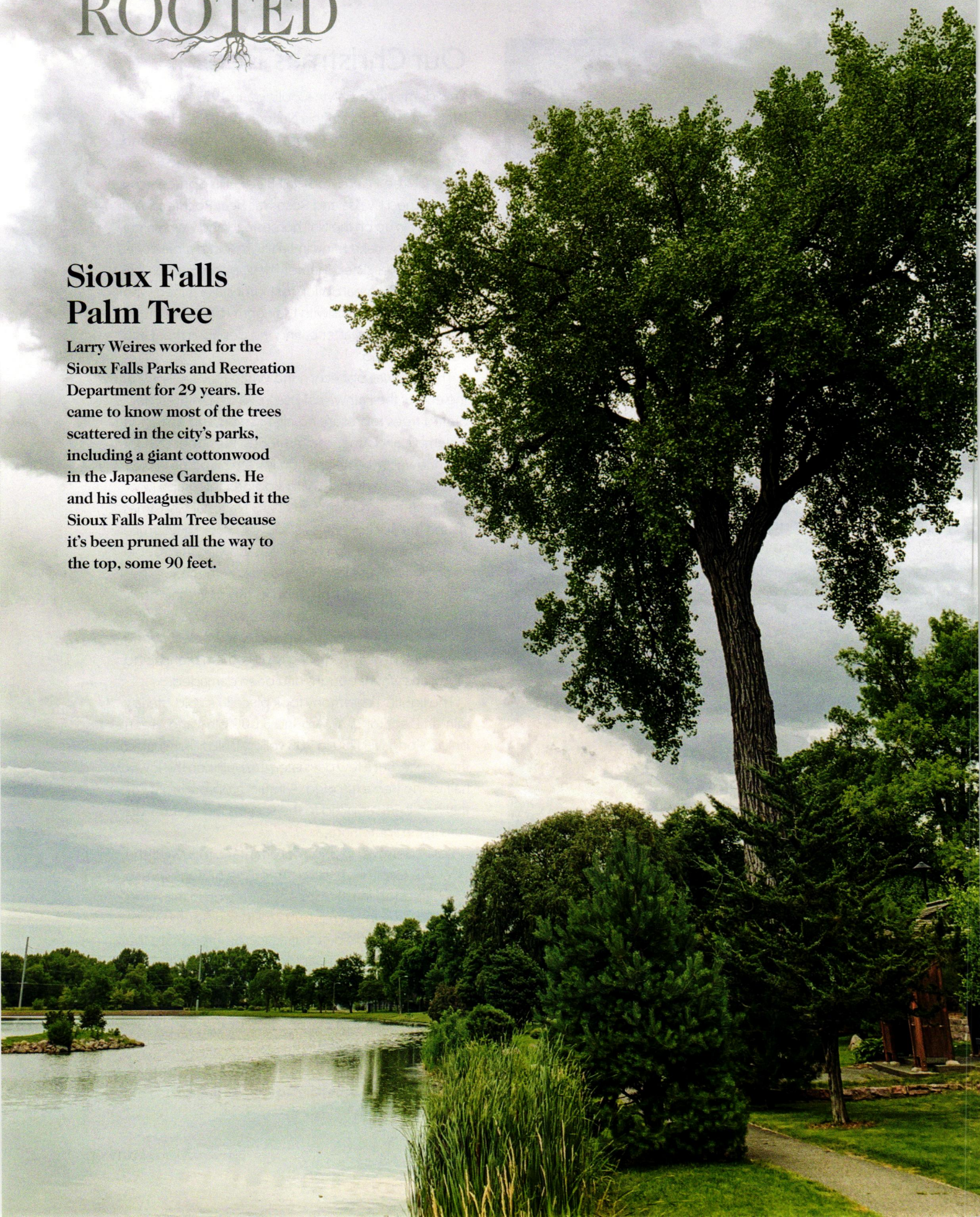
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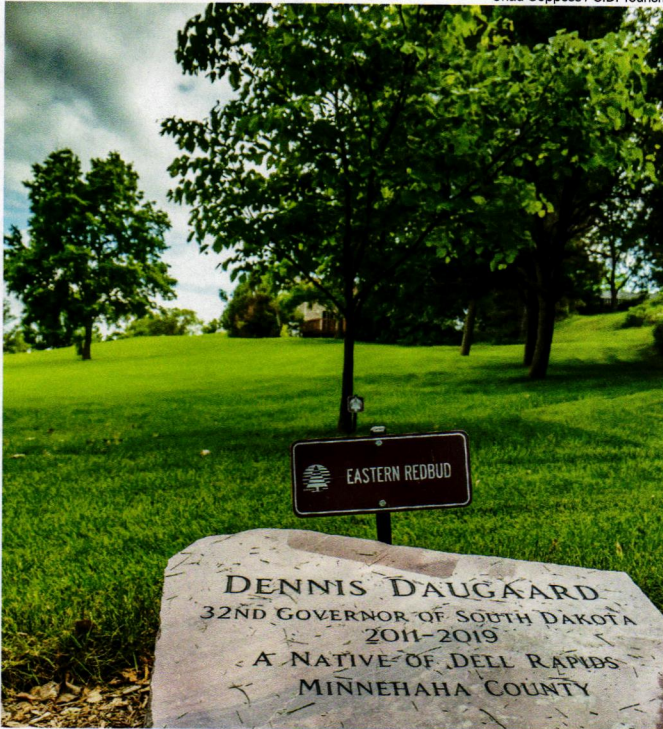
A graphic of tree roots extending from the word 'ROOTED'.

Katie Hunhoff

Sioux Falls Palm Tree

Larry Weires worked for the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department for 29 years. He came to know most of the trees scattered in the city's parks, including a giant cottonwood in the Japanese Gardens. He and his colleagues dubbed it the Sioux Falls Palm Tree because it's been pruned all the way to the top, some 90 feet.





Governors Grove

South Dakota's governors have a lot to think about when they assume office: legislative priorities, cabinet appointees, budgets ... and trees.

Among the first decisions newly elected governors make is which species they want to add to Governors Grove, a collection of 31 trees (soon to be 32 with the addition of Gov. Kristi Noem's American Bur Oak) that stand in Hilger's Gulch, north of the Capitol building.

Gov. George T. Mickelson started the grove in the 1940s northeast of the Capitol. When construction began on the Highway Transportation Building (today the Becker-Hansen Building) in 1967, a group of arborists relocated the trees to a hillside on the western edge of Hilger's Gulch.

Elms and spruces have been popular choices, but Gov. Dennis Daugaard chose an Eastern Redbud, a tree most commonly found between the Appalachian Mountains and eastern Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. "When I was working at the Children's Home Society, I drove by a tree every spring that was just striking, and I always thought it was a crab apple because it flowers early in spring," Daugaard says. "I found out later that it was an Eastern Redbud. It has a purplish bud and looks like crab apple bloom, but it's a deeper hue. We are on the very western fringe of where it can survive, but it's protected by other trees and should do well."

During Daugaard's administration (2011-2019), he also oversaw the planting of more than 500 trees around the Capitol. About 100 of them replaced trees that were damaged in a storm and the rest were additions. "I've always appreciated the difference trees make in a neighborhood," he says.

Trees Gone By ...

The Bead Tree

By Geraldine Evans

My grandfather homesteaded 4 miles west of Hermosa in 1883. The Sioux and the Utes had fought on this land in 1880, and in one battle an Indian chief was killed. His family laid him on a board in a small, low spreading oak tree about half a mile south of where my grandfather's log cabin eventually stood. He was dressed in all his finery for the Great Spirit.

My Uncle Emil was about 12 years old when he explored that tree and discovered the remains of the buffalo robe and colorful beads scattered all around. From then on, it was a joy for the children in our family to hunt for beads.

My introduction came when I was a child in the 1920s and 1930s. When I attended the little log school a half mile from the tree, we made it the spring skip day to spend an afternoon at the Bead Tree. We knelt or laid with our eyes close to the ground, looking for beads no more than an eighth of an inch in size. Every flick of soil and pine needles might unearth a precious white or blue dot. Once, a distant cousin from Illinois lifted a rock and found 12. He thought finding beads was no big deal, but I have looked for hours and never found more than one at a time.

I went away to college and lost track of the Bead Tree. In 1945, I married an engineer who decided he wanted to operate our share of the ranch east of the Hills, so we made our way back from the East Coast. One day in the 1960s, I drove up the road where the Bead Tree stood. I came around the corner to discover it was gone, sliced away when the road was blacktopped.

I now show guests where the Bead Tree stood, and the precious 12 beads that I still have.

Geraldine Evans and her husband, Irv, raised Herefords on their ranch near Hermosa. Evans, 96, now lives in Brighton, Colorado.

ROOTED

Henry's Survivor

Fires and storms have battered the town of Henry, but through them all a cottonwood planted nearly 140 years ago has survived and today towers over the Codington County community of 260 people.

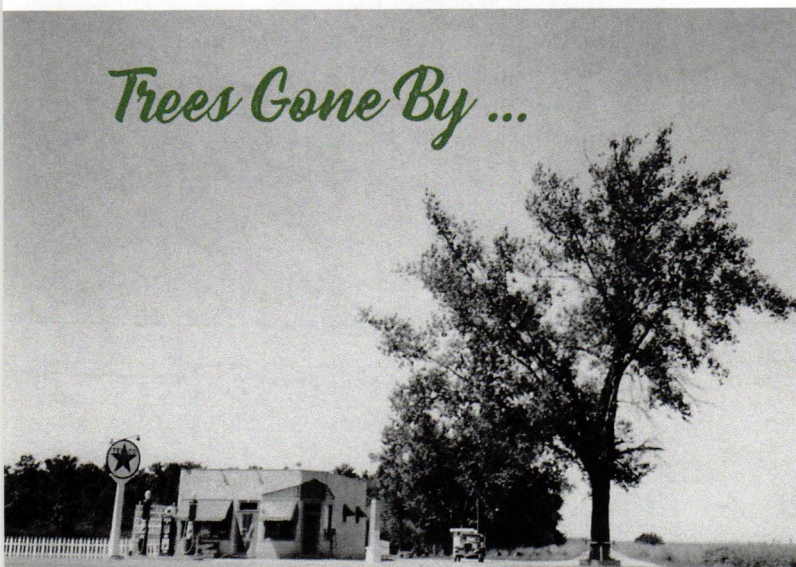
The tree was planted to coincide with the town's founding in 1882. In 1971 a tornado claimed about 10 feet off its top, and another windstorm damaged it in 1984. It also withstood a fire that destroyed the nearby Big Tree Cafe and Bar.

Henry's cottonwood stands 85 feet tall on the west side of Main Street.



The Gurney Elm stands near Ben Brunick's carpentry shop in downtown Yankton.

Trees Gone By ...



Chuck Cecil

Lone Tree: Lifesaving Landmark

George and Julia Cameron homesteaded 4 miles west of Egan in Moody County in 1880. Dakota Territory boasted far fewer trees than their previous homes in Minnesota and Vermont, and Julia longed to see and hear the springtime songs of birds nestled snugly in a tree's branches.

In the spring of 1881, the Camerons and their daughters, Mary and Nora, collected a cottonwood seedling from a nearby grove and planted it in a hole left by an original survey stake. The cottonwood became known as the Lone Tree, and served as one of the region's most recognized and important landmarks.

Since the Camerons had planted it in the exact corner of a section, farmers used it as a reference point to measure



Bernie Hunhoff

The Gurney Elm

A stately Siberian elm tree stands near the corner of Second and Capital in downtown Yankton and serves as a reminder of the heyday of the Gurney Seed and Nursery Company.

D.B. Gurney came to Yankton in 1892 to launch an offshoot of his father's Hesperian Nurseries. His focus was selling model orchards to farmers, but the business quickly grew to provide flower and vegetable seeds and eventually came to include radio station WNAX and a series of "fair price" gas stations that competed with oil conglomerates.

Gurney also developed a relationship with Niels Hansen, the world-traveling horticulturalist from South Dakota State College in Brookings. When Hansen brought Siberian elms to America, Gurney planted one outside his headquarters to prove they would grow here. Other such elms have not been so lucky, but the Gurney elm survives.

property lines. It also helped save the lives of rural school teacher Emma Clancy and 12 students who became lost during a blizzard. As they struggled to find shelter, they caught sight of the Lone Tree amidst the driving snow and knew it marked the Cameron homestead.

As roads became established through eastern South Dakota, travelers and locals used the Lone Tree to give directions. Sadly, progress in transportation led to the Lone Tree's demise. In 1931, roadbuilders recommended its removal to make way for the paving of Highway 34. Local residents fought to save their landmark, and eventually lanes of the new road were routed so that the Lone Tree stood in the center of the highway near the junction of South Dakota Highway 34 and old U.S. Highway 77.

Eventually, the heavy concrete of the road prevented adequate water from reaching its roots. The Lone Tree died and was cut down in 1956. It was unceremoniously hauled to the dump, but four years later was reclaimed and placed in a barn on the Arthur Hutton farm.

A number of slabs from the trunk were cut and distributed as mementoes; one piece measuring about 4 inches thick remains in the collection of the Moody County Museum in Flandreau, says Dale A. Johnson, president of the Moody County Historical Society. Cuttings were also said to have been delivered to the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre, but Katy Schmidt, the curator of collections, says a search returns no results. Today, a historical marker indicates where the Lone Tree once stood.

Story by LAURA JOHNSON ANDREWS
Photos by BERNIE HUNHOFF

Raclette: A Toasty Alpine Delicacy

Sonja Hoffmann of Raclette Corner brings the cheesy taste sensation to Sioux Falls

PERHAPS YOU'VE SEEN the Facebook videos in which half-wheels of creamy cheese are heated until the top layer is melted, bubbly and slightly browned, then scraped off onto a waiting dish of food. That gooey cascade of cheese is a Swiss treat called raclette, and a Sioux Falls woman named Sonja Hoffmann promotes its deliciousness as part of her online business, Raclette Corner.

The daughter of a Swiss mother, Hoffmann grew up in Germany, but her husband Marc's career as a software consultant brought their family to Sioux Falls in 1998. She started selling European cookware online a few years later. "I decided that as much as I love my children, I needed something a little bit extra," she says. Hoffmann was the first U.S. distributor for raclette grills, tabletop cheese melters that are common in Swiss, French and German households but were almost unheard of in America. Gradually, her cheesy

product lines garnered more attention. In 2007, she started RacletteCorner.com, and by 2018, decided it was time to shutter the original cookware site. "I just decided to focus on raclette because it's fun," she says.

The word raclette comes from the French *racler*, "to scrape," pointing to the cheese's origins in the French-speaking Valais region of Switzerland, where the dish was created due to nomadic necessity. For thousands of years, Alpine herds- men have driven livestock from their winter valley homes to high-altitude summer pastures in a seasonal migration called transhumance. When herds went into the mountains, the herds- men carried hearty peasant provisions with good keeping qualities, like cheese and potatoes. Add in a fire, and sooner or later, somebody was going to put the three elements together, toasting the cheese over the flames and sliding it onto the boiled potatoes. Racletting references have been



Marc and Sonja Hoffmann of Sioux Falls serve up a traditional Swiss delicacy called raclette as part of Sonja's online business, Raclette Corner.

TRADITIONAL RACLETTE

PREP: Raclette or other semi-hard cheese

New potatoes, boiled

Bread, sliced

Prosciutto or other cured meats, thinly sliced

Cornichons (a small, tart pickle)

Mixed salad greens

Vinaigrette

Salt and pepper

PLATE: Arrange a small handful of new potatoes, a slice or two of bread, prosciutto, a cornichon and mixed greens on a plate. Top greens with vinaigrette. Melt raclette cheese, and scrape it on top of the vegetables. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with black tea, dry white wine or beer.

SWEET RACLETTE SANDWICH

PREP: Raclette or other semi-hard cheese

Ciabatta bread

Pears

Mixed greens

Honey

PLATE: Melt raclette cheese. On top of a piece of ciabatta bread, layer mixed greens and sliced pears. Scrape melted raclette cheese on top, drizzle with honey and serve.




found in medieval manuscripts dating back to the 13th century.

Raclette is a semi-hard cows' milk cheese that has been washed in brine, giving it an edible rind and a somewhat powerful aroma. "It doesn't necessarily taste that good when you eat it raw," Hoffmann says, but melting helps tame the cheese's flavor. "It loses that extreme taste, and it's just nice and creamy." Traditionally, the cheese tops a plate of new potatoes, cornichons and salad, but the Hoffmanns enjoy racletteing a diverse array of foods, including hamburgers, pork chops, red peppers, mushrooms, pears and shrimp. After all, what doesn't taste better with a little melted cheese on top?

In addition to online sales, Hoffmann offers raclette melter rentals and caters small raclette parties in the Sioux Falls area. Last year, she brought the culinary experience to Sioux Falls Germanfest and a few other special events. And while it's some-



times difficult to get Midwesterners to try something new, once they have that first taste, they tend to want more, as Hoffmann discovered while serving ham and raclette cheese sandwiches at the Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show. “We had one lady who came back, and she was yelling, ‘I have to have a second one of these. This is the best food I ever had!’” Hoffmann remembers.

Watch for Raclette Corner at a handful of Sioux Falls events in 2019, including Germanfest, the 605 Made Night Market and Fernson Fest. 

Editor’s Note: If you don’t want to spring for a raclette grill or melter, use the broiler of your oven. Exercise caution while melting — you want to avoid heating the cheese so much that the oil separates.

25 Years of Germanic Cheer

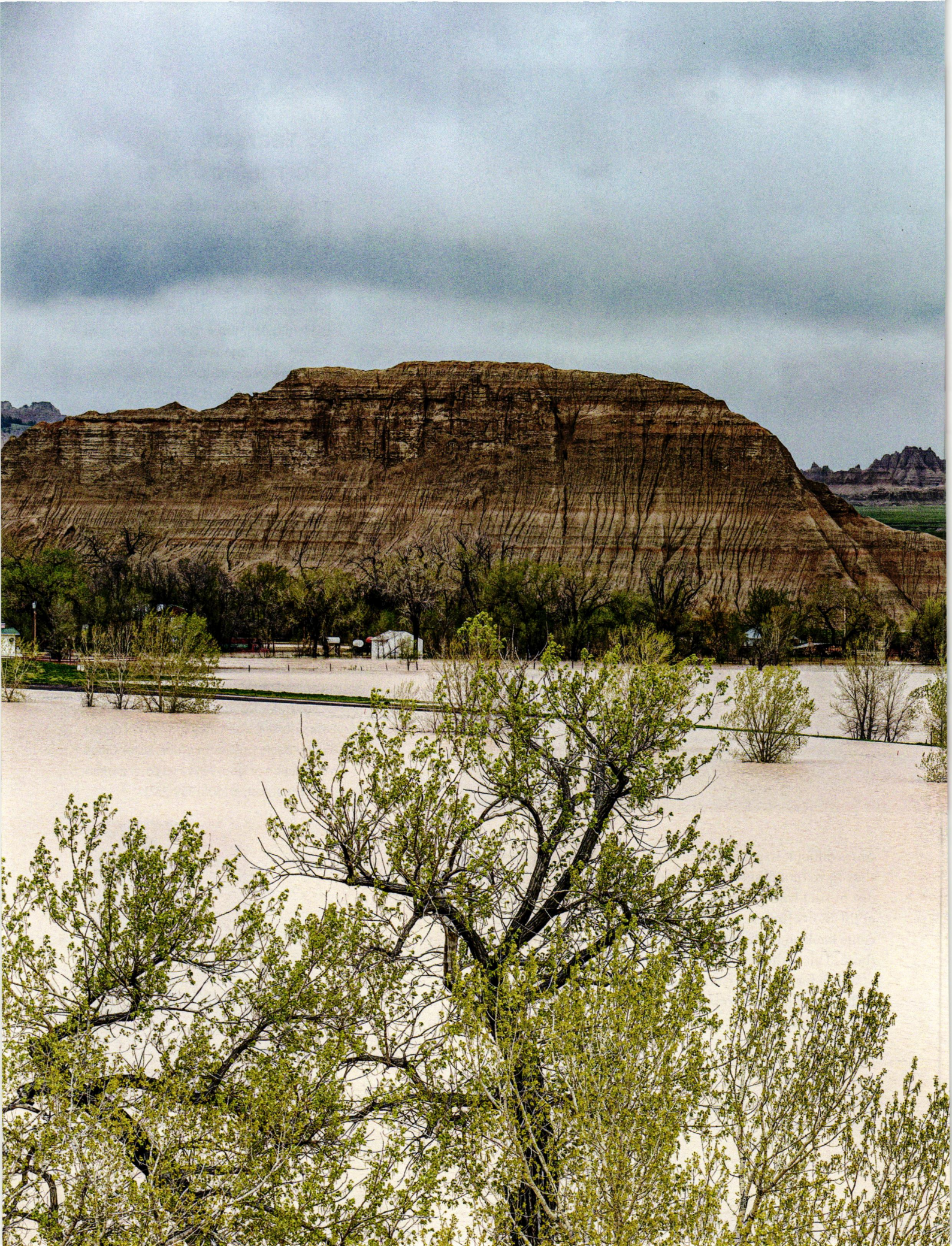
IN 1990, SIOUX FALLS became the first U.S. town to have a sister city in the former East Germany when it partnered with Potsdam, the capital of the German state of Brandenburg. Four years later, the first Germanfest was held. The brainchild of Harold Schmidt, a German teacher at Lincoln High School, the earliest Germanfests were cramped affairs on Phillips Avenue. The event now draws thousands.

This year’s Germanfest, which will be held Sept. 7 at Fawick Park, features the crowd-pleasing dachshund races, which are a fundraiser for Dakota Dachshund Rescue, Germanic foods, music by Brian Brueggen and the Mississippi Valley Dutchmen and the Jim Kuchera Band, kids’ activities and the new stein-holding contest. In a traditional Bavarian feat of strength, contestants are required to hold a beer-filled stein for as long as possible without dropping or spilling the glass or its contents. The last person holding an unspilled mug is the winner.

For more information on Germanfest, visit siouxfallssistercities.com/event or text Ginny Beck, president of the Sister Cities Association of Sioux Falls and co-chairman of Germanfest, at (605) 359-2371.



Red Penguin Photography

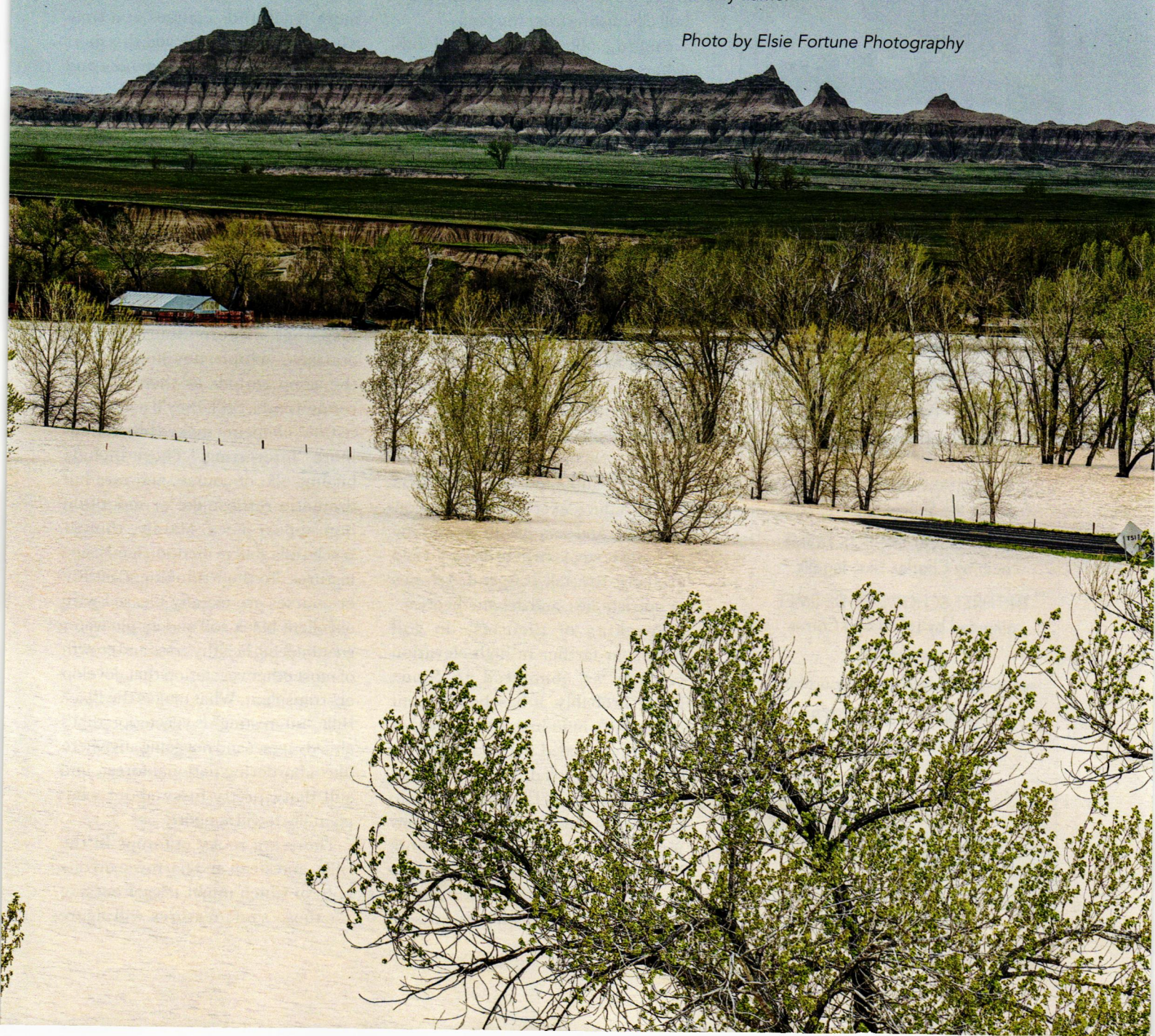


THE BIG PICTURE

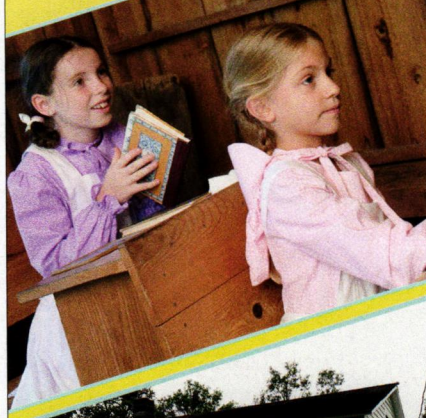
Badlands Flood

When it rains it often floods in South Dakota's semi-arid Badlands. That happened again in May when heavy rains washed through the White River Valley, threatening the Carlbom ranch (pictured) southeast of Interior, and forcing the evacuation of a popular campground. Such downpours wash sediment and volcanic ash from the Badlands into the river, giving it the milky appearance that led to its very name.

Photo by Elsie Fortune Photography



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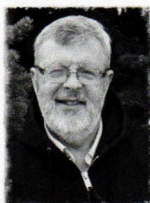
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MOUNTAIN AIRINGS

By Paul Higbee

BIRDIES, BANANAS & ELK

RAPID CITY'S Dave Noble describes autumn golf in the Black Hills beautifully. Like the day several years ago at Lead Country Club, 6,200 feet above sea level, when, "there was a fall chill in the air and a bull elk bugling from the pines."

Bugling elk have spooked fall golfers at Lead, but the great animals don't want to disrupt human sport. Their autumn instincts are geared to attracting mates, and they're generally cooperative about letting people play through their mating grounds.

Lead's golf course, built in 1922, was among the first in the Black Hills. Course development typically took weeks, not years, and cost hundreds of dollars, not millions. Sheep helped cut the grass. In similar fashion, courses took form at Custer, Hot Springs and Spearfish. Communities supported golf in the 1920s partly because it promoted physical exercise over bar lounging. No one could have predicted that within a few years golf carts would reduce exercise benefits considerably. And bars eventually became golf course staples where players could exchange tips, tell exaggerated stories or outright lies, and debate theories.

Speaking of theories, do golf balls soar farther in high-elevation settings as compared to Sioux Falls? Probably. If baseballs fly out of Denver's mile-high Coors Field at rates that exceed flatland stadiums, why wouldn't golf drives at mile-high-plus Lead Country Club generate more yardage? But the topic is a little touchy for some golfers. Who wants to work hard perfecting his or her swing, only to give thin air some of the credit for any improvement? Who wants to

make a clean drive at Lead that bounces onto the green only to hear a buddy ask, "But do you think you could do that in Sioux Falls?"

A post-Dust Bowl and post-World War II golf boom brought about more Black Hills courses at a time when everyone who loved the sport could contribute to development and upkeep. Work days were part of course calendars and caddies carried buckets for picking rocks off the fairways.

In this century, developers have raised big dollars and hired world-class architects to develop courses. Depending on how you define the Black Hills region, there are about 20 courses worthy of any golfer's attention.

I've seldom heard Black Hills golfers disparage eastern South Dakota courses, which developed over the same periods as their western counterparts. Still, they'll assert that natural elements make Hills venues more "interesting." Those include bugling elk, of course, and rare but dramatic rattlesnake or mountain lion appearances. Mainly, though, Black Hills golfers mention landscape features. To their thinking, East River courses are usually blessed with excellent black soil and ample water, guaranteeing healthy grass and growth of most other vegetation that developers transplant. What makes the Black Hills "interesting" is vegetation that's already intact and not going anywhere, like a bordering national forest, and soil that's pretty fussy about what plant life it will support.

There are rocky outcrops in the Hills, and steep and narrow canyons, both of which might trigger cussing. Yet those same features will figure

fondly when golfers tell stories after their round.


"That's one thing about golf," says Noble, who's been a PGA golf pro, coach and *Rapid City Journal* columnist covering the sport. "You meet good people who aren't Ben Hogan or Tiger Woods, but they're experts at spinning the baloney."

Something that's not baloney is the notion of Black Hills "banana belt" golf in December, January and February. The banana belt is discussed a lot in the fall because that's when golfers in most northern states (including eastern South Dakota) are packing away their clubs for several months. Black Hills golfers tend to keep theirs handy, in front closets or car trunks, waiting for the handful of dry, shirtsleeve days that draw them to favorite local courses in mid-winter.

"I've played year-round here," Noble says. "Of course, if I plan ahead to play a certain date in January or February, I might get fooled."

Responding to banana belt golf days is a great exercise in spontaneity, not just for Black Hills golfers but any South Dakotan. The term banana belt, as applied to the Black Hills, originated with Sioux Falls weather broadcasters in the 1960s. They noticed extreme temperature variances west and east across South Dakota on some winter days. By that era, good highways meant East River golfers could throw their clubs into their cars and speed west to the banana belt before conditions changed.

Some of South Dakota's very best golfers, however, migrate south for a few months beginning in the fall. They're not willing to limit their weekly rounds to whatever the banana belt might grant. With those golfers out of the way, fair to middling golfers might find themselves the best on the course on certain banana belt days.

That's good. Golf is, after all, mostly about competition. 

Paul Higbee is a contributing editor for South Dakota Magazine. He lives in Spearfish with his wife, Janet.



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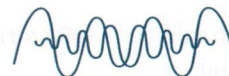
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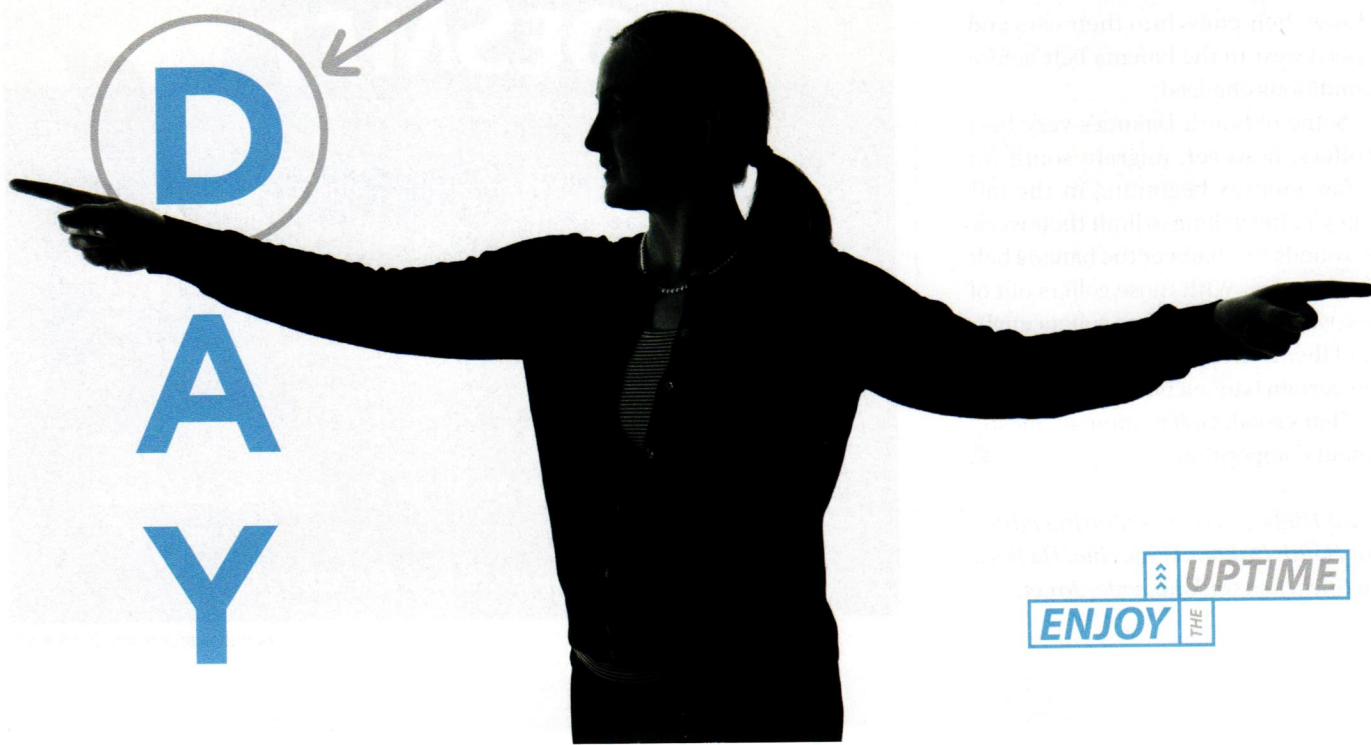
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ENJOY THE

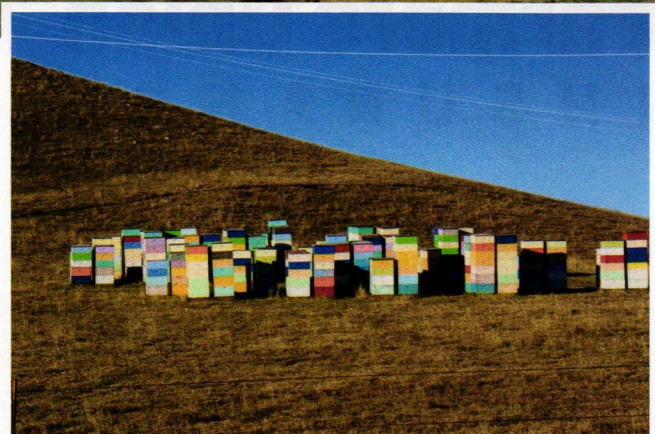
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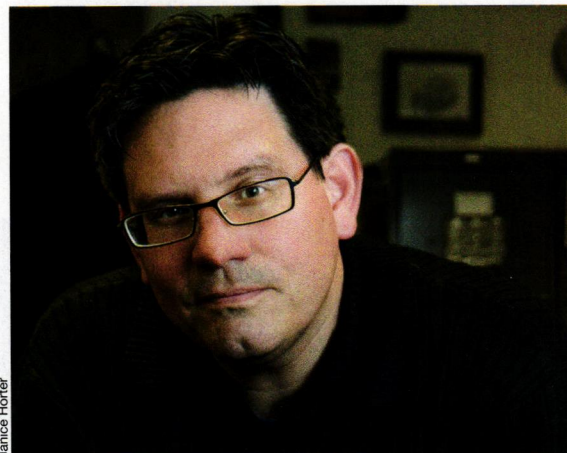
Beehives are often painted white, but it's not because the bees prefer it. Pale colors reflect light and heat, helping keep bees cool in hot weather. A Custer County beekeeper got colorful with his colonies near Fairburn, inspiring Artists of the Black Hills member Kevin Haller's painting *Prairie Beehives* (Western South Dakota) (above) and this photo by Gary Conradi of Sioux Falls (inset).



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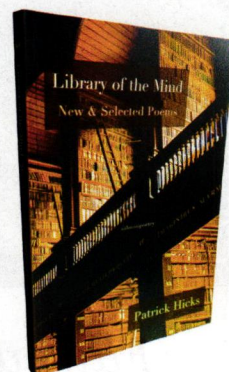
POETRY ON THE AIR

Since the beginning of 2019, listeners to Lori Walsh's *In the Moment* radio program have enjoyed a poetic interlude every week, thanks to Augustana University professor and Writer-in-Residence Patrick Hicks. Hicks mulled over the idea of a radio show for several years, but he didn't know how to make it happen on a technical level until Augustana remodeled its recording studio and hired Peter J. Folliard, recording producer and former conductor of the United States Air Force Band, as its director of orchestras. "Clearly, he knows one or two things about sound," Hicks says.

The result is *Poetry from Studio 47*, a 5-minute program featuring works by familiar names like Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, Leo Dangel and South Dakota's new poet laureate, Christine Stewart, as well as wordsmiths from farther afield. With each week's selection, Hicks hopes to surprise his listeners and show them a new view of the Midwest or the world. "If someone pulls out their smartphone and says to a friend, 'You've got to hear this poem,' then I think I'm doing my job properly," he says.

Hicks, an award-winning poet and author, recently published *Library of the Mind: New and Selected Poems*. "That's a watershed moment in any writer's life — to have your 'greatest hits' in a single book," he says.

Watch for Hicks at the 2019 South Dakota Festival of Books, October 3-6 in Deadwood. *Poetry from Studio 47* airs Fridays on SDPB Radio during the first hour of *In the Moment* (11 a.m. Central, 10 a.m. Mountain) and is archived at ps47.org.



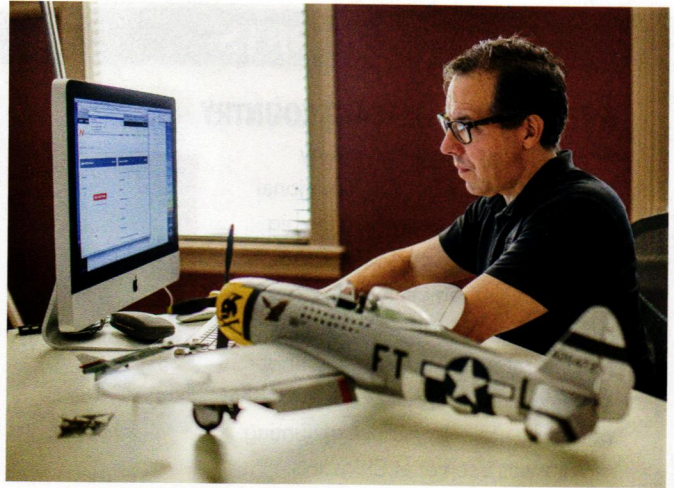
RECORDING WISDOM

When John Mollison met World War II veteran Bud Anderson from California, the two made a deal: Mollison would draw the airplane Anderson flew during the war in exchange for an interview. The agreement led Mollison to his work today, recording the stories of fighter pilots and aircrew who served in World War II and Vietnam.

Mollison, a writer, artist and filmmaker from Sioux Falls, tells these stories on his blog, *Stories and Illustrations of Combat Airplanes, Missiles and the People that Flew Them*. He draws the aircraft associated with each particular veteran, and then that vet signs it. His artwork can be found in museums and galleries all over the world.

Interested in history since age 3, Mollison's belief in the importance of history education drives his work. "I wanted to learn more about their experience of life from their aged vantage point," Mollison says. "We need to celebrate age. We need to celebrate wisdom. We need to understand what lessons we can learn ... and sometimes combat and warfare really represent the human experience compressed."

Mollison also produces a television show called *Old Guys and Their Airplanes*, which is distributed to PBS stations nationally and audiences in over 40 countries. The artist and his team are currently working on a film about World

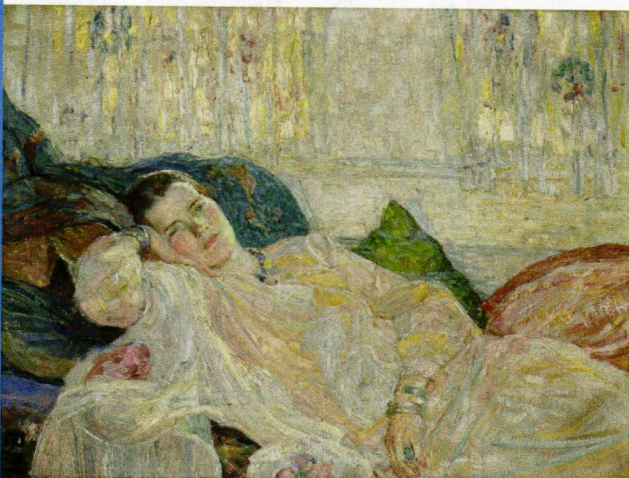


John Mollison of Sioux Falls preserves World War II and Vietnam veterans' stories through words, art and film.

War II vet Steve Pisanos, who traveled from Greece as a navy merchant seaman but jumped ship near Baltimore. Pisanos worked as an illegal immigrant until he earned enough money to follow his dream of becoming a pilot in the United States Air Force. *The Mettle Behind the Merit: The Steve Pisanos Story*, had its first trailer released in July, and can be found on Vimeo. The film will be released to the public on or around Veterans Day.

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Harvey Dunn, *May Street*, oil on canvas, 1922

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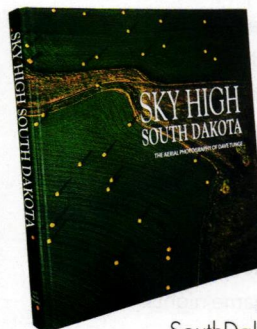
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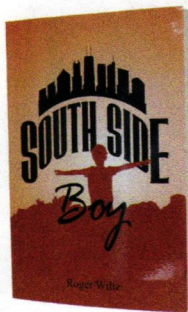
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SD SPORTS

A CITY BOY IN PHEASANT COUNTRY

Whether you're logging highway miles or merely calculating emotional distance, it's a long way from the big city of Chicago to small-town South Dakota. In his memoir, *South Side Boy*, longtime South Dakota educator, coach, administrator and outdoor columnist Roger Wiltz revisits that journey, one that was made easier by his love of hunting.

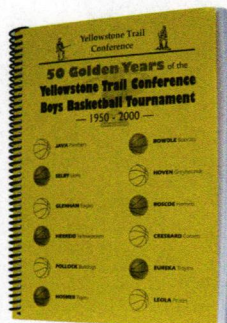
Wiltz was a senior at Chicago's Mendel Catholic High School when his wrestling coach encouraged him to attend South Dakota State College in Brookings in the fall of 1960. "I don't know if I knew where South Dakota was, but I did know there were a lot of pheasants from reading outdoor magazines," he writes. Hunting remained a constant for him — as well as a sign of the changing times — as he taught English or served as principal in Parkston, Burke, Wagner and Tripp-Delmont. During his first job teaching English at Willow Lake, Wiltz remembers the Willow Lake superintendent telling his goose-hunting teachers that he would cover for them if their hobby made them late to work. "We could simply put our shotguns in the school shop," he writes.



LIGHTS OUT IN HOSMER

Driven by a shared love of boys basketball, former Selby Lions player and Ipswich Tigers coach Marv Seyer and Java Panthers fan Lance Fiedler dug through old newspapers, school annuals and tournament programs to compile a year-by-year record of the sport's history in north-central South Dakota. The resulting book, *50 Golden Years of the Yellowstone Trail Conference Boys Basketball Tournament: 1950-2000*, includes photos of each year's winning team, a listing of that team's players, their scores during the season and tournament results, as well as notable facts about each season and postseason.

YTC fans were passionate about the game, as an anecdote from the 1982 season, the year of the Hosmer Tigers' sole championship win, attests. "During the district and regional tournaments the question was often asked, 'Who's turning out the lights in Hosmer?' as it seemed that the whole town moved 60 miles east to the Civic Arena on game nights."

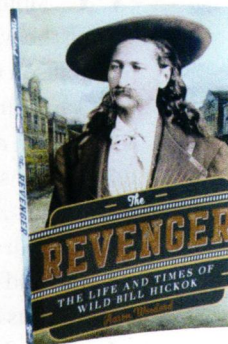


Don't Mess with Wild Bill

The past year has been a big one for James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok. The legendary Western figure has been featured in three new biographies, one by historian and USD Community College for Sioux Falls political science professor Aaron Woodard. In *The Revenger: The Life and Times of Wild Bill Hickok*, Woodard traces Hickok's life from his birth in Illinois in May 1837 to his demise in Deadwood's Number 10 Saloon.

Woodard had long been interested in gunslingers, but even so, he was impressed by Hickok's utter fearlessness.

"Anybody can shoot a target, because targets don't shoot back. He would get in those gunfights and he was just as cool as a cucumber," Woodard says. But the physically imposing Hickok did not always rely on his six-shooters to quell disturbances. At a fair in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1872, Hickok confronted 50 rowdy Texas cowboys who were badgering a band leader to play *Dixie*, the anthem of Confederate America. Hickok, who had served in the Civil War as a Union scout and spy, would have none of it. "He faced them all down," Woodard says.



A SMART, STUBBORN QUADRUPED is the star of a children's book series by Sturgis author Codi Vallery-Mills and illustrator Teri McTighe of Faith. Vallery-Mills was watching her husband ride their big red mule, who was named for the Nebraska Cornhuskers, when she realized the animal's narrative possibilities. In the series' latest installment, *Husker the Mule: Adventure Awaits*, Husker, his young owner, Carter, and a cowgirl named Caty Lou learn about self-confidence as they embark on a back-country camping trip.

GATHERING JUST FOR FUN

Rural people excel at gathering for work and family — ever see a neighborhood branding? — but sometimes they lack opportunities to simply gather. A new program in Lemmon called Placemakers Co-op is changing that.

“We’d been getting together to make things and have fun,” says Judy Larson, who grew up near Meadow before marrying and moving to her husband’s great-grandfather’s homestead. “One night we had 20 adults and a bunch of kids and three dogs crammed into my house making lavender bath bombs.”

Recognizing that neighbors were eager to socialize and learn, Larson and some friends considered starting a “maker space,” a big-city concept of providing shared space. Quickly they learned what Lemmon really needed was an organized effort to harness the area’s creativity and neighborliness.

Nobody doubted there was talent.

Larry Woiwode, an acclaimed poet and novelist, lives north of the border, and Kathleen Norris resided there as she gained prominence as a rural author and thinker. Sculptor John Lopez has a Lemmon studio and Eliza Blue, a popular folk singer, lives on a ranch near Bison. There’s no lack of creativity, says Larson.

Placemakers creates events for people to gather, learn a skill and enjoy fellowship. Topics have included coffee roasting, beer brewing, oil painting and glass etching. The group held a Smoke and Ice Festival to restart Lemmon’s skating pond and a cornhole tournament — but first they gathered to build the boards and make the bags.

“Sometimes there is a cost because we believe in paying artists what they deserve, so class fees might be \$20 or \$30,” Larson says. “If we make any money, we use the surplus for other events.”



Bernie Hunt/hoft

Dawn Johnson, a Napa Valley native who married an Isabel rancher, demonstrated vinaigrette-making at a Placemakers event in Lemmon.

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Story by **MISSY URBANIAK** and **JOAN WINK**

A YEAR AT ATALL

Rural Schools in Ranch Country



IF WE HAVE ANY RATTLESNAKES around the school, Teacher, don't worry, because I can handle them. I've done it before," said Sam, a confident 8-year-old student at the Atall School, an isolated and simple two-room place of learning on the West River prairies of South Dakota.

Atall School stands along a gravel road in Meade County, not far from Union Center. A barbed wire fence borders three sides. Cattle graze in the neighboring pasture, while kids run and play in the schoolyard. The rancher who owns the cattle has three daughters who drive across it each day to attend classes.

Meade County encompasses nearly 3,500 square miles, making it the largest county in South Dakota. While the population exceeds 25,000 people, most residents live on the western edge near the Black Hills. The vast majority of the boot-shaped county is an expanse of West River grasslands, interrupted by ranches, a few tiny communities such as Opal, Elm Springs and Hereford, and five country schools that have become their heartbeat.

Teaching school in an oasis of grass and wild prairie brings challenges for aspiring educators that are not addressed in any university, as Missy Urbaniak quickly learned. "Rural teachers must pull splinters, shovel snow, trap mice, soothe



Atall (above) is one of a handful of small schools that educate the youth of rural Meade County. Each has its own unique traditions. Students and teachers at the Hereford School ride horses on opening day (top photo) as a nod to the ranch environment that surrounds the classrooms.

bee stings, unclog toilets and kill snakes with a snow shovel, or chase snakes away when there is no shovel with which to kill them," she laughs.

Like any school, a support staff (janitors, electricians, plumbers, technical support) is available — 50 miles away. Therefore, rural school teachers, parents and the entire community work together to maintain their school. When the parking lot drifts in with snow during the night, a rancher brings his tractor to clear a path. When a leaky cistern leaves students without water,



neighbors bring buckets from their own wells.

Rural students adjust too, knowing that their teacher must also tend to three, four, or even five other grade levels. Older students are accustomed to helping younger ones.

Urbaniak says that is just one way that ranch kids grow up quickly — at times, too quickly. "While their independent spirit is usually applauded, it can also be a cause for concern," she says. "More often than not, it is the kids that must be chased away from the snakes, or the barbed wire, or the herd of cattle on the other side. One of the unique challenges we face is children who are not afraid of the prairie."

Prairie wildlife is another consideration. Once again, family and neighbors come to the rescue when the barbed wire fence fails to deter curious prairie critters. One father chased off an old porcupine that had set up residence under the front steps. On another occasion, a striped badger visited the schoolyard at recess, marching past the teeter-totters and merry-go-round. Jack-rabbits and ground squirrels often capture the students' attention during recess. Giving chase is irresistible, though the students have long since found capture to be nearly impossible.

THERE ARE MANY GREAT WAYS to begin a prairie school year. Students in Urbaniak's class receive a handwritten postcard welcoming them back, while

students in Annie Hlavka's class in nearby Faith find a gift-wrapped book on each desk. In July, Hlavka invited community members to donate, and books flooded in. Community matters greatly in rural schools.

Students at Hereford Elementary, another rural Meade County school, ride their horses on the first day. Even the teachers arrive on horseback. Small one- and two-room schools are thriving and vibrant community centers, where prairie people gather to celebrate the beginning of school and the kids.

RURAL SCHOOL TEACHERS OFTEN hear the same question: "How in the world do you teach all of those grade levels?" In this day of grade-specific content standards, tests and curricula, rural school teachers must cover all content in all grades.

Again, Urbaniak found a solution from a community member. Joan Wink, a retired education professor from Howes, volunteered to read books aloud to the students of Atall School. Under her guidance, Urbaniak discovered the power of using novels and picture books throughout the year with all grade levels. Like magic, they found that the required school content is often



Riding horses on the first day of school is tradition at Hereford Elementary, another rural Meade County school. Students at Atall arrive on horseback for their final day each year.

hidden within the pages of a good story.

For example, the Atall students were eager to hear the story and see the colorful images inside *Dance in a Buffalo Skull* by Zitkala-Sa. "This cautionary tale of mice playing in a buffalo skull, while a wildcat prowls ever closer, is a perfect example of a story I can share with multiple grade levels," Urbaniak says. "In this case, the lesson focused on elements of a folk tale for third-grade students, South Dakota history for fourth-grade students, and recognizing the theme of the story for fifth-grade students. *Dance in a Buffalo Skull* was a pivotal text. Not only was it relatable for country kids, it

also introduced local Native American folklore. The vivid photos and building suspense of the story captured their attention and led to meaningful discussions on the common elements of folk tales across cultures."

Books also generate writing opportunities for students, sometimes with a unique country-school twist. This was the case for Trailin, who spent kindergarten through third grade primarily writing about what he loved: tractors.

In kindergarten, Trailin filled pages and pages with drawings of every tractor on his ranch, first with just one-word labels, but eventually progressing to writing paragraphs about his own experiences behind the wheel. "I sought out every tractor picture book I could find, but what Trailin really enjoyed was looking at actual John Deere manuals and handbooks," Urbaniak says. "Being able to read and write about what truly mattered to him kept him engaged and learning. Finding titles that students in multiple grade levels can enjoy, relate to and write about became my go-to method for generating student learning and solving the dilemma of covering all subjects for all grades all nine months of the school year."


THERE ARE ALSO MANY great ways to end a prairie

school year, but Atall students celebrate with a much-anticipated field trip. These kids have been to the Mammoth Site, the Badlands, Mount Rushmore, the Sanford Lab at Homestake, the Vore Buffalo Jump, Devil's Tower and Wind Cave.

In addition, each year, all rural Meade County eighth-grade students take a special field trip to the Capitol in Pierre during the legislative session, where they search for the legendary blue tiles on the mosaic floor. Dare they hope that they may even find one of the fewer pale hearts?

These trips provide students with something that cannot be recreated in the classroom: firsthand experiences and memories of some of the most notable locations in South Dakota. When they return, Urbaniak encourages the students to find connections between their experiences and, you guessed it, books.

Another budding end-of-school-year tradition at Atall is for students to ride their horses on the last day of class. Celebrating this way is a fitting nod to their grandparents, who once rode their own horses to attend school at this very same site.

So, how do you teach it all at a country school? It helps to have the support of a caring community. Then, you simply begin with a book. 

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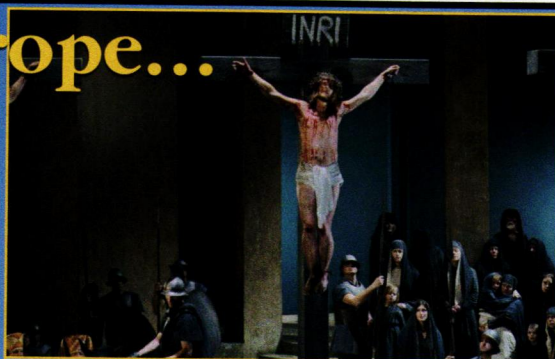
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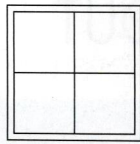
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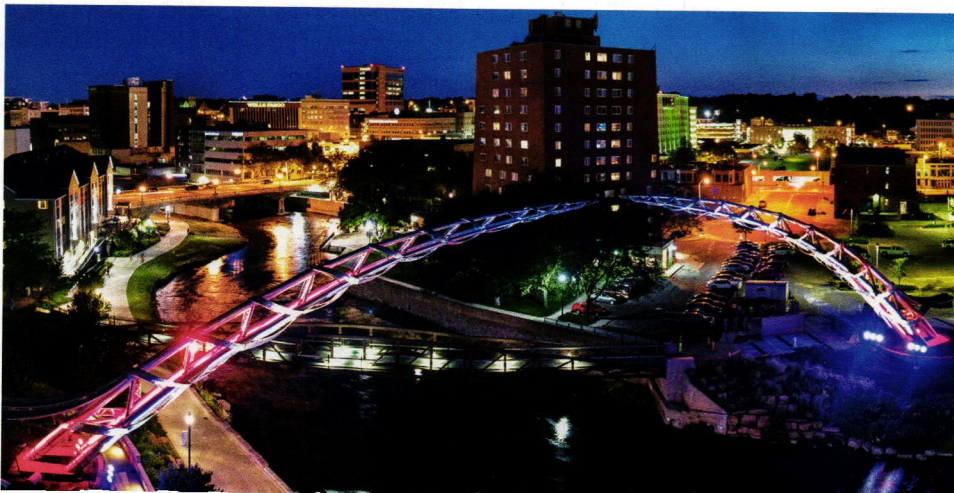
INSIDE AND OUT

Designing South Dakota

Paul Schiller photos



Every workday, men and women are planning, drawing, hammering, welding, mortaring and otherwise building South Dakota's future. All projects large and small are important pieces of the whole. But rarely does a structure rise from its humble footings to change, overnight, the way we see and experience a city. For many, the new Arc of Dreams in Sioux Falls does that. See page 71.





Levitt at the Falls

Designed for the power of music

By Bernie Hunhoff

Music often plays a secondary role when South Dakotans gather, whether for a ball game, wedding, rodeo or town festival. What would happen if music became the headline attraction and it was free, frequent and easy to access? Sioux Falls is finding the answer.

"My hope is that we pull people together with the music," says Tom Dempster, a longtime Sioux Falls business and community leader who initiated an eight-year effort that led to this summer's unveiling of Levitt at the Falls, a \$4.35 million project that will be home to 50 free concerts every year in the state's biggest city.

When a friend told Dempster about the Levitt Foundation, a national organization with a mission to build community through music, he did some research. After the foundation expressed an interest in Sioux Falls, he recruited Jennifer Kirby to help him develop a nonprofit.

Levitt staff had expertise on how to build a band shell, but Dempster and Kirby

wanted a structure that fit the culture and environment of downtown Sioux Falls and the Big Sioux River, so they asked local architect Catherine Dekkenga (Dempster's niece) to join the board. She and others worked with the Levitt staff and a Denver architectural firm to develop a band shell unique to Sioux Falls.

"We asked ourselves, 'How can we create a space that fits Falls Park and also fits with future development that will occur north of downtown?'" Dekkenga says. "We wanted something that would complement all that is going on around it."

Dekkenga was involved in planning the shell's wave-like roof and other features. While the visual aesthetics are important, she says there were many important details — seating, pathways, acoustics, space for food trucks and refreshment vendors, landscaping, electrical needs and public restrooms.

"We wanted to create a space that allowed for multiple experiences, and we did," Dekkenga says. "Up front, people



Tom Dempster

Free concerts at Levitt at the Falls have already drawn thousands of spectators to downtown Sioux Falls in the facility's first year.



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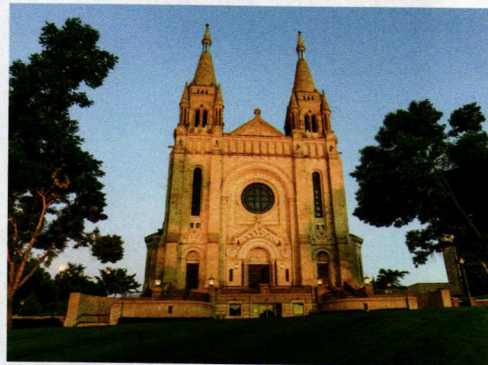
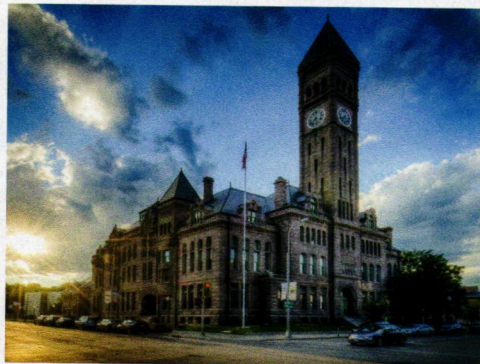
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INSIDE & OUT

are fully immersed. Middle of the lawn is socially relaxing. And the back reminds me of a neighborhood gathering with kids of all ages playing. With a sidewalk surrounding the lawn allowing people to bike or walk," she says, "some staying and some passing through." That was accomplished in part by tree plantings, granite boulders and a two-tiered path that winds around the grandstand.

"We also wanted to make sure that the sound doesn't carry too far because there are residential apartments and lofts in the area and we want to be good neighbors," Dekkenga says.

The local board also wants Levitt at the Falls to be a good experience for visiting musicians. "We sought to provide them with everything they need,



Tom Dempster

Colorful dancers and the contemporary Native American band Brulé performed at the Levitt in July.

such as space for their bus or van. We have outlets at the loading dock, so they can recharge or power something, and inside we have a shower and dressing room space."

The band shell was designed for

5,000 spectators, so a prime concern was the audience experience. "We want everybody to have a great view and good acoustics," she says. "The stage is facing north so nobody should be looking into the summer sun except the musicians, and there is an 8-foot drop from front to back."

The 13-acre park and the new band shell is owned and maintained by the city. It's available to families, businesses and organizations that may want to rent the space, so the designers also addressed needs that could arise.

Nancy Halverson, executive director of Levitt at the Falls, believes there may be opportunities for ethnic festivals to plan joint events with the concert series. For example, they might seek Hispanic music for a Cinco

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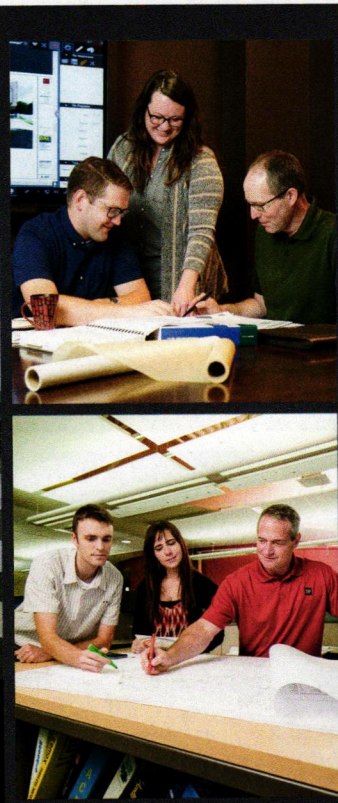
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de Mayo celebration.

Halverson and her family returned to Sioux Falls after a 10-year absence because she was excited about the Levitt. "I am a believer in the power of music and the arts to bring people together, and when I heard about the Levitt and how all these concerts will be free I thought it would be incredible for the city."

She says the Levitt has already inspired local developers to move ahead with plans for nearby lofts, restaurants and retail space. "We're also hearing from local merchants that sales are up," she says. A survey of attendees at this summer's brief inaugural series showed that the Levitt attracts out-of-towners, even out-of-state travelers.

The end result also pleases Dempster, who attended the first concerts. "It was simply stunning," he says. "It already has 10 times the impact than I ever thought it would, and in a very short time it has become integrated into the community."

Concertgoers may take the physical improvements for granted, but not the music. "Each of the performers have brought the same message to Sioux Falls — they say we are OK and we are all the same, and that is just the message we need today," says Dempster, a retired state lawmaker who was known for his collegiality in Pierre.

Dempster believes a key to the entire mission is the frequency of events. "The Levitt people have that figured out," he says. "When I first contacted them, I told them that I thought 50 concerts a year might be too many for Sioux Falls and that maybe we could shoot for 30, and they basically said, 'Well, then you just won't qualify.' Now I can see they are right. To involve the entire community, it has to be something that is so easy. All you have to do is go. You don't have to bring anything. It doesn't cost you anything. You can come late or leave early. All you do is just go and sit with a community of people who become friends, and you repeat that 50 times a summer."



MAKING A SPLASH

A new indoor aquatic center had long been part of Mitchell's Focus 2020 plan, and it came to fruition during the summer of 2018. The \$8 million project includes both recreational and competitive swimming pools, basketball and racquetball courts and cardio and weight facilities.

Mitchell voters passed an \$8 million bond issue in 2015. After studies and building plans had been completed, the city turned to MSH Architects in Sioux Falls. "We recognized a tight budget," says Robin Miller, the architectural firm's founder and CEO. "So we redesigned, worked some numbers and met with the committee multiple times. We were able to get the recreational pool and competitive pool figured out, and got our estimate to \$7.6 million. Then we took off to design the best possible building we could without going over, because if it came in over the amount that was bonded, there would be no project."

Not only did the 25,500-square-foot project come in under bid, but officials were also able to include extras. A big blue slide, donated by PepsiCo, winds outside the building.

The aquatic center, which is attached to the city's recreation center on North Main Street, is

one of the first buildings in South Dakota to utilize dynamic glass in its large south- and west-facing windows. "It automatically changes with the amount of sun that's hitting it," Miller says. "On a dark day, it will go up to 60 percent transmission. With the sun hitting it, it will go all the way down to 1 percent transmission. From the inside it still looks like glass, and you see everything outside, but it cuts down a huge amount of sun. Then we can do things with heating and cooling to create some savings."

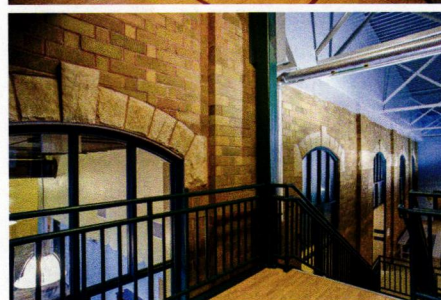
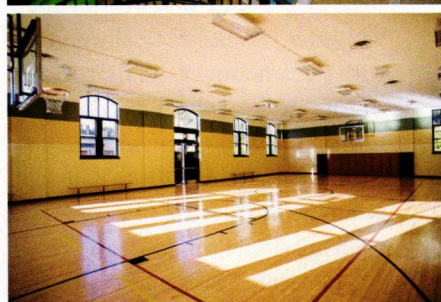
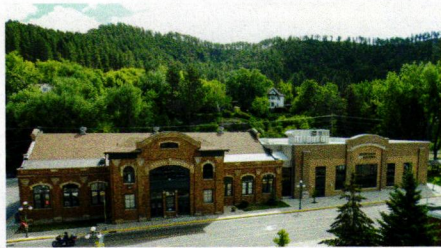
The architectural team also used an interactive software design program to see how light would be distributed. It helped to determine the height of the building and the location of interior pieces, such as the large duct sock that runs above the recreational pool. "At one point in the project, the duct sock was going to hang a little bit lower than what we designed, and right away we determined that we couldn't do it because of the lighting issues," he says. "It takes a lot of guesswork out of construction."

Mitchell residents celebrated a grand opening during the summer of 2018. Five kids, selected through a drawing held by radio station KMIT and wearing T-shirts that read, "First ride down the slide," officially christened the new center.



Where Old is New

TSP brings modern architecture to a historic mountain town



Architects matched the facade of Deadwood's century-old rec center to its new addition in order to blend into the town's historic character (below). Inside (above), the addition features swimming pools and a walking track.

History and hills are plentiful in Deadwood, and both present unique challenges to every building project. Mark Averett and his colleagues at TSP discovered that as they worked to refurbish Deadwood's century-old recreation center and complete a 14,568-square-foot addition.

"Nothing is flat in Deadwood," Averett says with a laugh. "We had to move entrances around and create different pathways for folks to get in, and then exiting once we added the addition."

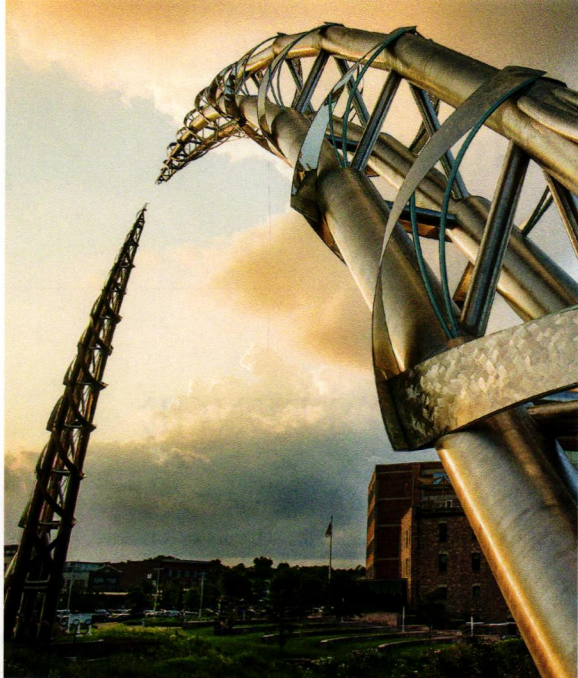
The original 17,059-square-foot rec center was built as an auditorium in 1912 along the cobblestoned Sherman Street. In 1958, the building was converted to a recreation center that featured a swimming pool and basketball court. That facility served the community until 2010, when TSP took on the challenge of making a century-old building modern and fun while nearly doubling the square footage. "We really just had to hug the building with whatever addition we were going to build," Averett says. "Because it was an old masonry structure, there are inherent challenges with some of that old detail-

ing and stonework. We had to be very careful of that as we attached this addition. How do you pay homage to something as historic as this is aesthetically without overpowering how beautiful the existing structure is?"

Crews carried over existing forms and features, such as the radius windows and the glass. The interior color scheme also transitioned to the new facility, which includes a six-lane competition pool, a zero-entry pool with water slide and a walking track suspended from the ceiling joists.

Because of Deadwood's status as a National Historic Landmark, archaeologists monitored any excavation. Work was halted for weeks when a stash of old whiskey bottles was unearthed. TSP also worked closely with the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission to ensure the building blended with the city's other historic structures. "They didn't want it to look modern," Averett says. "They wanted it to fit into the fabric."





Paul Schiller

RAISING THE ARC

Sioux Falls' downtown skyline gained stature in July when Sturgis sculptor Dale Lamphere and his crew raised the 85-foot-tall *Arc of Dreams* over the waters of the Big Sioux River.

Lamphere, who has built a reputation for larger-than-life stainless steel creations, says the Arc is the culmination of his long career. He says the project involved six years of work, several designs and three wind studies. Even the final installation presented challenges, exacerbated by the sculpture's 57-ton weight and the quartzite bedrock on which it rests.

The Arc now towers over the river as a triumphant symbol of how art has helped to transform Sioux Falls' downtown district, which has experienced a major renaissance of architecture, business and entertainment over the past 20 years. Beginning in 2004, a nonprofit called SculptureWalk has exhibited a rotation of quality sculptures throughout the district; the very same organization spearheaded the private fundraising drive for the Arc.

Jim Clark, who founded SculptureWalk, believes the Arc will become a signature sculpture in a state already famous for outdoor art, thanks to Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, the City of Presidents project in Rapid City, Pierre's Trail of Governors statues and Lamphere's *Dignity* statue by Chamberlain.

Lamphere says the *Arc of Dreams*, "represents the journey of everyone's dream." A 15-foot gap between the two arms symbolizes the leap of faith required to make a dream come true.



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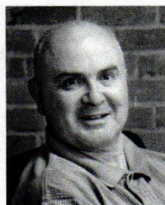
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SERIOUSLY, FOLKS

By Roger Holtzmann

THE PEOPLE'S FENCE

WHEN IT COMES to public buildings, most South Dakotans like to do things on the cheap. As for the rest, they would rather not do it at all. A school might date from the days of Dakota Territory and have a roof that leaks like a screen door on a submarine, but a good chunk of our population still won't see the need to replace it. There's nothing wrong with the old building! Everybody thinks they need new and fancy! Waste of taxpayers' money!

If by some miracle a new building gets approved, the grumblebums shift gears. Every square foot beyond the bare minimum and any design more ornate than a windowless Soviet gulag is taken as proof that the governing entity has lost its collective mind. Who needs brick? A steel building would be cheaper! My folks raised 13 kids in a house with one bathroom! They think they need two bathrooms on every floor! Waste of taxpayers' money!

That is why I am constantly amazed by our magnificent state Capitol. We got the plans secondhand from Montana, it's true, but everywhere you look there are ornamental gewgaws and soaring design elements. Start with the dome. Someone surely pointed out that a sturdy gable roof would have sufficed to keep the rain off our legislators, and who knows how many heart attacks were triggered when people heard about the million-dollar price tag. How it ever got built is a mystery to me.

Once the Capitol was completed in 1910, the legislature decided enough was enough. They refused to appropri-

ate money for a governor's residence; the chief, the head cheese, the big kahuna was given \$75 a month and cut loose to find a flop on his own.

William "Gas Man" McMaster was the first governor to live in an official residence — a cabin on the shore of Capitol Lake that the state purchased in 1925. Tom "The Hatchet" Berry moved in after his election and found the place a bit of a wreck; when the legislature balked at paying for a new pad, Berry turned to the feds for help. He got the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to finance and build a new residence, but nothing stays up-to-date forever. By 2002 the home was in such a sorry state that Gov. Mike Rounds moved in, then promptly moved back to his own home in Pierre.

In 2004 ground was broken on a new residence, funded almost entirely by private donations of money, material and labor. This was both a praiseworthy approach and a tacit admission that the grumblebums would have pitched a fit if the state put up anything fancier than a double-wide trailer; with them out of the loop, there arose a proper McMan-sion on the shore of Capitol Lake.

There are five bedrooms, two offices and full living quarters on the residence's private side, according to the state website. The public side features a grand dining hall that can accommodate 80 guests, give or take — replete with a fireplace accented with rock blasted from Crazy Horse Memorial — plus a commercial kitchen, greeting area and two staterooms for guests.


I've never eaten in a grand dining hall or spent the night in a stateroom.

If Kristi and Bryon are ever bored and want some company for an evening, Carolyn and I would certainly accept an invitation. I could even write about our visit for a curious public, something along the lines of, "Tuna Casserole Tastes A Lot Better When Served On A Gold Plate." I mean, I assume a grand dining hall would have gold plates.

This iteration of the People's House cost a cool \$2.8 million, but for that price you can't expect to get every little doodad. Like a fence. This omission came to light last spring when it was revealed that the state was looking to put a fence around the residence. The proposed budget was \$400,000.

My first thought was ... \$400,000!?! That sounds like a lot of money for a project that wouldn't improve security all that much. Unless you put up a 12-foot barrier with double coils of concertina wire on top and guard towers on the corners, fences don't keep people out. Most designs merely *suggest* that those with bad intentions move on, but I suppose it would be better than nothing.

As I considered this project, the example of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Hoven came to mind. When the parishioners set about building that magnificent edifice, they came to Mass each Sunday in wagons laden with rock, sand or gravel collected on their farms. After almost a thousand loads, they finally accumulated enough material for the foundation and basement walls of the building, which still stands.

Why can't we do that today? If every citizen who visited Pierre brought along a bag of mortar or a few rocks, we'd have enough material for a picturesque fieldstone fence in no time. I've got a couple beauties in mind for my contribution to The People's Fence. In case I ever get invited. 

Roger Holtzmann is a contributing editor for South Dakota Magazine. He lives in Yankton with his wife, Carolyn.


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HALLOWEEN IN CLARK

How life's lessons change with time

Story by **ROBERT A. CHRISTENSON**

CLARK WAS BUSTLING in 1966, with two hardware stores, two banks, two grain elevators, a jewelry store, a movie theater, bakery, restaurant, two clothing stores and two grocery stores.

For a time, the Protestants went to one grocery store and the Catholics went to another, or so it was rumored. The tallest structures were the grain elevator and the water tower, which visitors could see above the lofty trees of town for miles before they arrived. It proclaimed CLARK in black, bold letters, so big it would take a man a full day to paint one letter while he hung over the edge with a paint brush in one hand and a bucket of paint dangling on a rope at his side.

Harry Bailey sold cheap gas at Bailey's Filling Station. Pennzoil sat on the shelf alongside Hostess Cupcakes and large, plastic bottles of Mountain Dew. Harry was ahead of his time when it came to advertising. Next to his store on Highway 212, he placed a life-size mannequin of a sensual woman dressed in a blue miniskirt and a bright red blouse. She was posing as a hitchhiker. She had long blond hair, long legs and a suitcase.

I can't speak for the fathers in town, but it seemed they drove by the hitchhiker more than us high school boys. Of course, the men in Clark were discour-

aged from thinking wild thoughts about anything. Their charge was to go to work, go to church and, if lucky, volunteer with the Clark Fire Department so they could get out of the house once in awhile.

Al Knutson sold *Playboy* magazines at his drug store across the street from the courthouse. He ripped the covers off the unsold copies so he could return them for a refund, and he tossed the rest in the fire barrel behind his store.

Al Knutson also sold soap. In October of 1966, nearly every store window on Clark's Commercial Street — including Al's — suffered soap marks. My friends and I figured soap had two purposes — it was great for carving any number of school or Cub Scout projects and for writing stuff on store windows. We had also mastered the art of tipping over outhouses. Soaping store windows and tipping over outhouses made a great one-two punch on Halloween. In my neighborhood, south of the railroad tracks, many houses still lacked indoor plumbing. The alleys were rich with outhouses, and the practice was somewhat tolerated.

John and Vic Hamre left the town boundaries that October for a bigger prize: the doublewide outhouse north of town by the Clark Center Church, also known as the North Church. Janelle

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Just before midnight, two cars pulled into the churchyard. John later recalled that there were seven people in the two cars. The outhouse, which still stands about 40 yards northwest of the church, was in need of paint in 1966. The seven revelers tipped the outhouse over, door-side up. Then they looked upon their handiwork and began to laugh uncontrollably — that I-can-hardly-move-I-am-laughing-so-hard type of outburst. They ran wobbly-legged back to the cars and laughed all the way home. Then they laughed some more. Tipping over a two-room outhouse was something special.

But the laughter was about to stop for the Hamre brothers. No one had ever been caught tipping over an outhouse on Halloween in Clark. It just didn't happen. The prankster code would not allow it. However, early the next afternoon, Sheriff Joe Hulscher stopped by Citizens State Bank and asked to speak to Mel Hamre, the bank president and the father of the Hamre brothers. Mel had never had a reason to talk to the local sheriff before, and the sheriff never had a reason to talk to the bank president. Mel was polite, but nervous. He was entering unfamiliar territory. The two spoke quietly behind a closed door in Mel's office, which overlooked Commercial Street. After the sheriff left, Mel sat slumped in his chair. "The outhouse at the North Church for heaven's sake," he thought to himself.

With a heavy heart, Mel walked out onto Commercial Street at closing time. He soon observed that he wasn't the only person in town who was having a bad day. A tan 1964 Pontiac Catalina four-door was parked on the sidewalk, and the front end was inside the Red Owl grocery store. Word quickly spread around town that

my aunt, Izetta Lien, had driven her Catalina through the front window. She thought she had the gearshift in "R" when she gunned the big V-8, but it must have been in "D." She jumped the car over the curb and through the glass.

By the time Mel walked by, Aunt Izetta had already gathered her wits and walked into the store. People were mulling about, staring at her car and looking for the pork chops, which were on sale in the Red Owl newspaper ad.

"Just my luck," Izetta thought. "Oh, dear Lord ... Oh, dear Lord." As a life-long Presbyterian, she believed He could help in times like this.

Uncle John, Izetta's husband of 60-plus years, borrowed a friend's car to make the trip uptown. Once safely home, she baked some muffins and the pork chops she bought at the store and then sat quietly at the table, wondering how the embarrassing situation would all play out.

Meanwhile, Mel Hamre also sat at his kitchen table. He waited an hour after supper to bring up the outhouse incident with his wife, Ruth. She was the choir director at St. Paul Lutheran.

After heartfelt discussion and thoughtful prayer, they agreed that Mel should talk to the boys. He would ask for their side of the story and then plant some good, old-fashioned Lutheran guilt. The conversation went well. The brothers confessed, and they agreed to write an apology to the church. They went to bed and stared at the ceiling, contemplating their situation and wondering how the sheriff knew they were involved. Then they began to laugh again, a laugh they tried to control but could not.


THIRTY-FOUR YEARS later, in May of 2000, Mel Hamre left his house and walked the short distance to the St. Paul Lutheran Church. Entering through the side door, he walked briskly past the pews

to the choir loft, where he found Pam Seefeldt's Sunday School class.

Mel had been invited to share his faith that morning. Pastor Hooks thought that the confirmation class could benefit from listening to some, "older, faithful church leaders." Pam introduced Mel and, after a bit of idle talk, he told the class what he had contemplated telling them all along. He told the class how proud he was of his family, and he spoke of the joy of raising children.

And then he told the story of when his boys tipped over the outhouse at the North Church on Halloween night in 1966. He wanted the youth to know that, even in the most respected homes, kids "act up" every now and again. He told the class that it was okay to "get a little mud on the tires," or, "let the horse buck a little bit." The young men and women listened intently. Mel felt he had made

an impression. He felt good. He felt relieved. He was at peace with the outhouse scandal.

He walked home, sat in his favorite chair in the living room and gave such a loud sigh of relief that Ruth wondered if something was wrong. Did he want a cup of coffee? He said he did. He really wanted a Windsor and Coke. Let the horse buck a bit, right? But he wasn't sure Ruth would understand so he settled for a cup of Butternut coffee, still in the pot from breakfast. 

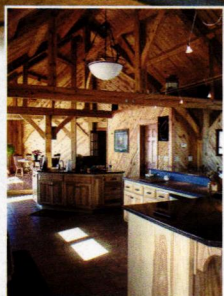
This was adapted from Robert A. Christenson's book, Clark Stories (437 pp. softcover), a lively collection of coming-of-age stories from the 1960s in small town South Dakota. The book is available at Zandbroz in downtown Sioux Falls and at Lulu.com.

VISITING CLARK

Clark, a busy city of 1,000 people located west of Watertown, is worth a visit. Dakota Butcher is famous for smoked bacon, jerky, beef sticks and several varieties of summer sausage, including a cranberry sausage in autumn. Patty melts are a favorite of regulars at Heather's Bistro. "We use a special sauce and green peppers instead of onions, and we add Swiss and American cheese," explains Heather Johansen.

Interesting stores line Main Street. Dekker's Hardware dates to 1892. Farmer's Daughter Boutique is a cute clothing shop. Clark Flower & Gift pioneered the concept of gift baskets in South Dakota and sells the Robert Christenson book, *Clark Stories*.

The town recently dedicated a monument in Flat Iron Park called the Charters of Freedom, featuring replicas of the Bill of Rights, the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence.



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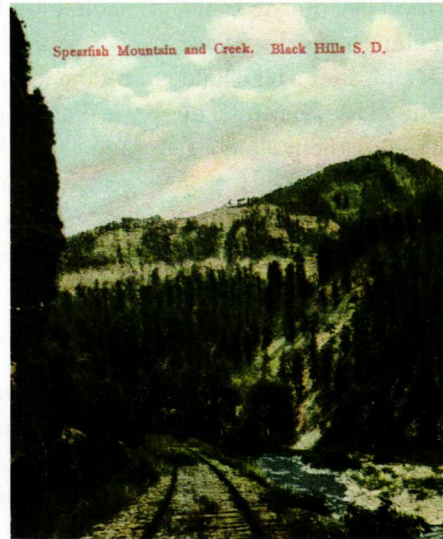
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Story by **PAUL HIGBEE**
Photos by **JOHN MITCHELL**

ROCKY ROAD

The Spearfish Canyon railroad is long gone, and nearly forgotten



THE JOKE ALREADY felt stale when I was a teenager in Spearfish: “No one grows up on the wrong side of the tracks here because there are no tracks.”

No tracks, no whistles, no rattling train cars through Spearfish nights. When the town lost rail service of any type in 1933, its population was under 2,000, yet Spearfish ranked as the biggest community in the United States where no locomotives rolled. Most people didn’t seem to care. During the same decade in which Spearfish said goodbye to trains, it gained mail and passenger service by air and developed an outdoor drama (Black Hills Passion Play) that would soon draw 100,000 travelers annually who were “tin can tourists”—packed into automobiles.

Within just a few years, the Spearfish Canyon railroad became a Black Hills legend: the train that had to be tied down at stops so it wouldn’t roll away down the steep grade, a friendly rail service that dropped off passengers at their favorite fishing spots in the morning and picked them up again in the afternoon, the transportation that President Theodore Roosevelt selected for his sons so they could access the rugged West.

This summer I spent two beautiful but futile days searching for signs of the railroad in the canyon’s

heart. I splashed along Spearfish Creek’s banks hoping to see just a piece of one of the 33 railway bridges that crossed this water and its tributaries. Nothing. The railroad boasted that by necessity it built remarkably well in the canyon, that “ties are bedded in rock the whole way.” Probably so, but in the heart nothing survived a railroad salvage contractor in 1934 and the relentless erosion that is the essence of any living canyon.

Out of the canyon’s heart, on its fringes, I’ve seen photographs of surviving abutments for great trestles that dropped trains off Bald Mountain and into the canyon, but I haven’t found them myself yet. In Spearfish a cycling and walking trail utilizes the old rail bed. A feature all Spearfish Canyon highway drivers recognize is a cut through which they pass 3 miles from Spearfish, considered by many to be the canyon’s north entrance. Originally, the cut was blasted for Grand Island & Wyoming Central trains (later known as the Burlington & Missouri River, or just the Burlington).

In some places, the modern Spearfish Canyon Highway follows the rail route closely—for example, approaching Spearfish Mountain from the south.





The first locomotive steamed through that rock cut and into Spearfish in December of 1893. Engines had to be powerful to handle the steep grades but were limited to 25 mph when moving passengers and 15 mph when passenger cars and freight cars were combined.

The Burlington's interest in the canyon stemmed from a series of proposed mines and ore processing mills that investors believed would utilize new technologies to extract gold and other precious metals. These canyon mines did indeed take form, but their production lives were short. The canyon railroad also carried passengers seeking tent camping, berry picking and steep hikes to spectacular vistas. There had been no outcry against sacrificing natural splendor to make way for mines and mills. Prior to the railroad, very few Black Hills people knew anything about Spearfish Canyon. Even in the town of Spearfish, only the most intrepid game hunters ventured into the canyon because its lower end was tightly packed with great boulders.

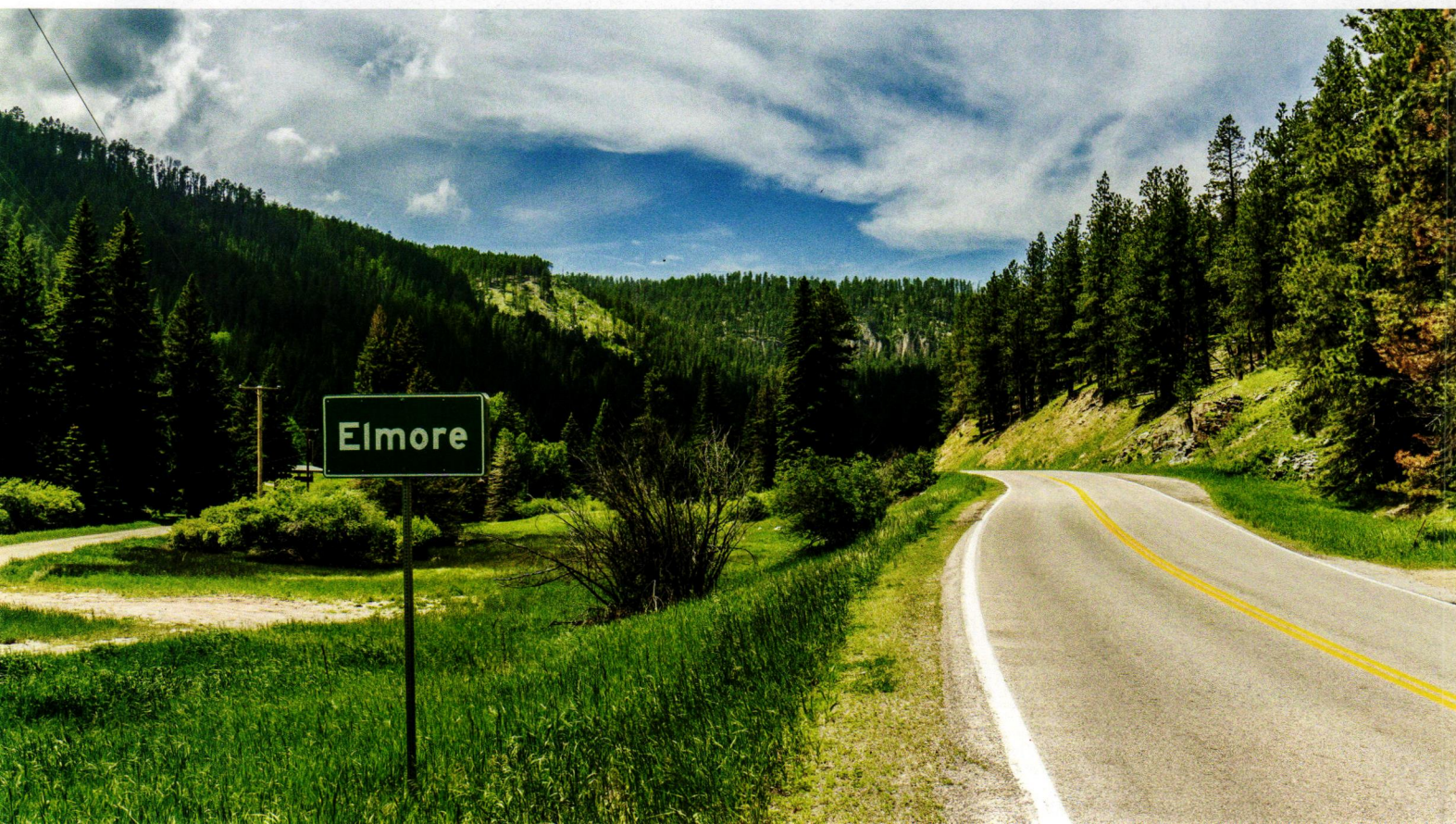
Thanks to the Burlington, Spearfish Canyon burst into consciousness. Modern South Dakotans don't like reading early Black Hills historian Annie Tallent's racist views, but it's hard to dispute that in 1899 she wrote a perfect description of riding the rails through Spearfish Canyon: "A trip over this marvelous piece of mountain railway — up the dizzy heights to the extreme summit of Bald Mountain, around a labyrinth of lofty crags in perfectly bewildering curves, and a plunge down into and through the most beautiful canyon in the world (the Spearfish) — is a revelation of grandeur and beauty unsurpassed and the

treat of a lifetime."

Six years later passenger James Doyle wrote in Spearfish's newspaper, the *Queen City Mail*, that the canyon, "has no common place in it. It everywhere plays homage to omnipotence." And much of it could be observed, through all seasons, from the comfort of passenger cars. Changing seasons, others noted, could sometimes be experienced in a single day due to the variance of elevations along the route. It wasn't out of the question for passengers to board at Deadwood in a spring mist, encounter drifts and even blowing snow in the canyon's middle, then step into summer-like sunshine down the grade at Spearfish.

An industrial aspect of the line remained through its four-decade history, chiefly lumber and wholesale deliveries to Spearfish, and farm produce and livestock shipped up the hill from Spearfish. But by the time the railroad merged into the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy in 1904 there could be no doubt that excursions were the main function. Recognizing that the average patron was now more likely to board with family members than livestock, the line stressed safety. "The passenger takes no risk when he rides," read company publicity. "The history of the line proves this. Collisions are out of the question because there's nothing with which to collide. One train has the

Spearfish-bound passengers from Deadwood knew they were more than halfway to their destination at Elmore and that they had descended into the canyon proper.





canyon to itself all day.”

While no other train could cause a wreck, engineers had to watch for boulders that came bounding down the canyon walls. There’s no record of one hitting the train, but now and then passengers were asked to climb out and help clear the tracks of rocks.

It was about 40 miles one way between Deadwood and Spearfish, but just as often the rail line was referred to as a 32-mile run — the distance between Englewood and Spearfish. In the early 1900s, round trip tickets cost about \$2.50. Passengers boarded at Deadwood’s Depot 47 on Sherman Street, a couple blocks east of the Franklin Hotel, in the morning and arrived in Spearfish early that afternoon. The Spearfish depot was a wood frame structure where the community’s main fire station stands today, on Canyon Street. By mid-afternoon the train had been turned around and was headed back up the canyon. Today, almost universally, the railway is recalled for its Deadwood to Spearfish and back runs, strangely inefficient because the geography forced the engine to actually steam in the direction opposite of its destination much of the trip.

Less well remembered is the fact that passengers could disembark and connect with another Burlington train at Englewood. That route (today the Mickelson Trail) took them south through the heart of the Black Hills and, in many cases, out of the Hills to distant cities.

Spearfish Canyon developed as a destination in its own right with construction of overnight lodging early in the 20th century. Deadwood’s Glen and Doris Inglis first opened the Glendoris Inn (now the storied Latchstring

Remnants of trestles that were part of the Seven Mile Bend can still be found near Annie Creek. The train dropped (or climbed) 800 feet in elevation over those 7 miles.

Inn) mid-canyon at Savoy where the train passed dramatically over a trestle across Spearfish Falls. Later, Martha Railsback and Maude Watts journeyed into the canyon by rail, bought the inn and brought it to full fruition. Sometimes elfin-sized, bewhiskered gold prospector Potato Creek Johnny greeted rail passengers at the inn and played his fiddle late into the night.

The canyon railroad had a role in one of South Dakota’s boldest engineering and construction feats ever between 1909 and 1912. Homestake Gold Mine diverted creek water through Spearfish Canyon’s west wall by way of 23,862 feet of tunnels it cut through solid rock. The diverted water spun turbines in a new state-of-the-art plant at Spearfish, generating electricity that powered mine operations for the next 90 years. The canyon rail bed was a reference point that surveyors used in determining the tunnels’ course, and the rails delivered drills, laborers and supplies. Canyon rail passengers were among the first to notice Spearfish Creek’s diminished flow in the lower canyon after the power plant went online.

A bit later Homestake built a second, smaller hydroelectric plant in the canyon, with water mostly channeled to it through an above-ground pipeline. Today, people sometimes mistake the pipeline path, visible along a ridge north of Savoy, for the old Burlington bed.

In the 1920s, Spearfish Mayor James O'Neill advocated for an automobile road through Spearfish Canyon. In fact, his enthusiasm led him onsite to work with the road crew some days after funding was secured. This first version of the Spearfish Canyon highway opened with ceremonial dynamite blasts and a speech by Gov. William Bulow in August of 1930. Hard as it is to imagine today in narrow parts of the canyon, the highway and train co-existed for two years and nine months.

Then on May 20, 1933, according to railroad records, "Engineer Steinberg and Fireman Kaup" made what proved to be the Spearfish line's final run. Three days later a raging Spearfish Creek wiped out rails and bridges. In July, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy filed a request with the Interstate Commerce Commission, seeking to abandon the line rather than rebuild. The *Queen City Mail* grumbled and Spearfish gasoline retailers stepped up to state they got better rates for customers when their product was delivered by rail. But the railroad had no difficulty documenting it was losing money, and called passenger service "not important," because travelers preferred "moving principally over the highways." That was exactly what Mayor O'Neill had sensed a decade earlier. The Commission authorized abandoning the lower 25 miles into

Spearfish but told the railroad to continue serving mines in the Bald Mountain vicinity.

In coming years Spearfish leaders sometimes contemplated re-establishing a rail connection, not through the canyon but by way of a northward spur to Belle Fourche. Nothing came of it. Then in the 1960s the community decided it wanted to be an interstate highway town. Leaders were successful in getting Interstate 90 routed past town in the 1970s, just as new Catholic priest Father Eugene Szalay arrived. As a hobby, he sought out people who recalled the old canyon line and preserved their stories.

Apparently no one confessed to Father Szalay what the railroad knew: Poachers at least once "borrowed" hand cars to sneak out-of-season bucks from the canyon. Much of what the priest heard came from former employees who recalled their canyon railroading as a grand outdoor adventure. Roger O'Kieff, for example, was hired at age 14 and sometimes tied one of those hand cars to the back of the train. He was pulled along until spotting snow or rocks to be cleared away from the track. Then he cut himself loose to tackle the job.

That would have been a dream job for any teenager during the golden, but short-lived, era of railroading through Spearfish Canyon.



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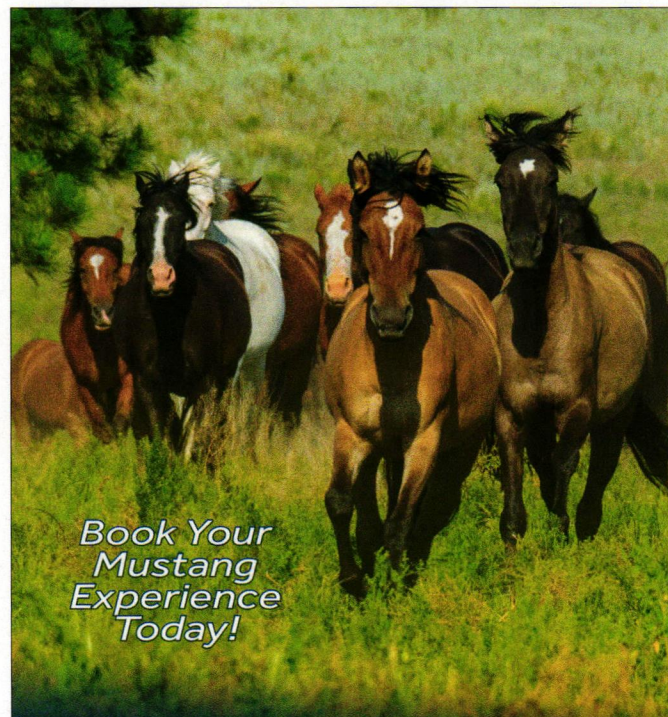
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Traveler



Bernie Hunhoff

Lighting the Night... It's like the Fourth of July in September when Crazy Horse Memorial stages its second Night Blast of the year. Using specially designed pyrotechnics, the blast (Sept. 6) commemorates the anniversary of the 1877 death of Crazy Horse and the 1908 birth of sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski, and illuminates the world's largest mountain carving in progress with brilliant light. Instead of admission, the memorial asks for three cans of food per person, which are then donated to Feeding South Dakota.

Traveler

Adventure and festivities in South Dakota

Stomp to the Beat

A free case of wine and bragging rights are on the line at the grape stomping competitions during With the Wind Vineyard & Winery's Grape Stomp Festival (Sept. 7-8) in Rosholt. A winning team consists of a relentless stomper with large feet and a mucker with quick hands to keep grape stems and skins away from the drain. Did we mention the winner gets a free case of wine? The vibrant celebration of the harvest season also features artisan booths, live concerts and the "Vino Adventure Zone," which provides fun games and challenges for all ages.

EAST RIVER EVENTS

Through Nov. 30: **Articles of a Treaty.** Oceti Sakowin artists explore the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty through music, poetry and art. Akta Lakota Museum Gallery, **Chamberlain**. 234-3452.

Aug. 29–Sept. 2: **State Fair.** Entertainment, carnival, exhibits and food. State Fairgrounds, **Huron**. 353-7340.

Sept. 5–8: **James Valley Threshing Show.** World's largest plowing demonstration, threshing, sawmilling, blacksmithing, car and tractor parades and quilt and craft show. Features the world's largest road locomotive, the 150 Case. Threshermen's Park, **Andover**. 868-3242.

Sept. 6–7: **Ribs, Rods & Rock N' Roll.** Classic cars, inflatables, vendors, music and state barbecue championship cook-off. Downtown, **Vermillion**. 624-5571.

Sept. 6–8: **Vintiques Car Show & Shine.** Kemp Avenue, **Watertown**. 880-1433.

Sept. 7: **Grape Stomp and Harvest Festival.** Vineyard and wine production tours, live music, demonstrations, kids' activities and stomping contest. Schadé Vineyard, **Volga**. 627-5545.

Sept. 7: **Insect Festival.** Monarch tagging, cockroach races, edible insects, crafts, games and insect education. McCrory Gardens, **Brookings**. 688-6707.

Sept. 7: **Sidewalk Arts Festival.** Arts, kids' activities, food and entertainment. Downtown, **Sioux Falls**. 367-6000.

Sept. 7: **Germanfest.** Music, dachshund races, stein-holding contest, kids' activities, food and beer. Fawick Park, **Sioux Falls**. 359-2371.

Sept. 7–8: **Grape Stomp Festival.** Food, drink, vendors, music, shopping and grape stomping. With the Wind Vineyard & Winery, **Rosholt**. 537-4780.

Sept. 8: **Antique Car and Tractor Parade.** Main Street,

Farmer. 239-4498.

Sept. 8: **Homesteader Day Celebration.** Demonstrations, reenactors, Dutch oven cooking and music. Beaver Creek Nature Area, **Valley Springs**. 594-3824.

Sept. 13: **Full Moon Hike.** Good Earth State Park, **Sioux Falls**. 213-1036.

Sept. 13–14: **Premier Rodeo.** PRCA rodeo and entertainment. Denny Sanford PREMIER Center, **Sioux Falls**. 367-7288.

Sept. 13–14: **Dinner with a Ghost.** Gourmet meal and paranormal investigation. Corn Palace, **Mitchell**. (503) 569-4753.

Sept. 14 & 21: **Help with the Harvest.** Learn to pick grapes at Turtle Creek Vineyard. Strawbale Winery, **Renner**. 543-5071.

Sept. 14–15: **Hero Days.** Craft show, kids' activities, kids' pedal tractor pull, sidewalk chalk contest, parade, show and shine, wing and pie contests and dance. **Elkton**. 695-7092.

Sept. 14–15: **Twin Rivers**

Cornucopia of Cars

More than 200 cars rumble into town for Vermillion's **Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n' Roll** (Sept. 6-7). But it's not just antiques – sports cars, motorcycles and even old semis show off their wheels. There's also a Kansas City Barbecue Society-sanctioned cook-off that attracts chefs from across the country who compete in the KCBS Master Series BBQ Contest.

Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n' Roll



Old Iron Harvest Festival and Kuchen Festival. Flea market, farm demonstrations, parade, music, games, food and tractor pull. **Delmont.** 928-3792.

Sept. 14–15: **NESD Celtic Faire and Highland Games.** Livestock, dancing, music, vendors, food, kids' activities, cook-off, weelad and lass contest and dog parade. Richmond Lake Youth campground, **Aberdeen.** 228-1206.

Sept. 20–22: **North Country Fiber Fair.** Spinning, knitting, crocheting and weaving workshops and vendors. Codington County Extension Complex, **Watertown.** 956-7909.

Sept. 21: **Powwow.** St. Joseph's Indian School, **Chamberlain.** 234-3452.

Sept. 21: **Harvest Festival.** Wagon rides, crafts and demonstrations. Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, **Lake City.** 448-5474.

Sept. 21: **Fall in the Park.** Music, obstacle course, mini-golf, archery, air rifles, games, crafts and Dutch oven cooking. Lewis & Clark Recreation Area, **Yankton.** 668-2985.

Sept. 21: **Watertown Radio Chili Cook-off.** Food, music and prizes. Bramble Park Zoo, **Watertown.** 882-6269.

Sept. 21–22: **Northern Plains Indian Art Market.** Juried art show and art market. Old Courthouse Museum and Hilton Garden Inn, **Sioux Falls.** 856-8193.

Sept. 21–22: **Pioneer Power & Toy Show.** Ford and Fordson tractors, Hercules engines, toys, flea market,

crafts, demonstrations, kids' games, tractor pull and parade. Pioneer Acres, **Menno.** 505-0109.

Sept. 26–29: **South Dakota Film Festival.** Capitol Theatre, **Aberdeen.** 226-5494.

Sept. 26–29 & Oct. 3–6: **Mamma Mia!** Sioux Empire Community Theatre performance. Orpheum Theater, **Sioux Falls.** 360-4800.

Sept. 27–28: **Oktoberfest.** Polka band, beer and food. **Vermillion.** 624-5571.

Sept. 27–29: **SiouxperCon.** Cosplay contest, celebrity entertainment, panels, videogame tournament, vendors and artists. Arena and Convention Center, **Sioux Falls.** 261-2467.

Sept. 28: **Stars, Strolls and S'mores.** Learn the stories of the stars. Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, **Lake City.** 448-5474.

Sept. 28: **Living History Fall Festival.** Demonstrations, displays, reenactments, food, kids' spelling bee, pumpkin decorating and entertainment. Granary Rural Cultural Center, **Groton.** 626-7117.

Sept. 28: **A Gershwin Celebration.** South Dakota Symphony Orchestra performance. Washington Pavilion, **Sioux Falls.** 367-6000.

Oct. 4–5: **Pumpkin Fest & Lighted Night Parade.** Baking contest, wagon rides, kids' activities, crafts and food. Free hot chocolate during the parade. **Webster.** 345-4668.

Oct. 4–6 & 11–13: **Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery.** Community the-



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Adventure and festivities in South Dakota

atre performance. Pepsi Cola Theatre for the Performing Arts, **Mitchell**. 996-9137.

Oct. 5: **Fall Festival**. Vendors, food judging, pumpkin decorating, punkin' chunkin' competition and kids' activities. **Chamberlain** and **Oacoma**. 234-4416.

Oct. 5: **Spirit of Dakota Award**. Art show, nominee tea and awards banquet honoring outstanding South Dakota women. Event Center, **Huron**. 352-6073.

Oct. 5: **Harvest Festival**. Music, face painting and pumpkin painting for kids, vendors, games and mini

grape stomp. Wilde Prairie Winery, **Brandon**. 582-6471.

Oct. 5: **Pumpkin Train**. Ride the train to the pumpkin patch. Kids 12 and under can pick a pumpkin. Historic Prairie Village, **Madison**. 256-3644.

Oct. 5: **Festifall**. Pumpkin catapulting, kids' crafts, hayrides, vendors and candlelight walk. Newton Hills State Park, **Canton**. 987-2263.

Oct. 5: **Oktoberfest**. Music, dancing, food, beer, wine, German breed dog parade, dachshund races, root beer garden, contests and kids' activities. Best Western

Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center, **Aberdeen**. 380-8448.

Oct. 5-6: **Fall Celebration**. Guided hike, fall activities and crafts. Sica Hollow State Park, **Sisseton**. 448-5701.

Oct. 11-13: **Great Scarecrow Festival**. Outdoor display of scarecrows. Campbell Park, **Huron**. 354-0491.

Oct. 12: **Pumpkin Fest**. Hayrides, train rides, face painting and pumpkin painting. City Park, **Groton**. 397-8422.

Oct. 12: **Harvest Festival**. Food, wine, games, cork and

pumpkin painting and music. Strawbale Winery, **Renner**. 543-5071.

Oct. 12 & 16: **Lantern Tour and Ghost Tour**. Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, **Lake City**. 448-5474.

Oct. 19: **Haunted Fort**. Activities, crafts and tour of Haunted Fort at dusk. Tour reservations required. Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, **Lake City**. 448-5474.

Oct. 19: **Arts & Crafts Festival**. Craft show, make & take pumpkins and themed meal. School & Community Center, **Faulkton**. 380-8444.

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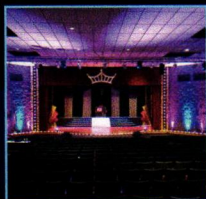
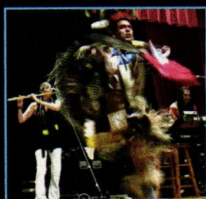


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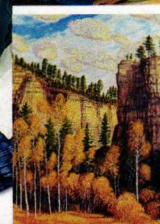


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Pumpkin Patch & Train Tracks

Visiting the pumpkin patch is always a fun family tradition, but not many pumpkin picking experiences involve a railroad. The Pumpkin Train (Oct. 5) at Prairie Village in Madison celebrates the spooky season by taking passengers along the Herman & Milwaukee Railroad, which surrounds the village, to a pumpkin patch, where children 12 and under can pick a pumpkin. The cost is \$5 per child and \$2 per adult/teen chaperone.

Oct. 25–27: **Zoo Boo**. Trick-or-treat and the Hall of Flames, featuring more than 300 hand-carved and lit jack-o'-lanterns. Great Plains Zoo, **Sioux Falls**. 367-7003.

Oct. 26: **Mortimer's Monstrous Halloween Event**. Hayrides, face painting, trick-or-treating, scavenger hunt and games. Oakwood Lakes State Park, **Bruce**. 627-5441.

Oct. 26: **Harvest Halloween**. Activities, food, art market, pet parade, trick-or-treating, corn pit, maze and inflatables. Downtown, **Yankton**. 665-9092.

Oct. 26: **Trick or Treat Trails**. Costumed hike along decorated trail. Big Sioux Recreation Area, **Brandon**. 582-7243.

Oct. 26: **Zoo Boo**. Trick-or-treat with the animals. Bramble Park Zoo, **Watertown**. 882-6269.

WEST RIVER EVENTS

Sept. 1: **Mount Rushmore Rodeo**. Mount Rushmore Resort at Palmer Gulch, **Hill City**. 574-2525.

Sept. 1: **Dakota Five-O**. Mountain bike race. City Park, **Spearfish**. 641-4963.

Sept. 3: **Trolley on the Trail**. Allows people with impaired mobility to experience the Mickelson Trail. Reservations required. George S. Mickelson Trail, **Deadwood**. 584-3896.

Sept. 6: **Night Blast**. Ceremony in observation of the death of Crazy Horse and the birth of sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski. **Crazy Horse Memorial**. 673-4681.

Sept. 6–7: **Dinner with a Ghost**. Gourmet meal and paranormal investigation. Bullock Hotel, **Deadwood**. (503) 569-4753.

Sept. 6–7: **Sturgis Supermoto**. Supermoto racing. Main Street, **Sturgis**. 720-0800.

Sept. 6–7: **Black Hills Polkapalooza**. Music, food, drinks and dancing. Mount Rushmore Resort at Palmer Gulch, **Hill City**. 574-2525.

Sept. 7–8: **Quilt Show**. Vendors, demonstrations, prizes, special events and supper. School Gym, **Hill City**. 574-2810.

Sept. 7 & 14: **Theater on the Run**. Community theatre performs five plays in five locations. **Spearfish**. 642-7973.

Sept. 13–14: **Deadwood Jam**. Outdoor music festival. Main Street, **Deadwood**. 578-1876.

Sept. 13–14: **Honors Ceremony**. Ten people are inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame. Arrowwood Resort, **Oacoma**. 234-4216.

Sept. 13–15: **Stratobowl**

Historic Hot Air Balloon Launch. Hike in to see balloons take flight at dawn. Stratobowl, **Rapid City**. 673-2520.

Sept. 13–16: **Dakota Western Heritage Festival**. Music, poetry, wagon train, steak feed, parade, Western displays, cowboy church service and Stirling Family Ranch Rodeo cancer fundraiser. **Fort Pierre**. 223-7603.

Sept. 14: **Wine Express**. Food, wine, keepsake wine glass and entertainment. 1880 Train, **Hill City**. 574-2222.

Sept. 15: **Black Hills Beer Run**. Fun run/walk, beer tasting, brat eating and costumes. Pavilion, **Spearfish**. 642-4700.

Sept. 20–22: **Plein Air Paint Out**. Wet paint sale and artist reception. Tri-State Museum, **Belle Fourche**. 723-1200.

Sept. 20–29: **Beauty and the**

Traveler

3 - 2 - 1 Launch

Beware of flying pumpkins at Rapid City's 11th annual Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival (Sept. 28). The competitive Pumpkin Chuckin' event is led by teams from the Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Production (CAMP) at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, who have probably spent more time studying pumpkin trajectory, acceleration and velocity than anyone in the state. The festival also includes a pumpkin weigh-off, pub crawl and vendors.

Adventure and festivities in South Dakota

Beast. Black Hills Community Theatre performance. Performing Arts Center, **Rapid City**. 394-1786.

Sept. 21: **Harvest Fest.** Food, crafts and entertainment. Downtown, **Spearfish**. 641-3920.

Sept. 21: **Pioneer Day.** Music, crafts, demonstration and lunch. Pioneer Museum, **Hot Springs**. 891-9357.

Sept. 25: **Haunted Deadwood.** A presentation on subjects and theories relating to paranormal investigations. Days of '76 Museum, **Deadwood**. 722-4800.

Sept. 26-28: **Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival.** Roundup, entertainment, educational programs, living history demonstrations and vendors. **Custer State Park**. 255-4515.

Sept. 28: **Oktoberfest Express.** Music, beer and traditional German foods. 1880 Train, **Hill City**. 574-2222.

Sept. 28: **Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival.** Pumpkin catapult, pumpkin weigh-off, cooking demonstration, kids' activities, pony rides and vendors. Main Street Square, **Rapid City**. 716-7979.

Sept. 29: **Fall Volksmarch.** Hike up the world's largest mountain carving in progress. **Crazy Horse Memorial**. 673-4681.

Oct. 3-6: **Festival of Books.** Author presentations, book signings, panel discussions and receptions. **Deadwood**. 688-6113.

Oct. 4-5: **Oktoberfest.** Music, Tour de Oktoberfest, food, dancing, wiener dog races and beer barrel games. **Deadwood**. 578-1876.

Oct. 4-5, 11-12 & 18-19: **Haunted History.** Paranormal investigations.

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Get Weird

Dressing up for Halloween has never been weirder in Deadwood. Deadweird, the mountain town's two-day tribute to our spookiest holiday (Oct. 25-26) features some of the most unique Halloween costumes in the state. The free event begins with the Monster Ball on Friday. Then over \$10,000 in cash and prizes will be given away on Saturday in the Deadweird costume contest.

Adams House, **Deadwood**. 722-4800.

Oct. 5: **Bierbörse**. Craft beer and homebrews sampling, polka music, stein holding contest, keg bowling and beer stock exchange. Main Street Square, **Rapid City**. 716-7979.

Oct. 5-6: **Run Crazy Horse**. Marathon, half marathon, relay, 5K and kids' 1K. **Crazy Horse Memorial**. 390-6137.

Oct. 10-12: **Wild West Songwriters Festival**. Top songwriters and artists share music and stories. **Deadwood**. 578-1876.

Oct. 11-13: **Black Hills Powwow**. Dancers, singers, artisans, He Sapa Win pageant, wellness symposium, hand games and archery. Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, **Rapid City**. 341-0925.

Oct. 14: **Native American Day Celebration**. Presentation, performers, storytellers, activities and free buffalo stew lunch. **Crazy Horse Memorial**. 673-4681.

Oct. 25-26: **Deadweird**. Costume contest and parade, monster ball and prizes. Downtown, **Deadwood**. 578-1876.

Oct. 26: **Symphonic Space Odyssey**. Black Hills Symphony Orchestra performance. Performing Arts Center, **Rapid City**. 394-1786.

Oct. 26: **Scare in the Square**. Trick-or-treating and family entertainment. Main Street Square, **Rapid City**. 716-7979.

Oct. 26: **Halloween Night Hike-Night of the Museum**. 1.5-mile hike on a trail lit by jack-o-lanterns and tiki torches. Reservations required. Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center, **Custer State Park**. 255-4515.

Note: Times or dates may change. Please call organizers to confirm. The area code for all phone numbers is 605 unless otherwise noted. For more events, visit www.SouthDakotaMagazine.com.



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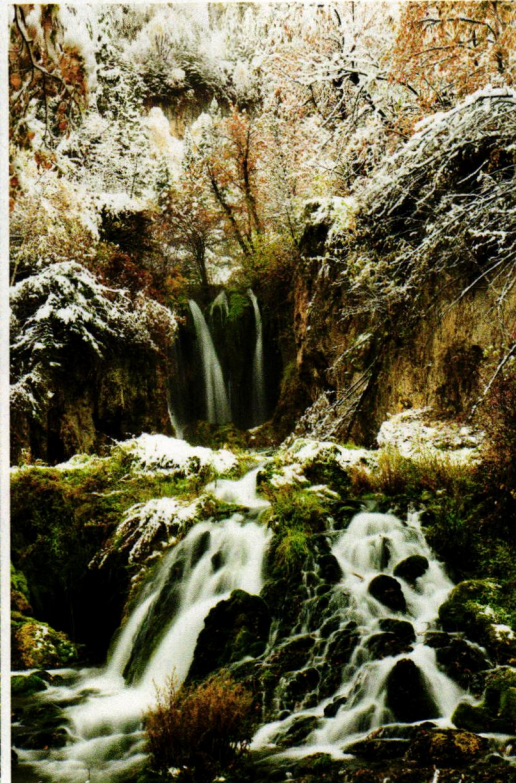


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POETRY

Autumn transitions to
winter at Roughlock
Falls. Photos by Paul
Schiller.



Paha Sapa

When I was a little boy — I would try to dream all day
I'd lay me down — close my eyes and visions would take me 'way

I would travel an unnamed trail — then recline on fresh cut hay
Staring straight up in the sky — to watch ravens dance ballet

Magic currents in the air — lift creatures and spirits again
Taking my mind to that peaceful place where I might fly with them

I spent my formative days — on that prairie's edge alone
Hearing whispers from days gone by when this was not our home

And if I listened closely — turning my ears away from the din
I'd hear the voices of a ghost dance transmitting through the wind

Magic currents in the air — lift creatures and spirits again
Taking my mind to that peaceful place where I might fly with them

Now I've grown much older — and not hearing the same way I did
Can't seem to conjure up that place I knew so well as a kid

I hope it's out there waiting — for me to again come home
To see wonders I saw back then and hear the ponderosa song

Magic currents in the air — lift creatures and spirits again
Come take my mind to that peaceful place where I might fly with them

Where I was young — never out of breath
Where I was strong — never second guessed
Where I was alive and in the very midst
Of heaven . . .

*Ross Fenner
Boise, Idaho*

A memory for you, my friend

I remember how the clover was blooming
Reckless and scattered in vast
Swaths of golden sun,
Bright and wild
Fragrant, free.

Across this pasture I remember
Flying, hands outstretched,
Rising in time to
His gaited steps,
His rhythmic breaths.

The scent of his clover-sweetened musk,
I remember, it was like
Earth and sage and rain
At dusk,

When you are crying in the barn,

Cradling his head,

In gentle, trembling arms.

I remember how the clover was blooming
At the brink of fall,
Reckless and scattered in
Thin swaths of graying tones,
Dying, free.

*Virginia Webb
Aberdeen, S.D.*



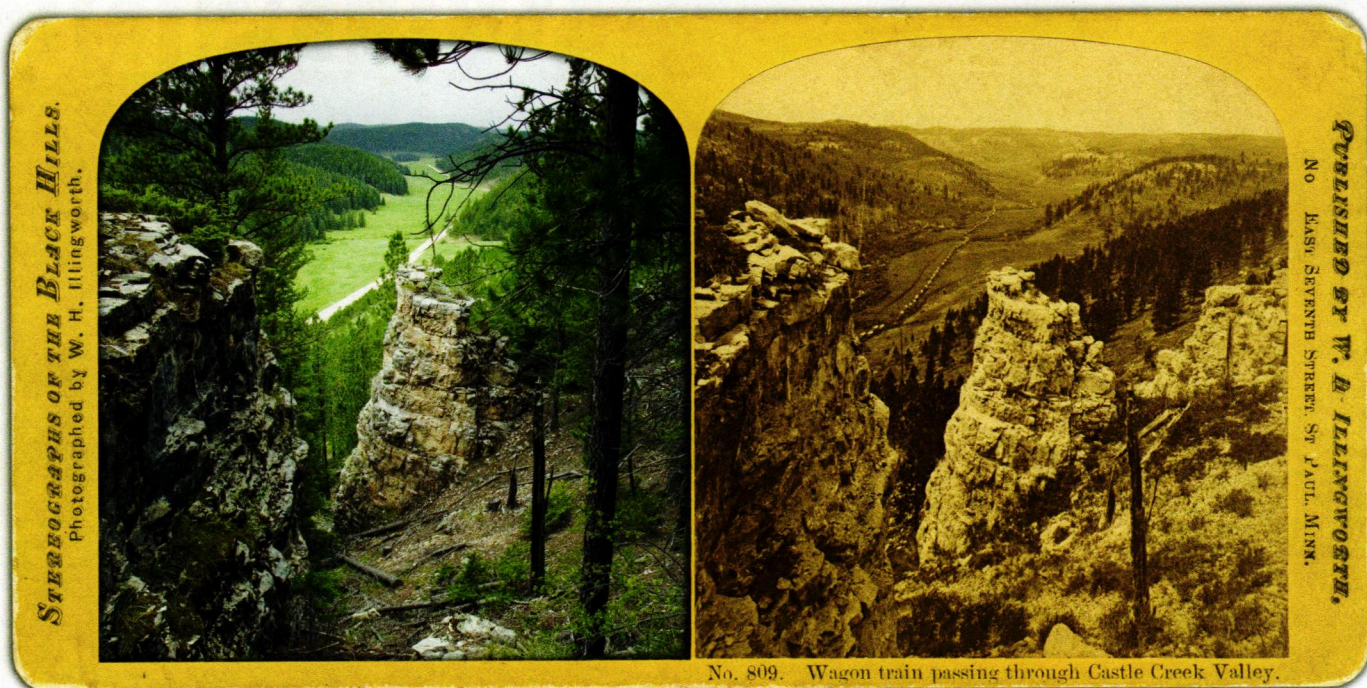
South Dakota's Untamed Flora and Fauna

OUR WILDSIDE



Going Solo ... Young red foxes are on their own this time of year, though this fox, photographed near Tulare, conveys the attitude of a rambunctious teenager more than a responsible adult. Kits are born in the spring. For several weeks in early summer, the parents bring live mice and other prey animals back to the den so their young can learn to hunt. By fall, a fox is ready to prowl the prairies alone, hopefully with properly honed hunting skills. Surviving its first winter depends upon them.

—Photo by Greg Latza



Then and Now

By Paul Horsted



Paul Horsted

Photographs taken during Custer's 1874 Black Hills Expedition and today show the same charred tree stumps. Tree ring analysis done on nearby trees indicates that they are more than 600 years old.

I've been visiting a historic photo site in Castle Creek Valley for nearly 20 years and often wondered about the several tree stumps still visible today, 145 years after the 1874 Custer Expedition. How long have they stood there? Now we know, thanks to Blaine Cook, a recently retired silviculturist for the Black Hills National Forest, and Peter Brown of the nonprofit Rocky Mountain Tree-Ring Research. Brown has hundreds of tree ring samples from the Black Hills and other areas. Using scientific comparison called dendrochronology, he can determine when a sample tree was "born" and how old it was when it died (except if the sample was in a fire that destroyed its outer rings).

Cook cut a section from a nearby stump that does not appear in the 1874 photograph and sent it to Brown. The results are astonishing: the sampled tree sprouted in 1418. Its outer surviving ring dates to 1570. Brown speculated that it could have died in a known massive fire that burned much of the Black Hills in 1685, but this is uncertain. What we do know is that the tree would be 601 years old if still alive, and that like its neighbors in the 1874 photograph, its charred, pitch-filled stump has likely stood for 300 to 400 years after it died in a fire that did not completely consume it.

This sample (pictured) and part of the stump from which it came are on display at the Black Hills National Forest Office lobby on the north edge of Custer. There are also large reproductions of the Castle Creek photo site on display by W.H. Illingworth, the photographer who accompanied the 1874 Custer Expedition, and by me.

Paul Horsted, of Custer, is the author of several books, including Exploring with Custer: The 1874 Black Hills Expedition, in which these side-by-side photos first appeared.

WALKING IN THE WILD

Botany Canyon

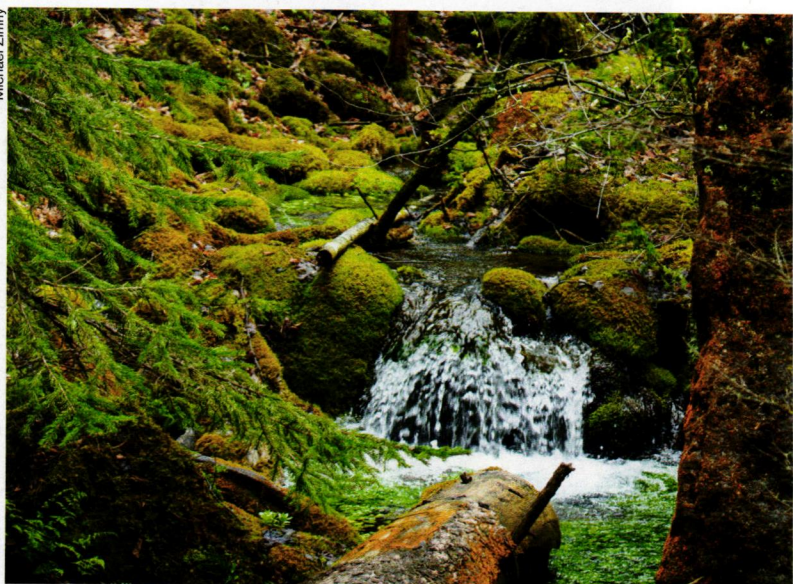
By Michael Zimny

Rapid Citians might bristle at the thought of Botany Canyon as a lesser-known locale, but most visitors will not have heard of it. Since the Canyon was reclaimed for foot travel only, the watercress beds and kaleidoscope of mossy banks and lichen-rich rocks have begun to thrive again. The place is a paradise for botanists and flora fiends, hence the name, replete with rare species of flower like death camas.

The parking area on High Meadows Drive west of Summerset has enough room for maybe three vehicles, and might fill up early on weekends. The trail starts somewhat unimpressively as a Forest Service road. There are several forks, so you might want to use an app such as the All Trails hiking map to navigate.

Hike down into the canyon until you reach a fence and a sign that reads, "Closed to Motorized Vehicles." This is where you enter a Rip Van Winkle-ish world more reminiscent of the Catskills than the Black Hills—a pocket of moisture retention beneath a steep-walled spruce forest. The trail seems to disappear before you reach the end, according to All Trails, but venturing further makes for high impact hiking. Once you've entered Winkle-world, the joy is in leisurely strolling

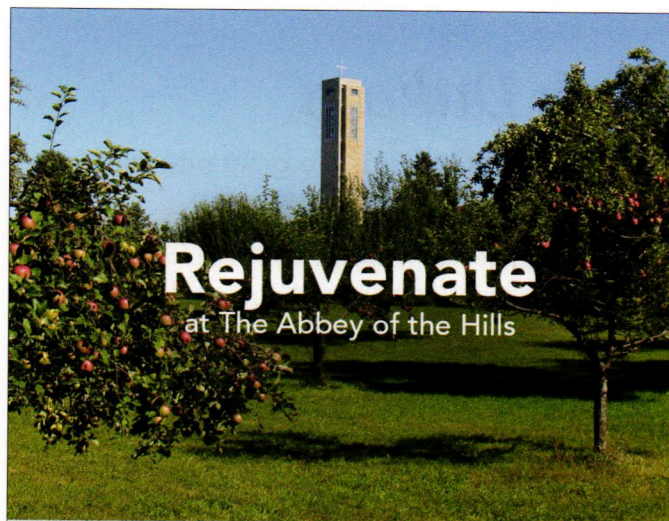
Michael Zimny



and contemplation.

Botany Canyon is a moderate (about 640 feet elevation gain) 5-mile, out-and-back hike, but tread carefully. The ecosystem remains fragile.

Michael Zimny is the social media engagement specialist for South Dakota Public Broadcasting in Vermillion.



Rejuvenate

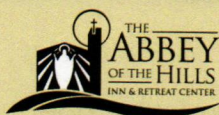
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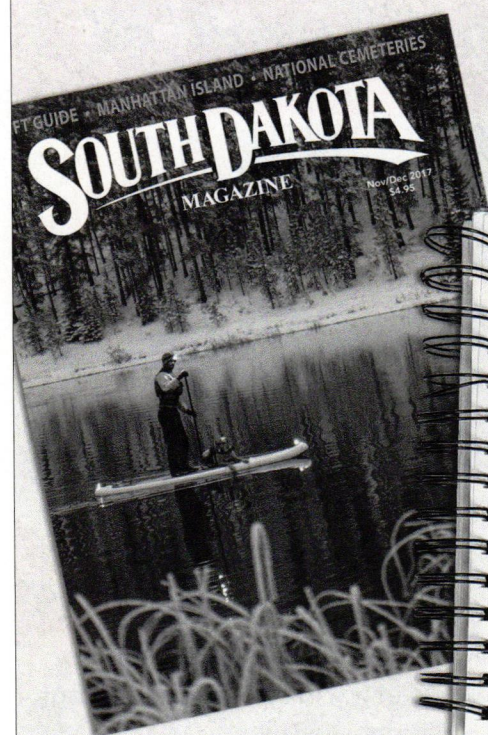
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Grounded

Keep an eye on the sky from July through October and you may notice that ducks are conspicuously absent. It's time for the duck eclipse, the period in which waterfowl lose all of their primary and secondary feathers at once, leaving them flightless for two to three weeks. "When I stop at a wetland, I can hear the ducks, but most are hidden away in the cattails, out of sight from predators because they can't fly away to safety," says Kelly Preheim, a teacher and wildlife photographer from Armour. "During eclipse time, the male ducks resemble female ducks, or just look brown and drab. When I first became a birder, it was difficult for me to identify some of the ducks because I relied on those distinctive colors for ID."



Christian Begeman

Ghost of the Forest

One of the spookiest plants found in Newton Hills State Park might be *monotropa uniflora*, also known as ghost plant, ghost pipe, Indian pipe or corpse plant. It blooms from early summer to early autumn and appears waxy white because it lacks chlorophyll, meaning it can grow in dense, dark environments. It is also parasitic, gleaming its energy from nearby trees.

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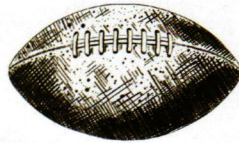


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TOO LONG IN THE SUN



LIVE FROM GEDDES

BY MIKE HENRIKSEN

WHEN I WAS HIRED at a new radio station in Gregory in the fall of 1982, we chose to broadcast football games for several area schools rather than just the Gorillas because our signal covered so much territory. Many area towns had never had a broadcast from their home field.

Superintendent Richard "Rock" Rockafellow welcomed me to Geddes and explained that the school did not have a crow's nest for the scoreboard operator and public address announcer because there was no electronic scoreboard. A kid stood at the end of the field and hung numbers on a board.

This was not ideal. The two things that matter the most in any broadcast are the score and the time remaining. One of those would not be available. And since there was no crow's nest, there wasn't a good view. Rock decided that the highest point was the roof of the concession stand, down the third base line of the baseball field. The goal posts were in the outfield. That presented its own issues.

There I stood on an open rooftop, with nowhere to set up my broadcast gear. Since I had to use my hands to hold a roster and keep some basic stats, I was broadcasting the game via a Princess phone, that slim design device with a rotary dial that you might have had on an end table in your house.


Because of the angle, the distance from the action and fans standing for much of the game, I could not see the entire field. My view was blocked from the 15-yard line to the end zone on the west. Fortunately, Sony had recently come out with a portable radio, and several fans had them, so if I guessed that a tackle had been made at the 8-yard

line, a few would turn around and yell that the ball was actually at the 3. That helped, but the worst was yet to come.

In about the middle of the fourth quarter, several fans — who had apparently started the night at the Blue Room Bar downtown — discovered my broadcast location. Three of them negotiated their way up the ladder and joined the show. Two of them, bottles in hand, were asking me questions as I was on the air. The third tossed his huge arm around me, leaned in close and yelled into the phone, "I'm drinking whiskey, Mom!"

To top it off, since they only wanted to work their way back down the ladder one time, they relieved their bladders off the top of the building. They provided a running color commentary on their activity that I could hear clearly, so keeping my focus was difficult.

By then, I had begun getting other final scores from the engineer back at the station. That meant that my play-by-play was probably the only game on the air at that point. I knew people were tuning in, including other broadcasters, and I was mortified at what they might be hearing.

When the game was over, I ended the historic broadcast from Geddes with one of the shortest post-games in the history of radio, climbed down the ladder — careful of where I stepped — and headed straight for the Blue Room. 

Mike Henriksen is in his 41st year of broadcasting sports in South Dakota. He also hosts Sportsmax, a weekly interview program available on radio stations statewide, and is the author of First Person: Legendary South Dakota Sports Stories.